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ROLE OF TRAYOPASTAMHAS IN MENTAL HEALTH

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ABSTRACT

Ahara, Nidra and *Abrahmacarya* are the three pillars of life. Supported by these three pillars, the body maintains its strength, colour and growth till the end of life. The purpose of life is to achieve fourfold objectives, viz. virtuous acts (*Dharma*), acquisition of wealth (*Artha*), gratification of desire (*Kama*) and salvation (*Moksha*). These pursuits can be achieved through austerity, studies, celibacy, fasting and religious vows. Diseases are major impediments to these sacred duties and lone remedy is that of preventing the body from falling ill by achieving a state of positive health. Thus health (*Arogya*) stands at the very root of achieving the four pursuits of life. The very objective of Ayurveda is achieving healthy status of the body. Both Caraka and Susruta outline similar objectives. They are to maintain the health of the healthy and to cure the disease of the diseased. Caraka in different context states that the object of the science is the maintenance of the equilibrium of the tissue elements (*Dhatu*). Disequilibrium among tissue elements is postulated as disease and equilibrium as health.

Key words: *Ahara, Nidra, Abrahmacarya*

Introduction

Health is a state of wellbeing at all the four planes of life, viz. Soma, senses, psyche and the spirit. Balanced state of the constituents of body (*Dosha, Dhatu, Mala* and *Agni*) and satisfaction or pleasure of senses, mind and the soul constitute health.

Ahara

The individual is no longer healthy unless he receives a healthy food. Hence a proper selection of food is also inevitable to drive out the susceptibility of disease. In modern science they only consider the quantitative values in the body like electrolyte, fat, proteins, iron etc. in percentage concerned with the maintenance of health. As a feedback, only they advise various restriction in food intake. Relevant theory regarding this is a famous one that 'A healthy mind dwell in a healthy body'. Meanwhile Ayurvedic treatises provide a vast collection of information regarding the action of food influencing mind. They have explored deeply along the various action by studying *Rasa, Guna, Veerya, Vipaka, Prabhava* etc. In fact, Ayurveda considers the body including the faculties as well as mind sets substratum for every disease. There is close relation between psyche and soma and so the psychosomatic concept is much appreciated. The body humors in their normalcy perform much psychological function as well.

Chandogya Upanisad links the origin of mind with food and states that the tenuous (subtlest) portion of food becomes the mind, the basis of the so-called physical nature of mind.

Annamasitam tredha Vidheeyate tasya ya stavishtho dhatu tat pureesham bhavati, somadhyamastanmamsam, Yo anishtastanmana

Annamayath hi Soumya manah. Chandogya Upanisad again emphasizes the relation between the food and mind. The mind is what we eat and a food that is pure results in a clean state of mind.

Ahara shudhou Satva Shuddhi, Satva Shudhou Dhruva Smriti

A clean mind has memory which transcends many births. This very verse probably is the basis for Gita's classification of food into *Satvika* (pure), *Rajasika* (pungent) and *Tamasika* (impure) varieties. In Bhagavad Geeta some references can be seen accessible to the same theory. From *Satva* results knowledge, from *Rajas* only greed and from *Thamas* delusion and ignorance itself.

Satvika food

Normally they like the foods that augment life energy, strength, health, happiness, joy and which are savory, nourishing and agreeable. In Ayurveda the fourfold type of food mentioned should possess the above qualities. For demonstration foods like milk ghee, fresh and sweet fruits can be included in this Class.

Rajasa food

Rajas itself is to be of the nature of passion the source of desire and attachment. It prompts the self by attachment of action.

The foods that are very pungent, sour, hot, saltiest, dry and burning are liked by *Rajasa* and it will be conducive to pain, grief and disease. Generally, the food habits of population are going in such a way. Consequently, from the society itself a lot of live examples like evil acts, quarrels, and impatience suicidal and homicidal tendency etc. are vividly common.

Thamasa food

Thamas to be born of ignorance and deluding all embodied being it binds through inadvertence, laziness and inactivity. The food cooked three or more hours before i.e., which has become cold, worthless, from which the essence has gone, putrid, foul smelling, the balance after somebody's use, not good for intellect is liked by *Thamasik* people. As a part of time saving, the preservation and further use of cooked food is common now. Ayurveda also consider it as toxin and harmful for body and mind. Food preserved in fridges, cooked tin foods, alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages belong to this category. *Ucchishta* food clearly indicates the possibility of contamination of various microbes.

