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Review Article

PHYSIOLOGICAL HINTS ON DHARANEEYA VEGAS

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ABSTRACT

Ayurveda, the science of life is the oldest health science. It is not only a science to cure diseases also science which teaches us to be healthy to be swastha. Swasthya as a state of total biological equilibrium, where the sensory, mental, emotional and spiritual elements are harmoniously balanced. Ayurveda explains that feelings and emotions are the expressions of a very subtle level of the faculty of intellect; Vegas are natural urges and are usually spontaneous in nature. They are reflex actions which originate from their own centre. They are inevitable for the maintenance of proper health. Vegas are classified into two: Sareerika (physical) and manasika (psychological) this paper emphasize on the manasikavegas and its physiological relevance .this paper attempts to give hints on dharaneeya vegas.

Keywords: Ayurveda, Sareerika, Manasika, Vegas.

INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda holds that the basis of life is the tripod of mind, body, and spirit. These are the purview of examination and the realm of treatment. The object considered must include all of these aspects to be considered life. The implication is that each element is a representation of the others. Physical processes are mirrors of mental and emotional events. Conversely, each mental phenomenon is an expression of a physical process proceeding in the body. Susruta¹, an ancient exponent of Ayurveda, defines health or swasthya as a state of total biological equilibrium, where the sensory, mental, emotional and spiritual elements are harmoniously balanced. Ayurveda explains that feelings and emotions are the expressions of a very subtle level of the faculty of intellect. The intellect is that faculty of mind that performs discrimination.

Definition of Vega

वेगोनामभावानांस्वस्थानात्प्रवृत्त्युन्मुखता²।

Vegas are natural urges and are usually spontaneous in nature. They are reflex actions which originate from their own centre. They are inevitable for the maintenance of proper health.

Classification of Vega

Vegas are classified into two³:

Sareerika (physical) and manasika (psychological)

Sareerikavegas

Sareerika (physical) vegas otherwise known as adharaniyavegas, ie. should not be controlled at will. Vegas

are involuntary in nature. Sareerika vegas include adhovata (flatus), urdhwavata (belching), sakrit (defecation), mutra (micturition), kshava (sneezing), trishna (thirst), kshut (hunger), nidra (sleep), kasa (cough), sramaswasa (panting), jrimbha (yawning), asru (shedding of tears), chardi (vomiting), retas (sexual urge).

Manasikavegas

Manasika (psychological) vegas are called as dharaniyavegas is the current focus.

धारयेत्तु सदा वेगान्हितैषी प्रेत्य चेह च³।

लोभेष्याद्वेषमात्सर्यरागादीनां जितेन्द्रियः ॥ (अ. ह. सू. ४/२४)

Manasikavegas are supposed to be controlled at will with perfect rein over our senses. They include lobha (greed), irshya (envy/jealousy), dwesha (aversion), maatsarya (competitive mentality), raga (attachment) Manasikavegas also include the other emotions like kama (lust), krodha (anger), bhaya (fear), soka (grief), chinta (anxiety) etc.

Emotional nervous system⁴

About 60 years ago Papez at Cornell identified a part of brain called limbic system involved in controlling emotional behavior. The limbic system is a complex set of brain structures that lies on both sides of the thalamus, right under the cerebrum. The limbic system includes the hippocampus, amygdale, anterior thalamic nuclei, septum, limbic cortex and the fornix.

Dharaniyavegas in detail

Lobha (greed)³: Intense and selfish desire for something, especially wealth, power or food. It is defined as desire to own or control more resources than others. Lobha is of rajasik variety. It vitiate vata and kapha. During greed, the reward centre in the limbic system is activated⁴. There will be release of neurotransmitter called dopamine, which in turn stimulate the autonomic system and make changes even in cellular and molecular level. Lesion in the ventromedial nucleus and surrounding areas of hypothalamus, may lead to lack of satiety and result in greed.

Irshya (envy/jealousy)³: Irshya is having rajasik quality. It seen in the imbalance of vata and pitta. Though it is a variety of anger⁴, it stimulates the punishment centre of the limbic system. Neurotransmitter named adrenaline is released. Adrenaline in turn, turn on the sympathetic drive. Morbid jealousy also comes from the lack of sense of satiety. So the reason behind it may be lesion in ventromedial nucleus and surrounding areas of the hypothalamus.

Dweshya (aversion)³: Dweshya also confined to the emotional variety of anger. It is pre-dominated with rajasaguna. It vitiates vata and pitta. Here due to external stimuli the punishment centre of the hypothalamus is getting activated⁴. The neurotransmitter, adrenaline is released. Adrenaline stimulates the sympathetic system, which is responsible for dweshya and punishment reaction. It ultimately results in fight or flight response.

Maatsarya (competitive mentality)³: Maatsarya simply means krodha, ie anger. We can expand it as intolerance to others excellence. Maatsarya comes from jealousy. Maatsarya also predominates with rajasaguna. Maatsarya vitiates vata at first and pitta in the last stage. At the last stage, it turns to krodha and may endanger the life of the victim. Here also the punishment centre of the limbic system is activated⁴. Cortisol, primary stress hormone has the main role during competition. Here also the fight or flight mechanism works to overrule the antagonist.

