



# "Mana in Ayurveda: Exploring The Mind-Body-Soul Balance And The Role of Gunas"

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## Abstract:

Ayurveda, the ancient science of life, emphasizes the harmonious balance of the body, mind, and soul for optimal health. The mind, or *mana*, is considered inseparable from the body and soul, influencing both physical and mental well-being. *Mana* is formless, imperceptible, and manifests through emotions such as happiness, anger, and desire. Its seat is debated in Ayurvedic texts, with suggestions of the heart, brain, or the whole body. *Mana* is governed by the three *gunas* of nature: *Satwa* (balance), *Rajas* (activity), and *Tamas* (inertia), which shape human behavior and consciousness. Ayurveda underscores the importance of integrating *mana*, the soul, and sensory organs for effective interaction with the external world, providing a foundation for mental health and well-being through balance and harmony.

**KEYWORDS:** Chikitsa, Health, Mana (mind), Swastha, Vikara.

## Introduction

According to Ayurveda, one may fulfill one's duty in life when one is in a state of good balance between one's body, mind, and soul. It's an old civilization science and culture that assumes humans are a part of the universe's microcosm and surroundings. According to their writings, Ayurveda has always existed in some form or another, whether it be in the form of books and active clinics or in the collective consciousness of the universe as eternal principles of unity between all things of the universe, of unity between man and nature, and so on. The ancient Indian rishis who developed the Science of Life (Ayur-veda) organized their wisdom into three levels of bodies: the physical, mental, and spiritual bodies. It sees the physical body as a crystallization of ingrained mental tendencies preserved from valuable lives.

## The concept of mana:

"Sharirendriyasatvaatmasanyog dhari jivitam" means that the combination of the mind (*mana*), soul (*atma*), and body (*sharir*) together results in the vitality of an individual. The text further explores how the soul enters the body, explaining that the soul, along with the fundamental elements of nature—earth (*prithvi*), water (*aapa*), fire (*teja*), and air (*vayu*)—in their finest forms, enters the zygote. The soul, being associated with the mind, moves at a speed greater than light or any other perceivable entity. According to the sages, although the soul is singular, it enters the bodies of different individuals due to its universal nature (*vyapak*). The soul leaves a deceased body and enters a newly formed one. While it is invisible to ordinary perception, it can be seen through the divine vision (*divyachakshu*) of a yogi.

Human body and manas are inseparable during lifetime of the individual and it's not possible to claim that when it enters the body since their relationship is from beginning of the universe i.e. manas is already there in fertilized ovum.

समदोषः समाग्निश्च समधातुमलक्रियः |  
प्रसन्नात्मेन्द्रियमनाः स्वस्थ इत्यभिधीयते ||४१||

Su.Su 15/41<sup>[1]</sup>

The body's anatomy and physiology are covered in the first half of this verse, while the atma (soul), indriyas (sensory organs), and manas (mind) are covered in the second half. It is referred to as entire health when all three of these are prasanna, which is a synonym for happiness. Three categories are used to classify Indriyas. Karmendriyas, or functions, Dnyanendriyas, or senses, and Ubhayendriyas, or senses and functions together. Manas is said to be Ubhayendriya, which receives the signals, transmits them to Buddha, and then instructs Karmendriya to respond appropriately. It views the mind as the repository of the impressions we receive via our senses and as the mirror of the body.

### Mana Swaropa:

Known as nirvikara, mana swaropa is devoid of rupa and can be inferred from lakshanas because it is an atindriya swaropa. According to Charaka, we cannot learn without the coordination of mana, soul, sensory organs, and subjects. Only mana is subject to vedanas like sukha, dukha, vichara, krodha, kama, and so on.<sup>[2]</sup>

### Location of mana:

There are several references in ayurvedic literatures that address the location of mana, as explained below,

