

## CHAPTER V

### PSYCHOSOMATICS IN AYURVEDA

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#### 5.1. INTRODUCTORY

'The Romans, masters at juggling words into immortal combinations, bequeathed to us an ideal vigour and good living in the proverb, a sound mind in a sound body. Psychosomatic medicine is a projection of this truism into actual practice. It derives its name from 'Psyche' which has been translated as mind or spirit or soul but which actually includes all of them and 'soma' which means body. Hardly anyone needs to be told that this world of mind and body are inseparable.'<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Flanders Dunbar. Mind and Body. (New York:Random House), Psychosomatic Medicine, p.VII.

The concept of psychosomatic medicine is not new; it is as old as the civilization. It simply means that the causes and cures of diseases are both related to body and mind and they are interrelated. Mind and body are not independent entities and therefore, affection of the one affects the other. This simple truth is well-known to all. The word psychosomatics has come into usage very recently and it can be found only in the latest dictionaries. 'It has often been said that there is nothing new under the sun. Certainly, human beings are not new, and there is nothing particularly startling, or original about 'troubles'. 'Psychosomatic', however, is a word that is so new that it is found in the most recent dictionaries, and it means, of course, 'Pertaining to both the mind and the body.'<sup>2</sup>

But to the ancient Ayurvedic authorities neither the concept nor its nomenclature <sup>is</sup> unknown, but on the contrary their very approach to all the diseases was psychosomatic. Psychosomatic theory was a natural derivation of their philosophical and psychological concepts. That is why they enumerated and divided diseases as somatic and psychic but behind all of them were shown psychosomatic causes. 'The complex of causes with reference to disease - psychic and somatic - is either erroneous, absence or excessive interaction

<sup>2</sup>J.A.Winter M.D.: Are Your Troubles Psychosomatic ?  
Popular Library Edition, 1954, Preface p.I.

of time, mind, senses and sense objects.'<sup>3</sup>

The Ayurvedic etiology is psychosomatic is made clear by this statement of Charaka. It shows that psychosomatic approach was quite known to Ayurvedic authorities. But the importance of the knowledge of the psychosomatic theory and concept lies not so much in the acquaintance with this psychosomatic principles as in its actual method and technique. The real test of novelty of the psychosomatic theory is not in the concept but in its actual practice.<sup>4</sup> Applying this test to Ayurveda, one can see that psychosomatic theory was quite well developed during the scientific period of Ayurvedic medicine in the times of Charaka and Sushruta. Compared to this, modern psychosomatic concept is a recent growth although its roots lie in the last century. 'In fact, the subject was a favourite topic of academic debate until very recently. About the middle of the nineteenth century a French physician with imagination, Claude Bernard, began to speak of mind's share in ailments which manifested themselves in the body. He has been acclaimed as one of the first of his profession to understand something of this fact and to make use of his knowledge in treatment.'<sup>5</sup>

In Ayurveda, psychosomatic theory was quite full-fledged can be seen from the following analysis of the Psychosomatic

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<sup>3</sup>Charaka-Samhita. (Jamnagar Edition), Vol. II, S.A.1, Sl.54, p.12.

<sup>4</sup>Flanders Dunbar. Mind and Body, Psychosomatic Medicine, (New York:Random House), p.viii.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p.viii.

theory therein :

## 5.2. ANALYSIS OF THE SUBJECT

The psychosomatic theory can be analysed under the following main topics :-

1. The philosophical derivation of psychosomatic concept.
2. The psychosomatic concept in Ayurveda.
3. The concept is not narrow but covers almost all medical aspects.
4. The root causes - aberration of understanding and intelligence.
5. Disharmony of the gunas or qualities like Rajas and Tamas (activity and inertia).
6. The comparison with modern concept of psychosomatics.
7. Psychosomatics in etiology and its comparison with modern etiology.
8. The abode of diseases.
9. Therapy also psychosomatic.
10. The psychosomatic stamp on enumeration of diseases.

## 5.3. PHILOSOPHIC DERIVATION

In the third chapter, it has been shown how philosophy has influenced Ayurveda not only in its approach towards life but in its formulation of psychological, physiological and medical theories and treatment of medical problems. That is why psychosomatic theory has also its roots in the philosophical background.

It has been already discussed in the same chapter that only the self is immaterial and is Avyakta while everything else is Vyakta and material. Ayurveda is influenced by Nyaya-

Vaisheshika and Sankhya systems of philosophy. But in either case Purusha or the self is conscient and Vyakta or Prakriti is material though there are many a strata and states of the material universe. It runs by the eternal law of causation and everything in Prakriti is interlinked and interconnected. Mind and body are also material and so they too influence each other and that is why both are considered to be a continuum. 'This body-mind continuum is said to have no beginning nor has it indeed any. Its cessation can be brought about by meditation, remembering of scriptures and transcendental understanding.'<sup>6</sup>

This shows close connection between mind and body and their interrelation. It is spoken of as the field and considered to be a unit in which all actions take place: 'All this, with the exception of the unmanifest, is spoken of as the field, while the unmanifest is regarded by the seers as the knower of the field.'<sup>7</sup>

This field is a successive creation of gross and subtle matter. 'From the unmanifest is born the intellect, from intellect arises the ego. Thereafter, from the ego are evolved ether etc. in orderly succession.'<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>Charaka-Samhita: Vol.III, Sh.A.I, Sl.42, p.1018-19.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., Vol.III, Sl.65, p.986

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., Sl.66, p.986.

