



## Review Article

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### YOGA, PSYCHOLOGY AND AYURVEDA MEDICINE

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#### ABSTRACT

The Indigenous philosophical schools mainly the six theistic doctrines have illuminated the development of the Indian sciences through their logical and pragmatic approach. The two convergent sciences of Yoga and the holistic system of medicine, Ayurveda have made an indelible mark in the field of health as both the systems have a lot common to share and enrich the goal of the attainment of the health. The School of Yoga emphasizes upon the independent sphere of mind and ultimate nature of the mental phenomenon along with the ways to arrest the mental states. The fact that the contemporary sciences have approved of the science of mind termed as Psychology postulated in detail probably for the first time in Yoga philosophy fully utilized in the Ayurveda underline the significance of Yoga in the faculty of medicine. This paper brings to light the approach of Yoga especially in its conceptual and practical exposition of Mind (Psychology) and establish the link between Yoga, Psychology and the Ayurveda medicine.

**Keywords:** Mind, Psychology, Mental state, Link, Scientific

#### INTRODUCTION

Since the very appearance of the supreme creature, the human, the quest for an end to the pain and sufferings and attainment of the contentment has been his coveted desire. The search of the happiness and betterment of the life lead to the in-depth analysis by the thinkers and philosophers of yore. The Indian philosophies known as darshana in Sanskrit parlance are an offshoot of the ancient most source of knowledge, the Vedas. In this sequence, the narrative of philosophy of Yoga deals with the exposition on the ways to eradicate the human sufferings through the control of the Chitta (mind).<sup>1</sup>

Likewise, the medical science of Ayurveda approves of the two factors of the Shareera (Physical body/Soma) and the Mana (Psyche/Mind) as factors responsible for the health and disease.<sup>2</sup> Ayurveda considers the pain as disease while the health is termed as the coveted pleasure.<sup>3</sup>

Therefore, both of the indigenous knowledge systems of the Yoga and Ayurveda share a lot in common particularly in consideration of the mind studied under the umbrella of Psychology in contemporary sciences as an entity to attain the desired objectives.

This paper therefore proposes to uncover the scientific tenets of the Yoga doctrine mainly the deliberations on mind or Psychology in the modern parlance and its relation and role in the development and enhancement of the principles of the medical science of Ayurveda. Before moving further, it is important to have a conceptual review of the Yoga system of philosophy.

#### THE CONCEPTUAL REVIEW

The six theistic (Astika) Indian philosophies that have shaped the Indian knowledge vistas are the Samkhya, Nyaya, Vaisheshika, Yoga, Karma Meemamsa & the Jnana Meemamsa. The Yoga school is very famous in the masses particularly in the form of the means to attain the physical and mental health widely acclaimed in the whole world as evidenced in the

declaration of the International Yoga Day on 21<sup>st</sup> of June. This worldwide appeal is not seen in the other five philosophies as they are known by a few persons having a special interest in them.

The doctrine of the Yoga system is supposed to have been narrated by the seer named Hiranyagarbha but re-established by the famous seer Patanjali.<sup>6</sup> This is noteworthy that the commentator Chakrapani approves that the seer Patanjali is the incarnation of lord of serpents, Shesha and is considered as the synonym of the famous preacher of Ayurveda, Charaka and the well-known Sanskrit Grammarian, Panini.<sup>7</sup> This per se suggests the proximity of the Indian health science of Ayurveda and the eternal doctrine of Yoga.

Prior to the understanding of the Psychology as described in Yoga and *Ayurveda*, it is mandatory to have a glimpse on the tenets of the philosophical school of the Yoga.

The philosophical school of Yoga has a total of the 195 verses divided into four sections-

- (i) **Samadhi Pada** – This involves the supreme renunciation possible for the people who are pure by their heart and mind. This section details the five stages or fluctuations of mind. It is termed as Chitta Vritti. The fluctuations of mind are the cause of the cognizance of the character of an entity. In fact, it is the arrest/control of these Chitta Vritti which is termed as Yoga.<sup>8</sup>
- (ii) **Sadhana Pada**- This is primarily the Kriya Yoga i.e. active tool of the Yoga practice. This is for the common man who desires to prepare himself for the Yogik life. This includes the procedures that lead to the purity of mind. This incorporates the triad of the Tapa, Swadhyaya (Self-learning) and Ishvara Pranidhana (Surrender to the almighty).<sup>9</sup> This section enunciates the eight-fold organs of Yoga.<sup>10</sup> This Ashtanga Yoga includes the Yama (Personal discipline), Niyama (Social discipline), Asana (Specific Postures), Pranayama (Regulation of breathing process), Pratyahara (Withdrawal of the senses), Dharana (Steadying

of the mind), Dhyana (Contemplation) and Samadhi (Unification of the mind and body).

- (iii) **Vibhooti Pada**- This postulates the special powers acquired by the virtue of strict discipline and Yoga practices.
- (iv) **Kaivalya Pada** – kaivalya specifies the ultimate renunciation or liberation.

