Understanding personality from Ayurvedic perspective for psychological assessment: A case

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Abstract

The study of personality has fascinated psychologists since a long time. Personality as an area of study has grown so much that a wealth of literature is available. On the other hand, the socio-ethnic dynamics of human race in the emerging global village context provoking psychologists to develop a personality theory which can treat certain basic components of personality as invariants, so that irrespective of culture, race, and nativity could still be able to study personality which will have universal applicability and relevance, is still far away. In the above emerging backdrop, “Ayurveda” has perhaps an important role to play as it can enable providing a theoretical and empirical base of personality traits and types. These Ayurvedic concepts are applicable to all human beings irrespective of caste, color, sex or race. Therefore, it is interesting to build on the Ayurvedic knowledge which has already given us so much since time immemorial, and validate some of these issues related to personality from psychological perspective. There are already certain efforts in understanding Sattva, Rajas, and Tamas Gunas. It can be furthered so that a comprehensive personality picture can be generated, which can have implications for health, career, education and many other dimensions of life. The present paper is a theoretical attempt in developing such a personality proposition which can be validated. Thus, the present paper only builds a theoretical framework for their possible empirical validity.

Key words: Ayurvedic typology, personality assessment, Prakriti, Tridoshas, Trigunas

Introduction

In this day and age when the world has become a global village, people from one socio-demographic location can be found across the world, with a lot of cross mingling of relationships that stretch the barriers of place and time. In this scenario, the need of the hour is to develop a theory of personality that transcends this problem of cultural and racial bias to propound one that is valid across the world. For this, the basic requirement is that it should be universally acceptable, be of an elemental nature, and be valid to people across all genres. To understand this, the first source of knowledge that comes to mind is that of the Indian philosophical systems that have withstood the test of time to be applicable across millennia without losing their relevance and applicability to people from ages to the present day. The first discipline that comes to mind which is capable of identifying people is that of Ayurveda with its exact science of medicine and which is capable of giving answers to questions that are posed at a biological and physical level as to the constituents of man and the reasons for his biological behavior.

“With the increasing realization that many of the western psychological concepts and methods lack relevance to different cultural systems, the need for developing indigenous psychologies was recognized all over the world (Kim and Berry, 1973)...”

Objectives

The main objectives of this paper are to consolidate a personality theory taking support of Ayurvedic literature from the psychological perspective and to make a case that personality testing taking Tridosha and Triguna could be a comprehensive perspective.

Ayurveda, with its defined constructs which are elemental and form the cornerstone of physiology as well as psychological delineations, their assessment, categorization and treatment options, is indispensable for developing a theory and methodology for assessment of Prakriti—more specifically, the
psychological manifestation of the Tridoshas and the Triguna
combined—for a scientific, elemental and globally validating
procedure and its obvious categorization. This would lead to
(globalizing the understanding of human behavior irrespective
of caste, creed and religion, leading to a universal typology of
people, helping in the ultimate need for psychology, that of
understanding and predicting of human behavior and emotions.
This has large implications in areas ranging from harnessing of
human resources to early identification of diseases and their
better management.

The Manifestation of the Five Proto-elements in Man

One of the basic tenets of Ayurveda is that man is a microcosm
of the very world that he inhabits. This implies explicitly that
whatever man is made up of, the world too is made up of those
same things or elements, but of different combinations and
degrees. Here, by elements is meant the five Mahabhutas—that
is, Akasa, Vayu, Tejas, Ap and Prithvi. The earth and man are
made up of these five elements. In fact, Ayurveda postulates
that all living beings on the earth, including the non-living too,
are made up of these same five elements in varying degrees,
specific to each form, matter and species, and according to a
determined ratio that cannot be changed. These five elements
combine with each other to form the three humors of Vata, Pitta and Kapha (also called as the Tridoshas in unison)
which is the cornerstone of Ayurvedic philosophy.

If changes do occur, then this leads to an imbalance in the
organism, or a modified version of the organism is formed,
the survival of which will depend upon its ability to adapt to
its environment. Ayurvedic principles are drawn heavily from
Samkhyan Philosophy.

