

MANAS AND ITS ANATOMICAL CONNECTIONS: *HRIDAYA* AND *SHIRA* IN  
AYURVEDIC PERSPECTIVEDr. Vyas Vrushani<sup>1\*</sup> and Dr. Bendal Sayali<sup>2</sup><sup>1</sup> Assistant Professor, Dept. of Rasashastra and Bhaishajyakalpana, Himalaya Ayurved Chikitsalaya and Mahavidyalaya, Vadasma, Mehsana (GJ).<sup>2</sup> Assistant Professor, Dept. of Samhita Siddhanta & Sanskrit, Sardar Ayurved College and Hospital, Mehsana (GJ).

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## ABSTRACT

In *Ayurveda*, *Manas* (mind) is considered a nonmaterial entity that governs mental, emotional, and cognitive functions. Unlike the modern biomedical understanding of the mind as a function of the brain, *Ayurveda* views *Manas* as interconnected with the *Hridaya* (heart) and *Shira* (head), which play key roles in its expression and regulation. The *Hridaya* is the seat of emotions and consciousness, while the *Shira* is regarded as the center of cognition, intellect, and sensory perception. This article explores the anatomical connections of *Manas* within these regions, emphasizing their roles in overall health. Understanding these connections provides valuable insights into *Ayurvedic* treatment for mental health, offering a holistic approach to balancing the body, mind, and soul.

**KEYWORDS:** *Manas*, *Hridaya*, *Shira*, *Ayurveda*, Mental Health.

## INTRODUCTION

In the *Ayurvedic* system, *Manas* is considered the governing force of mental, emotional, and cognitive functions. Unlike the modern medical view, where the brain is seen as the sole organ responsible for mental processes, *Ayurveda* places *Manas* as a nonmaterial entity that interacts with the body through various anatomical locations. *Hridaya* (the heart) and *Shira* (the head) are two vital regions in *Ayurvedic* anatomy closely connected to *Manas*. While *Hridaya* is believed to be the seat of emotions, consciousness, and overall mental health, *Shira* houses the sensory organs and intellect, making it the center of cognition and perception.

The mind body connection in *Ayurveda* is holistic, emphasizing the interplay between mental, emotional, and physical health. This article delves into the anatomical connections of *Manas* and their significance in maintaining mental wellbeing. Through an *Ayurvedic* lens, it emphasizes that the body's physiological systems, particularly the heart and head, are crucial for mental clarity and emotional balance.

## MATERIALS

1. Classical *Ayurvedic* Texts
  - *Charaka Samhita*
  - *Sushruta Samhita*
  - *Ashtanga Hridaya*
  - *Laghutrayee*

2. Research Articles on *Ayurveda* and Mind Body Integration.
3. Textbooks on *Ayurvedic* Physiology and Psychology, specifically related to *Manas*.

## METHODOLOGY

This article employs a qualitative review methodology, focusing on.

1. A comprehensive analysis of classical *Ayurvedic* texts that describe *Manas* and its anatomical locations, particularly *Hridaya* and *Shira*.
2. Interpretation of *Ayurvedic* concepts in influencing mental and emotional health using a comparative approach to modern neuroscience and psychology.
3. Discussion of the anatomical connections of *Manas* providing insights into *Ayurvedic* treatments for mental health.

## RESULTS

The exploration of *Manas* as it relates to *Hridaya* and *Shira* reveals.

1. *Hridaya* as the seat of emotions, consciousness, and overall mental balance, influencing both physical health and emotional states. *Acharya Vagbhata* has mentioned *Sthana* of *Manas* in *Sharirasthana* - सत्त्वादिधामं हृदयं स्तनोरः कोष्ठमध्यगम्
2. *Shira* as the location where sensory input, cognition, and intellect are processed, playing a crucial role in the expression of *Manas*. In *Bhela Samhita*, there is

mention of *Sthana* of *Manas*. - शिष्टात्त्वन्तर्गतः सर्वेन्द्रियपरं मनः।

3. The interconnectedness of the mind and body in *Ayurveda* offers a holistic approach to understanding mental health, with *Hridaya* and *Shira* acting as key anatomical locations that regulate emotional and cognitive states.

