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Prevention of Mental Disorders in Ayurveda and Yoga

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Abstract

Ayurveda is an ancient medical science of India. As per definition it is a science of life. Ayurveda's aim is "To prevent health of healthy person and to cure a diseased person." Yoga as well is an ancient science, which deals with physical as well as mental wellbeing. Ayurveda talks about Dhatu Saamyata" which means balancing bodily tissues. The dictionary meaning of word "Dhatu" is "Dhatu is that which holds". And in that context the Dhatu word covers Dosha, Dhatu and also Mala. The definition of health in Ayurveda is, "the person who is in state of Sama Dosha, whose Agni is proper, whose bodily tissues are in balanced state, whose excretory system is working in proper manner and whose soul, senses and mind are happy is called as a healthy person." Ayurveda also talks about Dinacharya i.e. daily regimen, Rutucharya i.e. a seasonal regimen and Sadvrutta i.e. explanation about well conduct. These all things affect on person's social relations which is most basic cause of the mental disorders. Yoga also treats mental issues by meditation and other remedial measures.

So, this paper tries to reveal certain known and some comparatively less known remedies and treatments available in the Ayurveda and Yoga.

Keywords: Mental Health, Mental Disorder, Stress, Dinacharya, Rutucharya, Sadvrutta, Dhatu Samyata, Homeopathic Remedy,

Introduction:

Ayurveda is an ancient medical science of India. Yoga is also one of the greatest heritages that we have inherited from our ancestors. However, both have different goals and different paths, both certainly make sure that the mental health of an individual is maintained. Considering Ayurveda as a science taking care of mere physical health would be an error and finding Yoga in mere Asanas or physical postures will also be an error. How Ayurveda and Yoga both take care of our mental health is an interesting subject to investigate as there are many dimensions of both Yoga and Ayurveda that are less recognized. So, in this paper, an attempt is made to uncover such aspects of Ayurveda and Yoga that are less explored and yet they are strongly functional in maintaining the mental health. We shall begin with Ayurveda first and then Yoga.



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❖ Ayurveda:

As per one of the definitions, it is a science of life. When we talk about Ayurveda and prevention of mental health the first and foremost thing comes in mind is Ayurveda's aim. The aim of Ayurveda is very clearly mentioned in Charak Samhita, “स्वस्थस्य स्वास्थ्य रक्षणं आतुरस्य विकार प्रशमनं च ।” (च० सू० 30/26). It means, “to prevent health of healthy person and to cure a diseased person.” So, the very aim of Ayurveda signifies that it is not only about curing the disease, but to prevent it and that also not only physical health, but the mental health as well. So, it is very much relevant to talk about Ayurveda while talking about mental health.

Ayurveda also aims to sustain 'Dhatu Saamyata'. It wouldn't be apt to translate the word 'Dhatu Samyata' in English because this word indicates deeper sense than just balancing bodily tissues. The dictionary meaning of word "Dhatu" is 'that which holds'. In that context, the Dhatu word covers *Dosha*, *Dhatu* and also *Mala*.

Now, before entering to *Dhatu Samyata*, let's see the definition of health which is given in Ayurveda texts.

समदोषः समाग्निश्च समधातु मलःक्रियाः ।

प्रसन्नात्मेन्द्रियमनः स्वस्थइतिअभिधीयते ॥

(सुश्रुत संहिता सूत्रस्थान १५/४८)

This definition of health says that, “the person who is in state of Sama Dosha, whose Agni is proper, whose bodily tissues are in balanced state, whose excretory system is working in proper manner and whose soul, senses and mind are happy is called as a healthy person.” Now, these all things are interconnected to each other.

So, while talking about prevention of mental health, it becomes very important to know about some of these things as those things can affect our mental health.

- **Balanced state of Doshas:**

The first thing was balanced state of Doshas. Doshas are mainly divided in two types, 1. Sharirik/ Daihik Doshas (Physical or bodily disorders) and 2. Manasik Doshas (mental disorders). Sharirik/ Daihik Doshas are Vata, Pitta and Kapha whereas; Manasik Doshas are Rajas and Tamas. Now, these both are also interlinked with each other as displayed in the following figure.