“In Ayurveda, the three Doshas are considered to be universal
principles that function in all aspects of material creation,
including the mineral, plant, and animal kingdoms, the time
of day, the seasons of the year, even the planets and galaxies.
In this way, the human physiology is inexorably connected
to the whole of existence. The Doshas have been correlated
with systems theory in the field of physics, providing a sound
theoretical basis for this Ayurvedic concept, and research
utilizing a bio-statistical approach to quantify the Doshas
reveals a sound empirical basis as well. A pilot study revealed
the possibility of utilizing Prakriti to correlate phenotypes with
phenotypes in the human population, which could have wide-
ranging implications for health care”.[6-4]

The Five Elements Combine to Form the Tridoshas
in Biodiversity

“According to Ayurveda, the universe evolved out of the ‘un-
manifested’ (Aryakta), which implies Prakriti (primordial
matter) and Purusa (primordial consciousness). Mahat
(intellect) then evolves from Aryakta, and Ahamkara (ego)
follows. Ego has three different qualities (Gunas): Sattva (the
pure), Rajas (the dynamic), and Tamas (the inert). Sattva
and Rajas together then produce eleven Indriyas (sense and
motor organs known as Jnanaendriyas and Karmendriyas) and
Manas. The Gunas, Tamas and Rajas combine to produce five
Tanmatras (energy quanta), which in their turn produce the
five Mahabhutas (elements in the ancient sense, sometimes
also called proto-elements). From these Mahabhutas the entire
material world is made up... Living beings consist of the
Mahabhutas as well as the Indriyas”.[9]

Dash,[8] in his book Fundamentals of Ayurvedic Medicine (pg.
16, 17), has explained the inter-relatedness of man with the
environment and how the Pancha Mahabhutas have evolved
in man to form the different body organs and organ systems.
He says, “…man has five senses and through these senses he
perceives the external world in five different ways. The sense
organs are the ears, the skin, the eyes, the tongue and the
nose. Through these sense organs, the external object is not
only perceived, but also absorbed into the human body in
the form of energy. These five types of senses are the basis on
which the entire universe is divided, grouped or classified in
five different ways, and they are known as five Mahabhutas….
According to Ayurveda, the body of the individual is composed
of five Mahabhutas. Similarly, other things of the world are
also composed of five Mahabhutas. In the human body these
five Mahabhutas are explained in terms of Doshas, Dhatu and
Malas…”

The play of the five proto-elements or the Pancha Mahabhutas
is not restricted to the physical body only. It finds expression
in the mind too, which also is purported to be made up of the
five elements. Frawley[7] in his book Ayurveda and the Mind is of
the opinion that the mind transcends all the five gross elements
because through the mind we can perceive all the elements
and their inter-relationships. He further says that all the forms
death, water, fire, air and ether can be observed, imagined
and contemplated on. “Yet the elements do provide a key to
how the mind works. Though the elements in the mind are
more subtle than those in the body, they retain the same basic
attributes and actions. We can understand the mental elements
through the analogy of the physical”.

Charaka Samhita expresses this idea in verses 46–47 (as stated
in Mental Health in Ayurveda) as follows: “Mind, Soul and
the Body—these three constitute a tripod, upon the meaningful
combination of which the world is sustained. They constitute
the substratum for everything, which is endowed with life. This
(combination of the above three) is Purusha who is sentient
and who is the subject matter for this science. It is for this that
Ayurveda has been brought to light”. Verse 1-55 also states: “The
body and the mind are the abodes of diseases as well as health.
Proper body-mind interaction is the cause for happiness”.

