

# Ayurveda and Insanity: A Fresh Look at the Classics from a Traditional Viewpoint

By Durgadas (Rodney) Lingham, Veda Kovid, R.A.P.

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Web: [www.nzayurveda.com](http://www.nzayurveda.com)  
Email: [satyavidya@snap.net.nz](mailto:satyavidya@snap.net.nz)

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## Background:

Ayurvedic Psychology has greatly been underestimated in the West, as also distorted by the New-Age Ayurveda which has superimposed its own biases and misinterpretations upon the system, rather than examine the traditional aspects as seen in the great science itself.

Movements such as the Arya Samaj and its founder, *Maharishi Dayananda Saraswati* often have stressed the need to go back to the original texts and sources of tradition to ascertain the truth in various Hindu sciences, which have been distorted over time. The approach here also follows this line.

As an example, in India, various systems have been developed by lesser-classes, often Buddhist monks in southern India who did not have access to the sacred texts of the Brahmins and were not allowed to study the classical texts in detail and hence developed their own pseudo-systems, which later influenced the mainstream of Hindu society and sciences. An example of this are the *Marmas* or vital energies in Ayurveda.

**Marmas** are vital spots that require *varma* (armour) or protection. *Sushruta Samhita* (*Sharirasthana*, VI, 41-43) states marmas should not be damaged in any way, which also means no use of acupressure nor acupuncture on them traditionally, as these

cause damage and aggravate the *doshas*, which includes cutting, hitting, fire even near the Marma causes issues (*Su. Sam. Sharirasthana*, 35 & 41).

The commentator on the *Sushruta Samhita*, *Dalhana* himself states the definition of Marma is "*Marayanti iti marmani*", which means that a Marma is one which causes death (if damaged).

In his chapter on *Siras* or veins and venesection, *Sushruta* also states that one should avoid all areas where there are *Marmas* for this procedure also. This again alludes to the prohibition of acupressure and acupuncture at the *Marma* sites and shows they are to be avoided and not touched, except for healing purposes (when wounded due to battle, accidents etc.).

Marmas were hence used in battle for the purposes of maiming others and causing various injuries to organs they relate to and should be healed alone, not pushed, prodded or manipulated, which although can produce short-term effects, long-term, would aggravate the *doshas* and cause injuries to organs, as per the Samhitas. They hence formed a part of the science of *Dhanurveda* or Indian Martial Arts, which was taken to China by Buddhist monks around the 5th Century AD, along with Ayurveda, the science to heal them when they were impaired to avoid damage to the vital organs they corresponded to.

Originally, Marmas had their respective oils, pastes and formulas for healing them, reducing swelling (*sophahara*), healing wounds and pains (*vrana-ropana, shulahara*) etc. (*Rig Veda*, X.97.1). Originally, *Marmabhyanga* or *Marma-Massage* included therapies where *Tailas* or oils were used in the reduction of accumulation of *doshas* at the site of the *Marmas*; coconut-based oils and soothing pastes where *Pitta* and bleeding were involved, drying herbs and pastes where *Kapha* was involved with swelling and application of heat-boluses etc. to reduce swelling as also *Tailas* or oils for *Vata* where there was dryness and cracking at *Marma* sites to counter this - which also involves processes such as *Shirodhara* for the head-marmas (region of *Pranavayu*), when *Vata* invaded the head *Marmas* and so on.

So likewise, forms of Cancer, which are numerous in Ayurvedic texts have also been limited in the West to the three *doshas* - viz. *Vata* (ether and air), *Pitta* (fire and water) and *Kapha* (water and earth) alone. Treatment has become more spiritual and herbal and adopted an anti-surgical approach, which contradicts all of the classical Ayurvedic texts, which note of 13 major types of tumours or cancers including *doshic* forms. Within these exist several sub-categories - for example, *Twak-Arbuda* or skin-cancer falls under the *rakta* or blood and *pitta* (bile) categories, as *rakta* or blood itself is related to *Pitta* and causes issues on the skin. The blood hence has to be purified for such issues. Then there are cancers as per various locations of the body. There are also forms of *granthis* or tumours such as *Gulma* or abdominal tumours, dealt with at length in the Ayurvedic texts.

There are for example other forms detailed in the Ayurvedic classics such as *oshta-arbuda* (lip-cancer), having forms as *mamsarboda*, *jalarbuda*, *medorbuda* and *arbuda*, *Talu-arbuda* or cancer of the palate, *Galarbuda* or cancer of the throat, *Mukharbuda* or cancer of the mouth (cavity), *Karna-arbuda* (cancer of the ears), *Nasa-arbuda* (cancer of the nose), *Netrarbuda* (cancer of the eye), *Kapala-arbuda* (cancer of the skull) etc. and their

treatment by *shastrakarma* (surgical intervention) by cutting out the tumours and cauterising the area, or by cauterisation and alkalis alone, depending on their size and stage of advancement. Herbal therapies were given as supplements to these therapies, not as cures, much like modern medicine which requires surgery and use of radiation therapy (the updated form of cauterisation).

So likewise, Ayurvedic Psychology has been limited to a science of possession by wicked entities, gods, demons and ghosts in the New Age Ayurveda, which sees such disorders as Schizophrenia as simply psychic-possession, without actually even noting the philosophy behind these, or that Ayurveda considers various forms of insanity - arising from the *doshas* to external factors such as poisons, such as we will discuss here in greater detail.

First of all however, we have to understand the background of Psychological profiling in Ayurveda and also a deeper understanding of what is meant by the so-called entities or organisms that produce the *bhuta* or *graha* - the supernatural types of insanity in Ayurveda, from a traditional point of view.