The successive creation is the link, between the mind and body and their faculties and functions. That is why, as is already referred to before, the word conjunction or Sannikarsha is used in perception to denote the interaction and interrelation among them.<sup>9</sup>

There is a natural conjunction among all instruments and aspects of life and life persists and grows by such close collaboration among them. But as soon as there is an error of judgment somewhere, disease appears and breaks harmony in the rhythm of life. Roots of all diseases are sins and these are due to volitional transgression or Prajnaparadha. Dasgupta sums up the whole concept of the causation of diseases thus. 'When sinful deeds are performed by Prajnaparadha and the sins (Adharma) associated with those deeds, which become efficient only after a certain lapse of time, illness is produced. The real cause of the illness is primarily Adharma or its root cause is prajnaparadha. Kala or time, however, may be regarded in some sense as the cause through which the Adharma is matured and becomes productive.'<sup>10</sup>

The aim of medicine, therefore, is to stop Adharma and induce to do Dharma. Man should live a normal and

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., Vol. II, S.A. 11, Sl. 20, p. 165

<sup>10</sup>Dasgupta : A History of Indian Philosophy. Cambridge. Vol. II, p. 321.

and progressive life to realize the self. Ayurveda teaches man to do this and inspires him to reach his highest aim. Zimmer, has well grasped this purpose when he states: 'In teaching man to regard his physical and psychic organism as the perfectly functioning vehicle of the divine life-spark within, medicine works in unison with theology and philosophy. Medicine provides man with a necessary and adequate instrument towards the most highly valued experience, that of the very essence of reality.'<sup>11</sup>

In such an attempt for the realization of life's essence in total conformity with regular and righteous secular life, man gets satisfaction of the senses, mind and intellect and attains true happiness here and hereafter.

This should be so because man is the microcosm in the macrocosm. 'It was believed that the principal forces and faculties which abide in the organism, giving it life and supporting its processes, were microcosmic counterparts of the powers which pervade the cosmic body and maintain it through their various antagonistic and co-operative activities.'<sup>11A</sup>

#### 5.4. PSYCHOSOMATIC CONCEPT

The origin of diseases is discussed in the form of a dialogue among the sages who gathered round the sage Atreya.

<sup>11</sup> Henry Zimmer: Hindu Medicine. The Johns Hopkins Press, Baltimore, 1948, p. 74.

<sup>11A</sup> P. Kutumbiah: Ancient Indian Medicine. (Orient Longmans, 1962), p. 61.

Charaka starts the dialogue thus: 'Long ago the great sages gathered about the worshipful Atreya to whom all knowledge was a matter of direct perception; there arose first the following discussion as to determining the truth concerning the primal origin of man who is the aggregate of the spirit, senses, mind and sense-objects, as also concerning the diseases affecting him.'<sup>12</sup>

A long discussion follows among the sages and each sage shows a particular cause as the origin of diseases. One calls the spirit, the other sattva or intelligence, the third the mind, the fourth the body, the fifth water etc. as the origin of diseases. There were arguments and counter-arguments on these statements and at last, sage Atreya advises not to see finality in argumentation but to have a balanced and unbiased view of the whole subject and then he succinctly summed up his own view-point on the subject and said: 'It is the very elements whose wholesome combination gives rise to the well-being of man, that bring about in their unwholesome combination, various kinds of diseases.'<sup>13</sup>

This means that wholesome and balanced combination of the five proto-elements in man is health and unwholesomeness or inbalance or unequilibrium of these result in various

<sup>12</sup>Charaka-Samhita: Vol.II, S.A.25, Sl.3-4-, p.395.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., S.A.25, Sl.29,p.401.



diseases. But this is not the only cause of diseases. It is one of the primary cause of diseases but there are other important causes for them too. The imbalance is caused by either physical or physiological factors or by psychic causes is recognised by Charaka explicitly. 'Vata Pitta, and Kapha are said to be the complex of pathogenic factors in the body; passion and delusion are again, considered the complex of pathogenic factors in the mind.'<sup>14</sup>

These pathogenic factors are interrelated and one or the other or both or a combination of various bodily and mental factors can be the causes of diseases. 'By suppression of the natural urges, by day-sleep, waking at night, intoxication, talking too-loud, exposure of head to the frost at night and facing hot winds, excess of sex-act, inhalation of unwholesome odours, by dust, smoke, cold, heat, over-eating of heavy and sour articles and greens, by the use of very cold water, by trauma of the head, morbid chyle, excessive weeping, suppression of tears, onset of rains, mental affliction and abnormal climate and season, the vata and other humours are provoked and the blood in the head gets vitiated. Consequently diseases with various symptoms afflict the head.'

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., S.A.1,Sl.57, p.13.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., S.A.17,Sl. 8-11,p.271.