1. Indefinite: Because the mind is constantly active, it is unable to remain still. It is therefore difficult to describe the seat of mana.<sup>[3]</sup>
2. Hridaya: Because the mind is always active, it cannot be still. The mana seat is therefore hard to describe.<sup>[4]</sup> Vagbhata asserts that the actual seat of mana is the hridaya. The trigunas, which are the typical attributes of mana, are said to have originated in Hridaya.<sup>[5]</sup>
3. Sira: As said earlier, Uttamanga, or Sira, is where Prana and Indriyas are situated. Manasa is the most powerful of all the Indriyas because it is in charge of all of them.
4. Sarva sharira: The body as a whole is the seat of the mind.<sup>[6]</sup>

### Mana's guna:

Charak described anutvam and ekatvam, two additional mana gunas. Anutvam is demonstrated when mana and indriyarth are united to reveal only a specific subject. guna. The fact that every creature has a single mana and receives information from a single source at a time demonstrates its ekatvam nature.

Nature is the Divine Mother in its manifested form, and the universe is her play of consciousness. She nurtures not only material growth and outward expansion but also supports our inner spiritual development. Nature possesses a dynamic energy that allows us to either expand into wisdom or contract into ignorance. Ayurveda offers a unique framework for understanding the primal forces of nature and guides us on how to align with them on all levels. According to Ayurveda, nature is governed by three primary qualities, or gunas, which influence our spiritual growth and keep us bound to the external world. These qualities are:

1. Satwa – The quality of intelligence, virtue, and goodness that creates balance and stability. It is light, luminous, and associated with clarity. Satwa fosters lasting happiness and contentment, representing peace, unity, and the force of love that binds all things together.
2. Rajas – The quality of change, activity, and restlessness. Rajas is driven by a desire for achievement, constantly seeking a goal or end that grants power. It is stimulating and can bring pleasure, but due to its unbalanced nature, it often leads to pain and suffering. Rajas represents the force of passion, causing turmoil and conflict.
3. Tamas – The quality of dullness and darkness, characterized by heaviness and obstruction. It acts as the force of gravity, slowing things down and limiting their potential. Tamas leads to ignorance and delusion in the mind, promoting insensitivity, sleep, and a loss of awareness.

These three gunas are the fundamental qualities of nature that underpin matter, life, and the mind. They are the energies that not only shape the surface mind but also govern our deeper consciousness. These qualities are the forces of the soul, carrying the karmas and desires that drive the cycle of birth and rebirth. All objects in the universe are composed of varying combinations of these three gunas.<sup>[7]</sup>

**Objects of the Mind (Mana):** The subjects of the mind include chintya (things that require thought), vicharya (consideration), uhya (hypothesis), dhyeya (emotional thinking), sankalpya (decision), or anything that can be comprehended by the mind.

1. Chintya: Refers to things that require deep thought, such as deciding what actions to take, whether strategic or otherwise.
2. Vicharya: Involves a process of examination that influences a person's decision to accept or reject something.
3. Uhya: Represents speculation, where imaginary self-discussions and logical reasoning are applied to a subject.
4. Dhyeya: Emotive thinking about a subject, where emotions are involved in how one reflects on or considers an issue.
5. Sankalpya: The process of contemplation and forming a conclusion or decision about a particular matter.

**Functions of the Mind (Mana):** The functions of the mind include Svasyanigraha (self-control), uhya (hypothesis), and indriabhigraha (control of sensory organs), which represent the mind's actions.

1. Indriabhigraha: The mind is considered the controller of the senses because it governs the reception and transmission of impulses, stimulating the cognitive senses for object perception.
2. Svasyanigraha: This function refers to self-control, where the mind regulates its own functions. Known as chanchala (restless), the mind requires svasyanigraha for proper focus on desired goals and for withdrawing once the objective is achieved.
3. Uhya: Chakrapani supported the concept of uhya, defining it as the knowledge of hypothetical objects acquired through detailed intellectual analysis. This type of knowledge, called alochana gyana, is divided into two forms: nirvikalpa gyana (indeterminate knowledge) and alochana gyana (reflective knowledge).
4. Vichara: Chakrapani described vichara as the process of reflecting on an observed object to decide whether it should be accepted (upadeya) or rejected (heya).<sup>[8]</sup>

**Manas Pariksha (Examination of Mental Faculties)** <sup>[9]</sup> – Satva, which is the mind, holds a significant influence over the body as it is intrinsically connected to the soul. The evaluation of Satva can help assess a person's mental health. Satva is classified into three types based on mental capacities: Pravara, Madhyama, and Avara.