## **Ayurvedic Psychological Types and Insanity:**

The classical Ayurvedic texts or *Samhitas* tell us that there are various varieties of people according to their psyche - from a *Brahma* (supreme) to a *Vanaspatya* (tree) type, according to mentality or psychic constitution (*Manasic Prakriti*).

These types are elaborated below:

### **1.Sattvic types:**

#### **Brahma:**

A Brahma-type person represents the highest type, that of Brahma or the Supreme. Such a person will exhibit extraordinary divine traits (*para-sattvic*). Such people are said to be engaged in the study of the religious texts (*Vedas*) and performing rituals such as the fire-sacrifices regularly. Such types are seen only in *avatars*, the divine incarnations of the Supreme on earth or in human form and is hence seldom seen. The *Prajapatis*, the progenitors of mankind, as also *Manu* the first man are in this category.

#### **Rishi:**

A Rishi type is like a Brahma-type and represents the *Mahasattvas* or the quality of Great sattvas or purity. Like the Brahma-type, such types are rare and seen only in a few Yogis of modern India even. Such people will be engaged in the *yamas* and *niyamas* of Yoga and study of the texts, celibacy, meditation, sacrifices and have wisdom of the higher cosmic principles. The ancient *Yoga-Rishis* such as *Patanjali*, *Vishwamitra* and *Sri Krishna* are in this category.

### **Indra:**

An Indra-type person is one who is like *Mahendra*, the lord of the demigods and as such is commanding, full of courage and knowledge and protects others. The ideal man and King of ancient India, *Sri Rama* was an Indra-type personality. This represents the stage of worldly or ordinary *sattvas* of man as the ideal role-model for others.

### **Yama:**

A Yama-type represents the nature of the god of death. Such a person performs actions with determination and at the appropriate times and is fearless, without passion or delusions. Such a type requires adherence to the Divine Laws however. Such a person represents the stage of *Sattvas mixed with rajas* or the quality of goodness, but with some passion or action or pride (*rajas*) inherit in their nature, required in order for them to uphold the divine law and justice.

### **Varuna:**

A Varuna-type is similar to a Yama-type, but is more purely *rajasic* level under the *sattvic* umbrella and represents the level of the chief of the lesser-gods. Such a person is said to be well-spoken and desires cold and has brown body, hair and eyes, denoting valour.

### **Kubera:**

A Kubera type is one who is the mid-road human, the person of a *sattvic* disposition but with the quality of *rajas mixed with tamas* under this. Such people are charitable and are wealthy (due to past *rajasic samskaras*) and often have many children. They are able to withstand difficulties quite well.

### **Gandharva:**

The Gandharva is the last sub-type of the *sattvic* types and represents its *tamasic* stage, the lowest of the *sattvic* types. Such a person is desirous of perfumes, garlands, fine things in life and also music, dance and fine foods. They may indeed be talented artists and

musicians. Yet, as they lowest state of *sattvic* types, they are just above the level of ordinary *rajas* in people, seen by their more materialistic pursuits.

## **2. Rajasic types:**

### **Asura:**

The Asura type is the *Maha-sattvic* or greater or better *rajasic* type of person, owing to some *sattvas*. Such people are very monumental and desire and have much wealth, courage but also traits of anger, and jealousy and can be gluttons. Such a temperament is a materialistic businessperson who is overweight and has wealth and power in society and seeks to keep it that way! Asuras can be very devotional to the Gods, which makes them a greater *sattvic* type under *rajasic*.

### **Rakshasa:**

A Rakshasa type is a more worldly *Sattvic-based* or higher type under the *rajasic* personalities below the *Asura*. Such a person is like an Asura type but of a lower kind and capable of understanding things by themselves but more terrifying and jealous in nature that often has a large ego and often transgresses the social norm or laws. Such people are the typical white-collar criminals and such of society who take pride in ripping off the system or the tax-man and feel no remorse in doing so!

### **Pishacha:**

The Pishacha type person is the *sattvic-rajasic* type that is *rajas mixed with sattvas* or better qualities but still mixed with passion and aggression. Such a person scavenges foods which have been left behind are not shy and are very lustful. Such people we can see with criminals in society or the homeless who move from place to place and scrounge for food off the streets and by begging.

### **Sarpa:**

A Sarpa, the lowest purely *rajasic* type of a more *rajasic* nature and such as type is of the nature of a serpent. Such people are fickle-minded, fast in nature, always changing place or abode, angry and aggressive, deceptive and likes recreational pastimes. We see such people as people who have undergone severe mental trauma or drug abuse in life, but seek to blame others for their predicament. They seldom seek help and when they do, they are seldom successful due to the waves of previous *rajasic samskaras* from the past mixed with

the *rajasic samskaras* in this life that they have picked up and added to their state. They can be intelligent however!

#### **Preta:**

A Preta type is a purely *tamasic-rajasic* or mixed kind of the *rajasic* category of people, like a ghost. Such a type is lazy, possessive, jealous, sensuous and likes to hoard things and not give anything to others. Such types are always plagued by anxiety and distress. Such types are those who hoard that much that they turn their homes or environments into living garbage tips and never seek to remove their clutter.

#### **Shakuna:**

A Shakuna is a bird-type personality and we can see this as an expression of the lowest *tamasic* level of the *rajasic* types. Such a type is mobile like a bird and does not stay in one place long and always distressed and always impatient and always consuming foods. It is placed just above the purely *tamasic* types owing to it being a bird - an animal.