Though this various combinations of bodily and mental factors are here given with reference to the diseases of the head, Charaka has shown similar combinations with reference to diseases in general. This will be shortly described while the subject of the root cause of diseases is taken up. Suffice it to state here that bodily and mental factors are both the causes of various diseases in the opinion of Charaka. Body and mind affect each other, react on each other and imbalance or fault in the one, causes imbalance and fault in the other and the result is disease. The inter-action of body and mind is so close that slight discrepancy in one field leads to a diseased state of body or mind or both and as a result man becomes invalid.

The same principle equally applies to the Pitta diseases in the heart. 'The Pitta is quickly provoked in the heart by intake of hot, acid, salt, alkaline and pungent articles of diet, by eating undigestible meal, by alcohol, anger and exposure to the heat in the sun.'<sup>16</sup>

In the case of blood-vitiation also the causes are psychosomatic. Cutting short the long list of these causes and quoting only the relevant portion, the causes therein can be stated as thus: 'Indulgence in over-eating and anger,

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<sup>16</sup>Ibid., S.A.17, Sl.32,p.276.

exposure to heat of the sun and fire - fatigue, injury, grief, loaded stomach, and the natural tendency or autumnal season.<sup>17</sup>

On the contrary, health and pure blood depend on the balanced condition of body and mind. 'He who has a clear complexion and senses, desires the sense-pleasures, has the strength of the digestive fire unimpaired and is happy, well-built and strong, is said to be of pure blood.'<sup>18</sup>

All this description of health and disease and their origin suggest that according to the Charaka the origin of diseases is psychosomatic and reasons of health are also equally psychosomatic. That is why Charaka has precisely stated that 'The complex of causes of diseases are psychosomatic.'<sup>19</sup>

This statement finally settles that Charaka considers all diseases - somatic or psychic or both - to have their origin in physical, psychial or psychosomatic factors.

It can be seen from the above statements and especially in the last one, that Charaka's approach throughout in regard to diseases of the head, heart, blood and other diseases is psychosomatic. Therein too, anger, grief, passion and other disturbed emotions are particularly mentioned and that suggests that emotional disturbance is

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., S.A. 24, Sl.5-10, p.383

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., S.A. 24, Sl.24, p.386

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., S.A.I, Sl.54, p.12.

the prime psychic cause in such diseases. There is a definite background for this approach of Charaka. He brings in the time factor, misuse of senses and wrong interaction in the enumeration of causes of diseases. But before passing on to this subject it is useful to see the mind-body relationship in modern psychology and psychosomatics.

#### 5.5. COMPARISON WITH MODERN APPROACH

The concept of psychosomatics in modern times is still under formation and taking its own scientific shape as research work advances. It has still to gain some more ground to establish itself firmly as a coherent theory but the concept is no more questioned. That is why it means many things to its many adherents. 'Psychosomatics means many things to different people. It is seen as a form of medical philosophy, as a conjoint research approach and as an application of psychosomatic principles and methods in certain forms of somatic sickness.'<sup>20</sup>

In spite of these varied trends and meanings, a common meaning and approach is seen throughout these variations. It is the interrelation of body and mind, of psychology and psychology of physical actions and mental actions in normalcy and diseases. 'The term 'psychosomatics' is most often thought of in relation to the way emotions express

<sup>20</sup> A.A. Roback: Present Day Psychology. Philosophical Library, New York, p. 593.

themselves in disease or in deviation from normal physiological functioning... It properly includes all psychophysiological relationships including normal physiology and psychology. Just as emotional stresses can create disturbances in physiological function, emotional satisfaction can have profound psychosomatic consequences.'<sup>21</sup>

The prominence of psychic factors in psychosomatics definitely gives it a due place in psychology; still, however, as it directly deals with disease-physical and mental - medicine and psychiatry also lay claim on it; they too contribute to its advancement. But the proper place for its inclusion is psychology. 'While it is regarded as a branch of medicine by physicians and psychiatrists, there is no reason why it could not with equal justice be allocated to psychology.'<sup>22</sup>

Though psychosomatics mainly has its basis in psychology it seems to be on the borderline of medicine and psychiatry, and touches a number of fields like physiology, comparative anatomy and others. Each of them has its own approach to this subject. 'There have been not only widely different approaches from many different but related fields such as general biology, comparative anatomy, physiology, psychology, psycho-analysis, anthropology, clinical medicine and many others.'<sup>23</sup>

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., p. 593-594.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., p. 592

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., p. 597.

All these approaches can be well included in two main approaches - physical and mental - and they too are based on the interrelation of body and mind. The interrelation of the physical and the mental is accepted by some prominent psychologists. Sherrington has described this relation thus: 'I would submit that we have to accept the correlation, and to view it as integration, body-mind. Macrocosm is a term with perhaps too medieval connotations for use here; replacing by 'surround', then we get surround - body mind.'... Organismic evolution with its ways and means, appears to the biologists to treat and handle body and mind together as one concrete individual.'<sup>24</sup>

This succinct but complete picture of interaction between body and mind is borne out by facts.

This interaction of mind and body is complete. There can be no denial of this apparent fact. Without the acceptance of this interrelation psychology cannot get along : 'In fact, psychology can scarcely get along without coming to terms with the relation of body and mind.'<sup>25</sup>

This relation is established on the basis of organismic unity of the human being. Human organism is one whole and body and mind are main aspects. There is an interaction

<sup>24</sup>Sir Charles Sherrington: Man on His Nature. Cambridge University Press, 1943, p. 313.