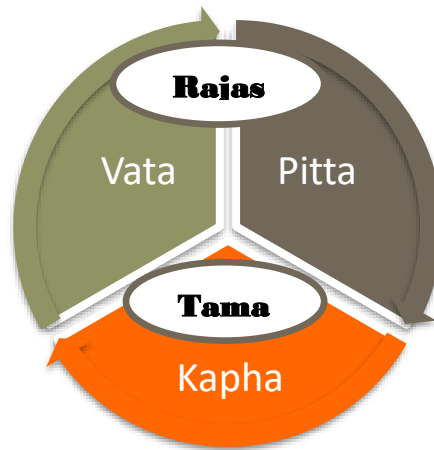


Figure 1

As the above figure indicates that Vata, made of air and ether elements, has the predominance of air element and so it is allied to rajas quality. Pitta has the predominance of fire element and it is also responsible for rajas quality. Kapha is made of water and earth elements with predominance of water element and so responsible for Tamas. So, maintenance of all the Dosha is compulsory to prevent any kind of disease, mental of physical.

- **Balanced state of Agni:**

Second point was Agni. The term Agni represents biological fire. Agni is extremely vital at pathological and physiological levels. The way we need constant food to survive, the digestive system, known as digestive fire also requires constant feeding. Many of the diseases are the result of malfunctioning of the Agni, so it's necessary to maintain balance. There are total thirteen types of Agni, 1. Jatharagni, 2 to 8 Sapta Dhatvagnis and 9 to 13 Panch Bhootagni.

These all Agnis can be in four different states, 1. Vishama, 2. Tikshna, 3. Manda and 4. Sama. Where, Sama Agni is a state of healthy person. These states are again depends upon the predominance *Doshas* which is explained below,

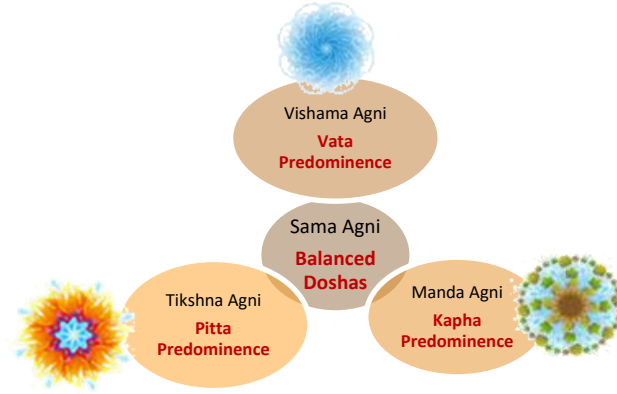


Figure 2

- **Balanced state of Dhatu:**

Next parameter is Dhatu. Now, there are total 12 parameters given to assess Dhatu Samyata and surprisingly these 12 parameters include whole definition of the health, as per *Charaka Samhita*, among them we will talk about those only which are related to mind. They are as follows:

- ‘*Nidrālābho Yathā Kālam*’ which means the person should get sleep at proper time.
 - ‘*Vaikārikam Swapnam Ādarshanam*’ which means person should not get nightmares.
 - ‘*Sukhena Cha Pratibodhanam*’ which means the awakening of the person should be comfortable.
- And the last one is
- ‘*Sarvākaraih Mano Buddhi Indriyānām Cha Avyāpatiriti*’ which means all of these Manas, Buddhi and Indriyas should work in proper manner.

In short these all things collectively prove that the physical health is connected with a mental health.



- **Happy Soul, Senses and Mind:**

After talking about balance of Dosha, Agni, Dhatu and Malakriya, the last point is directly linked with the mind which says that happy soul, senses and mind is indicative of good health. One can remain happy only when there is no mental pressure, mind is calm and pleasant. Ayurveda not only indicates the characteristics of an healthy person but also shows the path to maintain the health, and health here means both mental and physical.

Now, the question is which path does *Ayurveda* show to maintain the health? And we get the answer from Ayurveda that just follow some basic principles and be healthy. These basic principles are Dinacharya, Rutucharya and Sadvrutta. If the person is following these basic principles properly then he/she will always stay healthy. We will not go very deep in these basic principles but will explain it briefly.

- **Dinacharya:**

Dinacharya is a daily regimen. It explains what are the things a person should follow on daily basis which indeed help to the person to maintain health. There are many small details explained while describing Dinacharya which helps the person to avoid any kind of diseases. The detailed description of Dinacharya is given in Ashtanghridayam and it basically deals with appropriate diet, appropriate timings, daily cycle and behavioral norms to keep one fit and healthy. The topics include dinacharya include: waking time, elimination, hygiene, bathing, meals, massage, exercise, meditation and prayer, study, work, relaxation and sleeping.

- **Rutucharya:**

Rutucharya is a seasonal regimen. There are six seasons in India and they are Late winter (शिशिर), Spring (वसन्त), Summer (ग्रीष्म), Rains (वर्षा), Autumn (शरद्) and Early winter (हेमन्त). It says about the food and regimen which should be followed by a person during particular season. Even we get detail that what to follow during seasonal change.



