

Concept of Manas (Mind) in Ayurveda

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Abstract: *Manas is the chief component of life (Ayu) which is the combined state of Sharira(body), Indriya(senses), Satva (psyche) and Atma (Soul). A substance, which is responsible for the presence or absence of the knowledge, is called Manas. Anutvam (Atomic dimension) and Ekatavam (Uniqueness) are considered to be the two characteristics of the Manas. Chintya (Things requiring thought), Vicharya (Consideration), Uhya (Hypothesis), Dhyeya (Emotional thinking), Sankalpya (Determination) or anything that can be known by Mana, are regarded as its objects. Manas is transported through the channels to provide Chetana to all the living cells of the body that's why it is called as Manovaha Srotas. Mental fitness of patient can be assessed with the help of Satva examination. Depending upon its strength, it is of three types, viz. Pravara Satva, Madhyama Satva and Avara Satva. Manas is considered as Trigunatmaka because it consists of Satva, Rajas, Tamas and accordingly three types of psychological traits are formed i.e. Satvika, Rajasika and Tamasika.*

Keywords: Manas, Trigunas, Satva, Mind, Chetna

1. Introduction

Human birth is a very rare privilege, as only man has the possibility of living a conscious, wide awake and controlled life. Human being possesses instinct and intelligence. All these things may not happen without presence of Manas (psyche) and Aatma (soul). Our ancient tradition of health i.e. Ayurveda, which defines Ayu (life) as the combined state of Sharira (body), Indriya(senses), Satva (psyche) and Aatma(soul)¹. A healthy person is one whose humors(Doshas) and metabolic state(Agni) are in equilibrium state, whose functional activities of the tissues and excretory systems are in balance, and the soul, senses and mind feel well. Therefore, cheerful state of mind is necessary for the good healthy life. Manas is chiefly responsible for perceiving good healthy life. Signs of good health are mentioned in Sushruta Samhita².

Vyutpatti (Etymology) of Manas: The word "Manah" is derived from root "Mana" adding the suffix "Asuna", with the following meanings:

- Which leads to knowledge (Shabdakalpadruma)
- Which analyses by special knowledge (Maha Bharata)

Nirukti (Derivation) of Manas: Following are the nirukti of the Manas which is described in different treaties.

- In Monnier Williams Dictionary, Manas is regarded as mind, intellect, intelligence, perception, conscience etc.
- In Apte Sanskrit-English Dictionary, Manas is considered as the mind, understanding, heart, perception and intelligence.
- In Wilsons, Sanskrit-English Dictionary Manas is considered as the seat of perception and passion, heart, intellect and understanding.
- The entity which is responsible for the perception and leads to apprehension is known as Manas. (Shabdakalpadruma)
- By which one attains the complete knowledge is called as Manas. (Patel N. 2000).
- By which one perceives the objects or phenomenon through Indriyas(senses) is acknowledged as Manas³.

Definitions of Manas from different treaties:

- Sometimes, one person understands a thing and sometimes one does not. This proves the existence of the mind as a separate sense organ⁴.
- Which has the authority over the functions of Indriya(sense) is called as Manas⁵.
- Manas is the Indriya which is for the perception of happiness, sorrow etc. (Tarkasangraha).
- Acharya Charaka says that 'the Manas transcends all the sense organs i.e. it is beyond the perception of all the senses and termed as Satva, although many of the people called it as Chetah'. It is reliant upon its objects as well as on execution of Aatma(self). At the same time it is an initiator of all the actions by all the sense organs⁶.

Different synonyms of Manas from different treaties⁷:

The Manas has several synonyms:

Satvam, Manah(A.S.Sh.5/22), Satva, Chetah (Ch.Su.8/4), Chittam, Cheta, Hridayam, Svantam, Hrnmanasama, Manah(Amarkosha 1/4/3), Chittam, Cheta, Hridayam, Hrat(ShabdaRatnavali). The other synonymous terms available in relation to Manas are as follows. Antahakarana, UbhayatmakaIndriya, Atindriya, Pragma, Smriti, Satvam, Mahamatih, Svaantam, Anangakam Chitta, Ishwarah, Brahma.

For the Manas, Satva, Chitta, Chetah is the term which had been repeatedly used in Ayurvedic literature.

