



## IMPORTANCE OF NATURAL URGES – VEGAS IN THE MANAGEMENT OF NATURAL MEDICINE – REVIEW ARTICLE

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**ABSTRACT:** The prerequisite for reaching any of our goals and objectives (*Dharma, Artha, Kaama* and *Moksha*) is health and wellness. These are referred to as *Swaasthya* in Ayurveda and *Aarogya* in Yoga systems respectively. The management of one's lifestyle has a direct impact on maintaining health and manifesting diseases. According to Ayurveda and Yoga, *Aahara*- Diet and Dietetics, *Vihaara*- Habits & Practices, *Vichaara*- Thoughts, *Aachaara*- Daily Regimens, *Vyavahaara*- Occupation and Professions, and *Aadhyathma*- Spiritual practices play an important role in lifestyle management. The *Vihaara* comprises of the most crucial yet unnoticed issues in our daily lives namely, Physical and Mental Urges known as Vegas. Classical texts identify and describe the significance of Vegas in maintaining the health and controlling diseases. Diseases are caused by the suppression and lack of control of Natural urges. As a result, a wise person should never suppress Physical urges and allow the Mental urges uncontrolled. If violated, it can lead to variety of Somatic, Psychosomatic and Psychiatric ailments and disorders. In this article, all aspects pertaining to Vegas and their influence on disease and health management is discussed critically.

**Keywords:** *Ayurveda, Yoga, Vegas, Dhaaraneeya, Adhaaraneeya, Shaareerika, Maanasika, Urges, Reflexes.*

## INTRODUCTION:

The human body is essentially an incredible, sophisticated and interconnected system that has evolved over millions of years to adopt and interact with the natural environment (Homeostasis / *Prakrthi Sthaapana*). It possesses a multitude of mechanisms for signaling and maintaining harmony with the nature. One such mechanism is Natural Urges / Reflexes which are known as **Vegas** in Ayurveda and Yoga.

Ayurveda which is defined as '**The Science of Life**' and Yoga, as '**A way of Life**' are inherent components of Natural medicine, which essentially prescribes Life-style management comprising of Diet and Dietetics (*Aahaara*), Practices and Habits (*Vihaara*), Positive thoughts (*Vichaara*), Daily and Seasonal Regimens (*Aachaara*), Professions and Occupations (*Vyavahaara*) and Spiritual practices (*Aadhyaathma*) as the first choice of intervention in disease management, promotion of positive health and wellness.

In addition, Ayurveda recommends awareness of natural urges / reflexes and their influence on the complexity of the body and mind. To achieve effective and total benefits of Lifestyle practice, the classical texts of Ayurveda have enlisted an array of symptoms and disorders that are caused by suppression of physical natural urges (*Shareerika*) and non-

suppression of Psychological or mental (*Manasika*) urges. The physical urges (*Aadharaneeya Vegas*) should never be suppressed and mental urges (*Dhaaraneeya Vegas*) should be controlled (*Vegaan na dhaarayeth dheemaan mano vegaan na vidaarayeth*). Disordered suppressive mechanisms may contribute to neuropsychiatric disorders where individuals cannot control unwanted memories, impulses, behaviors, and emotions.<sup>[1]</sup>

The phenomenon of Suppression is usually considered within the domains of affect, cognition, and behavior. Actions involved during natural urges, though involuntary, are partially under voluntary control. These are deemed necessary considering people's individual and social well-being. Ayurveda, the most ancient, authentic and natural health care prevailing in India since the time immemorial, suggests that the natural urges should be strictly attended without disturbing their natural flow (*Vegah Pravrtthihi Unmukhathwam Moothra Pureeshaadeenam*).

### ***Dhaaraneeya Vega and Adhaaraneeya Vega***

*Vegas* are the involuntary, natural and physiological reflexes, which happen periodically at the level of body and mind.<sup>[2]</sup> Based on the plane of manifestation, *Vegas* are categorized as Physical (*Shaareerika*) and Mental (*Manasika*) urges. Physical urges are

known as *Adhaaraneeya Vegas* (Unsuppressable) and Mental urges as *Dhaaraneeya Vegas* (to be controlled). Suppression of natural urges are considered as the major cause for ill health <sup>[3]</sup> (*Rogaaha Sarvepi Jaayanthe Vega Udeerana Dhaaranaihi*) and can affect the psychosomatic axis and induce or precipitate stress induced disorders like peptic ulcer, hypertension etc. <sup>[4]</sup>

As per the major texts of Ayurveda, *Adhaaraniya Vegas* (Non-Suppressible urges) are 14 (13+ additional Kasa / Cough reflex by Vagbhata)<sup>[5]</sup> and *Dhaaraneeya Vegas* (Mental urges) are 22 in number. <sup>[6]</sup> Further, *Dhaaraneeya Vegas* are classified as *Maanasika vega* (mental)-9, *Vaachika vega* (speech)-4 and *Kayika vega* (body)-3.<sup>[7]</sup> Acharya Sushruta mentions the *Adhaaraneeya Vega* under the disease *Udaavarttha*.<sup>[8]</sup> *Adhaaraneeya Vegas* <sup>[9]</sup> are- *Vata* (Urge of Flatus), *Vit* (Urge to defecate), *Muthra* (Urge to micturate), *Shukra* (Urge to Ejaculate), *Udgaara* (Urge to Burp), *Kshavathu* (Urge to Sneeze), *Kshudha* (Hunger), *Nidra* (Sleep), *Kaasa* (Urge to Cough), *Shrama Shwaasa* (Urge to control breath after exercise), *Jrumbha* (Urge to Yawn), *Ashru* (Control tears), *Chhardhi* (Urge to vomit). The following are listed as the *Dhaaraneeya Vegas* (Mental urges) by Acharyas- *Lobha* (Greed),

*Shoka* (Sorrow), *Bhaya* (Fear), *Krodha* (Anger), *Maana* (Pride), *Nirlajja* (Shamelessness), *leershya* (Jealousy), *Athiraaga* (Over attachment).