Review of Literature

“The concept of Tridosha, the Ayurvedic theory of physiologic
regulation involving the integrated function of the three
Doshas—Vata, Pitta, and Kapha—is a cornerstone of Ayurveda,
named in the first chapter of the earliest text, Charaka
Samhita (Angot, 1993; Sharma, 1981–1986). Its connection to
modern science, showing that the Doshas constitute systems
of regulatory function, each with a particular area of responsibility
(Hankey, 2001) and its present preliminary validation, are first
teps to bringing the discipline wider acceptance within modern
medicine”.[9]

From the Ayurvedic source, what has already been studied and
internalized in psychology is the concept of “Triguna”. “The theoretical expositions on Triguna and their manifestations in human nature have attracted the attention of Indian psychologists. The concept has been examined theoretically (Bose, 1966; Misra et al., 2000; Parameshwaran, 1969; Rao, 1971) and empirically (Das, 1987, 1991; Kapur et al., 1997; Marutham, Balodhi and Misra, 1998; Mathew, 1995; Mohan and Sandhu, 1986, 1988; Pathak, Bhatt and Sharma, 1992; Rao and Harigopal, 1979; Sebastian and Mathew, 2002; Sharma, 1999; Singh, 1972; Sitamma, Sidcvi and PVK. Rao, 1995; Uma, Lakshmi and Parameshwaran, 1971; Wolf, 1998)”.[10] So far, what has not been explored is the study of “Tridoshas”, empirically from the domain of psychology.

“The ancient texts name many other properties of the Doshas. For example, all human beings can be classified according to the dominance of one or more Doshas in their physiology, their Prakriti (literally ‘nature’). The classification gives a good indication of physiologic strengths and weaknesses, mental tendencies, and susceptibility to illnesses of different kinds. According to Ayurveda, the Prakriti, including its distortion by life history, is of fundamental importance in maintaining health: It provides a guide to lifestyle and ways of healthy living appropriately individualized for each person. Early, pre-pathologic stages of the development of illness depend on the pressure on the functioning of the Doshas. Do they have the ability to cope with challenges presented? Simple knowledge of how they function, and what their state is at any time, can prevent disease, and help restore health more quickly.”[9]

Hankey (Establishing the scientific validity of Tridosha)[10] is also of the opinion, “the functions of Vata, Pitta and Kapha are fundamental is confirmed by the fact that each represents an independent definition of ‘life’ used in modern biology”. He reinstates this statement by delineating the functions of the Tridoshas with the knowledge obtained by modern science, and more specifically, the area of biological, cellular, chemical sciences as we know them today. He is of the opinion, “… These three (homeostasis, the ongoing production of ‘negative entropy’, and inheritable structure)” (he is talking about the modern biological equivalents of Vata, Pitta and Kapha) “have all been used as definitions of life. Comprising all three makes Tridosha the most powerful definition of life ever formulated”

“Being based on systems theory Tridosha would apply to living organisms other than those found on earth... The possibilities for speculation are endless. But whatever the chemical basis for its reproducing forms, each organism in such a system of life would necessarily have to possess the systems functions named, and their regulation could justifiably be identified as ‘Vata, Pitta and Kapha’.” Hankey said.[10] “The analysis of Dosha function presented here confirms the experience of every practicing Vaidya: Tridosha is a simple and profound way to understand human physiological function, giving an accurate explanation of physiological function, including the means of regulation of all the major organ subsystems – and their principal organs. One of the most powerful aspects of Tridosha is that it presents physiological function from a holistic perspective... In not losing sight of the whole when dealing with each component part, Tridosha reveals its sophistication as a description of physiological function from the perspective of the organism itself, ‘the organism as a whole’ is the primary concept, and the functioning of its parts is secondary. Wholeness of organism functioning can only be maintained by coordinated regulation of functioning of each successive level of parts. In Tridosha, Ayurveda gets it right, setting the scene for descriptions of how to maintain wholeness of organism functioning, and when compromised how to restore it. In other words, it lays the ground for programs of both prevention and cure of ill health”. (Hankey, Establishing the scientific validity of Tridosha)[10]