<sup>25</sup>The Physical Basis of Mind. Edited by Peter Laslett, 1950, p. 6.

between the two. That is the stand and line of argument of the organismic approach today. This argument is stated by Murphy thus: 'To be sure, there is a great deal of insistence about the unity of the organism. But having verbally created the unity, one says that the psychogenic conditions cause the organic damage or vice versa; or in view of the unity of the organism as a whole, one must see how psychic processes reflect physical processes.... But with all that psychosomatic medicine continues to study action from mind ~~and~~ to body rather than from body to mind.'<sup>26</sup>

This stand of organismic unity is supported by Alexis Carrel: 'The human body, as we have known since Aristotle, is an autonomous unit in which all the parts have mutual functional relations and exist to serve the whole. It is made of tissues, blood and consciousness. These three elements are distinct but inseparable from each other.'<sup>27</sup>

This is the doctor's way of stating the organismic unity of man and the interaction of the body and mind. Alexis Carrel is not a lone medical authority to say this on this subject but the whole science of psychosomatics has the same points on the subject.

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<sup>26</sup>G.Murphy. An Historical Introduction to Modern Psychology. Routledge & Kegan Paul, p.386-87.

<sup>27</sup>Alexis Carrel. Reflections on Life. Wilco Publishing House, p.39.

In modern psychological concept, personality express the unity of the organism and when personality is affected, both mind and body are afflicted. 'Psychosomatic medicine has shown how personality difficulties may express themselves in disease or in deviation from normal physiological functioning. The effects of chronic emotional excitation may appear in temporarily or chronically disturbed functioning which in time manifestly affects the physiological system and eventually may produce visible damage to tissue.'<sup>28</sup>

The psychosomatic concept can succinctly be presented in the following few sentences.

- (1) All healthy and sick human functioning are psychosomatic.
- (2) Emotions are always associated with action patterns expressed through a portion of the automatic nervous system and its innervated organs.
- (3) For specific emotions there are appropriate vegetative patterns.
- (4) Emotions suppressed from over-expression lead to chronic tension, thus intensifying in degree and prolonging in time the concomitant vegetative innervation leads to disturbance of function ending eventually in morphological changes in the tissues.'<sup>29</sup>

This gives a fair idea of the psychosomatic concept in modern times. Though the basic and philosophic approaches of Ayurvedic and modern approaches, differ, there are some

<sup>28</sup> Personality, A Biosocial Approach to Origins and Structure. (Harper and Brothers, 1947), p. 78.

<sup>29</sup> Eric D. Wittkower M.D. and R.A. Cleghorn; Recent Developments in Psychosomatic Medicine: Pitman & Sons Ltd. P. 18



fundamental common factors in both of them. They, in short, are like this:

- (1) Both accept the interaction of the mind and body.
- (2) The correlation exists in both normal healthy state as well as in disease.
- (3) Deviation from normalcy in either body or mind affect the normalcy of the other and disturbs the functioning of the whole organism.
- (4) Mind and specially emotions play an important part in psychosomatic diseases.
- (5) Both accept psychosomatic concept as an established fact in their own way and their own style.

This comparison can well be represented in a tabular form below:

<u>PSYCHOSOMATIC CONCEPT</u>		
<u>Ayurvedic</u>	<u>Common features</u>	<u>Modern</u>
1.Philosophical Derivation	1.Interaction of mind and body.	1.Psychophysiological derivation
2.Psychic features	2.Interaction in normalcy and abnormalities	2.All functions psychosomatic
3.Somatic Symptoms	3.Deviation from normalcy affects mind and body	3.Emotions and nervous action
4.Root cause in psychic disturbance	4.Emotions play most important part.	4.Suppression of emotions.
5.Misuse over-use and disuse of senses	5.Accept psychosomatic theory as an empirical fact.	5.Physiological effects
6.Emotional disturbances	6. -	6.Steadily progressive in Method.
7.Seasonal and environmental factors		
8.Prajnaparadha		
9.Physiological effects		
10.Conceptually complete.		

Apart from this comparison and common views, there cannot be much of similarity as the basic approaches of the two are quite different. The approach in Ayurveda is based on Tridosha theory and philosophical and spiritual conceptions of life and universe while modern approach is still growing. Still, however, the conclusions arrived at in this field of psychosomatics have much in common. That is why Ashotosh Roy's following remark seems reasonable and acceptable to any researcher: 'If at all, the Tri-dhatu theory can bear any comparison with any conception of western science, it is in the regions which I have indicated above - regions, where true bio-physics and bio-chemistry supplement the so called 'mechanistic' physio-chemical conceptions of today and where physics and meta-physics, science and philosophy, physiology and psychology are not isolated in water-tight compartments but meet together to enrich our knowledge of nature of man and life generally, it is thus extended region which has ever been the province of Ayurveda.'<sup>30</sup> This makes the concept of psychosomatics in Ayurveda a full-fledged theory and Ayurveda can well lay claim for its originality too.

