

## METAPHYSICAL STUDY OF MANA (HUMAN MIND) AS PROPOUNDED IN CHARAKA SAMHITA

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### ABSTRACT

**Introduction:** According to the foremost compendium of *Ayurveda*, *Charaka Samhita*, *Mana* or *Sattva* (mind) constitute *Purusha* - the subject matter of this *Ayurveda* science. *Mana* (mind) in association with *Indriya* (sensory organs), *Atma* (soul) and *Sharira* (physical body) constitute *Ayu* which is considered as span of life. Different sensory organs are capable of perceiving anything only when associated with the mind. *Mana* which in association with *Ahamkara* (ego) and *Buddhi* (intellect) constitutes the basic cascade for perceiving any type of knowledge. **Aims and objectives:** Metaphysical analysis of the concept of *Mana* (human mind) as discussed in *Charaka Samhita* along with its various characteristics and functions. **Discussions:** Among the principal characteristics of mind *Anutva* (atomicity) and *Ekatva* (having only one existence) are considered as most important. Also, it is considered as beyond the purview of senses. The principal objects of mind are considered to be five - *Chintya* (things requiring thought), *Vicharya* (consideration), *Uhyam* (proposing hypothesis), *Dhyeyam* (emotional attention) and *Sankalpya* (determination). *Indriyabhigraha* (controlling the sense faculties), *Swasya Nigraha* (self - restraint), *Uhya* (proposing hypothesis) and *Vicharya* (consideration) represents the actions of mind. *Acharya Charaka* has classified mind into three distinct types: 1. *Shuddha Sattva* 2. *Rajas Sattva* and 3. *Tamas Sattva* - which has many sub types. All these types of minds determine the mental as well as physical behaviour of human. **Conclusion:** In *Charaka Samhita*, different aspects of human mind have been dealt with great im-

portance. The different characteristics of mind, its different objects as well as its various functions have been thoroughly discussed and analysed in different chapters of *Charaka Samhita*. The metaphysical background of all these discussions can be related with the eternal thoughts of different Indian philosophical schools like *Nyaya*, *Vaisheshika*, *Samkhya* etc.

**Keywords:** *Mana*, *Sattva*, *Chetana*, *Indriya*, *Charaka Samhita*, mind, senses.

## INTRODUCTION

In *Charaka Samhita* it has been said that *Sattva* (mind), *Atma* (soul) and *Sharira* (physical body) - these three are like a tripod; the world is sustained by their combination; they constitute the substratum for everything<sup>1</sup>. This combination is also called *Puru-sha*, and this is the subject matter of this *Ayurveda* science. Again, the combination of *Sharira* (physical body), *Indriya* (sensory organs), *Sattva* (mind) and *Atma* (soul) - is called *Ayu* (span of life)<sup>2</sup> and the science which imparts knowledge about *Ayu* is known as *Ayurveda*<sup>3</sup>. *Charaka Samhita* has conversely used the terms '*Sattva*', '*Mana*' and sometimes '*Chetas*' to denote human mind. It has been said that, without the association of *Mana* (mind) no sensory organ is able to make contact with their respective objects (*Artha*)<sup>4</sup>. This aspect of association of *Mana* with the sensory organs to perceive anything has been thoroughly discussed in different ancient scriptures like *Brihadaranyakopanishada*<sup>5</sup>, *Samkhya Darshana* and *Nyaya Darshana* etc. *Acharya Charaka* has clearly stated that, the different sensory organs are capable of perceiving their respective objects only when they are motivated by the mind<sup>6</sup>. *Mana* and its different contributions towards various aspects of human physiology as well as psychology has been discussed with great importance throughout the compendium of *Charaka Samhita*. Acknowledging the various impact of human mind in different psychosomatic activities the concept of *Manovaha Srotas* has been laid down in *Charaka Samhita*. The seat of *Mana* in human body has been accepted as *Hridaya* by *Acharya Charaka*<sup>7</sup>. The diseases are classified in to three basic categories being *Manasa Vyadhi* (psychological disorders) one of them. Thus, it has been accepted that, unlike *Atman* (soul), *Mana* (human mind) is susceptible to different miseries which ad-