### **3. Tamasic types:**

#### **Pashava:**

The Pashava or beastly type is one who acts like an animal and represents the *sattvic* or higher stage under the greater *tamasic* level. Such people always think negative thoughts, are slow in whatever they do, has many dreams and is lustful as well as denying their own issues and problems. Such people are very difficult to be helped and are sloths.

#### **Matsya:**

The Matsya is the fish-personality, representing *rajas* under the *tamasic* level. Like a fish, such people are unsteady, dull in intellect or ignorant people, always fearing something, always fighting with people and desire water and dense objects. Such people are the ignorant followers of blind faiths or religions and cults that do whatever others say without question.

#### **Vanaspatya:**

The final type is the Vanaspatya or tree-type. This type of personality is the lowest, the *tamasic* type under the *tamasic* umbrella. Such people are dead and inert in emotions

and feelings like a tree. They like only to eat and will not go out or travel and have no wealth and never speak the truth. Such people are vegetables of society who would rather sit and complain about everything and do nothing. Such types are those who also are reborn into lesser animal forms in their next lives if they do not change their behaviours as they attract or create more negative *samskaras* and *vasanas* or impressions in their minds.

*Charaka Samhita* (Nidanasthana, VII.5) states that *unmada* (insanity) is seen due to a perversion of the mind, intellect, consciousness, knowledge, memory, desire and behavioral patterns. Any of these above types hence also represents a shift or change in attitude according to their mental constitution in the classical texts and hence the various traits that are seen in these various types.

The main causes of insanity are due to aggravations on the biological constitutions or *doshas* in the body, such as *Vata* (ether and air - breath or movement), *Pitta* (fire and water - bile and blood) and *Kapha* (water and earth - lubrication and phlegm).

Basic types of insanity in the texts are *Vataja* (Vata-type), *Pittaja* (Pitta-type), *Kaphaja* (Kapha-type), *Sannipata* (all three *doshas* together) and *Agantuja* (external factors such as divorce, shock, grief and also poisons or toxins etc.). These types are distinguished from the *bhuta* types that we will also discuss, also known as *graha* or seizures.

Thus according to afflictions also, there are also *Deva*, *Pishacha*, *Yaksha*, *Rakshasa* etc. types of *graha* or seizures upon the mind, which are caused as a result of ridiculing or imitating such beings or classes of men. *Sarngadhara Samhita* (I.7.37-39) describes 20 types of possession-caused insanity: *Deva*, *Danava*, *Gandharva*, *Kinnara*, *Yaksha*, *Pitr*, *Guhyaka*, *Preta*, by *Vridhdhas*, *Siddhas*, *Bhutas*, *Pishachas*, *Jala-Devatas*, *Nagas*, *Brahmarakshasas*, *Rakshasas*, *Kushmandas*, *Vetalas*, by *Krityonmada* (caused by actions such as magic etc.) and by the curse of the Guru.

On this note, imitation here also resonates with modern New-Age practices such as Reiki and Pranic Healing etc., where the person imitates the *Deva* or God with healing powers. According to Ayurveda, by way of karmic effects (cause and effect as a result of this), one can come down with insanity. Likewise, practices such as Channeling are also inferred here, as they could bring about *possession* according to Ayurveda, of these various types of entities (airborne bacteria) as a result of creating a *tamasic* or negative environment (excess *prana* / *vata* or air, causing depletion in *ojas* or vitality in the body and the bodily tissues, thus allowing such bacteria or viruses to impair the person and their psyche easier). Channeling and Pranic Healing as they are today actually find no mention in Hindu texts - *Pranic Healing* simply was confined to healing via *Pranayama* or breathing techniques with their psycho-physical effects and eradication of disease by breathing out toxins in the body and oxygenating the blood and brain. It was a rational system.

Affliction of these types of 'entities' however also relates to classes of physical human people or tribes as well.

*Pishachas* generally denoted the Dardic people of the Himalaya such as the Dards and Kalash, who are nomadic tribes. *Yakshas* and *Rakshasas* also denote the people of Sri Lanka in earlier times and the *Devas* were the people of northern India into the Himalayas. *Kinnaras* and *Gandharvas* were in the performing arts, *Nagas* were the people of eastern-India and into south-east Asia (with their dragons and serpents) and so on. *Nagas* being serpents also relates to insanity being caused by being bitten by a snake or terrorised by them as well. Apparitions and hallucinations come into effect here with relation to these various classes of "entities" as well.

Yet, these also denote subtle viruses etc. as well, but causes of insanity arising due to the physical element (harassing or ridiculing tribes) we can infer, was hence due to physical afflictions these people produced upon them as a consequence of direct harassment (threatening their families, robbing them, public humiliation etc.) or as a consequence of supernatural factors, such as the law of *karana* (cause) and *karya* (effect), known as *karma*. A guilty conscience is hence also a possible causative factor here also, if we interpret in this broad manner, the texts appear to state.

It also appears then, as a culture, that by breeding new viruses and bacteria, we are actually getting back our own negative karma. Maharishi Dayananda Saraswati on this stated that we should all daily perform the *Agni Hotra* or fire-offerings which help purify the air, prevent bacteria and also help the atmosphere and hence Mother Earth. By neglecting this and creating a culture of pollution and arrogance, it appears that the negative bacteria are the negative side as a karmic result of neglecting these and also the native people of the Earth also (for example driving away native tribes to develop their land into housing complexes etc. for the wealthy, converting Brahmins to Christianity and Islam etc., which brings about negative karmic reactions for a whole nation and individually, which appears to come in the form of viruses, insanity and such - which do plague our society now, more than ever!).