#### • The Concept of *Manas* in *Ayurveda*

Before delving into the specific anatomical locations, it's important to understand the concept of *Manas* in *Ayurveda*. *Manas* is not just the intellect or cognitive function but a broader term encompassing the mind, emotions, thoughts, and consciousness. It is considered the seat of mental powers, responsible for perception, emotion, cognition, and behavior. *Manas* is also deeply linked to the *Sattva* (pure consciousness) and is intricately tied to the physiological functions of the body through the *Doshas* (*Vata*, *Pitta*, *Kapha*) and the five senses.

*Ayurveda* views *Manas* as an integral component of the mind body system, with its functions distributed across various organs and systems. The heart (*Hridaya*) and the head (*Shira*) are two primary locations where *Manas* is said to reside, with each region playing a distinct role in the mind's activities.

According to *Ayurveda*, *Manas* has following features.

- Dravyatva (Substancehood)
- Achetana (Unconscious)
- Kriyasheela (Active)
- Anutva (Subtle)
- Ekatva (Oneness)
- Panchabhautikatva (Materialistic)
- Ateendriya (beyond sensory perception)
- Ubhayatmaka (both organ of sense of action)
- Trigunatmaka (three dimensional)
- Adhishthyaka of *Indriyas* (Controller)

*Manas* has been considered as *Sarvendriyapara* i.e., controller of *Indriyas*. *Manas* is related to cognitive & conative functions and *Chitta* is responsible for intellectual activities.

#### • *Hridaya*: The Heart as the Seat of *Manas*

The concept of *Hridaya* in *Ayurveda* extends beyond the physical heart and into the realm of subtle physiology. *Hridaya* is considered the seat of both physical and emotional aspects of the individual. While Western medicine focuses primarily on the heart as an organ responsible for pumping blood, *Ayurveda* assigns it a far more profound role in the holistic understanding of the human being.

##### 1. *Hridaya* and Emotional Functioning

The heart in *Ayurveda* is believed to be the seat of emotions and desires, playing a crucial role in the processing of feelings like love, compassion, fear, and anger. It is seen as the central hub where the mind and

emotions converge, and from which they influence the rest of the body. The emotional aspect of *Manas* is thought to emanate from *Hridaya*, making it a critical location for emotional health and mental equilibrium.

According to texts such as the *Charaka Samhita*, the *Hridaya* is the location where the three primary mental functions—*Dhi* (intellect), *Dhriti* (memory), and *Smriti* (cognition)—are connected. These mental abilities are seen to be influenced by the state of the heart, and any imbalance in *Hridaya* can lead to disturbances in mental and emotional health.

##### 2. *Hridaya* and the Influence of the *Doshas*

The *Doshas*—*Vata*, *Pitta*, and *Kapha*—play a significant role in the balance of *Manas* within *Hridaya*. For instance, an imbalance in *Vata* may cause anxiety and restlessness, *Pitta* imbalances might lead to irritability and aggression, while *Kapha* imbalances can result in lethargy and depression. In *Ayurvedic* medicine, the heart's health and the balance of these *Doshas* are crucial for mental clarity, emotional stability, and overall wellbeing.

##### 3. Soulful Connection

*Hridaya* is also seen as the soulful center of the body. In some texts, it is even referred to as the location of the soul (*Atma*). The heart is said to be the bridge between the physical body and the inner, deeper aspects of consciousness, making it an essential place for meditation and introspection. It is believed that through practices like *Pranayama* (breath control) and meditation, one can cultivate mental peace and soulful growth by focusing on the *Hridaya*.

#### • *Shira*: The Head as the Seat of *Manas*

While *Hridaya* is linked to the emotional and soulful aspects of the mind, *Shira* (the head) is traditionally regarded as the location for cognitive and intellectual functioning in *Ayurveda*. The head is considered the seat of the senses, perception, and intellect, with the brain playing a central role in the mental processes of thinking, reasoning, and understanding.

