

INFLUENCE OF *TRIGUNATAMA*KA AHARA ON MENTAL HEALTH

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ABSTRACT

Ayurveda the most ancient science of life, practiced in India for thousands of years based on its own unique fundamental principles such as prevention of disease, maintenance of health and promotion of health. *Trayopasthamba* consists of *Ahara* (food), *Nidra* (Sleep) and *Brahmacarya* (good conducts). Each *Upasthamba* has its own importance in prevention of disease. *Aahara* has been considered as the first one which shows its prime importance. *Ahara* stands for balanced diet and is the first and foremost pillar of *Ayurveda*. *Acharya Charaka* has clearly stated, that a daily diet should be of such quality, which not only helps to maintain present well-being but serves as a prophylactic against upcoming disease. This is a very important aspect of preventive medicine as mentioned in *Ayurvedic* classics. Diseases are mainly result from unhealthy diet and faulty dietary habits, lack of physical activity and lack of awareness. *Triguna* represents essential energies of the mind. Individual's personality is genetically determined and dependent on dominance of *Triguna*. According to *Triguna* Theory it is hard to change physical constitution, but mental attitude can be molded through the choice of food. Ancient *Yogic* science classified food in to three basic categories called the *Satvik Ahara*, *Rajasic Ahara* and *Tamasic Ahara* based on their influence on *Triguna* of mind. Through this paper the effect of *Trigunas* on mental health is explained and classics will be reviewed. An attempt has been made to explain them in terms of scientific terminology and their relation with *Ahara*.

KEYWORDS: *Ahara*, *Triguna*, *Trayopasthamba*, *Satvik Ahara*, *Rajasic Ahara* and *Tamasic Ahara*.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

AYUSH is the acronym of the medical system that is being practiced in India such as *Ayurveda*, *Yoga & Naturopathy*, *Unani*, *Siddha & Homeopathy*. These systems are based on definite medical philosophies & represent a way of healthy living with established concepts on prevention of disease & promotion of health. *Ayurveda* is one of the most ancient systems of medicine in the world. It is essentially a science of life, health & cure based on the eternal laws of nature. *Ayurveda* defines health as a state of equilibrium of *Tridosha*, *Trimala*, *Sapatadhatu* & Homeostasis of mind as well as sense organs. Mental well being is a cardinal integrant of *Ayurvedic* definition of '*Swasthya*' along with the Physical and Spiritual well being. *Ayurveda* has always laid special emphasis on prevention and promotive aspects. It deals with physical, psychological & spiritual well being of an individual & represents total health of human being in a holistic way. WHO defines mental health as a state of well being in which every individual realizes his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to contribute to her or his community. Mental health is a foundation for effective

communication, learning, emotions, thinking and self-esteem in an individual. Mental illness is often used as an umbrella term for all diagnosable mental disorders involving significant changes in thinking, emotion and behavior, And functional problems in family, society and work place. Mental disorder is a significant contributor to the global burden of disease & affects people in all communities across the world.

According to *Ayurveda Dharma*, *Artha*, *Kama* & *Moksha*, are the prime goals of life and achievement of these goals leads to a healthy life. On the other hand, in today's modern era, life has become stressful due to changes in lifestyle and over ambitiousness resulting in manifestation of Psychological disturbance & mental disorders, which have come into existence like forest fire. Solving of mental ailments & providing a fundamental basis for maintaining good mental health has become a great challenge to humanity.

The concept of *Manasa* with its three qualities viz., *Sattva*, *Rajasa* & *Tamasa* has been discussed in detail in *Ayurvedic* classics. The equilibrium or balance between these three result in mental health or *Manasa Swasthya* which is an important component of *Arogya*. *Manasa*

Swasthya essentially means a healthy mind with emotional well-being, logical behavior, cordial relationship with environment and appropriate thinking. A person is said to be mentally healthy if *Dhee* (*Buddhirhi Nischayatmika*), *Dhriti* (*Dhritirhi Niyamatmika*) & *Smriti* (*Smaranat Smrti*) is intact.