It is pertinent, now, to pass on to the psychosomatic concept of etiology in Ayurveda. As it has been already observed in the foregoing chapters that the basic approach

<sup>30</sup> Ashutosh Roy: Pulse in Ayurveda. Second Edition, 1929, Publisher, Journal of Ayurveda, p.ii.

of Ayurveda is synthetic and organismic in general, it has been equally applied to eitological concept.

#### 5.6. PSYCHOSOMATICS IN ETIOLOGY

Ayurveda and specially Charaka considers psychic cause the cause of all diseases and this is made explicit by a categorical statement like this. 'Whatever act is done by one who is deranged of understanding, will or memory is to be regarded as volitional transgression. It is the inducer of all pathological conditions.'<sup>31</sup>

Here the original word for 'volitional transgression' is prajnaparadha which is translated as 'misuse of intelligence.' Both these meanings only approximately express the original word Prajnaparadha. The word Prajna has more than one meanings and over and above the common meanings like 'intelligence and wisdom' it means also 'insight' and 'discernment.' The last meaning has a touch of natural instinctive or insight of the self or conscience in general. Such a faculty is in all persons but its development or expression varies from person to person in accordance with his inner and cultural development. Jamnagar edition of Charaka Samhita translates this word as 'volitional transgression' and this should be taken in the light of the various shades of the meanings of this very important term.

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<sup>31</sup>Charaka-Samhita: Jamnagar Edition, Vol.II, S.A.I,Sl.98, p.993-94.

Coming back to the root cause of all diseases, we are given to understand by Charaka that root cause of all diseases is Prajnaparadha. This term in turn covers three-fold psychic mistake or blunder and that is deranged understanding, misuse of will and wrong use of memory. These three combined constitute Prajnaparadha. <sup>Prajna</sup> 7 is almost equivalent to insight in modern terminology.

Prajnaparadha:

The question would arise what are the signs of derangement or misuse of these three i.e. understanding, will and memory. Charaka defines them in turn like this 'That is called derangement of understanding whereby the eternal and the non-eternal, good and evil are mistaken one for the other; true understanding always perceives rightly.'<sup>32</sup>

This definition of 'understanding' almost means - discrimination. The original word for 'understanding' is Buddhi which means here as Viveka-Buddhi or discrimination which at once discerns the right and gives up the wrong, finds the eternal and leaves the transitory. After defining Buddhi or understanding, Charaka explains will or Dhriti thus: 'In the event of the derangement of the will, the mind which is always reaching out for its objects is

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., Sh.A.1, S1.99, p.993.

incapable of being restrained from undesirable objects, for the will is the controller.'<sup>33</sup> Here the meaning of 'will' is apparent. Dhritibhransha is lack of will or self-control. Will plays an important part in man's life according to Ayurveda. The power of will finds an important place in the psychology of Ayurveda and specially in its psychosomatic aspect. Equally important is memory. Describing the place of memory Charaka states: 'When on account of the mind being clouded with passion and delusion, the relation of true knowledge is destroyed; that is called the derangement of memory; for indeed the memorable abides in the memory.'<sup>34</sup>

Memory, too plays an important role in Ayurvedic psychosomatics. If it is deranged or is faulty due to passions and delusions, there is bound to be an adverse effect on the mind and ultimately on the body. Derangement of these three or one of them result in the volitional transgression or prajnaparadha.

Charaka, after describing the three aspects of volitional transgression and the transgression itself, gives in nutshell the main signs of such a transgression.

' Premature expulsion of excreta or the suppression of natural urges, indulgence in rash acts, over indulgence

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid., Sh.A.I, Sl.100, p.993

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., Sh.A.I, Sl.101, p.993

in women, procrastination in treatment, wrongful undertaking of actions, disregard of modesty and custom, disrespect towards the venerable, indulgence in things which one knows to be harmful or highly intoxicating, moving at improper times and in improper places, friendship with evil doers, the abandoning of the good habits inculcated in the chapter on the regimentation of the senses; envy, fear, pride, anger, greed, folly, arrogance, delusion, or injurious acts emanating from these, or any act that is harmful to the body, or any similar act arising out of passion and delusion - all these are said to be volitional transgressions causative of disease.<sup>35</sup>

These signs and causes and acts fall into following categories (1) Wrong acts which lead to maladjustment with family, elderly and society, (2) Wrong habits and unnatural indulgences against the laws of nature, (3) Suppression of rightful natural urges, (4) Emotional disturbances like anger, fear, anxiety etc. (5) Over indulgence or wrong use of the senses. All these categories are summed under two headings by Charaka himself by saying: 'Misconception by the intellect and misconduct are understood as volitional transgression because they come under the ken of the mind.'<sup>36</sup>

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., Sh.A I, Sl.103-8, 994-995

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., Sh.A.I, Sl.109, p.995.