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- **Sadvrutta:**

Sadvrutta is explanation about well conduct. It explains that how the person should make relation with other people. How to talk, what should not be done publically etc. these all things affects on person's social relations which is most basic cause of the mental disorders.

- ❖ **Yoga:**

Yoga as well is an ancient science, which deals with physical as well as mental wellbeing. Yoga also treats mental issues by meditation and other remedial measures. Yoga leads to mental health in many ways and Karma Yoga is one of them. All the paths can be discussed in detail but we shall deal with Karma Yoga in this paper.

It has also been explained in great detail how can one have a healthy body and a cheerful mind. It also describes various forms of yoga relating to spirituality. Spirituality maintains our psychological health, affects substance abuse, interpersonal relationship, parenting, and coping. It has been suggested that spirituality also results in finding purpose and meaning in life (Snyder & Lopez, 2007). The paper tries to explore the karma yoga described in Bhagavad Gita and its relationship with Health and Well-being. It has also been thoroughly discussed how to have a healthy body and a happy mind. It also describes many types of yoga that are spiritual in nature. Spirituality helps us maintain our mental health and has an impact on interpersonal relationships, parenting, and coping.

- ❖ **Karmayoga and Mental Peace:**

According to the Gita, one attains the supreme through doing one's duty. Here, supreme refers to a supreme state of self-fulfillment rather than a supreme being: A blissful and ecstatic state. Krishna advises in chapter 3, verse 8,

नियतं कुरु कर्म त्वं कर्म ज्यायो ह्यकर्मणः ।

शरीरयात्रापि च ते न प्रसिद्ध्येदकर्मणः ॥ 3.8॥



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Perform your designated responsibility, because action is preferable to passivity. In the next verse, lord Krishna says,

यज्ञार्थात्कर्मणोऽन्यत्र लोकोऽयं कर्मबन्धनः ।

तदर्थं कर्म कौन्तेय मुक्तसङ्गः समाचर ॥ 3.9॥

The deed should be conducted without attachment, as if it were a sacrifice. He advised Arjunav to his task efficiently, free from attachments for the sake of sacrifice alone. Self-fulfillment occurs when one is detached from external repercussions and performs with a sense of responsibility. By detaching an activity from its repercussions or fruits, I mean that the detached action is not influenced by external rewards. External consequences for the Karma Yogi are psychologically non-existent because all actions are delinked from extrinsic rewards. A Karma-yogi is someone who chooses the path of disinterested conduct and understands the nature of the experienced world. Any man, like Arjuna, can follow the karmayoga path.

The Gita's message for psychological wellness is a condition of physical, psychological, and spiritual equilibrium. Samstithi (Samatvam Yogam Yuchyate) refers to attempting to achieve the mental condition of a neutral, detached observer or performer in this universe. A healthy mentality is the only way to achieve health. This attitude must consist of a collection of beliefs, emotions, and behaviours. This mental shift is necessary for a karmayogi. Krishna outlines the Sthitipragya's attitudinal framework in Chapter II, verses 55 to 72. The first is quoted here.

प्रजहाति यदा कामान्सर्वान्यार्थ मनोगतान् ।

आत्मन्येवात्मना तुष्टः स्थितप्रज्ञस्तदोच्यते ॥ 2. 55॥

One is considered to be transcendently situated when he or she abandons all selfish desires and cravings of the senses that torment the mind and gets satisfied in the realization of the self.

He argues that the structure of an ideal personality consists of numerous features such as a person who experiences pain and pleasure equally, sees birth and death as unimportant, has a single-mindedness of purpose, renounces attachment, and has self-control, among others. As we all know, cognition is crucial in the development of mental processes.



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There is no problem if the action goal is achieved along a chosen path. If the outcome of one's actions does not meet his expectations, he becomes frustrated. Anger, a negative feeling, is elicited. This lack of achievement makes a man feel more infatuated and causes emotional excitation. It is considered that in an agitated emotional state, mental disruption occurs, and memory and thinking are both harmed. As a result, rational decision-making is impaired.

Conclusion:

We discussed how two Indian sciences, Ayurveda and Yoga show the path to mental healing and health, and yet in the modern era, we pay very little attention to our heritage and rush behind the so called modern inventions that lead us to darker and darker future. Let's hope that the new rays of the Sunrise bring with them the forgotten faith in our age-old wisdom and we may realize the real paths to bliss.



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