“Every individual is different. What determines the ‘individuality’ of a person? How do we identify genotypes associated with phenotypes and classify the human population? Systematic surveys of genetic variation form the basis for determination of population frequencies, genetic linkage studies, and association studies relating genotype with phenotypes of interest to answer some of these questions (Bamshad et al., 2003; Rosenberg et al., 2002). Genotypic or phenotypic classification of human populations is important in various epidemiological contexts, such as better understanding disease (Pearson et al., 2003) and drug response (Kirchheiner et al., 2004; Meyer, 2000). The current classification of human populations is broadly based on ethnicity; geographical location, language, or self-reported ancestry. However, such commonly used ethnic labels are inaccurate representations of genetic clusters and do not reflect the underlying genetic makeup (Wilson et al., 2001). The inability to explore such relationships is attributed to the complexity of human demographic history, which gives rise to neither an obvious natural clustering scheme nor an obvious appropriate degree of resolution (Editorial comment, 2001)”.[11]

Hence, from the above-mentioned numerous researches, we can see how different scientists are engaged in understanding the physical properties of the Tridoshas and how they work in tandem, to promote health and to understand their role in identifying and rectifying disease states. What is common to all of them is the underlying principle that the Tridoshas are the cornerstone of biological behavior which has far-reaching consequences for the study of the psychological implications that are implicit and explicit to the present researcher. This is from the medical perspective. But what about the psychological perspective? Is it not possible to use these same principles to understand the psychological basis of behavior in both the physical and the mental states? This is also a cornerstone of understanding the human psyche and has been quite neglected till date. Though the inherent interdependence of the physical and the psychological is talked of and acted upon in Ayurvedic medical perspective, it has not followed suit in psychology. The Cartesian dichotomy of the body and the mind did a lot to disturb this basic theory and it is only now that the world is realizing the value and the truth of the Ayurvedic principles of Prakriti, its manifestations and combinations.

Delineation of the Tridoshas—Vata, Pitta and Kapha

According to Ayurveda, the human body (the physical entity) is composed of three fundamental categories called Doshas, Dhatus and Malas. The Doshas are three in number, the Dhatus are seven, and the Malas are three. The three Doshas (Tridoshas) are Vata, Pitta and Kapha. Their psychological correlates
which play a role in the functioning and behavior of humans is the Trigunas—Sattva, Rajas and Tamas. These psychological attributes are not restricted or confined to humans alone, but are also attributed to almost all living beings, including the food we eat, and all other elements in the environment we live in, which are said to have a predominance of one or the other characteristic Guna/Prakriti which gives that matter its unique quality.

The Tridoshas are composed of all the five Mahabhutas, but one or the other is predominant, with the other four are in lesser dominance. There can never be a state when one or the other Mahabhuta is absent totally. All five are essential to sustain life. Proper balance among these three Doshas is essential for good health.

- Vata Dosha is composed of Akasa (ether) and Vayu (air) Mahabhutas.
- Pitta Dosha is composed of Tejas or Agni (fire) and Ap Mahabhutas.
- Kapha Dosha is composed of Ap (water) and Prithvi (earth) Mahabhutas.

When we talk about imbalance of Doshas, we say that a person is Vata, Pitta or Kapha dominated. This does not mean an absence of the other two Doshas, but that the other two Doshas are suppressed compared to the dominant Dosa. This also does not mean that a person who is either of the Dosa dominated is not in good health. That particular dominant Dosa is his natural state of being or Prakriti. It is not ill health.

“Prakriti is specific for each individual. It is said to be determined at the time of conception (in modern terms, by the recombination of zygotic DNA from sperm and ovum) and remains unaltered over the individual’s lifetime. Prakriti specific treatment, including prescription of medications, diet, and lifestyle, is a distinctive feature of Ayurveda. We hypothesize that Prakriti has a genetic connotation that could provide a tool for classifying the human population based on broad phenotype clusters”.[11]

Each Dosa gives certain characteristic qualities to the person, based on which an individual can be classified as belonging to that particular Dosa type. Charaka and Sushruta recognize seven types or categories into which people can be classified, depending on the dominance of the Doshas in their body. They are said to belong to a particular Prakriti or constitution as follows:

1. People with dominant Vata Dosa, i.e. Vata Prakriti (or constitution).
2. People with dominant Pitta Dosa/Prakriti.
3. People with dominant Kapha Dosa/Prakriti.
4. People with dominant Vata–Pitta Dosa combination/Prakriti.
5. People with dominant Vata–Kapha Dosa combination/Prakriti.
6. People with dominant Pitta–Kapha Dosa combination/Prakriti.
7. People with balanced Doshas or with Vata–Pitta–Kapha Dosa combination/Prakriti.