So, according to Charaka, mental and physical, personal and social, moral and psychical misconduct is the root of all psychosomatic diseases. But over and above such psychic causes there are certain other causes also and they too require to be mentioned here to give a complete picture of Ayurvedic etiology as far as it falls within the arena of psychosomatics. In addition to volitional transgression, Charaka enumerates other causes like this: 'The onset of adverse season and effect of past action and contact with unwholesome sense-objects - these should be known as the causes of suffering.'<sup>37</sup>

Ayurveda believes firmly that change of season and especially adverse season creates imbalance in the mind and body and so it is a cause of diseases. Past action also has such an effect. Past action means action of the past in this life or the previous life meaning the accumulation of past actions and its effect in this life in accordance with the inscrutable laws of life.<sup>38</sup>

Discord or imbalance either in body or mind is also an important factor in Ayurvedic etiology. Similarly wrong use in three ways like over-use, disuse and misuse in relation to sense-objects, action and season also plays its part in producing diseases.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>37</sup>Ibid., Sh.A.I, Sl.95, 993

<sup>38</sup>Ibid., Sh.A.I, Sl.93,p.992

<sup>39</sup>Ibid., S.A.11,Sl.37,(i), p.172.

All these different causes, though mainly related to mind and body, are shown to be three mainly. 'Of both kind of morbidic factors (psychic and somatic) the exciting factors are three. They are non-homologatory contact of the senses with their sense-objects, volitional transgression and time-effect.'<sup>40</sup>

All the three factors are due to the Rajas and Tamas i.e. passion and ignorance. That is why root causes of all diseases are Rajas and Tamas with their ensuing mental and emotional derangements. 'Rajas and Tamas are the morbidic factors affecting the mind. Among disorders brought about by these two are desire, anger, greed, infatuation, envy, conceit, arrogance, anxiety, remorse, fear, exhilaration etc.'<sup>41</sup>

This means that imbalance in the gunas or qualities is the root cause of all the causes of diseases and this concept has a philosophical background as has been described before.

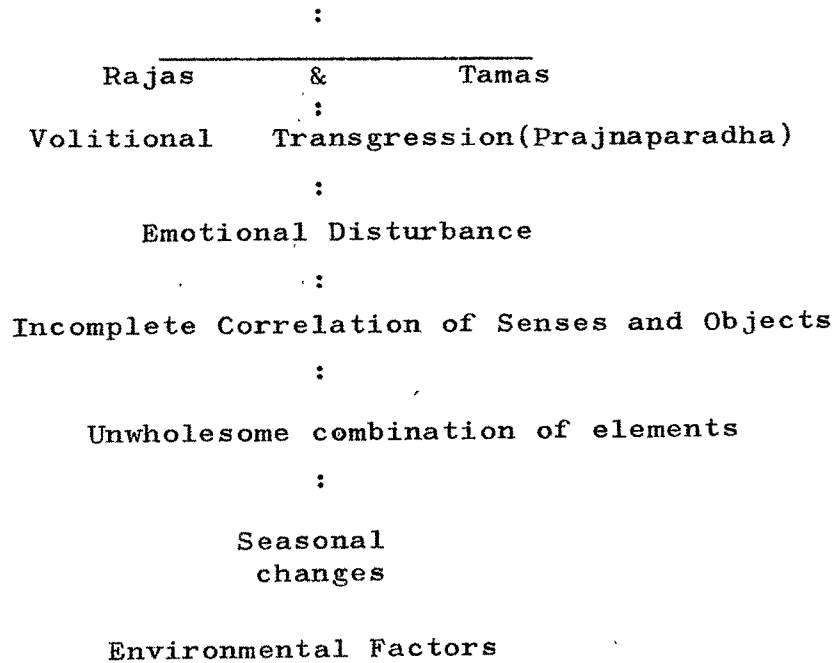
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<sup>40</sup> Ibid., V.A.6, S1.6, p.822

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., V.A.6, S1.5(2), p.821.



The Circuit of Causes  
(The Two way Circuit)



The etiology according to Charaka is, in short, can be expressed under these heads (1) Unwholesome combination of the elements, (2) Incomplete correlation of the senses with the sense-objects, (3) Misuse of intelligence or volitional transgression, (4) Seasonal and other phenomena governed by time factor known as Parinama (5) Unequilibrium of the qualities. The last is the root cause of all other factors.

#### 5.7. ALLOPATHIC ETIOLOGY COMPARED

The approach of modern allopathic etiology is not quite different from that of Ayurveda, except it is mainly

analytic. It can be stated in short like this: (1) Congenital or hereditary tendencies or defects and constitutional factor, (2) Insufficiency of food and oxygen and other deficiencies, (3) Infections by various pathogenic micro-organisms, (4) Animal parasites, (5) Trauma (6) Physical irritants, (7) Chemical poisons.<sup>42</sup> Similar causes are cited by both Charaka and Sushruta. (42A)

These are the general causes of diseases according to allopathy. The causes of psychic disturbances though similar are worth knowing. They are (1) Heredity, (2) Constitutional factors, (3) Irregular secretion of endocrine glands, (4) Nervous disorder, (5) Exhaustion and debility, (6) Anxiety and stress, (7) Trauma, and (8) Social and environmental factors. As research advances, the search for causes of different diseases increases fast. This is well illustrated by recent research of the diagnosis and therapy of depressive states. A patient research on the subject of depressive states carried on at the university psychiatric clinic (Basle) shows that there are five types of depressions; (1) Reactive (2) Exhaustive (3) Depressive neurosis (4) Melancholias and (5) Involutional depressions. (42B)

<sup>42</sup> G. Srinivas Murti. The Science and Art of Indian Medicine. Theosophical P. House, p. 32.

