

Ayurvedic Perspective of Yoga for Physical and Emotional Well-Being

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Abstract

Ayurveda is ancient Indian medical science. Apart from physical disorders, many psychological disorders are mentioned in Ayurveda. As per Ayurveda, incompatible contact of sensory organs with their senses and intellectual transgression (pragyaparadha) are the causes for psychological disorders. Similarly, bad mental qualities like jealousy, fear, anger, greed, conceit are also responsible for the development of mental disorders. As per Ayurveda, thinking, reasoning, conceptualizing, perceiving are the functions of the mind. As per Ayurveda, Yoga is a powerful tool to overcome the psychological pain. By virtue of Yoga, the mind is unified with the soul and detached from the materialistic sensory pains and pleasures. Atmagyan (knowing the self) has been mentioned as the part of treating the mental disorders. There are many psychosomatic disorders like Bhayaj and Shokaj Jwara and Atisara (anxiety and depression related fever and diarrhea), Manas Arochaka (anorexia nervosa), Dwishta Chhardi (psychological vomiting) etc which can be treated with meditation and mood elevating measures and sadvritta palana (noble code of conduct). It is concluded that role of Yoga in treating the psychological disorders is very well documented in Ayurveda.

Keywords: mana; ashtang yoga; mind; meditation

Introduction

There is now increased awareness about Yoga and its beneficial effects on health in India with highly appreciable efforts from Yoga Guru Swami Ramdev in propagating it. At least 5 in 1 Indian started doing it. The yogic procedures like *Anulom Vilom*, *Pranayam*, *Kapalbhatti* is now, a household name in India. Government of India took extra ordinary efforts to globalise Yoga by observing 'International Yoga Day' on 21st June every year through United Nations. The various researches at various places observe that Yoga promotes the cardiac health by number of ways. It relieves the stress, calms the irritated nervous system, lowers the raised blood pressure, improves lung function, helps in optimum secretion of body fluids. Some Yoga Asanas are helpful in burning the body fat, thereby reducing the obesity and decreasing the overt risk of type II Diabetes mellitus and ischemic heart diseases. It has been proved beyond doubts that meditation relaxes the body, calms the nervous system, brings down the elevated blood pressure and produces the mental harmony, creates enthusiasm by promoting the secretion of positive andorphins. As per Ayurveda, Yoga is a powerful tool to overcome the psychological

pain. By virtue of Yoga, the mind is unified with the soul and detached from the materialistic sensory pains and pleasures. *Atmagyan* (knowing the self) has been mentioned as the part of treating the mental disorders. There are many psychosomatic disorders like *Bhayaj* and *Shokaj Jwara* and *Atisara* (anxiety and depression related fever and diarrhea), *Manas Arochaka* (anorexia nervosa), *Dwishta Chhardi* (psychological vomiting) etc which can be treated with meditation and mood elevating measures and *sadvritta palana* (noble code of conduct).

Material & Method

Literary analytical method of research is adopted in present study. Classical Ayurvedic texts such as Sushrut Samhita, Charak Samhita, Ashtang Samgraha have been referred for literary search.

Review of Literature

Yoga As Per Ayurveda

Soul connects the mind. Mind connects with the sensory organs and the sensory organs connects with the sensory object to perceive the sensation of happiness and pain (*Atma indriya mana arthanam sannikarshat pravartate sukham dukham*). When mind is concentrated on the soul (*Atme manasi sthire*), both these sensations of happiness and pain are not felt. On account of control of mind and sensory organs, individual becomes able to perform supernatural functions. This state of complete control of mind is called as 'Yoga' by the sages. [1]

Application of Yoga In Ayurveda

As per acharya Charaka, all pains get abolished in the state of Yoga and Moksha. [2]

Hence, Yoga, can be used as powerful tool to get rid of many mental agonies like jealousy, fear, anger, greed, conceit which leads to many mental disorders.

Eight Powers (Ashta Siddhis) of Yoga As Per Ayurveda

1] *Aawesha* – Entering the other person's body

2] *Arthanam Gyanam* – Reading another person's mind

3] *Chhanda Kriya* - Doing things at pleasure

4] *Drushti* – Vision to look beyond the obvious

5] *Shruti* – Power to hear beyond the obvious

6] *Smruti* – Power to recollect the past (super memory)

7] *Kanti* – Superhuman brilliance

8] *Eshata Darshan* – Power to get appear & disappear at will

When the Satvik mind gets unified with the soul, ne gets these powers. [3]

There are many evidences to these *Ashta Yoga Siddhis* in ancient literature. The famous example of Shankaracharya doing *Para Kaya Prawesha* in the dead body of the king. The supernatural vision and hearing offered to Sanjay by sage Vyasa during Mahabharat war is again the testimony to this.

Mind As Per Ayurveda

Mind is the knowledge system by virtue of which the knowledge of all the sensory objects is gained (sensory function) and executed for effect (motor function). For receiving the sensory information, Soul connects the mind. Mind connects with the sensory organs and the sensory organs connects with the sensory object forming a chain of knowledge system. [4]

Functions of Mind

1. Thinking (*Chintya*)

2. Analyzing (*Vicharya*)

3. Reasoning (*Uhya*)

4. Concentrating (*Dheya*)

5. Conceptualizing (*Sankalpa*)

6. Controlling the senses (*Indriya Nigraha*)

7. Self restraint (*Swasya Nigraha*)

Are the functions of mind as per acharya Charaka. [5]

Altered state of Mind & Altered Functions

The altered state of mind leads to the thinking of undesired and no thinking about the things to be thought over. There is irrational thinking in altered state of mind. [6]

Excessive thinking, absolute no thinking and perverted thinking are the incompatibility of mind which may lead to many psychological disorders. [7]