We shall describe what these various types actually denote later on.

Subtly (karmically), these classifications are known to be linked to the cycles of Astrology as the Rishis understood affliction could occur at certain times, just as the Moon influences the tides. We can classify these as being caused by (a) viruses or bacteria causing insanity and (b) various classes of insanity outside the *doshic* forms that the *Samhitas* list, as *Bhutonmada* or insanity as a result of spirits - or rather, the elements (meaning external factors due to environment, dust, parasites, bacteria, fear, traumas, accidents, storms or viruses etc.). *Bhuta* here means the *Panchamahabhutas* or caused by the physical world, which according to *Samkhya* (cosmological) philosophy, is a creation of the five great elements. The terms as *rakshasa* etc. here are hence subdivisions of such that afflict the mind.

Hinduism understands atomism through its *Vaisheshika* philosophy also, which comprehends subatomic particles (*paramanus*) as the building blocks of all creation. I hence understands the concept of subtle parasites or micro-organisms existing as well, as a consequence of this philosophy.

On this, Charaka (*Charaka Samhita, Sutrasthana, XI.45*) clarifies that *Bhuta*-caused means the elements - viz. *vishavayu* (poisoned air), *agni* (fire and heat) etc. and *Manasa* (mentally-caused) are due to emotional upsets etc. as unfulfilled desires. The 20 types mentioned in *Sarngadhara Samhita* hence have their origins here. *Krityonmada*, caused by magic etc. would be due to trying to perform actions to gain wealth, supernatural powers etc. and due to a failure of such, one falls into insanity (as in cases of anxiety-depression etc.). Curse of a Guru can be described as (a) karmic, but also as a result of one's Guru or teacher chastising them or (b) taking away titles and positions of the disciple, causing grief and hence mental agony causing depression - similar to what we have noted relative to microorganisms and tribes of people by their *karmic* effects or physical insults causing mania (logically speaking - we will discuss karma further on).

*Sushruta* (*Sushruta Samhita, Uttarasthana, LX.5*) states that these *grahas* (bhutas) possess a person who is wounded or not, unclean in habits (inferring bacteria) etc. which also reveals these as airborne bacteria and subject to external toxins, viruses and so forth. He also states (*Uttarasthana, LX.37*), that is they do not go away by chanting of mantras etc. (sound-effects and spiritual therapies for the mind or Psycho-therapy), then they should be treated with medical drugs.

*Bhava Prakasha* (*Madhya Khanda, 52.49*) on contagious skin diseases also lists fevers, ulcers and specifically *Bhutonmada* (insanity caused by *bhutas* or supernatural forces / elements, as noted here) to be passed on through sexual intercourse, breath (i.e. airborne bacteria or viruses specifically – Ayurvedic texts list *krimi* as parasites directly) from clothes, sharing foods etc. of infected people. Hence, this also confirms again these are bacteria and viruses.

We can hence also see these as productions of various toxins in the environment that cause chemical imbalances in the mind. Another example of a toxic involvement of the senses is the Television and News media and also Social-media, through which we must also develop an attitude of Pratyahara and sensory withdrawal from also, as such impressions can also create disturbances in our psyche and can create bad dreams, as the great author *Vagbhata* itself states:

*“Bad dreams occur due to the blockages in the manovahasrotas (mind carrying channels), due to aggravated wastes in the body.”*

**-Ashtanga Hridaya, Sharirasthana, VI.59-60**

Ayurveda and Yoga hence recognise several states of the mind and several causative factors for this, as noted by these types and also the Psychic Types, such as *Brahma*, *Indra* etc types also. Other forms of Indian philosophy describe several other types, as also by *lokas* (spheres of realms of consciousness), such as represented by the 14 major *chakras* in Hinduism, which correspond to these numerous states of being or psychology. In many Yoga systems, there are actually 21 chakras, each with their own three levels of consciousness according to *sattvas*, *rajas* and *tamas*, thus giving a total of 63 broad

states of consciousness.

Many schools of *Shaivite Hinduism* and Yoga also have the view that there are also seven higher planes (paracausal) of consciousness beyond *Brahmaloka* (the highest plane) or the *Sahasrarachakra* (crown chakra) which many systems see as being the "liberated" state of the Soul also. The great Yogi *Gorakshanatha* refers to the state of *Paramashunya* or the Transcendental Void beyond the 21 Chakras itself for example (including the seven *Parasiva Chakras of Saiva Siddhanta* above the *Sahasradala* or thousand-petalled lotus / Crown chakra). This gives us several more states of consciousness regarding the mind.

These three states Yoga and Ayurveda recognise under which various levels of the mind can be influenced or operate - viz. *sattvas* (purity, clarity and truth), *rajas* (passion, agitation or aggravation) and *tamas* (delusion, darkness and ignorance) thus play a major factor in understanding Psychology from the Indian point of view traditionally. Sub-divisions also exist, such as a mixture of *sattvas* (purity) and *rajas* (passion), mixtures of *rajas* (passion) and *tamas* (ignorance) etc. giving us essentially five broader states (*sattvas*, *sattvas-rajas*, *rajas*, *rajas-tamas* and *tamas*).

Jainism recognises six *leshyas* -

viz. *shukla* (white), *padma* (yellow), *tejo* (red), *kapot* (grey), *neela* (blue) and *kala* (black) according to these, which correspond to these various mental states.