##### 1. *Shira* and Intellectual Functions

In *Ayurvedic* texts, *Shira* is associated with the intellect, the cognitive functions of the mind, and the higher mental powers. The brain, located within the head, is seen as the center of perception and reasoning, where sensory information is processed and understood. The intellectual activities of *Manas*, such as decision making, memory, and critical thinking, are considered to be controlled by the brain, thus making the head an essential location for mental function.

The *Sushruta Samhita* and other texts emphasize that the head houses the "central organ" of the mind, which regulates thought processes and sensory input. This location is particularly important for understanding, analyzing, and interpreting information, which are key

aspects of *Manas* in *Ayurveda*.

## 2. *Shira* and the Role of the Nervous System

The nervous system, with its intricate network of neurons, connects the *Shira* to the rest of the body. *Ayurveda* correlates the *Shira* with the sensory organs (eyes, ears, nose, etc.), which are responsible for perceiving the external world. *Manas* receives input from these senses and processes it through the intellect, which is housed in the brain. Therefore, the brain and the head are crucial to mental clarity, intellectual pursuits, and rational thought.

## 3. *Shira* and the Mind Body Connection.

Just as the heart is seen as the center for emotions and soulfulness, the head is considered the location where mental clarity, intellectual development, and mental health are influenced. Imbalances in the *Shira*, such as those caused by physical ailments or emotional stress, can disrupt cognitive functions and impair mental health. *Ayurvedic* treatments for the head often focus on restoring balance to mental clarity, intellectual vigor, and emotional stability.

### • *Hridaya* and *Shira*: The Balance Between Emotions and Intellect

Both *Hridaya* and *Shira* are essential to the functioning of *Manas* in *Ayurveda*. While *Hridaya* governs emotional processing, soulfulness, and internal harmony, *Shira* is responsible for intellectual functions and external perceptions. The mind operates optimally when there is a balance between the two regions. Imbalances in one can affect the other, and disturbances in either can lead to mental health issues.

For instance, if the heart is troubled with excessive emotions or desires, it can cloud the intellectual functions housed in the head, leading to poor decision making or confusion. Similarly, an overly stimulated intellect, without emotional grounding, can lead to a lack of compassion or understanding, affecting one's emotional wellbeing.

*Ayurveda* emphasizes a holistic approach to maintaining balance between these two regions, promoting mental and physical health through practices like yoga, meditation, herbal remedies, and diet. These methods aim to nurture both the heart and the head, leading to a harmonious integration of emotional and intellectual aspects of *Manas*.

## DISCUSSION

*Ayurveda* presents a unique perspective on mental health, viewing *Manas* as an integral part of the body's physiology, not confined to a single organ. *Hridaya* and *Shira* are crucial anatomical sites that influence emotional health and cognition. The heart is regarded as the emotional center, where mental states manifest, while the head houses the intellect and sensory powers.

Modern science recognizes the brain's role in cognition, but *Ayurvedic* philosophy expands this understanding by emphasizing a more holistic approach, where both the heart and head are essential for the balance of *Manas*. *Ayurvedic* treatments, such as herbal formulations, yoga, and dietary adjustments, aim to promote mental clarity and emotional stability. These treatments highlight the importance of maintaining harmony between the heart, head, and mind for overall wellbeing.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the *Ayurvedic* perspective on *Manas* as an immaterial entity, influenced by anatomical locations such as the *Hridaya* and *Shira*, offers a unique and holistic approach to mental and emotional health. The interrelationship between *Manas*, *Hridaya*, and *Shira* emphasizes the dynamic balance needed for maintaining mental wellbeing. Understanding these anatomical connections can enhance *Ayurvedic* treatments for mental health, promoting a balanced mind-body-soul approach to wellness. *Ayurvedic* principles provide valuable insights into holistic therapies for mental disorders, offering a comprehensive alternative to modern mental health treatments.

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