Apart from this, the philosophical school of Yoga approves of the three means of examination termed as Pramana which are the direct observation (Pratyaksha), Inference (Anumana) and the Authoritative testimony (Agama). The tenets of the Samkhya School of Kapila have a lot in common with the doctrine of Yoga and therefore the duo is termed as Samana Tantra (similar systems). The Yoga enumerates the twenty-six entities, one addition of God to the twenty-five elements of the Samkhya.

Thus, from the above deliberation, it becomes clear that the Yoga involves various activities which result in the physical, mental and spiritual well-being. In the contemporary era of stress and strain, the doctrine of Yoga offers to be a perfect and all the more relevant remedy leading to the achievement of the coveted goal of the health and overall advancement of the humanity.

### THE PSYCHOLOGY OF THE YOGA SCHOOL OF PHILOSOPHY

The cynosure of the deliberations and activities prescribed in the Yoga philosophy is the concept of the Mind/ Chitta. This scientific study of the mind is termed as Psychology in modern parlance. The philosophy of Yoga and the psychology behind its practice—the two are bound up together in such a way that any consideration of the one inevitably has to simultaneously take into account the other, because the practice of Yoga is laid upon the basis of a psycho-philosophical background. The philosophy of Yoga and the psychology of Yoga are present not only as a background to this science of Yoga, but also as the basis for the practice of the Yogic processes.

### THE MAIN POINTS OF THE PSYCHOLOGY OF YOGA

**The theory of causation and concept of the vikalpa** – The cause and effect theory has been approved by all the philosophers. The Yoga accepts the cause as the potential effect. The like causes produce the like effects. So, it is important to note that there can be no interaction between the different entities. The Yoga psychology postulates that the mind manifests the merely related through the analytic-synthetic function of mind termed as Vikalpa. Therefore, it is the constructive function of mind (Vikalpa) that generates the concept of relationship/inherence like the inherent relation between the substance (dravya) and the attribute (guna).

**The three existents (Triguna)** – The three gunas of Sattva, Raja and Tama represent the enlightenment, activity and the steadiness.<sup>11</sup> The appearance of the characteristics of these three gunas in the phenomenal world is due to the constructive nature of the phenomenal mind and the phenomenal conditions. These three hold within themselves the whole of universe and its characteristics in a potential form. Thus, it becomes difficult to unravel the actual nature of these three existents. All the mental and physical spheres have evolved from the three existents through the evolution process.<sup>12</sup>

The theory of neutral plurality is approved by the Yoga psychology.<sup>13</sup> It proposes that there are diverse kinds of the effects of the three basic existents that are manifested in the matter and mind. The physical (Somatic) and the mental (Psychic) spheres have their own properties and characteristics. The body system develops in relation to mind and the external

environment. The neutral gunas are the cause of the physical, mental and physiological or biological constitution.

To conclude, it can be inferred that the Yoga doctrine envisages the deductive and inductive methods of the existence of mind/Psychology and that the mind and body are in co-operation and approves of the manifestations of all the physical, biological and mental properties and characteristics as those attributed to the three neutral ultimate existents termed triguna.

### PSYCHOLOGY IN AYURVEDA

The Psychology forms an integral part of the Ayurveda philosophy. The concept of the Mana (mind/psyche) has been studied in depth in the ancient Indian science of health, Ayurveda. The various aspects of the Psychology in Ayurveda are specified below-

- a. **Psychology as the integral part of basic thought of Ayurveda** – The Basic Principles of Ayurveda are deficient without the mentioning of the mental sphere. The concept of the Pramana (means of investigation/validation) is unthinkable sans the cognizance of the subjects which depends upon the mind. The definition of mind per se suggests its utility as the association of it is compulsory for the cognizance.<sup>14</sup> Similarly, the mental sphere is an integral part of the intellectual activity. The evolution process also envisages the three gunas in a homogenous state termed as Prakriti (natural constitution) which differentiates into all the senses and the panchamahabhoota (five basic elements).<sup>15</sup>
- b. **Psychology and the Ayurveda physiology** – The concept of mana (psyche/mind) is approved to be as significant as the somatic part. Like the channels of the physical dosha, there are the channels for the mind.<sup>16</sup> The Ayurveda science mentions the manasa prakriti (natural mental constitution) based on the manasa dosha/guna (three basic existents) of Sattva, Rajas and Tamas.<sup>17</sup> The mental constitution like its somatic counterpart remains unchanged throughout the life and is important in assessing the body as well. The two entities of the Shareera (body) and the Mana (mind) complement each other and are in perfect harmony.<sup>18</sup> The three doshas of Vata, Pitta and Kapha also have the predominance of the basic mental gunas. The Vata has the preponderance of the Rajas, Pitta is Sattvika and the Kapha is Tamasika.<sup>19</sup> Likewise the fundamental entities namely the Panchamahabhoota are also dominant in one or the other realms.<sup>20</sup> The choice and the effect of the dietary items also depend upon the three basic qualities of the Mind.
- c. **Psychology and the Ayurveda pathology** – The pathology of diseases in Ayurveda also propose the inevitability of mind. The abode of disease is either the Shareera (Physical body) or the Mana (Mental sphere). The mental diseases like the Unmada (Psychosis) and Apasmara (compared to the epilepsy) are caused exclusively by the vitiation of mind. The cause of all the diseases known as Prajnaparadha (fallacy of the intellect) is also attributed to the mind.<sup>21</sup> The contemporary medical sciences approve of the Psychosomatic diseases afflicting the body and mind both.
- d. **Psychology and the Ayurveda medicine/remedy** – Amongst the three modes of treatment, the Sattvavajaya (uplifting of the Sattva) is the line of treatment of the mental disorders.<sup>22</sup> The treatment of the mano dosha is the jnana (textual knowledge), vijnana (applied/systematic knowledge), dhairya (patience), smriti (memory) and samadhi (meditation).<sup>23</sup> It is also important to note that the pure ghee is the main medicine of the mental disorders. The possible logic is the fact that the mana is very minute and thus only the pure and minute can be the remedy for the