This is accepted by all the different schools of Ayurveda, i.e. Charaka, Sushruta, Vagbhata, etc., to name a few. Varahamihira’s Brhat Samhita too has given detailed delineations of the human characteristics.[12]

Delineation of the Trigunas—Sattva, Rajas and Tamas

Prakriti is composed of three Gunas: Sattva (white, knowledge, happiness, prajna), Rajas (red, activity, pain, krodha) and Tamas (dark, resistance or inertia, confusion, iti). Thus, it is endowed with all the necessary and sufficient powers of production, preservation and dissolution of the phenomenal world. Mainly, it is the material cause of multiplicity.[13]

The three Gunas—Sattva, Rajas and Tamas—also promote different kinds of temperament based on the dominance of one or the other Guna. The temperament of a person can be discerned based on the “mode of worship, the type of food consumed and other activities of everyday life”. [14]

Sushruta clearly describes the five Mahabhutas as being constituted by the Trigunas. According to him (S.S. III. 1.20.),[15] Akasa is predominant with Sattva, Vayu with Rajas, Agni with Sattva–Rajas, Ap (jala) with Sattva–Tamas, and Prithvi with Tamas. Inferentially, since both Charaka and Sushruta clearly state that Vata Dosa is a combination of Akasa and Vayu, Pitta Dosa of Agni and Ap and Kapha Dosa of Ap and Prithvi, we can deduce the Gunas that are predominant in each of them. Hence, Vata Dosa is a combination of Sattva and Rajas but is referred to as being predominantly Rajasic—as Rajas Guna overtakes or is stronger than the Sattva Guna. Pitta Dosa is said to be more Sattvic in nature, though it has an element of Rajas and Tamas in it. Kapha Dosa is said to be more Tamic in nature though it has an element of Sattva in it (but no Rajas). Hence, we understand the Doshas in respect of the Gunas exhibited by them due to the relative dominance of one or the other Pancha Mahabhutas that they are made up of. “This Trignatmakrama description of the constitution of Pancha Bhuutas is the most applied aspect of philosophical concept of Gunas in the field of science and medicine.” [16] This is invaluable in deducing the behavior exhibited by individuals depending on the dominance of one or the other Dosa or Guna that is constitutionally present in the person from conception—which is referred to as the particular Prakriti–Guna combination that a person exhibits. This Prakriti–Guna combination is unique to every individual and is not changeable during the course of their lifetime.[16]

Each Guna gives certain characteristic qualities to the person, based on which an individual can be classified as belonging to that particular Guna type. Charaka and Sushruta recognize seven types or categories into which people can be classified, depending on the dominance of the Gunas in their body. They are said to belong to a particular Guna combination, as follows:

1. People with dominant Sattva Guna.
2. People with dominant Rajas Guna.
3. People with dominant Tamas Guna.
4. People with dominant Sattva–Rajas Guna combination.
5. People with dominant Sattva–Tamas Guna combination.
6. People with dominant Rajas–Tamas Guna combination.
7. People with balanced Gunas or with Sattva–Rajas–Tamas Guna combination.

(Charaka[17] and Sushruta Samhitas[18] Vagbhata’s Ashtanga Hridaya,[19] and Dhanwantari by Johari[20] and many other books and classical texts have emulated references to these seven types of Doshas and Gunas.)

Krishman[24] says that Varaha Mihira, an eminent scholar,
using the “Guna” theory, presents a sevenfold classification of persons. They are Sattvic, Rajasic, Tamasic, Sattvic–Rajasic, Sattvic–Tamasic, Rajasic–Tamasic, and Sattvic–Rajasic–Tamasic. Quite evidently, the mixed types are recognized too, other than the basic three types of Gunas.