The word *Manas* is derived from the root 'Man' adding the suffix 'Asuna' having the meaning, 'to perceive', 'to lead to knowledge', 'to analyze by special knowledge'.

"*Chittam cheetah hrdayam svantam hrumanasam manah iti*" (*Amarakosha* 1/4/3). *Mana* is the entity through which the knowledge is obtained, which is closely related with *Atma*, through which one can perceive and the seat of *Mana* is *Hridaya*.

Mana is a superior analyzing faculty, the seat of soul or *Atma* and controls the whole body, by accommodating the superior senses and can be said as the seat of knowledge. According to *Vedanta Darshana*, *Manas*, *Buddhi*, *Chitta* and *Ahamkara* combine are called four *Antahkarana*. *Manas* is told as 'Ubhayatmaka', it is a dual faculty which has both sensory and motor functions and hence considered as a superior faculty because it controls and co-ordinates all other faculties connecting them with the soul. In *Ayurveda* classics no specific description of mental illness is given but all type of mental disorders are classified in *Unmada Chikitsa*. As *Ayurvedic* point of view *Raja* & *Tama* vitiation leads to *Manasika Vikara*. *Ayurveda* deals with four aspects of lifestyle which can ensure good health, which are *Aahara*, *Vihara*, *Achara* and *Vichara*. Observing certain practices ensures a healthy and happy life.

To promote mental health and prevent illness, there is a need to create such living conditions and environment that support mental health and allow people to adopt and maintain healthy lifestyle. The intake of healthy *Aahara* as per the rules prescribed and adhering to the principles of *Dinacharya*, *Ritucharya*, *Sadvritta* & *Achara Rasayana* are the fundamental entities which play a pivotal role in attaining positive mental health. In *Ayurvedic* system of medicine, *Chikitsa* has been categorized under 3 dimensions as follow:

1. *Daivavyapashraya Chikitsa* (use of *Mantra*, *Aushadhi*, *Mani*, *Bali*, *Ahara*, *Homa*, *Niyama*, *Prayashchitta*, *Upavasa*, *Svastyayana*, *Pranipatagamana* etc. are aimed at boosting the self confidence and mental strength to the individual)
2. *Satvavajaya Chikitsa* (Controlling the mind, in such a way that it is not acted upon the various stressors making it prone to *Prajnaparadha*. *Acharya Charaka*, defines *Satvavajaya* as withdrawal of mind from unwholesome objects.)
3. *Yuktivyapashraya Chikitsa* (This includes treatment through logical use of medicines and modification of *Aahara* and *Vihara* to suit the needs of the person.)

Diet is said to be basis of life, strength, complexion, *Ojas*, growth and development, happiness, clarity of voice, luster, pleasure, nourish *Dhatus* and *Indriyas*, intellect, health etc. According to *Chhandogya Upanishad*, the food inside the body is divided into 3 parts: *Sthoola*, *Madhyama* & *Anu Bhaga* which nourish *Purisha*, *Mamsa* & *Mana* respectively, which means the subtle and abstract part of *Anna* is *Mana*. '*Annamayam hi soumya manah*' is a popular quote from *Chhandogya Upanishad*, which means the mind is the essence of food we take. So, all the aspects are important to prevent the mental illness and to promote the mental health, because healthy mind lives in a healthy body. If the mind is unsullied and pure, it will greatly help in maintaining physical well-being and health.

CONCEPT OF AHARA

- *Shabda Kalpa druma* explains that *Ahara* is a substance which is swallowed through throat after eating.
- *Acharya Dalhana* said that the substance which is swallowed through *Anna-nalika* is called *Aahara*.
- *Acharya Cakrapani* said that *Ahara* means anything which is ingested and thus it includes both diet and drugs.
- The body as well as diseases is formed by food, wholesome & unwholesome food are responsible for happiness & misery respectively.

अन्नं ब्रह्मोति व्यजानात् अन्नाद्येव खल्विमानि भूतानि जायन्ते ।
अन्नं जातानि जीवन्ति अन्नं प्रयन्त्यमि संविशतीति ॥ (तै०उ०)

- Food is supreme or *Brahma*. All the beings originate from food, food is responsible for life of all the beings. *Anna* is present in all living beings in the form of food sheath.