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The *Rig Veda*, the oldest texts of the Hindus alludes to 99 states of the mind (refer my book, '*Vaidik Para-Yoga Vijnana*'), or rather, levels of consciousness one can become entrapped in.

Buddhist Psychology also mentions various factors, such as in *Abhidhammatt-sangaha* - 52 mental factors are noted by them, including 14 unwholesome factors of the mind. Such should be studied also, with regards to these on deeper levels, as they contain older teachings of the Samkhya and Yoga schools that were lost.

On Moha or delusion, the **Buddhist Atthasalini** (Book II, Part IX, Ch.1, 249) states:

" '*Delusion*' (*moha*) has the characteristic of blindness or opposition to knowledge; the essence of non-penetration or the function of covering the intrinsic nature of the object; the manifestation of being opposed to right conduct or causing blindness; the proximate cause of unwise attention; and it should be regarded as the root of all *akusala* (unsavoury karmic

acts)".

This is also reflected in the treatment of Psychological disorders, as mentioned in the Ayurvedic text, Ashtanga Hridayam and here we also reflect relative to techniques as *Pranayama* for purifying the mind and body and the state of the bodily tissues, relative to a sound mind:

*"Purity of the indriyas (sensory organs), their objects, the buddhi (intellect), soul and mind and natural state of the bodily tissues (dhatus) are the features of a person cured of insanity" (Ashtanga Hridayam, Uttara Sthana, VI.60)*

The *buddhi* or intellect itself is hence deranged by delusion and also colourings of *rajas* and *tamas* in the mind, which can be due to various parasites and micro-organisms or viruses that can also afflict them.

The Rig Veda also notes on various parasites and mental disorders, related to them:

***"The Deva expels all the rakshasas and yatudhanas, with all those offensive defects (prati-dosham, Vikriti) and hatred." Rig Veda. I.35.10***

*Rakshasas* are those who injure, destroy etc. *Yatudhanas* are another class of *rakshasas*. *Prati-dosham* can also mean the "offensive *dosha*", or the vitiated *dosha* (*vikara*), depending on how we translate the term.

Here, the hymn relates to these causing disease and driving them off. *Surya* (Sun) as the *Deva* is the Light or "Shining One" that drives them off, relating the Light against Darkness (*Tamas*), or the force of heat against disease, parasites and bacteria (*krimi*), of which *rakshasa* and *yatudhana* are Vedic synonyms. They also mean bacteria, infections, viruses and such also. It also refers to the fire of discrimination (*vivekagni*) that negates *avidya* or ignorance in the mind, which is also a causative factor of insanity, due to the improper association of the mind and hence creating delusions or even hallucinations (such as the false belief one has seen a ghost, god, demon or is possessed by them) and such:

*"One who is overpowered by ignorance mistakes a thing for what is not: It is the absence of discrimination that causes one to mistake a snake for a rope, and great dangers overtake him when he seizes it through that wrong action. Hence, listen, my friend, it is the mistaking of transitory things that constitutes real bondage"*

**~Adi Shankaracharya (c.500bce), Vivekachudamani, 138**

The first part of the above Rig-Vedic hymn lauds *Savitara* or the Sun as "*Hiranya-hasta*" or "Golden handed", which on this note does not mean the God himself, but relates to *Haridra* (Haldi) or Turmeric, which is well-known to have famous anti-bacterial properties,

when used internally (as a *rakta-shodhaka dravya* - blood-purifying agent) and also externally (as a *vrana-shodhaka* - wound-healing agent).

In the same verse, Savitar is lauded as the “*Asura*”, which comes from *asu* (breath) and *ra* (ruling force) or “ruling-life breath”, meaning *Asura* is another term for *Prana*. And *Prana* also means *Vata* here. Thus, the *Hiranya-hasta* (Haridra) connected to *Asura* (*Prana*) here shows that it increases *Prana* or *Vata*, also relating to the symbolic wisdom of the Rig Veda stating Haridra or Turmeric is a *Vata*-increasing herb that here drives away infection, parasites and such.

As noted, *Rakshasa*, *Yakshasa*, *Yatudhana*, *Pishacha*, *Gandharva* etc. are all synonyms for *Krimi* or Viruses, Bacteria, Parasites or Disease (*Roga*) in the Vedic texts, such as the Atharva Veda, where they can be understood in their proper context, in these symbolic lights. *Vata-Dosha* is also the main cause of severe psychological disorders or derangement in the Ayurvedic classics also. In the context of viruses and bacteria, the Ayurvedic classics, such as *Sushruta Samhita* also have charms and special fumigation to help protect against them - the term used again is *rakshasa*,

Modern science also recognises factors such as herpes and other viruses as also causative factors of Schizophrenia. The Hindu *Atharvaveda*, from which Ayurveda is said to have arisen also has many hymns extolling various viruses, bacteria and other micro-organisms and their cure as well.

*Brahmarakshasa* type psychic disorder is one of the most severe forms of insanity in the Ayurvedic texts and is said to be characterised by one hating priests, religious texts, physicians etc. (inferring here, they do not adhere to the laws of the land or moral ethics and codes) and also injure themselves (*Charaka, Chikitsasthana, IX.20*) and comes on during a full-moon, which has been associated with lunacy (hence the term) - mainly due to it's factor to historically affect sleep patterns. The ancients however did believe that the lunar cycles did produce various effects upon the psyche, which modern science is yet to research more - and of which are noted in the Ayurvedic texts as being factors also causing insanity. Some noted Psychiatrists such as Ian Stevenson (1) are also well-known to have documented accounts of reincarnation scientifically. Carl Jung (2) the noted Psychologist was also open regarding the effects of Astrology and the birth-chart as is well-known.