In the Indian psychological literature, Guna theory is already empirically tested and accepted.\[1\]

“Mental disposition (Sattva) is basically threefold: pure (suddha), violent (Rajasa), and dull (Tamasu), depending on the prevalence of each of the three Gunas. The first is largely free from defects (specially abnormalities with respect to speech, thought and bodily behavior), while the other two are defective or abnormal. The distinction is between the disease-free (the first type) and the disease-prone types (the other two types). Among the disease-prone types, one is dominated by excessive activity prompted by anger and other emotions, while the other is dominated by inactivity due to delusions and confusion. Each of these has varieties depending upon physical characteristics and psychological tendencies. It is recognized that the mind and the body are interdependent and that there is an impact of the mind on the body and of the body on the mind. There is also a hierarchical notion in describing the pure type as the best (sreshtha), the violent type as middling (madhya) and the dull type as the worst (adhama).\[13\]

Besides the basic seven types of Prakriti (Vata, Pitta and Kapha and their blends), Ayurveda recognizes 16 types of personalities based on the classical Guna theory. Both Charaka and Sushruta Samhitas have a description of these types. According to them, there are 7 types of Sattva, 6 of Rajas and 3 of Tamas, totaling 16 types of personalities under which all people can be grouped.

The seven types of Sattva are: Brahma Sattva, Mahendra Sattva, Varuna Sattva, Kubera Sattva, Gandharva Sattva, Yama Sattva and Rishi Sattva.

The six types of Rajas Sattva are: Asura Sattva, Rakshasa Sattva, Patacara Sattva, Sarpa Sattva, Praita Sattva and Sakuna Sattva.

The three types of Tamas Sattva are Pasava Sattva, Matsya Sattva and Vanaspatya Sattva.

Discussion

Keeping the above in the backdrop, the authors wish to develop their arguments on four issues as follows.

**Trigunas are the psychological manifestations of the Tridoshas**

This sevenfold classification of people with respect to the Gunas is similar to the sevenfold classification of people with respect to the Dosha Prakriti. In fact, it is identical in as much as one is concerned with the body constitution (Doshas = physical = Vata, Pitta and Kapha Prakriti), while the other is concerned with the mental or psychological characteristics exhibited by people with these Doshas (Gunas = psychological = Sattva, Rajas and Tamas Gunas). Taking these two striking classifications one step further, it would not be wrong to say that the physical constitution leads to the corresponding psychological attributes in a person or vice versa as both are interdependent. Indian tradition does not share the Cartesian dichotomy of the body and the mind as is common in western psychological thinking. In fact, the interplay between the mind (Sattva), soul (Atman) and body (Sharira) in a tripod allusion is the cornerstone of Ayurvedic philosophy.\[16\]

**Interaction of Tridosha and Triguna to complement the psyche of man**

In the words of Charaka, “The psyche is of three types—Pure, Rajas and Tamas. The pure is said as devoid of defects due to having beneficial fraction whereas Rajas and Tamas are defective because of the fractions of agitation and ignorance respectively. Out of these three types of psyche, each one has got innumerable sub-divisions due to relative degrees and variations in interaction of psyche and body according to species. Body follows psyche and vice versa. Hence some of the types of psyche are described here as illustrations by showing their similarity with some well known symbols”.\[17\] After this, Charaka goes on to describe the 16 personality traits with examples, which has not been quoted here for obvious constraints. Though Charaka has described the 16 personality traits, he has not detailed them as much as he has detailed the biological aspects of personality, namely Vata, Pitta and Kapha Prakritis. For a further understanding of the psychological aspects of these physical traits, we have to look elsewhere for the delineation.

“There are two basic laws of the Gunas that are crucial in understanding their workings. The first law of the Gunas is ‘the law of alternation’. The three Gunas are ever in dynamic interaction. All three forces remain intertwined, affecting each other in various ways. Rajas and Tamas exist in the field of Sattva, Tamas and Sattva are found in the field of Rajas, and Sattva and Rajas move in the field of Tamas. The essence of the three qualities is their interplay. Rarely is seen pure Tamas, pure Rajas or pure Sattva. There must ever be readiness for the Gunas to change. The second law of the Gunas is ‘the law of continuity’. The Gunas tend to hold their particular natures for a certain period once they come into dominance. Substances stabilize on the level of one of the three Gunas. While it is initially difficult for Tamas to become Rajas, or for Rajas to become Sattva, once they do so they will continue in that same quality.”\[20\]