"*Annamayakosa*".

Importance of AHARA

आहार शुद्धौ सत्त्व शुद्धिः सत्त्व शुद्धौ स्मृतिः ध्रुवा

स्मृति लम्भे सर्व ग्रन्थीनां विप्र मोक्षः ॥

(*Chandogya Upanishad* 7.26.2)

- From purity of food comes purity of mind; from purity of mind comes constant remembrance of God, and from constant remembrance of God one becomes free from all bonds - one becomes liberated.
- *The constitution of a man's mind is determined by the kind of food he takes; and a man's faith corresponds to his mental constitution.*
- *If a man's diet is pure, his mind too, will be pure as a matter of course.*
- *"Purity of mind follows from purity of food."*
[*Chandogya Upanishad*]

कालबुद्धीन्द्रियार्थानांयोगो मिथ्या न चाति च ।

द्वयाश्रयाणां व्याधीनां त्रिविधो हेतु संग्रहः ॥ (च० चि० 1/54)

Causative factors for physical and mental disease are wrong utilization, over utilization & non-utilization of objects of sense organs, time & intellect.

So, intelligent person should avoid them & prevent diseases.

Concept of Triguna

त्रिवैधं खलु सत्त्वं शुद्धं राजसं तामसमिति ।
तत्रशुद्धदोषमाख्यातं कल्याणांशत्वात् राजसं सदोषमाख्यातं
रोषांशत्वात् तामसमपि सदोषमाख्यातं मोहांशत्वात् ॥

(च.शा. 4/36)

- *Sattva*, *Rajas* and *Tamas* are called *Trigunas*. *Sattva* is pure due to its divine quality, *Rajas* is impure due to angry quality and *Tamas* is impure too due to greed quality within.
- All human beings are combinations of the three *Gunas* and therefore these features together promote different kinds of personalities based on the dominance of one or the other *Gunas*.
- The temperament/ character of a person can be recognize based on the mode of worship, *the type of food consumed* and other activities of everyday life.

1. Sattva Guna

- It is mainly the *Spiritual quality*. When *Sattva* guna is dominant, a person has natural desire to be good and caring.
- In such individuals, the mind and senses are at a constant state.

2. Rajas Guna

- It is nothing but the *Active quality*. *Rajas* guna in people drives more passion and desire in them.

3. Tamas Guna

- It is essentially the *Material quality*. Arises from hope and illusions.

Relation between Tridosha and Triguna (Sharangdhar 5th chap.)

Dosha	Predominant guna
1. Vata	Rajas
2. Pitta	Satva
3. Kapha	Tamas

Yogic Classification of food

Sri Krishna describes the classes of foods in *Srimad Bhagavad Gita*-

1. Satvik food-

आयुः सत्त्वबलारोग्यसुखीतिविवर्धनाः ।

रस्याः स्निग्धाः स्थिराहृद्याआहाराः सात्विकप्रियाः ॥

(*Bhagavad Gita Shloka/Verse 8* of Chapter 17)

- Persons in the mode of goodness prefer foods that promote the life span,
- Increase virtue, health, happiness and satisfaction.
- Such foods are juicy, succulent with natural fats, wholesome and nourishing, conducive to the heart health and naturally tasteful.

Preventive aspect of Satvik Ahara

- The cooking and processing of *Satvik Aahara* is to be done in a *Satvik* atmosphere and with *Satvik* mood, affection and love.
- *Satvik Aahara* is not considered in terms of its physical composition but is also viewed from the point of view of its cooking and eating.
- It is considered pure and ideal for promoting *Sattva Guna* in the system.
- Such a diet orientates the mind and provides a better sense of sympathy and compassion.
- Most of the fruits are considered *Satvik*. As they are taken fresh with the rhythms of time and season they are considered pure, natural, eco- biofriendly. Fruits promote mental energy and quieter the lower organs.