Rules for taking food:

Healthy individuals as well as the patients should observe the following, even while using such of the food articles as are most wholesome by nature. One should eat only that food in proper quantity which is hot, unctuous and not contradictory in potency and that too, after the digestion of the previous meal. Food should be taken in proper place equipped with all the accessories, without talking and

laughing, with concentration of mind and paying due regard to oneself.

Right time for food intake

When faeces and urine are excreted, *Hridaya* becomes clear, *Doshas* traverse in their right pathways, belching becomes clear, hunger begins and *Vata* functions properly, digestive power increases, the body becomes light and capable of perceiving the senses; food is to be taken, as it is the right time scientifically recommended for food intake.

Nidra

Sleep has its existence since the creation of living beings in the universe. Ayurveda consider sleep as one of the three supports of life. The other is *Ahara* and *Brahmacharya*.

Thraya Upasthambha ithyahara swapno brahmacharyamithi

A life, which is supported by these 3, well-observed factors, be endowed with strength, complexion and a full-term life span. Sleep is also included in the 14 natural urges, which are not permissible to be suppressed as they may cause severe pathological conditions.

Cause of sleep

Thama kaphabhyam nidra syat

According to Ayurveda, the prime factor producing sleep is *Thamas* and the accompanying biological humor is

Kapha.

Over a day's work when the mind, sensory and motor organs become exhausted, they dissociate from the

objects, then the individual sleeps. The channels of consciousness of which purity keeps us alert, become clogged with *Thamas* and *Kapha*, which distort the acuity of mind compelling to relieve from its objects, necessarily wants a relaxation, that is sleep.

Thamas

All phenomena in the universe are bound to obey a natural rule, *Srishti, Sthithi* and *Samhara*, which are affected by three *Mahagunas Satva, Raja* and *Thama*. The nature's creation and manifestation are referred to as *Satva*. The nature organizing and activating phase can be called as *Rajas* and when the purpose of this stage is complete then the destructive phase which is called *Thamas* which brings to an end. The influence of these *Thrigunas* is universal. The same *Gunas* that governs the universe regulate our mind too. *Satva* is the quality for happiness, balance and study of mind. *Rajas* and *Thamas* are considered as *Manodoshas*, *Rajas* brings about activity, change and imbalance of mind, while *Thamas* literally means darkness, is the quality of dullness, darkness and inertia. *Thamas* brings about ignorance and delusion in the mind and promotes sleep and loss of awareness.

Role of Thamas and Kapha in sleep

Among the 3 biological humors *Vata, Pitta* and *Kapha*, *Kapha* is responsible for the induction of sleep. *Kapha* is made up of *Prithvi* and *Ap mahabhootha* which are heavy and the properties of *Kapha* include heaviness, stability etc. *Nidra* is occurring due to the increase of *Kapha* in the body and it has been mentioned as a symptom in *Kapha Vridhi*.

Sleep is usually occurring at night. Night is also *Thamasik* (dark). The darkness increases the *Thamas* in human beings based on the principle '*Vridhi Samanai Sarvesham*'. In *Ashtanga Samgraha* *Vagbhata* says that sleep is *Thamasik* in origin. (*Thamomoola*) and *Thamasik* in constitution (*Thamomayi*) and has its existence from the origin of this universe itself. Increase in *Kapha* and *Rasadi dhatu* constitutes sleep.

Lokadi sarga prabhavo thamomoola thamomayi Bahulyat thamaso rathrau nidra prayena jayate Sleshmavrutheshu dosheshu sramathuparatheshu chaIndriyeshu swakarmebyo nidra visathi dehinam (A.H.Su 9)

Children sleeps more due to the predominance of *Kapha* in their body and in old age *Kapha kshaya* and *Vata Vridhi* induce sleeplessness. After a heavy meal, people feel sleepy due to the increase of *Kapha* and *Rasadhatu* in the body. People, predominantly having *Kapha Prakruthi*, sleep more than those who have the other two *Prakruthis*.

Sleep according to *Susrutha Samhitha* *Susrutha* had mentioned the relation of heart and sleep. In his view sleep is the illusive energy of God and it is natural. *Susrutha* consider heart as the seat of consciousness (*Chethanastana*). He compares heart to an inverted lotus, which blooms during wakefulness and contracts during sleep. *Pundareekena sadrusam hridayam syad adhomukham Jagrathasthad vikasathi swapnayascha nimeelithi* (Su.Sa 4/31)

Utility of sleep

Even though *Ahara*, sleep and sexual contact are the three pillars of life, these factors are to be used with discrimination and their excessiveness or in sufficiency

will cause disease. Hence Acharya has told
'Yuktya Nishevithi'.