**Understanding the working of Tridosha and Triguna to categorize/typecast people**

The classification of people into types can be noticed in a variety of literature ranging from dramaturgy (where it is restricted to heroes and heroines leading to around 384 varieties or types)\[14\] to sexual science like Kathsaisstra or Kamasutra where the authors expound about the classification of men and women on the basis of their physical and psychological characteristics. This shows that typology or categorizing people into different categories is not a new field of enterprise where Indian knowledge systems are concerned. Hence, being able to make use of this pre-existing knowledge base to develop the field further would be an obvious step in the same direction.

Although Ayurveda recognizes the uniqueness of every individual, generalization and classification of people into categories is necessary. To quote Shakespeare, “All men are not alike, clay and clay differs in dignity, whose dust is both alike”
Effects of imbalance of the Tridoshas and Trigunas:
Its predictive value

By knowing the inherent qualities of a person, it is easy to categorize a person as belonging to any of these three Doshas. But can all people be categorized into just these three groups knowing how wide a spectrum of differences we can see in them, in each and every aspect, be it the physicality or the psychological tendencies that they exhibit? What about those people who exhibit a combination of two or more Doshas? How and where are they to be represented? At this point of merger, can’t a new group of people be created who exhibit the traits of both the categories that this line is trying to bifurcate? It is not possible that the Doshas are in balance at all times. How is the imbalance of the Doshas to be understood? How can the imbalance and the resultant state of behavior and thought processes that are exhibited by this imbalance be predicted? Can this imbalance be brought back into a state of balance? If so, as is dictated by Ayurvedic principles, then how is it to be done? What would be the resultant predictive value of these Tridoshas and Trigunas? How can this and their consequent behavior be understood? This is not only highly probable but very possible too, as dictated by logic and as stated in the Charaka and Sushruta Samhitas, and also in Vaghbatacharya’s Asthanga Hrdaya. This viewpoint is expressed by Varaha Mihira[15] in his classification of people too.

“Then the Guna is the magnetic field of the soul. One Guna usually predominates and polarizes our mind and life according to its qualities. Souls become Sattvic, Rajasik or Tamasic in nature. However, in the ordinary, unrefined field of human nature, one Guna seldom prevails. After a time the other Gunas must assert themselves. Our lives are an interplay of dullness, distraction and virtue, with shifting currents of good and evil, truth and falsehood…. Only a rare human being can become so totally dominated by one Guna that the other Gunas lose their power. Such extreme types are the hardened criminal or complete Rajasik type, the super achiever or complete Tamasik type, and the selfless saint or complete Sattvic type, but even these types can have their admixtures of the other Gunas. Both Ayurveda and yoga seek to reduce the lower Gunas of Rajas and Tamas. They are factors of mental and physical disease which Ayurveda addresses and the spiritual ignorance that yoga seeks to dispel”.[20]

According to Frawley[20] “Yoga examines individuals in terms of their mental/spiritual level according to the three Gunas. Ayurveda looks at individuals in terms of their psychophysical constitution through the three Doshas. Yet Ayurveda also considers the role of the Gunas as factors of mental health and well-being and yoga considers the Doshas relative to physiological functioning. For a complete ascertainment of the individual nature, both the gunic and doshic natures must be considered… The Doshas are a biological classification that is horizontal in application with no necessary spiritual implications. A Vata type may be a saint or a sinner; the same is the case with the other two types. The Gunas are a spiritual classification that is vertical in nature. It has no necessary physical implications. A saint or sinner may be Vata, Pitta or Kapha in body” (pg. 46). Hence, it is necessary to understand and categorize people according to both the Tridosha and the Triguna classification as has been delineated in ancient Indian texts and scriptures. Trying to study people in exclusion of the other will not give a complete picture of the nature of human personality, which is a complex interplay of thoughts, emotions, predispositions and behavior, both conditioned and unconditioned.