<sup>42A</sup> Charakasamhita: Vol. V S.A. 18 p. 113 and Sushrutasamhita: S.A. 28, Sl. 5, p. 65

<sup>42B</sup> Paul Kielholz. Acta Psychosomatica, 1959, p. 13.

These recent researches show that according to modern etiology the causes of diseases are increasing in number and are complex too.

There is a scope for addition of such causes as investigation and research advance. This is mainly an analytical approach with always a scope for further analysis and addition to the knowledge. Ayurvedic approach is analytic but ultimately it is synthetic as its all causes are integrated into only a few basic factors like imbalance of qualities and volitional transgression. Thus it is analytic, totalistic and ultimately synthetic. These two approaches are well compared by Srinivas Murti. 'Its (Ayurvedic) analysis of all possible disease-causes invading the body under the categories of Indriya-Artha Samyoga, Prajnaparadha, Parinama, and Guna-Vaishamya is therefore complete, comprehensive, and adequate for all time, as all invasions of India by land, sea and air is complete, comprehensive and adequate for all time, as all invasions in the past, present and future must come under one or other of these categories, singly or combined. The allopathic analysis given above is like the second classification of invasion of India in one analogy viz. invasions by Greek, Scythians, Muslims - a classification which would necessarily prove incomplete or inadequate if new invasions of India occur in future by people other than

those noted in the analogy.<sup>43</sup>

The analogy of invasion is quite appropriate as diseases also 'invade' man. Ayurvedic etiology is so comprehensive that on further research any new factor of diseases can be readily covered under any of the main categories. As far as psychosomatic factors are concerned Ayurveda considers misuse of intelligence or error of judgment as the root cause of all disease while modern psychosomatics emphasis emotional disturbance as the main factor in psychosomatic disorders.

#### 5.8. ABODE OF DISEASES

Charaka considers both mind and body as the abodes of all diseases. As is already seen, mind and body are two closely separate entities though very/dependent and inter-related with each other. That is why Charaka considers both of them as abodes of diseases: 'The body and that which is called the mind are both considered to be the abodes of diseases, likewise of well-being; their concordance is the cause of well-being.'<sup>44</sup>

This thesis about the abode of diseases is a natural conclusion of the etiological concept in Ayurveda. As the diseases are psychic and somatic so the abodes also the mind and the body. The spirit or the self cannot be the

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<sup>44</sup>Charaka-Samhita: Vol.II, S.A.I, Sl.55, p.12-13.

abode of diseases. The self is ever pure and untarnished though it can be obscured by ignorance and passion till it gets salvation. Moreover, the self is immaterial and so it cannot be the abode of the material substances. So Charaka says: 'These qualities do not abide in the worldling, obscured of soul as he is with passion and ignorance. In consequence many are the diseases both somatic and psychic that affect the man.'<sup>45</sup>

Here the word 'somatic' and 'psychic' are used to denote diseases residing in body and in mind respectively.

The resorts of mind and body are explicitly stated by Charaka because they are the grounds where diseases can do mischief: 'They(diseases) are again of two fold nature when classified as exogenous and endogenous. Their resorts again are two - mind and body.'<sup>46</sup>

The question of resort of diseases naturally leads us to the question of types of diseases.

#### 5.9. TYPES OF DISEASES

The foregoing statement of Charaka clarifies that all diseases can be first classified into two divisions.

(1) exogenous and (2) endogenous. There are ~~two~~ other four classifications but it is not needful to go into details of such divisions of diseases. These diseases are due to

<sup>45</sup>Ibid., S.A.28, Sl.38, p.573

<sup>46</sup>Ibid., S.A.20, Sl.3(2), p.330.

derangement of Vata, Pitta and Kapha as well as imbalance of gunas and there would be a combination and permutation of causes and types of diseases. That is why Charaka has in short described these varieties of diseases thus: 'Their variety is innumerable due to the countlessness of the combinations and permutations of their nature, site, symptom and causative factors.'<sup>47</sup>

But in spite of the many types of diseases, the somatic and psychic types are never forgotten in Ayurveda. 'From these three ( three causes ) three kinds of somatic diseases arise, of the kapha type, Pitta type and Vata type. There are the (psychic) diseases which are of two kinds - those caused by Rajas (Passion) and those by Tamas (ignorance).'<sup>47</sup>

Sushruta classifies diseases in four main types - (1) Exogenous (2) Somatic (3) Psychic and (4) Consequential (in nature of course) or Swabhavika.<sup>48</sup>

Sushruta has not gone much into this type of detail like Charaka but he too accepts the psychic aspect thereof.