1. Pravara Satva (Excellent Mental Fitness): This represents superior mental strength and exceptional mental capabilities. Individuals with Pravara Satva can endure powerful treatments without harming their physical well-being. They possess a resilient mind, capable of withstanding both external and internal challenges. Despite being physically frail, they are able to handle severe mental or physical distress without difficulty. The mind, or mana, acts as the controller of the senses, receiving and transmitting impulses that enable cognitive perception.
2. Madhyama Satva (Moderate Mental Fitness): Those with Madhyama Satva have average mental capabilities. They can tolerate strong therapies without physical harm but may have a moderate ability to handle mental or physical discomfort. These individuals struggle to deal with extreme external or internal stresses, yet they can adjust moderately to challenging situations and discomfort. Their mental resilience lies between the extremes of strength and weakness.

3. Avara Satva (Poor Mental Fitness): Avara Satva individuals have weaker mental faculties, unable to maintain mental strength on their own or with help. Even with good physical health, they are susceptible to fear, grief, greed, delusion, and ego. They react strongly to distressing situations—such as hearing terrifying or repulsive stories, or seeing blood or flesh—by fainting, feeling dizzy, or even experiencing madness or despair. In some extreme cases, such events may even lead to death. These individuals have a difficult time adapting to pain or unusual circumstances. For them, samsodhana karma (detoxification treatments) is not advisable, as they cannot handle such processes effectively.

Satva, in combination with the ego, governs the body and mental state. People with Pravara Satva (excellent mental fitness) show remarkable mental resilience, often maintaining physical stability despite intense challenges. In contrast, those with Avara Satva (poor mental fitness) rely heavily on external support to cope with life's difficulties. They are particularly vulnerable to emotional and psychological disturbances when exposed to disturbing sights or stories, showing visible signs of distress such as pallor, fainting, or confusion.

In essence, the balance of Satva within a person plays a significant role in determining their mental and physical resilience, influencing how they respond to both internal and external challenges.

### **Anatomical Considerations of the Mind (Manas) in Ayurveda**

In Ayurveda, the mind (Manas) has been the subject of various interpretations by ancient philosophers, each proposing different locations within the body. The Rigveda places the mind within the heart, describing it as a light that resides there, illuminating the inner self. Acharya Patanjali, following this idea, also locates the mind in the heart.

On the other hand, the Bhela Samhita suggests a different viewpoint, positioning the mind in the head, while the Charaka Samhita agrees with the Rigveda and Patanjali, placing it in the heart (Hridaya), referring to it as being rooted in the heart center (Hradi samsritham).

The Bhela Samhita further distinguishes between the two aspects of the mind: Manas (the cognitive and reasoning part) is located in the head (Shir), whereas Chitta (the emotional and subconscious aspect) resides in the heart. Moreover, the Bhela Samhita elaborates that the mind is situated between the cranium and the soft palate, with Chitta and the emotive elements of Mana housed in the heart.

Lastly, the Charaka Samhita expands the scope of the mind's location, indicating that the mind is not confined to a single place but is spread throughout the entire body, influencing both physical and mental functions from within. This interconnectedness suggests that the mind, in its entirety, is a holistic force that permeates and coordinates the entire being.