- Satva:** According to Acharya Charaka, Sattva is known as Manas and it controls the body because of its relation with Aatma(soul)⁸
- Chetana:** Manas is Achetana but it is very dynamic in nature whereas Aatmais Chetan, butactionless. Manasacquires Chetana from Aatma and in line endowed Chetana to all parts ofthebody. So it is also known as Chetah.
- Chitta:** It is the mediator between the object and the absolute knowledge.

2. Historical Review

1) Description in Vedas⁹:

In **Rigveda**, it is said that Mana acts as a tool between Atma and Indriyas in the origin of knowledge. The Atma is supreme and Mana, Indriyas are subordinate to it. (Rigveda1/164/18).

In **Yajurvedait** is said that Manas is the supreme power which is associated to carryout the actions. (Yajurveda34/3).

Brahmanas, which constitute the later part of 'Shrutis' postulated that Manas regulates the organs of sense and sense faculties and the sense organs are dependent on Manas for perceiving their sense objects. Shatapata Brahmana has used Manas as synonym of Pranavayu.

2) Description in Darshana¹⁰:

Darshanas have given an elaborated and clear outlook about the relationship between Manas and Sharira.

Particularly the **Sankhya Darshana** and **Vaisheshika Darshanas** discussed the relationship between mind and body in the background of human existence.

Sankhya Darshana has mentioned about the order of creation where in Manas and Sharirahave common origin from Ahamkara. Among the three types of Ahamkaras Manas and Indriyas are derived from the Satvika Ahamkara and Sharira is derived from the Tamasika Ahamkara. Both derived force for creation from Rajasika Ahankara¹⁵. (Ch.Sh.1/36).

Mimansa Darshana is similar to Nyaya and Vaisheshika, Mimansa considered Manas as an Indriya in addition to five basic Gyanendriyas which is responsible for the attainment of Gyana. Regarding the structural foundation of Indriya, there is a general agreement that four senses of Sparsha, Rupa, Rasa and Gandha are derived from the Bhutas whose distinctive qualities are of their respective objects. In case of the Manas, it is believed that it may or may not have been derived from Bhutas.

3) Description in Puranas¹¹: The Puranas are always considered as a wealth of information. There are eighteen Mahapurana and eighteen Upa-Purana, out of which twenty two Puranas are able to give an assortment of various personalities to the ones that are demarcated in the Ayurvedic texts. Some of the names that have appeared in the Puranas (both Maha-Puranas and Upa-Puranas combined) are as follows: Satva, Rajas, Tamas, Brahma, Aarsha(Rishi), Aindra (Indra), Yama, Varuna, Kaubera, Gandharva, Rakshasa, Paishacha, Sarpa and Preta. The Agni Purana expounded ten goddesses separately for all the ten Indriyas and the Manas occupies the eleventh position in the sequence. It has been presumed to be Vaikarika and has its origin from Satvika Ahamkara(Agni Purana 17/5). The Brahma vaivarta Purana has distinguished the Manas as a paramount of Indriyas, initiator of actions and an unavoidable, undefined and imperceptible object to human beings. (Brahmavaivarta Purana 2/25/19-20)

4) Description in Shrimad Bhagwada

Gita¹²(Bha.Gi.17/14-16): Gita is considered as one of the classics of Indian philosophy. It remarkably detailed the human behavior and their type on the ground of Satva, Rajas and Tamas which explains the concept of personality in Indian philosophy. Lord Krishna while describing the attributes of Manas stated that the Manas is quite impatient, turbulent, obstinate and sturdy like a wind, it is very difficult to subdue command over it. Shrimad Bhagwada Gita has focused on the substantial nature of the Manas and elaborated its role more in meditation and concentration of Yogic practices.

5) Description in Ayurveda¹³: Acharya Charaka has mentioned Manas as one of the nine Kaarana Dravyas or Nitya Dravya. He stated that Aakash, Vayu, Teja, Jala, and Prithvi, these five Mahabhuta, Aatma, Manas, Disha are the Kaaran Dravyas(Ch.Su.1/48). While Chakrapani has also notified that Manas being an eternal element needs not to be nourished, yet its association from one sense to another sense is possible through Srotas only (Chakrapani on Ch.Vi.5/3). The Aatma along with four Mahabhuta transmigrates from one body to another with the speed of Manas due to the influence of actions performed by Aatma in the past life and one can not see this without divine visual sense(Ch.Sh.2/31). So in Ayurveda Manas has been considered as Nitya. Manas is said to be manifested from Manas itself which is always in association of Aatma. What so ever differences in the form or intellect are seen in different persons, those are due to Rajas, Tamas and past deeds.