Micro Qualities of Mind as Per Ayurveda

Mind is one (*Eka*) and very minute at functional level (*Anu*). [8]

Psychological Qualities of Mind as Per Ayurveda

Following are the good and bad virtues of mind which can influence the mental harmony [9]

Good mental qualities :

1. *Avyabhihara* - Decent behaviour
2. *Avikara* - Absence of ill feeling
3. *Sheela* - Good character
4. *Hiyam* - Shyness / modesty
5. *A-lolupata* - Non greediness
6. *Santosh* - Contentment
7. *Dhairya* - Courage
8. *Harsha* - Pleasantness

Bad mental qualities :

1. *Krodha* - Anger
2. *Lobha* - Greediness
3. *Bhaya* - Fear
4. *Vishad* - Sadness
5. *Shoka* - Grief
6. *Ershya* - Jealousy
7. *Mana* - Conceit
8. *Mada* - Ego

Root of Mental System

The mind lies inside a brain and it is the seat of higher functions such as intelligence and all sensations. [10]

Causes of vitiation of Mental System

1. Forceful initiation of natural urges,
2. Forceful suppression of natural urges,
3. Misadventure (e.g. too much weight lifting, fighting),
4. Indecent behavior
5. Insulting the respected persons,
6. Avoidance of code of noble conduct
7. Jealousy
8. Conceit
9. Fear
10. Anger
11. Greed
12. Ego
13. False self perception

Above causes induced troublesome deeds are responsible for development of mental disorders [11] [12].

(Features of vitiation of Mental System)

1. Drowsiness
2. Syncope
3. Stupor
4. Fear / Anxiety
5. Vertigo
6. Altered intelligence
7. Laughing at improper place

8. Dancing at improper place
9. Singing at improper place
10. Improper body movements
11. Excessive crying
12. Delirium
13. Frightening dreams
14. Insomnia

Disorders of Manowaha Strotas As per Ayurveda

1. *Unmada* - Schizophrenia
2. *Apasmara* - Epilepsy
3. *Atatvabhinivesha* - Paronia
4. *Avasada/Vishada* - Depression
5. *Bhaya* - Anxiety

Psycho-somatic Disorders As per Ayurveda

1. *Bhayaj Atisara* - Anxious diarrhoea
2. *Shokaj Atisara* - Nervous diarrhoea
3. *Bhayaj Jwara* - Fever due to fear
4. *Shokaj Jwara* - Fever due to depression
5. *Kamaj Jwara* - Sexual arousal fever
6. *Dwishtaj Chhardi* - Psychogenic vomiting
7. *Manas Arochaka* - Anorexia nervosa
8. *Madatyaya* - Alcoholic intoxication

General Treatment of Mental Disorders

1] Staying away from the harmful religious conduct, deeds, money, sexual activity

2] Engaging in beneficial religious conduct, deeds, money, sexual activity

3] Serving the elderly and respected peoples like parents, teachers

4] Taking the help of psychiatrist

5] Keeping the knowledge of self, area, family, time, strength

These are the principles of management of psychological disorders. [13].

There are many other therapeutic measures undertaken in Ayurvedic science to treat mental disorders.

Discussion

Acharya Charaka advocates the use of Yoga in overcoming the psychological pain. Ayurvedic acharyas has also recommended its use to treat the various psychosomatic disorders along with mood elevating measures (*Harshani chikitsa*) and observing the code of noble conduct (*Sadvritta Palana*). Through meditation mind can be controlled by detaching it from the materialistic pains and pleasures and by concentrating on self soul. Ashtang Yoga is a meditation process which involves following eight steps :

A] Pre Meditation Processes – 1. Yama, 2. Niyam, 3. Asana, 4. Prati Aahar

B] The Meditation Processes – 1. Pranayam, 2. Dhyana, 3. Dharana, 4. Samadhi

Conditioning of body is done through the pre meditation processes by following the certain set of norms and body postures. *Yama* refers to the noble moral behavior which is achieved through *Ahimsa* (nonviolence), *Satya* (truthfulness), *Asteya* (restraining from stealing), *Brahmacharya* (continence), *Aparigraha* (non collection of materialistic things). *Niyama* refers to the adherence to noble code of conduct which is achieved through *Shauchya* (cleanliness), *Santosha* (contentment), *Tapa* (spiritual austerities), *Sawadhyay* (practice by self), *Ishwar Pranidhan* (remembering the God). The *Prati aahar* process controls the craving for delicious food by inhibition of food desire. The *Asana* is the body posture.

There are various Asanas for various purpose. The *Prana Yama* is a breathing exercise to control the breaths. The *Dhyana* and *Dharana* is a concentration of mind over certain object, place or deity as guided. Most of the general peoples reach up to this stage. The *Samadhi* is highest stage of trans or ecstasy which is attained by very few. The 'Vipashyana' is another such mind relaxing technique invented by lord Gautam Buddha and is a gift of India to the world. The late Shri Ramnarayan Goenka had taken enormous efforts to promote it in India by forming the network of Vipashyana centres across the India. Self hypnotism though bio feedback is also practiced by many in India to relax the mind and promoted by hypnotists like Dr. Manohar Naik. The Asanas constitute various body postures which can influence cardiac health by promoting the burning of fat, reducing the weight and reducing the elevated blood pressure. It is possible to control the mind through Ashtang Yoga and thereby to overcome the psychosomatic illnesses.

Conclusions

1. The concept of Yoga for physical and mental wellbeing is very well documented in Ayurveda.
2. Yoga helps in controlling the mind and mental disorders.
3. Yoga is useful in psychosomatic disorders also.
4. Knowledge of self and strength helps in overcoming the psychological troubles.

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