It may includes Fruits, Milk & Ghee, Coconut, Sesame, Honey, Rakta Shali (Red Rice) (Unpolished), *Panaka*, Saffron, Dravyas like *Brahmi*, *Amla*, *Satavari*, etc.

2. Rajasic food

कट्वम्ललवणात्युष्णतीक्ष्णरूक्षविदाहिनः ।

आहाराराजसस्येष्टादुःखशोकामयप्रदाः ॥

(*Bhagavad Gita Shloka/Verse 9* of Chapter 17)

- Too bitter food items,
- Too sour food items,
- Very hot,
- Pungent,
- Dry and
- Spicy, are dear to person in the mode of passion.
- Such foods produce pain, grief and diseases.

Preventive aspect of Rajasik Aahara

- *Rajasik Aahara* augments activity and agility.
- It increases the attributes of *Pitta* and *Agni* in the biological system and increases basal metabolic rate.
- Consumption of *Rajasika* food besides, augmenting *Rajo Guna* in system, cause hyperacidity, irritability, restlessness, Hypertension, peptic ulcer, anxiety and insomnia, So it should be avoided by the person suffering from such ailments.
- For those who are lazy and dull, it may be appropriate to advice consuming a larger quantity of *Rajasik* food items.

It may Includes Refined oils, Refined grains, Sour food, Kanda- Mula(Onion and garlic), Deep fried, Excess salt, White Rice, Junk food, Tea & Coffee, Green chilli, pepper & *Hing*, etc.

3. Tamasic foods

यातयामं गतरसं पूति पर्युषितं च यत् ।

उच्छिष्टमपिचामेध्यं भोजनं तामसप्रियम् ॥

(*Bhagavad Gita Shloka/Verse 10* of Chapter 17)

- Stale food,
- Tasteless,
- Putrid,
- Polluted &
- Impure are dear to person in the mode of ignorance.

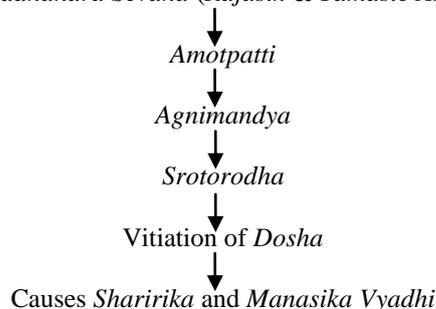
Facet of *Tamasik Ahara*

- *Tamasika Ahara* induces inactivity and inertia.
- It augments *Kapha* and difficult to digest.
- *Tamasika Ahara* is best avoided, as it makes one dull, enhances anger and criminal tendency and hinders betterment of a society.

It may Includes Fermented food, meat, Fishes, Eggs, Alcohol & cigarette, Tobacco, Fried food, Overcooked food items, Burned food, Food full of preservatives etc.

Effect of *Rajasik & Tamasic Ahara*

Viruddhahara Sevana (Rajasik & Tamasic Ahara)



Rajasika evam *Tamasika Ahara Sevana* causes vitiation of *Tridosha* esp. *Vata Dosha* which ultimately affects ones physical health as well as mental health. It is also believed that all mental illnesses are because of the disorders of *Rajas & Tamas*. *Sattva* is never the cause of illness.

DISCUSSION

Dietary habits also have role in preventing mental illnesses and promoting mental health. *Ahara* is the best of all medicines and one of the major causes of the disease, if it is *Pathya Ahara* or *Apathya Ahara* respectively. Preventive & curative aspects revolve around of *Pathya Ahara & Vihara*. Whereas *Viruddhahara (Rajasika & Tamasika Ahara)* vitiates *Doshas & deteriorates Mental health. Annamayam hi soumya manah* is popular quote by *Chandogya Upanishad*, which means mind is the essence of food we take. *Satvik Ahara* increases life span, nourishes *Satva*, healthy, full of nutrients & conducive for soul, So one should take *Satvik Ahara* rather than *Rajasika & Tamasika Ahara*. *Satvik Ahara* should be adopted in an appropriate manner, in the ratio of 1:3.

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