Site of Manas: The site of Manas has been a focal topic of debate for a long time. There is a controversy between Hridaya and Mastishka for being the Adhithana of Manas in Ayurveda, although various views are available regarding the location of Manas in Ayurveda literature.

a) Hridaya as a seat of Manas in Ayurveda: In Amarkosha, the words Chitta, Hridaya and Manas have been used in the same sense. On the other hand, the Ayurvedic approach is analogous to Amarkosha. The words Manas, Satva and Chetas have been used as synonymous. Charaka holds that Saguna Aatma, Cheta (Mana) and its Arthas are included in Hridaya (heart) (Ch.Su.30/4, Ch.Si.9/4). Acharya Charaka has also observed that Hridaya is the site where the Rasa, Vata, Dosh, Satva (psychic factor), Buddhi (intellect) and the senses linger down with Aatma. (Ch.Chi.24/35) Acharya Kritavirya, as quoted by Sushruta, has given the statement that being the seat of Buddhi (Intellect) and Manas (Mind), Hridaya is the first organ to be developed in the embryo. (Su.Sh.3/30, Su.Sh.4/33). Sushruta and Vagbhatta have clearly enunciated that the site or location of Satva is Hridaya, which lies in the region of 'Stanyormadhya'. It is quite evident that Ayurvedic scholars in Samhita period had regarded Hridaya as the chief site of Manasa Vyapara.¹⁴(Su.Sh.6/26, A.H.Sh.4/13)

b) Shira as a seat of Manas in Ayurveda: Shira has been considered as the best among all the organs of body by Charaka where the Prana and all the Indriyas are located. Mana is one of the Prana and Indriya too. (Ch.Su.17/12, Ch.Si.9/4). In Bhela Samhita, Acharya Bhela has taken Manas and Chittam as two different

entities. He expounded Manas to be located between the Shira and Talu and have the authority over all the Indriyas whereas Chittam is seated in Hridayam. This ideation of Manas location is quite different from other Ayurvedic scholars. So, according to Bhela, Manas is related to cognitive organ and Chitta is concerned with the various aspects of intellect.¹⁵

- c) **Whole body as a seat of Manas:** While describing the Srotas, Charaka has mentioned that Vata, Pitta and Kapha move all over the body through all the Srotas which serve as the purpose of passage for them. In the same way, Manas provides Chetana to all the living cell of the body via Shrotas.

Lakshanas of Manas¹⁶: When Manas comes in close contact with Aatma, Indriya (cognitive organs) and their objects then only the knowledge can be perceived. However, if Aatma and Indriyas come in contact with sense objects without Manas, there will be no perception of knowledge. In other words manifestation of knowledge or its absence is the characteristics of Manas.(Ch.Sh.1/18)

In this way, Manas is the most important factor for the perception of knowledge. It is proved by practical experience too, that even if the sense organs are connected with the sense objects, it does not necessarily follow the required knowledge will always be there. It occurs only when the Manas gets associated with it.

Manas Gunas (Quality of mind)¹⁷: According to its nature consists of three primal qualities, which are the main powers of our spiritual growths i.e. Gunas that keeps in bondage to external world. They are:

- 1) **Satva:** In Shrimad Bhagavata Purana while describing the attributes of Sattva, it is stated that this is responsible for commanding the Manas and Indriya, self-control, unbiasedness, soberness, honesty, empathy, memory, satisfaction, selflessness, desirelessness, reliance, revulsion from evil, charity, absorption in the Self (Tapasyananda, 2003).
- 2) **Rajas:** The 3rd verse of chapter number 25 of Skandha XI of Shrimada Bhagavata Purana described the attributes of Rajas which are as follows:- "rage, greediness, duplicity, nastiness, beggarliness, hypocrisy, languor, quarrelsomeness, depression, delusion, hopelessness, misery, stupor, useless expectations, fear are the characteristics of Rajas. When Rajas, characterized by attachment, sense of difference, and consciousness of one's power, direct over Satva and Tamas, then man becomes subject to suffering. (SBP, XI, 25, 14)
- 3) **Tamas:** Shrimada Bhagavata Purana states that when Tamas, dominates over Rajas and Sattva, then man becomes object voracious, delusive, sluggish, cruel, and indulge in useless expectations (SBP,XI, 25, 15). When Tamas prevails, unable to maintain consciousness, indulge them in sleep, becomes pessimist and dominated by inertia.