versely affects physical body. In *Charaka Samhita*, *Sattva* or human mind has been described as identical correspondent of universal cosmic soul (*Antartman*)<sup>8</sup>. Again, it has been said that *Mana* (the mind), *Manortha* (the object of mind), *Buddhi* (intellect) and *Atma* (soul) constitute spiritual elements and qualities; they serve as factors for prompting an individual to indulge in and or refrain from virtuous and sinful act<sup>9</sup>. Thus, it can be said that the spiritual background of the philosophy of *Charaka Samhita* is mainly constituted by mind and its different objects. *Acharya Charaka* has described mind as a transcendental object which transcends all sense perception and whose action is determined by its contact with its objects and soul - thus acts as a driving force for all the sense faculties. Again, mind has been also described as the unique organ which possess the qualities of both sensory and motor organs. *Mana* is devoid of multiplicity, and it has unique ability to control all the other sense organs of body. Again, it has been said that it is *Mana* which in association with *Ahamkara* (ego) and *Buddhi* (intellect) constitute the basic cascade for perceiving any type of knowledge. Considering the various aspects of human mind and its different role as described in *Charaka Samhita*, the present study was carried out with following aims and objectives:

### Aims and Objectives:

1. Metaphysical analysis of the concept of *Mana* (human mind) as discussed in *Charaka Samhita*.
2. Evaluation of various aspects of *Mana* and its role in maintenance of homeostasis of human body.

### Materials and Methods:

For the present study the various description regarding *Mana* and *Sattva* as available in *Charaka Samhita* has been thoroughly studied and analysed. For this

purpose, the two sections of *Charaka Samhita* i.e., *Sutrasthana* and *Sharirasthana* have been especially studied elaborately. For proper explanation of various statement made by *Acharya Charaka* regarding human mind, different commentaries of *Charaka Samhita* have been thoroughly consulted among which *Ayurveddipika* commentary of *Acharya Chakrapani Dutta* and *Charakoposkar* commentary of *Yogindranath Sen* being the principal one. For analysis of philosophical background of various concepts regarding human mind as propounded by *Acharya Charaka*, various classical texts of Indian philosophy have been thoroughly consulted as when needed.

## DISCUSSION

### Characteristics of Mana:

There are multiple descriptions available in *Charaka Samhita* regarding the characteristics of human mind which can be discussed under the following points:

1. One of the principal characteristics of *Mana* has been referred as '*Atindriya*' - beyond the purview of senses. *Acharya Charaka* has said, "*Mana*, on the other hand, transcends all sense perception. It is known as '*Sattva*', some calls it as '*Chetas*'. Its action is determined by its contact with its objects (like happiness, misery etc.) and the *Atman* (soul); this acts as driving force for all the *Indriya* (sense faculties)"<sup>10</sup>.

On the above context *Acharya Chakrapani* commented that, "mind transcends all the sense faculties which are responsible for the perception of external objects. Even though, mind is also regarded as a sense faculty in as much as it is responsible for experiencing happiness etc. still it is above the other sense faculties. Rather mind acts as controller of all the other sense faculties. So far as its transcendental qualities are concerned, they are even attributed to other sense faculties; but they are more so in relation to the mind which is much more subtle than other sense faculties". He further clarified the characteristics of mind as, "it is only when the objects like happiness etc. present and the soul is active, the mind conceives its objects and motivates the sense faculties

and then the sense faculties are active in relation to their respective objects"<sup>11</sup>.

2. *Mana* has been considered as '*Eka*' - having one and only existence. *Acharya Charaka* has described this aspect of human mind as, "in the one and the same individual, the mind appears to be multiple in character due to variations relating to the experiences of its objects, perception of the objects of the sense faculties, its disposition and also its contact with *Rajas*, *Tamas* and *Sattva* qualities. But really speaking, there is no multiplicity of mind. It is one and only one. So, it does not motivate more than one sense faculty at a time, and that is why all the sense faculties are not got active simultaneously"<sup>12</sup>.

*Acharya Chakrapani* explained this as: "the mind acts in various ways. Sometimes it experiences happiness, sometimes unhappiness. It also motivates sense faculties in relation to their specific objects in various ways. Its disposition is also multiple in character. Similarly, it takes various forms due to its contact with *Rajas*, *Sattva* and *Tamas* qualities. For example, if the mind is dominated by *Rajas*, it has the feeling of anger, if by *Tamas* of ignorance, fear etc. if by *Sattva*, it imbibes truthfulness, cleanliness etc. all this supports the apparent multiplicity of the mind. But really speaking, mind is one and only one and it is *Anu* (atomic) in size. As it has been said, *Ekatva* (oneness) and *Anutva* (atomicity) - these are the two qualities of mind. Had the mind been multiple in nature, one could have all perception like olfactory, visual, gustatory, auditory and tactile ones at a time even as different individuals possessing different minds have such perception at a time. But this does not happen. This proves that one individual possesses only one mind. Mind cannot be treated as a gross element; if it would have been gross, it could have motivated all the five sense faculties. But this never happens. So, the mind is atomic in size"<sup>13</sup>.