Raga (attachment)³: Excessive desire towards worldly affairs. This is called as raga (attachment). It is an inborn tendency of human to get attached towards the desirable objects. Raga is a rajas predominant natural urge. Raga is a quality of kapha. It also vitiates vata and kapha. In certain condition, raga can be considered as excessive sexual desire. In raga, the reward centre of the limbic system is activated⁴. In case of sexual desire, most anterior and posterior portion of the hypothalamus is stimulated. Here also the neurotransmitter released is dopamine.

Kama (lust)⁵: Kama is a product of rajasaguna. It vitiates vata. It can be included in the variety of raga. According to Bhagavatgita, when an individual thinks about the objects of sense organs, an affection and attachment regarding that object is developed. The attachment produces desire to achieve it. This desire is called as kama. Kama can be considered as altered sexuality in some occasion. Lesion of orbito-frontal lobe may remove moral and ethical restraints and lead to indiscriminate sexual behavior⁴. Sexual drive can be stimulated from several areas of hypothalamus, especially the most anterior and most posterior portions of the hypothalamus.

Stimulation of the reward centre of the limbic system causes lust towards the external affairs.

Krodha (anger)⁵: Reaction towards an adverse situation. It is for self preservation. It can be considered as enmity or jealousy. Krodha predominates with rajas quality. It vitiates pitta. Symptoms of anger include teeth grinding, fist clenching, flushing, paling, prickly sensation, numbness, sweating, muscle tensions and temperature changes. Here the punishment centre of the hypothalamus is stimulated from the external stimuli⁴. As a result, there will be surge of catecholamines occur. The release of catecholamines triggers the fight-or-flight response in the individual through activating the autonomic system. Stimulation of the lateral hypothalamus, sometimes leading to overt rage and fighting.

Soka (grief)³: It can be included under tamasa variety of manovegas. Grief vitiates vata dosha. It is a normal emotional response to a significant loss.

Bhaya (fear)³: Bhaya is a tamasa variety of manovega. It vitiates vata. In fear the punishment centre of the limbic system is activated. It turns on the autonomic response of fight-or-flight response. Stimulation of a thin zone of periventricular nuclei of thalamus, located immediately adjacent to the third ventricle usually leads to fear⁴.

Understanding the dharaniyavegas

Why called as dharaniyavegas?

Mind reflects our interactions with the external world. Many acharyas said that for the perception and attainment of knowledge proper samyoga between indriya, artha and atma is necessary. Here the term indriya include not only the sense organs but also the mind. Only in the presence of mind, indriyas can acquire knowledge. The impairment in the association of indriya, artha and atma, ie. Ayoga, mithyayoga and athiyoga result in impaired perception. This impairment can be seen in manovegas. Manovegas⁵ like lobha, irshya etc are the result of improper atma-indriya-artasamyoga. The root cause of impaired atma-indriya-artasamyoga is the prajnaparadha (prajna = buddhi or intelligence, Aparadha = faulty deeds). Due to the lack of intelligence, memory and will power, man is prone to commit intellectual errors. It will vitiate all the doshas especially vata, which in turn vitiates trigunas. Vitiating of tridoshas and trigunas causes impairment of all the mental and physical function. All these effects result in the development of diseases. All the manovegas are when expressed in improper situation are against the ethics of social life. They may hurt ourselves and the individuals surrounding us in the family, relation, society etc. Manovegas adversely affect not only the mind but also almost all the systems of the body, may sometimes endanger the life of the individual. Due to these reasons, mental urges are advised to be controlled.

How the manovegas can be controlled?

Ayurveda and other systems, through various methods like meditation, and adopting sadvritta in daily life remove these psychological impurities⁵. Through these methods they are attempting to condition the limbic part of the nervous system in a way to sort out all the psychological perceptions in more or less satwik way. Thus the emotions and other perception will get digested properly. Properly digested experiences are absorbed properly and allow us to function in life with peace and clarity.

CONCLUSION

Manovegas are nothing but certain energy of life force, which are trapped by our process of self centered consciousness. Negative emotions owe their existence to wrong usage of the energy of consciousness, which consists of fixing our attention on the names and forms of external world and losing the track of the greater field of existence. The impairment in the association of indriya, arta and atma, ie. Ayoga, mithyayoga and athiyoga result in impaired perception. This impairment can be seen in manovegas. Manovegas like lobha, irshya etc are the result of improper atma-indriya-artasamyoga. The root cause of impaired atma-indriya-artasamyoga is the prajnaparadha (prajna= buddhi or intelligence, Aparadha= faulty deeds). In Ayurveda, suggests thvarious methods like meditation, and adopting sadvritta in daily life for controlling this dharaneeyavegas. By controlling these manovegas, we can

reclaim the energy of attention and use it in a creative and conscious way.

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