### **Manasika Bhava/Vikara (Mental States and Disorders):**

Any disruption in the natural functioning of the mind can lead to psychopathology, or an abnormal mental state, known as *manasika vikaras* (psychological disorders). *Manasika bhavas* include mental states such as *kama* (desire), *krodha* (anger), *lobha* (greed), *moha* (attachment or delusion), and *harsha* (joy), which reflect the physiological state of the mind. When these states are balanced, they are considered normal and contribute to overall well-being. However, when excessive or imbalanced, they can lead to mental disturbances.

The mental constitution, *manasa prakriti*, remains constant throughout life, similar to the physical constitution, and does not change. The mind's imbalance is influenced by *rajas* (activity) and *tamas* (inertia), contributing to the development of mental disorders. These disorders manifest through processes such as perception, mind control, self-debate, critical analysis, and various aspects of the mind like decision-making, memory, orientation, faith, conduct, psychomotor activity, and psychosomatic functions.

The onset of mental diseases is often linked to *alpasatva* (weak psychic energy). Disorders may involve both *sharirika* (physical) and *manasika* (mental) doshas or affect only the mind. Mental disorders are traditionally classified into *manasa vikaras* (mental disorders) and *ubhayatmaka vikaras* (both mind and body disorders), with the *manovaha srotasa* (mental channels) and *manodhsthana* (heart) as key areas of influence.

### Categories of Mental Disorders:

1. Manodhisthita Manasa Vikara: Disorders affecting the mind alone, such as desire, anger, greed, anxiety, worry, and fear.
2. Nanatmaja Manasa Vikara: Conditions where physical doshas affect the mind, leading to symptoms like auditory hallucinations, confusion, insomnia, excessive talking, and anxiety.
3. Sharira Manodhisthita Manasa Roga: Mental conditions linked to bodily disturbances, including psychosis, epilepsy, hysteria, intoxication, fainting, and hydrophobia.
4. Manoshariradhisthana Manasa Vikara: Mental conditions manifesting with fever due to emotional causes, such as grief, passion, or anger-induced fever.
5. Manasa Vikaras Causing Other Roga: Mental disorders can worsen physical illnesses, with psychological factors influencing the progression of somatic diseases.

**Satvavajaya Chikitsa** – This therapeutic approach aims to control the mind's tendency to crave harmful desires and emotions. It emphasizes the essential role of the therapist in guiding the patient towards a beneficial and effective treatment. According to Charaka, the most effective way to achieve the goal of Satvavajaya Chikitsa is by cultivating qualities such as jnanam (knowledge), vijnanam (analytical thinking), dhairya (courage), smriti (memory), and Samadhi (concentration). These qualities help the patient gain control over their mind and emotions. Mental disorders triggered by emotions like kama (excessive desire), shoka (grief), bhaya (fear), krodha (anger), harsa (pleasure), irsyā (jealousy), and moha (attachment) can be treated by encouraging the opposite emotion. By cultivating positive qualities such as contentment, calmness, and detachment, the harmful effects of these negative emotions can be neutralized, bringing balance and mental stability.<sup>[12]</sup> The concept of Manas is explored in various intellectual texts, particularly in Ayurveda, where it plays a crucial role in maintaining and promoting health. The two doshas of the mind, rajas (activity) and tamas (inertia), significantly contribute to the development of both psychological and physical disorders. In today's fast-paced world, changes in lifestyle and the pressure to compete in all aspects of life lead to increased stress, resulting in various mental and physical health issues. To thrive in this competitive environment, it is essential to focus on mental well-being. Sattvavajaya Chikitsa, an Ayurvedic approach, offers a valuable tool for promoting mental health and helping individuals navigate these challenges.

### Conclusion:

Mana is an intangible substance with no physical form, but its activities can be observed in everyday life. The heart is considered the permanent residence of mana, where it retreats after fulfilling the body's functions. The brain (or mastiska) serves as the primary control center for mana, directing and guiding all sense organs in their natural and customary roles. The entire body can be seen as the domain of mana, which interacts with and motivates the sensory organs to perform their respective functions. Knowledge and action are only perceived when the soul connects with mana, which, in turn, links to the sense organs, enabling them to engage with the external world.

### Referance -

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