As noted however, Ayurvedic classics that the cause of these effects or disorders, is karmic and due to negative karmic actions in the past (*Charaka Samhita, Nidanasthana, VII.10, VII.19-20*). Likewise, while Ayurveda recognises that *atmaja* (genetic) disorders derives from the ovum or sperm or mother or father, the primal or *karana* (causal) form of this is also karmic, and causes afflictions as a result in the embryo, as also to the psyche:

*“All foetuses have four elements (all except ether – viz. wind, fire, water and earth) which are fourfold also as maternal, paternal, nutritional and self-borne. Because of them the dominant factors arise from past-life deeds of the parents and resemble the physical appearance. Likewise the mental state is also determined by the past lives or species.”*

**-Charaka Samhita, Sharirasthana, II.23-27**

*“According to past karmas (actions), form arises from form and mind from mind. Whatever difference is seen in the physique and psyche is caused by rajas (passion) and tamas (darkness, ignorance) as well as the past karmas.”*

**-Charaka Samhita, Sharirasthana, II.36**

*“The gross body is formed from ones past-life activities (purva-karmas) out of the gross elements (bhutas) formed by the union of the subtle elements with each other and is the medium of experience for the Soul. That is the waking state in which it perceives gross objects.”*

**-Vivekachudamani, 88.**

Charaka Samhita (*Vimanasthana, VIII.95*) also confirms that by the constitution of the sperm and ovum, food and behaviour of the Mother and of the products of the five elements, the *dosha* or the *Prakriti*, the biological constitutional nature of the individual becomes manifest as such – either *Vata, Pitta, Kapha* or a combination thereof.

Diseases (*Vikriti*) however are another issues and also come out as a result of past karmas or seeds and actions that one does and affects us also:

*“Deeds in previous lives are known as ‘Daiva’ (divine) and those from the present life as ‘Paurusha’ (pertaining to man). These in an unbalanced manner cause diseases, which in balance they avoid them.” -Charaka Samhita, Sharirasthana, II.44*

*Gandharva* type is characterised as if one is "possessed" by a musician and has similar traits. Karmically, the cause here is said to be ridiculing musicians or dancers in a former life and hence such *vasanas* or mental impressions are lodged in the subtle mind-stuff or consciousness (*chitta*) and come out in the future life as a psychic derangement. Thus, some are not produced by bacteria as such, but as a result of past-life actions and subtle mental impressions or *stains* if we like, that come out in the next life as traits suddenly. *Gandharva* type is said to come out on the twelfth and fourteenth days of the lunar fortnight, which accounts again for the subtle-effects of the external world or effects of the lunar cycles, as also according to one's own karma or destiny as per his past-life actions. The science behind such psychic derangement in the classical texts then, is quite specific and goes beyond the spheres known to modern psychologists.

However, the commentator on *Charaka Samhita*, Chakrapani (commentating on *Sutrasthana, I.54*) also states that *prajaparadha* or perversion of the intellect causes one to commit bad deeds (karmas). Taking of impure foods, insulting teachers and learned people (Brahmins), mental shock, fear and irregular or forced bodily movements cause insanity. This causes the bodily biological humours to become aggravated and dulls the truth-perception or reality of the person (*sattvas*) in the heart (of the mind), enter the mental-channels and derange the mind of the person (*Charaka, Chikitsasthana, IX.4-5*). This also

means taking incompatible foods such as milk with seafoods, artificial poisons or emotions such as anger (*krodha*), which can damage the mind, according to *Chakrapani*, the commentator on Charaka Samhita.

As a result of this, Ayurveda employs various exotic methods of imparting *sattvas* or purity to the mind, by way of various devotional practices such as *poojas* (devotional offerings), *seva* (selfless service or volunteer work), *dhana* (charity), *havanas* (fire-offerings), which cultivate detachment, bring in the idea of *sattvas* (purity) and *dharma* (righteousness) to the person by such psychotherapy techniques. The *Havana* is also known to destroy airborne bacteria, viruses and also impart nice smells etc. which are pleasing to the psyche, as also by the fire itself, awakens *vivekagni* or discrimination and mental metabolism in people, which is not properly functioning when there is insanity. Various medications and reciting hymns (music therapy) are also noted in the texts, as well as specific herbs and formulas for the mind to help clear the *manovahasrotas* or mental channels of impurities or chemical imbalances and impart proper cognitive functions to the mind.

These rituals also help to reduce the *karana-nidanas* or causal factors that have caused them - the karmic factors as "karmic reduction methods" by accruing *punya karmas* (good karmas) and positive *vasanas* or mental traits as a result and forcing out the *papa-karmas* or bad actions that have caused these (before the genetic and other stages - i.e. why we are fated with such diseases or issues). They hence have no "magical" or "supernatural" effects of their own with relation to Deities and such, but simply work upon altering our karmas or subtle causative factors that have brought thus about, by our own wrong-doings. By imparting *sattvas* or clarity and truth to the mind physically, this acts subtly also on our *chitta* or mind-stuff that stores all past *vasanas* or *samskaras* (karmic mental traits and impressions of past-lives) and transforms them, as it were, thus altering the (physical) outcome of the disease as a result (rectifying the root-cause of these).