3. In 1<sup>st</sup> chapter of *Sharirasthana*, *Acharya Charaka* has placed an argument in support of proof of existence of mind which indicates a very unique characteristic of mind like: "sometimes one understands a thing and sometimes one doesn't ('*Gyanasyabhavo Bhava Eva Va*'). That's why, when there is no con-

tact of the mind with the sense organs and their objects, no understanding of things can occur. It is only when the required mental contact is there, that one can understand things”<sup>14</sup>.

On this *Acharya Chakrapani* later explained: “one can find from his practical experience that even if the sense organs are connected with their objects, it does not necessarily follow that the required understanding will always be there. Sometimes there is understanding and some other times it is not. This clearly shows that there is a sixth sense organ which determines the understanding of the object and but for which, there is no understanding at all despite the contacts of the sense organs with their respective objects”<sup>15</sup>.

4. Again the same characteristics as *Anutva* (atomicity) and *Ekatva* (oneness) of human mind are placed by *Acharya Charaka* as proof of mind’s existence in 1<sup>st</sup> chapter of *Sharirasthana*: “*Anutva* (atomicity) and *Ekatva* (oneness) are considered to be the two characteristic features of the mind”<sup>16</sup>. This has been said in support of the fact that, all kinds of perception do not occur at a time.

5. As evident from above discussions, *Acharya Charaka* has accepted the three principal characteristics of *Mana* like: ‘*Gyanasyabhavo Bhava Eva Va*’, *Anutva* and *Ekatva*. These three characteristics of *Mana* have been also mentioned by the philosophers of *Nyaya - Vaisheshika* school. In *Vaisheshika Sutra*, in spite of having association of *Atma* (soul) and *Indriyārtha* (sense objects) the emergence or absence of knowledge has been regarded as sign of existence of *Mana*<sup>17</sup>. In *Nyayasutras* also this aspect has been mentioned<sup>18</sup>. Again, the *Anutva* and *Ekatva* of *Mana* have also been mentioned in different *Nyaya Sutras* as well as *Vaisheshika Sutras*. In *Karikavali* of *Vishwanath Panchannabhata* also this characteristic of *Mana* in form of *Anutva* and *Ekatva* has been mentioned in line of *Charaka Samhita*<sup>19</sup>.

#### **Objects and Functions of Mana:**

1. In *Sutrasthana* 8<sup>th</sup> chapter, *Acharya Charaka* has defined *Artha* (objects) of mind as: ‘*Manasastu Chintyamarthah*’ - i.e., thinking constitute the object of the mind. He further explained: “proper utilisation or excessive utilization, non-utilization and wrong

utilization of mind or mental faculty is responsible for normal or abnormal mental conditions”<sup>20</sup>.

On this context, *Acharya Chakrapani* later explained: “the object of mind is one which mind conceives without reference to the sense faculties or even if sense faculties are involved, the mind conceives it quite independent of the sense faculties. Thinking includes even such concepts like happiness, misery etc.”<sup>21</sup>.

2. Later in *Sharirasthana* 1<sup>st</sup> chapter, *Acharya Charaka* has elaborately discussed the five principal objects of human mind (*Mano Artha*) as: “*Chintya* (things requiring thought), *Vicharya* (consideration), *Uhyam* (proposing hypothesis), *Dhyeyam* (emotional attention) and *Sankalpya* (determination) or whatever can be known by means of the mind are regarded as the objects (*Artha*)”<sup>22</sup>. These five objects of mind should be taken for five distinct phases of decision making in accordance with modern psychopathology.