Ayurvedic treatises and advocates various norms for practicing sleep in proper manner. They even hold that sleep is the root cause of pleasure pain, nourishment, emaciation strength, weakness, fertility impotency, knowledge, ignorance, life and death. These two kinds of positive and negative results can be brought about by proper and improper nidra itself. One should sleep in time for the required period, lest we may fall victim to diseases.

Types of sleep

Ayurvedic Treatises classify sleep as follows

1. Caused by *Tamas*
2. Caused by *Kapha*
3. Caused by Fatigue of Mind and body
4. Sleep in terminal stage
5. Pathological sleep
6. Nocturnal sleep
7. Day time sleep

Of them day sleep is caused by the increase of *Thamas* and *Kapha* or by fatigue. Generally daytime sleep is not appreciated in Ayurveda due to its deleterious nature towards health, as it is unduly increase *Kapha*. Keeping awake in night is considered as *Rooksha* and daytime sleep is unctuous.

Sleep has a therapeutic value in emaciation. During summer daytime sleep is permitted to all, mainly due to the decrease in the length of night. But if a healthy person resorts to day sleep during other seasons there may be aggravation

of *Kapha* and *Pitta*. In certain pathological conditions such as poisoning even night sleep itself is contra indicated. The sleep caused by the nature of night is considered the best of this classification. This is considered as *Bhoothadhathri*-means it is like a mother who nurses the child. Likewise, the sleep nurses all the living beings for bestowing health.

The other one, *Thamobhava* sleep caused by the accumulation of *Thamas*, is the cause of all sinful acts or the cause of adharma. The reason is *thamas* causes excessive sleep, by which the individual is unable to perform the virtuous acts, so he subjects himself to sinful behavior. The other all sleeps are considered as pathological, like sleep in *sannipathika jwara*, become *Rishta* (deadly prognostic sign) of the disease.

Abrahmacarya

Abrahmacarya means proper *Gramya dharma*. There are so many healthy aspects in Ayurveda regarding *Gramya dharma*. Woman who does not take supine position during coitus, menstruating, not lovable, who has indisposed customs, whose genitalia is unhygienic and abnormal, who is either too obese or too emaciated, pregnant woman, woman other than one's own wife and woman who observes vow are to be excluded from coitus. Teacher's abode, place of worship, royal palace, monastery, burial ground, gallows, courtyard, water reservoirs and cross roads should not be selected for coitus. Copulation on full or new moon days and during day time is restricted. Practices such as sexual perversions and thrashing the head and heart during copulation

are also not desirable. One who has eaten too much food, coward, one who is hungry, one who is in awkward position, who is thirsty, young children, the aged, one who has other urges to satisfy and the sick are restricted from sexual intercourse. After sumptuously taking drugs which increase virility, one can have sexual intercourse till satisfaction in the *Ritus of Hemantha* and *Sisira*, once in three days in *Vasanta* and *Sarat ritus* and once in fifteen days in *Varsha* and *Grishma ritus*. Sexual intercourse in undesirable ways can lead to *Bhrama, Klama, Urusada*, decrease in strength, virility, weakness of sense organs and early death. One who indulges in sexual intercourse in a controlled manner remains young for a long time with high memory power, intellectual ability, long life, health, nourishment, high perceptive power of senses, fame and strength. Taking bath, anointing the body, exposure to cool breeze, eating sweets, drinking cold water, milk, meat soup, green gram soup and beverages such as *Sura* and *Prasanna* can be had after sex. Thereafter sleep can also be had. This helps in regaining the vitality instantly.

Discussion and Conclusion

Ayurveda advocates health not only as the fitness of physique but also as the wellbeing of soul, mind and faculties. So,

the persons who prefer the attainment of the goal should follow the advice of this health science not only to cure the disease but also for the prevention of psychological and somatic miseries. Shortly the way to pure knowledge is through a clear mind and the same clear food itself. *Ahara Suddhai Satva Suddhi Satva Suddhai Dhruvo Smruthim*. The proper observance of the three aspects of food, sleep and sex will support the body just like pillars supporting a building.

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