All diseases have their root cause in some sort of volitional transgression but by the classification, Charaka classifies some as somatic diseases by the apparent and exogenous character and symptoms. Even in such somatic diseases there are psychic symptoms seen along with somatic

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., S.A.20, Sl.3, p.330

<sup>48</sup> Sushruta Ayurveda Part I. Sasta Sahitya Karyalaya, p.7.

signs. This can be seen in a number of somatic diseases. One illustration is sufficient to demonstrate the truth of this concept. Fever is a somatic disease but still therein are seen signs of psychic symptoms like the heat of the mind, lack of intelligence and diminishing of enthusiasm.<sup>49</sup> Such psychic symptoms are seen in other somatic diseases like consumption and others too.<sup>50</sup>

#### 5.10. THERAPY ALSO PSYCHOSOMATIC

From this it follows that therapy, too, in Ayurveda must be psychosomatic. It is a part of its comprehensive and configurational approach to life and medicine. The former type of morbidity (Pathogenic factors in the body) is quieted by meditations, spiritual and physical, and the latter (Pathogenic factors in the minds) by religion, philosophy, fortitude, remembrance and concentration.<sup>51</sup>

Fortitude, concentration and similar psychic cures have an important place in modern psychotherapeutics and even in Freudian psychoanalytic treatment. But this topic will be treated more fully in the latter chapter on Therapy. Here the mention of this is made only to see how deep is Charaka's approach to therapy. He advocates psychic cure not only in mental pathogenic condition but also in

<sup>49</sup>Charaka-Samhita: Jamnagar Edition, Vol.II, N.A.I, S1.35 (1), p.635

<sup>50</sup>Ibid., C.A.6, S1.8(1), p.697.

<sup>51</sup>Ibid., S.A.S1.58, p.13.

bodily pathogenic state. Here is a precautionary suggestion by Charaka to remain healthy. 'The self controlled man desiring to live the full span of life should live with great caution knowing himself to be constantly surrounded by foes (to his health).'<sup>52</sup>

Here, too, self-control and caution are shown to be precautionary and fortifying measures for health and these are mainly psychic steps, no doubt. There are such other measures too in certain specific diseases. 'The diseases of intoxication and fainting get alleviated by depletion of blood as also by devotion to scriptures and to good and righteous man.'<sup>53</sup>

In diseases of heart too, psychosomatic cures are suggested. 'Moreover, he should have diligent recourse to whatever is good for the heart, good for the vital essence, and is purificatory of the vessels. Similarly, he should have recourse to quiet and wisdom.' Charaka advocates physical and psychic cures side by side and these two are so well interlinked that their combination seems quite natural and is the result of the psychosomatic approach of Ayurveda. This naturalness of approach is due to its philosophic approach to life-problems and medical questions. That is why Charaka points out that passions are the root

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<sup>52</sup>Ibid., S.A.17, Sl.119, p.298

<sup>53</sup>Ibid., S.A.14, 51,58, p.394.



cause of all physical and mental pain and misery and should renounce them in order to be happy and healthy. It is by ignorance that he gets himself entangled in the web of misery. 'Just as the silk-worm builds its own tomb, the cocoon, similarly the ignorant worldling clings to the thirst for sense-objects and is ever miserable.'<sup>54</sup>

Happiness is generally the aim of man's life. But to attain happiness man has to endeavour. 'The wise man, who seeks happiness both here and hereafter, should exercise the highest care in selecting what is wholesome in the matter of food, conduct and behaviour.'<sup>55</sup>

Such behaviour is of the body as well as of the mind. Man's actions whether mental or physical should be so wise and balanced that it should give contentment to his body, senses, mind and intellect. 'The fruit of action is the attainment of happiness. Its characteristics are satisfaction of the mind, intellect, senses and the body.'<sup>56</sup>

Here there is no question of suppression but of satisfaction, and such satisfaction is not only of the body but of the senses, mind and intellect. The aim of life is happiness and that can be attained by wise conduct and behaviour with full satisfaction of mind, senses and

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<sup>54</sup>Ibid., Sh.A.I, Sl.95, p.992

<sup>55</sup>Ibid., S.A.7, Sl.60,p.120

<sup>56</sup>Ibid., V.A.8, Sl.90,p.917.

the intellect. Such is the complete picture of the full-fledged psychosomatic approach in Ayurveda. This is the natural culmination of the psychological approach to Ayurveda.

#### 5.11. AYURVEDA'S CONTRIBUTION AND SUMMARY

This is how Ayurveda has made its contribution in psychosomatics by giving a full-fledged concept thereof. It covers almost all the aspects of man's psychic life and physical body too. It envelops the causes and cures and the abode also. Not only is it broad enough to cover all important aspects but is intrinsic in its depth too. It emphasizes the psychic factors more than the physical and at the same <sup>time</sup> does not neglect the physical causes and cures. Its distinction lies in the fact that it shows a balanced philosophical derivation of its theory of psychosomatics and thus makes the concept a complete whole. The growing modern concept of psychosomatics can usefully utilize this Ayurvedic concept for its further investigation and theorization.

#### SUMMARY

Psychosomatic concept is as old as civilization. The importance lies not so much in the idea as in the method and working of the psychosomatic concept. The concept means, in short, the interaction of the body and mind and

mind's effect on the body is definite and conclusive. Ayurveda derives this concept from its philosophic ideology and naturally concludes that mind and body being both material are interconnected and affect each other but mind being subtler of the two, has its profound and immediate effect on the body.

The concept is not narrowed down to mere diseases but extended to etiology and envelopes therapy too. There are some common characteristics between the Ayurvedic concept of psychosomatics and modern concept. Both emphasize the interaction of mind and body, emotional factors and the correlation between the normalcy and the abnormalities. Both accept the psychosomatic concept as an established fact. Ayurvedic concept broadly covers up the entire field of psychosomatics. Modern concept is only century old but makes a steady progress.

