

## Commentary

# Indian Cultural Contribution to Wellbeing

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## Scriptures

Indian Psychology begins where western psychology ends' as per many Indian Psychologists [1]. In Indian thought mind is never perceived as a separate entity. With a complementary interaction in between, the harmony exist between mind and body; but the body is the slave and the mind is master ultimately.

By intense practice of yoga and meditation this state is attained, where the mind attain control overall sensory stimuli and mind look for the ultimate, through self-realization and cosmic awareness 'Aham Brahmasmi', the total identification with the ultimate. The body is just a platform, with a highly positive and subjective transformation.

Wrong interpretation of experiential world like anxiety or depression, when severe leading to schizophrenic mind, results with occurrence of negative aberrations at emotional and cognitive level coupled with changes in psychophysiology [2]. The Benson Relaxation Response was developed in continuation with Prof. Herbert Benson's investigation on Maharishi Mahesh Yogi's Transcendent Meditation (TM). Impact of Yoga and Meditation on Psycho-physiological indicators was experimented on by Wallace. Ancient India had significant Mind Management Technologies.

Tamil, a classical language, which is rich and ancient, contains treasures of Behavior Modification Techniques. 2000 years and more back, Thiruvalluvar and Tholkappiar have thoroughly dealt with the Emotional Responses [3]. Invention of Aversion Therapy is credited to US psychologists. As a treatment procedure for alcoholics, it emerged in 1930s and later for treatment of homosexuality, was used by Dr. Sando Redo in 1950s. Since the times of Raja Bharthari (Raja Vikramaditya) however, Aversion Therapy was known to Hindus. In the Vairagyashatak, elaborate description of the techniques was written. For the treatment of disorders of desire, attachment, clinging and preoccupation with love object, it was used. Applicable even today, Aversion therapy is used as a tool for cognitive restructuring as described in Vairagyashatak. [4] Immense practical values are embedded in Ancient Techniques. Over the ages, all cultures have evolved such techniques. Distant past, can present many things to be learnt. Culminating in satiation resulting

in rejection of the addiction to certain persons, objects or situations, aversion components from these techniques form the stem. Solutions to the so called unsolvable problems can result from the use of such techniques.

Indian Psychological approach has never been documented in specific. Blending of philosophy and practical psychology can be found in our ancient educational system.

Acts are based on street smart techniques, classical and operant conditioning practice in Thenali Raman stories (eg, conditioning the cat to have fear of Milk). In irrational behaviors and thoughts wisdom is planted. Psychological principles, especially virtue, wealth and love, are elaborated in Thiruvalluvar's Thirukural, with focus towards managing self, marital life, household, Governance etc. Psycho therapeutical principles abound in the Bhagavad Gita.

Temple architecture has key lessons for understanding of self, sexuality, guilt, possession etc. The fear inducing God/Goddess forms in village boundaries were all focused towards the Desire/lust for possession, power, land etc.

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## Yogic Diet

To obtain full benefits from yoga practice, Yoga diet principles play an important part [5]. As sportsmen and pregnant women need special food, requirement of food for getting energy to sustain life is persistent. We are what we eat and food is what builds up our body. Mental and physical health are vastly affected by the type and quality of food we eat.

There is no dependence on calorie count of foods or the amount of vitamins, minerals or proteins obtained from food, according to Yogic diet philosophy. Type and quality of food is where the stress is laid upon. Even with meager amount of food better health is enjoyed by some Yogis than other people. Without bothering about taste, focus on nutrition available from food. From the recommendations of yoga, becoming a slave to taste buds by temptation is not supported. Moderation in whatever you drink and eat is also favored. For health and subsequent march to meditation and spirituality, self discipline in choice of foods is critical. Easy but difficult to follow, Yoga has a strict diet principle.

## Kinds of Food

A diet based on foods with sattva quality, otherwise called guna, is called Sattvic diet [6]. Sattvic diet restores and maintains sattvic state of living, as per Yoga and Ayurveda literature. Foods and drinks that have destructive influence on the mind or body are considered Tama sic, while those that neither lead to better health nor are destructive are Raja sic, in Sattvic system of dietary classification. Food and eating habit that is 'pure, essential, natural, vital, energy-containing, clean, conscious, true, honest, wise' are classified as Sattvic diet. Emphasis is laid on seasonal foods, fruits, dairy products, nuts, seeds, oils, ripe vegetables, legumes, whole grains, and non-meat based proteins, in Sattvic diet regimen. In modern literature, Sattvic diet is referred to as yogic diet. The diet concept discussed as Mitahara, in ancient and medieval era Yoga literature, actually means 'moderation in eating'.

## Prayer

We may ask ourselves: 'Why should we Pray? As God is omniscient, does he not know that we need to have his blessing to have the ability and strength to Pray to Him? As a cloth gets soiled, to make it clean, we put it in a bucket of hot water and add soap powder [7]. There is no need for either the water or soap for the presence of the cloth.

With the help of the active, dynamic contact of water and soap, the cloth gets cleaned. The logic behind prayer is that God knows everything, and he needs not be told, the one who prays is benefitted and is blessed by the contact he creates through prayer.

In all living religions of the world, Prayer has gained an essential place in the context of the mystical aspects. We are not telling Him something that He does not know, but the act of telling Him elevates us, sanctifies us, blesses us [8]. A wise person is not bound by his or desires and is

not subject to any kind of mandate, as Krishna told Arjuna in the third chapter. If you take yourself to be a doer, desires are only binding. You have things to do only then. There can only then be dereliction of duty.

There is no question of the self being a doer, if on the other hand, you do not look upon yourself as a doer and are awake to the knowledge of yourself. There is no doer ship and nothing to be done, therefore. A wise person is one who is happy with oneself, and one who can totally accept himself or herself because the self is acceptable. The expressed form of fullness, Ananda, is nothing but Love. Love is subject to various forms, just as wheat flour takes on names such as bread, rolls and muffins. Modifications of wheat is represented by the different names given to wheat. Love is a simple emotion similarly, which is a modification or manifestation of Ananda. Nothing but Ananda can be found when love is analyzed.

Love is manifested from Ananda, and natural qualities as sympathy, compassion and giving results from love itself. Let Ananda be the mantra to lead a happy and contented life.

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