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## PSYCHOSOMATIC DISEASES AND RASAYANA

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Psyche means mind or Manas and somatic means pertaining to the body or Sarira as we call it in Ayurveda. Psycho-Neuro-Immunology, Hypothalamic-Pituitary-Adrenal axis, ratio between Th 1 and Th 2 lymphocytes are terms widely used in modern research explaining how our thoughts and feelings influence the way our body reacts to external or internal stressors. These stressors can be anything that threatens our homeostasis, like an increased bacterial load, food excessive or deficient in nutrients, too much or too little sleep, lack of physical activity, mental fear, anger, depressive traits etc. The term psychosomatic diseases was initially reserved for diseases that lacked a clear-cut histopathology. Now we know that a vast array of diseases is in a broader context psychosomatic and their initial manifestation or their course is influenced by the mental state of the individual patient. Sense of "lack of control" that is the emotional switch for the stress physiological response, can have a profound effect in the circulation states creating in the long term hypertension and contributing to arteriosclerosis. All these modern research findings were already known few thousands years ago in Ayurveda. Kaya and Manas (i.e body and mind) are the seats of disease. Vayu, Pitta and Kapha are Saririka Doshas and Raja and Tamas as the Manasika Doshas. Further onwards looking in the Sthana and Karyas of the Tridoshas we find the constant link between the mental and physical world. Prana and Udana Vayu share these physiological functions that are helping the mind remain steady and the immune system intact. Prana relates with proper function of the Buddhi and at the same time with inhalation; we know that slowing down of inhalation enhances the heart rate variability which is a so called health index of the cardiac function. Udana Vayu as described by Vagbhata in the Astanga Hridayam clearly links enthusiasm or Urja, which is a mental quality, with Bala or strength, which in modern terms includes apart of the mental strength, the ability of the immune system to fight against infection.

Ayurveda has a very important role to play in understanding the causes, the pathogenesis and management of psychological diseases and this scope is emphasised in the definition of Rasayana.

So, clearly Ayurveda helps through its holistic approach the whole psychosomatic entity of the human being and in this way it can be of great help to the suffering humanity in the new millennium.