Charaka (*Charaka Samhita, Sutrasthana, XI.46, 54*) states of these therapies, that they are there to keep the mind freed of unwholesome objects (or from performing bad actions, further complicating the disease) and hence their employment in treatment (*mano-nigraha* - attempts to subdue the mind), which constitutes *Sattvavajaya* or psychological therapies - of which *Daivavyapashraya*, the "divine therapies" or spiritual therapies hence form an integral part of and are done along with *Yuktivyapashraya*, that is, rational therapies as diet, herbs and formulas for the mind. Shock-therapies were also given in various cases according to the specific mental derangement also. Charaka thus states that opposite therapies according to the mental disorder (*Sutrasthana, XI.46*) should be adopted, which proves such "spiritual therapies" were mental distractions and psychological tools for also providing detachment of the mind, mental disorder etc.

Charaka (*Chikitsasthana, IX.96*) also states that insanity can be avoided if one abstains from eating meats and wines or impure diets etc. and hence are seen as causative factors (*nidanas*) of various kinds of insanity. Various meats and also alcohol are given various factors or qualities (*gunas*) in Ayurveda, according to their chemical reactions upon the mind, which are described as aggravating *rajas* and *tamas* in the mental channels, blurring our perceptions. As such, they are to be avoided in such conditions. Various *dosha*-aggravating factors are also listed in the classical texts according to their variations of disorder as well.

We hence see that there is a great depth of Psychology and causative factors behind mental derangement in the Ayurvedic texts with a rational basis. Whereas western medicine stops short of genetic factors, Ayurveda questions how these genetic factors affect the individual directly themselves, which is a consequence of past-life karmas causing such specific afflictions to the mind, that have to be rectified by spiritual methods or *Sattvavajaya*, that is, imparting purity and clarity to the mind through various psychological tools, *vairagya* (detachment) that they help cultivate (as an attitude of 'giving' rather than 'clinging' or attachment to them).

As such, Yoga is one of the tools here that also helps take the mind away from the attachment of one's past deeds or *karmas* and thus helps in restoring the body and mind back to health:

*“Happiness and misery are due to contact with the Self (Atman), mind and senses, but when the mind is steadily concentrated on the Self, both cease to exist, due to non-initiation and a supernatural power comes forth from the person. This state is known as Yoga by the seers”*  
**-Charaka Samhitam Sharirasthana, I.137**

Thus, while modern American Ayurveda has sought to turn Ayurvedic Psychology into some mumbo-jumbo or help promote it as a pseudo-science in the West, the Vedic tradition represents a highly sophisticated model with also further truths beyond what is currently known to western Psychology and also various techniques that were seen as simply tools in aiding the mind to restore it back to health, rather than magical powers of Divinities etc.

## **Deeper Meaning of Afflictions by Devas and Rishis:**

We have noted the various afflictions by forms of *possession* and their meaning various airborne parasites and also karmic conditions arising out of impurities in the mind and use of meat and wine etc. However, as per the Deva and Rishi types, there are also other specific considerations, relative to their symbolism. As noted, there are several levels to these, but here we also express yet another level of how they can cause psychic disturbances, according to their Vedic interpretations.

Some examples are already seen in the *Upanishads*, such as the *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad* (II.2.4) which correlates the so-called *Rishis* or Seers as the two ears (*Gotama* and *Bharadvaja*); the two eyes (*Vishwamitra* and *Jamadagni*); the two nostrils (*Vasishtha* and *Kashyapa*) and *Rishi Atri* is the tongue. As such, these respective “*Rishis*” denote the various organs connected to the *Nadis* or subtle currents in Yoga also. The term *Ganga* (Ganges) is often translated as it, but also refers to a *Nadi* or subtle current in Yoga, plus means standing or being near land (*Nighantu*, 1.1).

It is also well-known that of the 33 *Devas* or deities in the texts, that as per *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad*. The 8 *Vasu* deities represent heaven / light (*dyaus*), atmosphere (*antariksha*), wind (*vayu*), fire (*agni*), earth (*prithivi*) as also the sun (*surya*), the moon (*chandrama*) and

stars (*nakshatras*). In Vedic Astrology, the *nakshatra* or lunar mansion one is born under is also said to give an insight into their basic psychology, which also represents a deeper level beyond the physical state, that needs to be examined by modern science. However, relative to the Vasus basically here meaning the elements and their impact upon the individuals psyche by their environment and reflection (of the sun, moon, stars, phobias etc.). The 12 *Adityas* are the months of the year (accounting for climatic changes and impacts on the psyche by *dosha*-aggravation as per the seasons). The 11 *Rudras* are the various 10 *Pranas* or breaths in man, which also have their various states and when impaired, cause diseases of both physical and psychic natures also in Yoga and Ayurvedic sciences (the 11th is the *Self* or soul). The remaining two are *Indra*, representing lightening (or physical phenomenon as lightening and storms producing fears, anxieties and psychological issues or insanity in people as a result) and *Prajapati*, representing *Yajna* or sacrifice (inferring that if one gets too close to the fire when performing fire-offerings or done incorrectly - can produce toxic gases or by affects also afflict the mind).

The *Shatapatha Brahmana* (XII.9.1.1-17) also states that the deities represent various organs in the body of man also. *Varuna* the deity represents the lung and breathing, while *Savitri* is the breath. The *Ashwins* are the eyes, nostrils, ears etc., relating to the *nadis* or subtle currents on the left and right side of the body denoting these respectively, whilst the goddess *Saraswati* is the tongue and speech, representing the *Saraswati Nadi* and so on. Even in the Vedas, the deities were hence taken as (i) proper nouns (ii) spiritual terms and (iii) yogic metaphors.