*Acharya Chakrapani* has eloquently explained these five principal objects of human mind while commenting on the present context as: “apart from *Chintya* (things requiring thought), *Vicharya* (consideration), *Uhyam* (proposing hypothesis), *Dhyeyam* (emotional attention) and *Sankalpya* (determination), there are some other subtleties like happiness, miseries etc. which constitute the object of mind. Happiness etc. are the objects which are perceived by mind alone without any aid from other sense faculties. Other objects are essentially included under the objects of sense faculties. Thus, there is no addition to the five objects included in the twenty-four elements as described elsewhere. As regards to happiness, miseries etc. they constitute parts of intellect which is also an element in the above list”<sup>23</sup>. Linking the five principal objects of mind as proposed by *Acharya Charaka* with the lineage of philosophical thoughts of *Samkhya* system, *Acharya Chakrapani* has further commented: “*Uhya* (hypothesis) is nothing but knowledge indistinct”<sup>24</sup>.

3. *Acharya Charaka* has considered four principal actions of human mind as: “*Indriyabhi-graha* (controlling the sense faculties), *Swasya Nigraha* (self - restraint), *Uhya* (proposing hypothesis) and *Vicharya*

(consideration) represents the action of mind. Beyond that flourishes the domain of *Buddhi* (intellect)<sup>25</sup>. To explain these functions further, *Acharya Chakrapani* later explained: “control or direction of sense faculties and self-restraint constitute the action of mind. Even restraint of the mind is possible only with the help of the mind. As it has been said: “the mind, if combined with other qualities does dissociate itself with the objects of its indulgence”. It has further been stated that the mind being always directed towards its objects cannot be taken away from the undesirable objects without patience. Patience alone is capable of controlling the mind. Here, patience is the instrument by means of which the mind controls itself”<sup>26</sup>.

4. *Acharya Charaka's* concept about interrelation between *Mana* (mind), *Indriya* (sense faculties) and *Buddhi* (intellect) seems to be influenced by philosophical understandings of *Samkhya* system. According to *Samkhya* system four causative factors for distinct knowledge have been accepted. Among them, five sense organs and five motor organs - together has been considered as *Vahya Karana* i.e., external causative factors. *Mana* (mind), *Ahamkara* (ego) and *Buddhi* (intellect) have been considered as *Antah Karana* i.e., internal causative factors. According to *Samkhyakarika*, in the process of acquiring distinct knowledge, at first the five sense organs produce an indistinct or indeterminate perception. Thereafter, mind guides as to what is acceptable or to be rejected; following which ego brings out the emotional attachments in form of possessiveness and ultimately intellect takes the decision in form of what is right or what is wrong for an individual to do<sup>27</sup>. Although the indistinct perception has been accepted as function of external sense organs but in *Charaka Samhita* the sense organs are said to be controlled by the mind, so this indistinct perception has been accepted as function of mind. *Acharya Charaka* has accepted the *Samkhya* process of acquiring distinct knowledge as: “objects are perceived with the help of sense organs together with mind. This perception is purely mental in the beginning; the practical advantages and disadvantages are ascertained thereafter. The intellect which determines individuals to speak or act intelli-

gently. The five sense faculties made of all five *Mahabhutas* with one *Mahabhuta* as a prominent faction in each, are inferred from their five respective action which serve as agents for the manifestation of intellect”<sup>28</sup>.

#### **Mana as Indriya - Charaka's view:**

In accordance with the philosophical understanding of *Samkhya - Yoga* and *Nyaya - Vaisheshika* system of Indian philosophy, *Acharya Charaka* has also accepted *Mana* as *Indriya*. This is evident from the following reference:

1. In *Sharirasthana* 1<sup>st</sup> chapter, while considering the various *Karana* i.e., instruments or organs necessary for knowledge, *Acharya Charaka* has mentioned *Mana* along with *Buddhi* (intellect), *Buddhiindriya* (cognitive organs) and *Karmendriya* (motor organs)<sup>29</sup>.
2. In *Sutrasthana* 26<sup>th</sup> chapter, one of the functions of *Madhura Rasa* has been mentioned as ‘*Shada Indriya Prasadana*’ i.e., to promote the six organs of body. Here six organs imply for *Jnanendriya* (five sense organs) along with *Mana* (mind)<sup>30</sup>.
3. Similarly, in *Sharirasthana* 4<sup>th</sup> chapter while describing the development of *Garbha* (foetus) *Acharya Charaka* has mentioned: “therefore the *Chetana Dhātu* (conscious element) endowed with *Sattva Karana* (mental equipment) merged with the qualities of *Mahabhutas*”. Here, referring *Sattva* or *Mana* as a *Karana* (equipment) clearly indicates that, *Acharya Charaka* has accepted *Mana* as an *Indriya*<sup>31</sup>.