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manasika Doshas, the pathological psychic factors, which are finally responsible for the disturbance of the three somatic factors (Vata, Pitta and Kapha). These three somatic factors are responsible for the various body ailments”.[22]

Though there is some amount of work that is done in the field of Ayurveda by scientists to establish the scientific validity of the Tridoshas, there is a possibility and a need to empirically test and validate it from the domain of psychology. This would also lead to a better categorizing of people based on the Trigunas, where people know their inherent psychological constitution, modes of behavior and conduct, which would help them to understand themselves better, leading to better adjustment in both personal and professional lives. The ripple effect of this would be to choose the best people suited for a particular field of enquiry/work, wherein people are satisfied in their chosen professions, giving rise to a more harmonious society. The advantage of developing testing procedures that are in alignment with the laws of nature are evident, to say the least, where they would be applicable the world over, without cultural and racial overtones or biases. The uses and benefits of this exercise are innumerable and far outweigh the difficulties that would be faced in trying to develop a test of such truly global standards and applicability.

Conclusions

By importing the knowledge systems of Ayurveda and the other ancient Indian scriptures which delineate the working of human behavior and mind in detail, psychology as a science would be enriched, and be able to provide answers to many questions which are puzzling western scientists even today to a large extent. Psychology is going to gain from this exercise of going within and deep into the matter of philosophical speculation that forms an integral part of Indian psychological thought and practice.

In the above backdrop, it should be possible to group people based on their physical characteristics and be able to predict their psychological manifestations. This would also give us an opportunity to see what kinds of people are prone to which kind of health risks and how it could be avoided or cured. This would also give medical professionals an opportunity to prevent diseases rather than look for cures alone. The opportunities that this field of enquiry has to offer across different spheres of human functioning today are unlimited, to say the least.

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‘व्यक्तित्व’ का अध्ययन काफी समय से मनोवैज्ञानिकों को आकर्षित कर रहा है। ‘व्यक्तित्व’ अध्ययन के क्षेत्र में इतना बड़ा गया है कि इस पर साहित्य का अपार खजाना उपलब्ध है। दूसरी ओर, मानव जाति की सामाजिक – जातीय गतिशीलता इस उभरते मैथिली संदर्भ में मनोवैज्ञानिकों को ‘व्यक्तित्व सिद्धांत’ को विकसित करने के प्रेरित कर रही है। ताकि संस्कृति, जाति और जन्म की विभिन्नता के बावजूद व्यक्तित्व अध्ययन की सार्वभौमिक व प्राथमिक उपयोगिता निकट हो सके। इस उभरती पृष्ठभूमि में शायद ‘आयुर्वैदिक’ की एक महत्वपूर्ण भूमिका है क्योंकि व्यक्तित्व के लक्षण और प्रकार का एक संदर्भितक व अनुभवव्य आधार प्रदान करने में यह सक्षम है। ये आयुर्वैदिक अवधारणाएं सम्पूर्ण मानव जाति को जाति, रंग व लिंग भेद के बावजूद लाभ होती हैं। अतः इस ‘आयुर्वैदिक’ज्ञान को, जिसने प्राचीनकाल से इतना कुछ दिया है और व्यक्तित्व के कई मुद्दों को मनोवैज्ञानिक परिप्रेक्ष्य में मान्य किया है, का निर्माण दिलचस्प है। सत्य, रज और तामस गुणों को समझने में पहले से कुछ प्रयास बतल रहे हैं। इन प्रयासों को और आगे बढ़ाया जा सकता है, ताकि एक व्यापक व्यक्तित्व विचार, उत्पत्ति किया जा सके। अथवा इसका सूचना किया जा सके जो स्वास्थ्य, कैरियर, शिक्षा और जीवन के कई अन्य आयामों के निहितार्थ हो सके। प्रस्तुत शोधपत्र एक व्यक्ति – प्रस्ताव जिसका वैधिकरण किया जा सके, को विकसित करने का एक संदर्भितक प्रयास है। अतः यह लेख उनके व्यक्तित्व प्रस्ताव के संबंध अनुभवव्य वैधता के लिए केवल एक संदर्भितक ढांचा बनाता है।

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