Impairments to these organs and the *Devas* or *Rishis* that rule them for example (meaning the specific regions of the body and their impairments) can hence create psychic disturbances for people as well. Relating to the nostrils for example, *Nasarbuda* or nasal cancer could cause great psychological strain due to the physical impairment of the individual and the stress they underwent as a result of tumours being removed. As we know, Ayurvedic did employ *Rhinoplasty* or plastic surgery for this purpose of repair. *Saraswati* and *Atri Rishi* representing the tongue would also relate to speech impediments such as stuttering which would also be seen as a psychic affliction in Ayurveda, as also one causing further psychological unrest as a result of this (due to ridicule and low self-esteem etc.).

*Sushruta* likewise in his *Sushruta Samhita* also correlates the deities with various organs of the body as well (*Sharirasthana*, I.7): *Brahma* is *buddhi* (intellect); *Ishvara* is *ahamkara* (ego); *Chandra* (moon) is *manas* (the mind); *Dishadevas* (directional gods) are the *srotras* (ears); *Vayu* (wind) is *twacha* (skin); *Surya* (sun) is *chakshu* (eyes); *Apa* (water deity) is *rasana* (tongue); *Prithivi* (goddess earth) is the *ghrana* (nose); *Agni* (fire god) is *vacha* (speech - tongue); *Indra* is *hasta* (hands); *Vishnu* is *pada* (feet); *Mitra* is *payu* (anus) and *Prajapati* is *upastha* (genitals).

The *Pancha Mahabhutas* or five great element that make up the *doshas*, personified as "deities" - viz. ether, wind, fire, water and earth, all have their own correspondences also. Ether relates to sound and the ear; Wind relates to touch and the skin; Fire relates to sight and the eyes; Water relates to taste and the tongue and Earth relates to smell and the nose. Excesses or deficiencies in any of these hence produces afflictions to the mind-body

complex.

We have already discussed the *karma* of these and hence here, the deities related to them also relate to the elements and also abusing or polluting the elements in past lives (such as throwing our garbage and polluting the air; throwing toxic substances into the fire and so on).

Impairments to any of these organs according to the *Bhutas* (elements) they relate to hence also denotes the respective *Deva* that causes the psychic affliction also (hence also why Ayurvedic Psychology is known as *Bhutavidya*). On this also, like *Charaka*, *Sushruta* takes this rational approach (*Sutrasthana*, I.25) and states that *manasika* (psychic) disorders are caused

by *krodha* (anger), *shoka* (grief), *bhaya* (fear), *harsha* (exhilaration), *vishada* (sadness), *kama* (lust), *lobha* (greed) etc. and similarly, *Madhava Nidana* (XX.14-15) states insanity is brought on by fright, loss of wealth, death of family members, excessive sexual desire etc. which also further infers these are due to mutations, issues etc. of these various organs constituting the *Deva* class (here *Devas* represent cognition of the organs / senses and elements).

The classics are hence quite logical with regards to various forms of insanity and don't simply ascribe them to supernatural powers, psychic possession etc. simply as has occurred in Western New-Age modifications of the science of Ayurveda. They are seen as psychic disorders brought on by physical factors, but as a causative result of negative actions (bad karma) from the past. As a result, impairments to bodily organs afflicting the mind, as also other external (mental) factors can also produce insanity falling under the class of *Bhutonmada* or elemental forces or caused by supernatural powers (symbolically only, 'Gods' representing various organs and functioning of the body).

For example, *switra* (leucoderma) would be seen as a *Vayu-type* psychic disorder - meaning one affecting the skin and thereby due to this pigmentation, causing anxiety to the person causing diseases. *Ishvara* type would be due to *ahamkara* or ego and hence creates a kind of narcissism in the person and so on. These *Devas* and *Rishis* as causes of psychic disturbances then have their own sub-classifications that have to be understood in their correct context for causing *Unmada* or insanity and here are quite specific, if we look at the classical texts.

They hence shape the mind of the person and produce various *rajasic* and *tamasic vasanas* or mental impressions as a result, which cause the mind to become unstable, leading to these forms of insanity. No doubt however, that regardless, their initial causes are still a result of negative actions or karmas in the past, which come out as a result in these various diseases. Here, insults to the *Rishis* and *Devas* could also mean polluting elements or harming the bodily organs of another or insulting another's deformities (especially a Brahmin or teacher - say blind or deaf), which produces subtle karmic patterns or *vasanas* impressions or mental blockages and stains that as a result, produce such disorders of insanity as mentioned above. This is indeed quite a complex science in itself!

In the *Rig Veda*, the antagonist is called *Vritra* or obstruction. He is the father of the God *Indra*. We read from the *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad* that the Father is the Mind (I.V.7)

thus also noting this direct affliction. The term *vritra* is also related to *vritti* which are waves or movements of the mind in Yoga, which are to be checked, by controlling the senses (*indriyas*). Indra here is the master of these *indriyas* or senses. We have mentioned before about the role of Yoga and the mind.

By withdrawing our minds and bodies away from such things, we can hence go far in Yoga by cultivating this fire of detachment and withdrawal and therefore help us in restraining the senses overall, by which we can become great Yogis and become free from these *grahas* or seizures/ influences by the Deities and such:

*“Restraining speech in the mind and restraining the mind in the intellect; this again restrains in the witness of the intellect and merging with the Supreme Self, attain to the highest peace. The body, the breaths, organs, mind and intellect and others – with whatsoever of these supervening adjuncts of the mind is associated, the Yogi is transformed as it were, into that!” -Adi Shankaracharya, Vivekachudamani, 369-370*

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