#### **Types of Mana:**

*Acharya Charaka* has classified *Mana* into three distinct types: 1. *Shuddha Sattva* 2. *Rajas Sattva* and 3. *Tamas Sattva*<sup>32</sup>. Here *Suddha Sattva* refers to mind which is dominated by *Sattva Guna* because the other two i.e., *Rajas* and *Tamas* have been mentioned as *Dosha* as they use to vitiate mind<sup>33</sup>. While describing these three types of human mind *Acharya Charaka* said: “the *Shuddha* one is free from defects as it is endowed with auspiciousness - ‘*Kalyanamshatwat*’, the *Rajas* type is defective because it promotes wrathful disposition - ‘*Roshamshatwat*’ and the *Tamasa* type is similarly defective because it suffers from ignorance - ‘*Mohamshatwat*’”. He further explained: “each of the three types of mental faculty is in fact of

innumerable variety by permutation and combination of the various factors relating to the body, species and mutual interactions. Sometimes even the body follows the mind and vice versa”<sup>34</sup>.

It should not be understood that the mind which is *Sattvika* or *Shuddha* in nature does not get effected from *Rosha* (wrathful disposition) and *Moha* (ignorance). The same human mind gets affected from *Sattva*, *Rajas* or *Tamas* faculties time to time. But the basis to determine a specific type of mind related with a particular faculty has been explained by *Acharya Charaka* like: “according to scholars the mind of person is qualified on the basis of the type of his repeated action; it is so because that quality must be predominating in him”<sup>35</sup>. Relating this statement to classification of mind on the basis of *Sattva*, *Rajas* or *Tamas* faculties *Acharya Chakrapani* later commented: “how it is that an individual is known as *Sattvika*, *Rajasa* or *Tamasa* in nature? The mental condition of every individual is flexible; sometimes, it is *Rajas*, sometimes it is *Sattvika* and sometimes *Tamasa*. But in spite of the ever-changing state of mind, there is one and only one quality which predominates as individual. This predominance is judged by the frequency of a given quality in an individual. So, if somebody frequently displays the quality of *Sattva* (even though occasionally he might be displaying *Rajas* and *Tamas* qualities) will be known as the man of *Sattvika* nature. That is to say, the quality of *Sattva* would be the general rule of him, *Rajas* and *Tamas* would be treated as exception”<sup>36</sup>.

*Acharya Charaka* has further classified each of the three principal types of minds into more varieties like *Sattvika* mind has been classified into seven subtypes namely *Brahma*, *Arsha*, *Aindra*, *Yamya*, *Varuna*, *Kauvera* and *Gandharva*; *Raja*'s mind has been classified into six subtypes namely *Asura*, *Rakshasa*, *Paishacha*, *Sarpa*, *Praita* and *Shakuna*; *Tamas* mind has been classified into three subtypes namely *Pashava*, *Matsya* and *Vanaspatya*<sup>37</sup>. The detailed characteristics of each type of mind has also been described.

## CONCLUSION

In *Charaka Samhita*, different aspects of *Mana* or *Sattva* i.e., human mind has been dealt with great importance. The different characteristics of mind, its different objects as well as its various functions have been thoroughly discussed and analysed in different chapters of *Charaka Samhita*. The metaphysical background of all these discussions can be related with the eternal thoughts of different Indian philosophical schools like *Nyaya*, *Vaisheshika*, *Samkhya* etc. But what makes the metaphysics of *Charaka Samhita* one of its kind is the fact that, just like a honeybee collects nectars from different flowers and subsequently assimilates all these collected nectars into a new substance like honey by adding its own contribution, by incorporating different principles altogether *Charaka Samhita* has also moulded them into basic and applied aspect of understanding about human mind. Thus, *Charaka Samhita* has developed its own distinct as well as unique set of philosophical understandings about human mind which are not mere repetition of the principles of other philosophies. These understanding about human mind in accordance with *Charaka Samhita* will help us to interpret different conditions and actions of human mind and subsequently to formulate the line of treatments of different mental ailments. So, it can be said that, like this present study, more and more metaphysical analysis of *Mana* i.e., human mind will help us to throw light into the deep mysterious depth of human psychology and will help us to solve the many unanswered questions about behaviour of human mind in near future.

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