Properties of Manas¹⁸: Acharya Charaka has accepted two qualities of Manas i.e Anutvam (atomicity) and Ekatvam (oneness)(Ch.Sh.1/19). Because of these properties of Manas one is able to perceive various kinds of stimulation at

the same time. The sense faculties are capable of perceiving their relevant objects only when they are stimulated by Manas.

Acharya Chakrapani exemplifies Utpalapatra and Dirghashashkuli to illustrate its working phenomenon i.e. if a hundred leaves of the lotus are taken together and set over each other, and then needle is pierced in this cluster, it takes a fraction of time and seems that all the leaves were punched simultaneously. So one can thought that all the stimulation are carried by Manas at the same time but this is a misleading truth because of the Anutvam Guna of Manas. It associates with one sense faculty at a time but that conjunction is that much speedy and it seems to be happening together.

Karma of Manas¹⁹: Indriyabhigraha (control of sense organs), Svasyanigraha (self restraint), Uha (hypothesis) and Vichara (consideration) represent the action of mind.

- 1) **Indriyabhigraha:** Mana is called as the controller of Indriya because it indicates to receive, send the impulse and impel to cognitive senses for perception of objects.
- 2) **Svasyanigraha:** Controlling of own function or self control is another function of Manas. It is called Chanchala (Ch.Sh.3/21) so it is necessary to have Svasyanigraha to have right orientation towards desired objects and retraction from those after the purpose is fulfilled.
- 3) **Uha:** Chakrapani explained in favor of Uha that knowledge of perceived objects produced by complete examination by mind is Uha.
- 4) **Vichara:** Chakrapani stated that thinking upon perceived object for its reception (Upadeya) or rejection (Heya) is Vichara.

Vishayas (sense object) of Manas²⁰: (Ch.Sh.1/20) Acharya Charakahas described five Vishayas of Manas: Chintyam (things requiring thought), Vicharyam (consideration), Uhyam (hypothesis), Dhyeyam (emotional thinking), Sankalpya (determination) or whatever can be known by mind, are regarded as its subjects.

- 1) **Chintyam (Things of Thought)-** Things requiring thought, to think about to do or not to do with purposeful or purposeless manner.
- 2) **Vicharyam (Critical Analysis)-** It is a distinct analysis, enough to direct the mind to accept or reject a thing. This term has been further explained by Chakrapani as 'Vikalpana' or critical analysis where 'Heya' (worthlessness) or 'Upadeya' (suitableness) of the object is decided.
- 3) **Uhyam (Conjecture)-** It is a speculation, hypothetical self-discussions and logical thinking about a thing. Chakrapani has explained 'Uhya' is a type of Knowledge which is regarded as Aalochana Gyana and it is a type of Nirvikalpaka Gyana. Nirvikalpaka is a type of Pratyaksha discussed in Nyaya Darshana.
- 4) **Dhyeya (emotion/ attention)-** It is an emotional thinking about distinct thing. But Chakrapani has taken it as Bhavana (emotion) which gets perceived on emotional basis is called as Dhyeya. Gangadhara Rai has explored it that when Manas apart itself from the Bahyendriyas (Gyanendriyas) Chintan performed at that time is called Dhyeya. Hence the difference between Chintana and

Dhyeya can be understood on the basis of the involvement of the Indriyas.

- 5) **Samkalpya(Determination)**- It is consideration, determination of mind about a thing. According to Chakrapani, it is about which merits or demerits are to be considered. Besides this others such as pleasure etc are also included in this. Yogendranath Sen stated similar to Chakrapani, that the decision taken by the mind to do or not to do, after the above process is called as Samkalpa.

3. Conclusion

Acharya Charaka gives a very good description of Manas Siddhanta including its normal and abnormal states. It is the connecting link between the Atma with Sharir and hence influences both. Manas is considered as Trigunatmaka i.e. it consists of Satva, Rajas, Tamas and accordingly three types of psychological traits or temperaments are formed. Manas also play a significant role in keeping healthy status as well as in disease manifestation. Rajas and Tamas are the two Dosha of Manas which play a major role in causing the diseases both psychological and somatic. Ayurveda teaches the harmony with nature, simplicity and contentment as keys to well being. It connects us with wellsprings of creativity and happiness within our own consciousness.

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