vitiation of mind. The ghee is the purest and the finest form of the milk and thus it is said to have an impact on the mind. The desire of the substance determines the status of the dosha vitiation. In the six stages of the manifestation of the disease, the first stage of the Sanchaya (accumulation) is characterized by the desire of the diet having the opposite qualities to that of the vitiated dosha.<sup>24</sup> Similarly, the Upashaya- Anupashaya i.e. temporary soothing or aggravation is also a mental sphere very useful in the diagnosis and treatment.

#### THE PSYCHOLOGY OF YOGA AND AYURVEDA: A COMPARATIVE STUDY

The above deliberation on the psychological tenets of the philosophy of Yoga & Ayurveda leads us to believe that there is a lot common between both the philosophies. Like the contribution of the other philosophies in the development of Basic Principles of Ayurveda, the Yoga has influenced the Ayurvedic science through its psychology and deliberations on the mental spheres. The theory of evolution from the three mental qualities postulated in the Yoga find their approval in the Ayurveda science.<sup>25</sup> The concept of the individuality of mind and theory of neutral pluralism are accepted in Ayurveda with special reference to the medicinal utility. The Ayurveda accepts that the mind and body influence each other and their perfect harmony or co-operation is termed as the health.<sup>26</sup> The natural constitution/prakriti of the physical and mental spheres also complement each other. Even the effect of the diet is manifested in terms of the actions characteristic of the three mental qualities. The purity of mind termed as Soucha is essential attribute of the doctor and the scholar of medicine.<sup>27</sup> Thus, the mind and its purity has been linked to the medical ethics as well. Acharya Charaka uses the term Yoga in reference to the means of the complete cessation of the pains and sufferings.<sup>28</sup>

#### DISCUSSION

The concept of Psychology is the crux of the Yoga system of Indian Philosophy and the same has been made to the maximum use by the seers of Ayurveda. The fact that the commentator, Chakrapani considers the Charaka and Patanjali one and the same indicates the proximity of the two philosophies. However, it is noteworthy that according to the aims and objectives of the two philosophies, their views have developed; the Yoga considers the arrest of the mental states as the means of attainment of liberation while the Ayurveda regards the mind as the physiological and pathological factor which when normal bestows the health while the vitiation leads to the disease expecting the treatment. The physical body and the mental sphere move in perfect co-ordination to perform all the functions of body. The Ayurveda believes that the mind affects the body while the body affects the mind as well. Thus, in spite of their independent existence the duo of mind and body affect and influence each other in health and disease. This view is different from the Yoga as it postulates the theory of neutral pluralism which believes in the existence of the independent mind which does not affect the body and is not affected by the physical body.

The greatest significance of the mental sphere is the production of cognizance in the form of the Pramana mainly the direct observation which produces the intellectual activity including the research. The other means of validation like the inference and analogy also expect the intellectual sphere generated by the mind.

The cause of all the diseases termed as prajnaparadha (intellectual fallacy) is also attributed to the vitiated mind. Thus,

it is the mind that is pivotal to maintenance of health as that of the physical sphere.

#### CONCLUSION

The Yoga system of Indian Philosophy is harbinger in the promulgation of the psychology which finds its application in various streams of the contemporary sciences mainly the medical faculty. The concept of health is invariably not done sans the knowledge and application of the Psychology. Ayurveda, the indigenous science of health envisages the significance of the mental sphere at par with the physical counterpart in every aspect of the Physiology, Pathology and thereafter the plan of the treatment.

The human endeavour to eradicate the pains and sufferings is not a new concept as it is intertwined from the time of the arrival of the supreme man. The Yoga doctrine has therefore been a stepping stone in this quest of attaining the painless state and thus the advancement of humanity.

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