Apart from these, Acharya Charaka recommends certain discipline to be followed in speech like - avoid *Parusha* (Harsh words), *Athi* (talking too much), *Anrutha* (Lies), *Soochaka* (Deliberately using words to hurt), and *Akalayukta* (Irrelevant talk).<sup>[10]</sup>

*Vegadharana* as a cause for disease manifestation is a unique feature to Ayurveda and removing or avoiding the causatives (*Nidana Parivarjana*) is the first line of treatment. <sup>[11]</sup> Controlling or suppressing the natural urges can affect the *Srothas* (Circulatory channels). Suppression and forceful evacuation of physical urges and non-controlling of mental urges initiates aggravation of *Vatha dosha* and gradually affect the homeostasis of the body. *Vatha dosha* is the stimulator and the one that guides the other *Dosha* (*functional entities namely Vatha, Pitta and Kapha*), *Dhatus* (Tissues) and *Malas* (Excretory products) to carry out their function. Any obstruction or abnormal movement of *Vatha* can cause disturbances both at physical and mental dimension. Thus, the treatment for all the conditions / diseases caused by not following

the principles of urges is aimed at bringing the *Vatha dosha* back to its normalcy.

#### **DISCUSSION:**

According to Ayurveda, the ultimate root cause of all diseases is the suppression of the physical urges and non-controlling of the mental urges. Often, the natural urges are suppressed in order to follow the social code of conduct, work pressure, sedentary habits, table mannerisms etc. To be healthy and happy one has to practice and follow the principles and rules of controlling the *Manasika Vegas* and not suppressing the *Shaareerika Vegas*. This rule is applicable to Preventive, Therapeutic, Rejuvenative, and Rehabilitative management of all types of diseases. Management of *Vegas* can be considered as the first line of Lifestyle prescription because this is a non-invasive, non-pharmacological, no cost, natural and practical way of self-health care. Contrary to the progress of civilization and quality of life in every field, worldwide, there are sporadic sudden deaths happening among the young adults and children with unknown reasons. This may be attributed to improper Lifestyle practices including ignorance or negligence about the importance of *Vegas*. So far research has not explored much in this area of lifestyle management.

From the literature of Ayurveda, it can be noted that many mild to severe and serious health issues can crop up due to non-following of the dictated rules and cautions about the *Vegas*. Suppression of non-suppressible urges can have an adverse effect on various systems of the body. The effects could vary from a simple symptom to involvement of multi-organ systems. Few localized symptoms listed in the classical texts of Ayurveda are-

Suppression of *Pureesha* (defecation), *Muthra* (micturition), *Adho Vatha* (flatus passing), *Kshavathu* (sneezing), *Kaasa* (cough), *Kshuth* (hunger), *Pipaasa* (thirst) and *Nidra* (sleep) *Vega* can cause different types of headaches.

Constipation is a common occurrence among the people who suppress Micturition, Defecation, *Rethas* (seminal discharge), Erection, Thirst, Hunger and Sleep reflexes. Eye disorders are caused by the suppression of *Bhaashpa* (tears), *Chhardhi* (vomiting) and sleep reflexes.

Ear disorders are caused due to suppression of thirst.

Obstruction of Urine, Feces and Flatus are observed by suppression of Flatus passing reflex.

Suppression of Hunger, Thirst, Sleep, Defecation, Flatus passing, Cough and *Nishwasa* (breathing reflexes) cause weakness, loss of immunity and strength.

Suppression of Vomiting, Defecation result in various Skin diseases and allergies.

Suppression of Sneezing reflex causes weakness of Sensory organs.

Suppression of natural urges can have a large-scale effect on the organ systems. <sup>[12]</sup> <sup>[13]</sup>

Respiratory system is affected by suppression of Defecation reflex, Vomiting reflex, Eructation reflex and Cough reflex.

Cardiovascular system is influenced by suppression of Seminal discharge reflex, Defecation reflex, Flatus passing reflex, Eructation reflex, Thirst reflex, Cough reflex and Breathing reflex.

Gastrointestinal System is afflicted by suppressing the Belching reflex, Flatus passing reflex, Tears reflex, Breathing reflex, Hunger reflex, Cough reflex, Defecation reflex and Thirst reflex.

The Genitourinary System is prone to several disorders by suppressing Micturition reflex, Seminal discharge reflex, Flatus passing reflex and Defecation reflex.

These symptoms, disorders or disease conditions are manifested due to the redirection of the normal movement of Vata, ingestion and exposure of incompatible sensory objects through natural orifices and accumulation of macro and micro excretory products produced within the body. Vegas help, support and protect the system by giving

an alarm signal for evacuation of the wastes from the body. If the wastes are not excreted at the proper time, it disturbs the homeostasis between the four essential pillars of life namely, body (*Shareera*), senses (*Indriya*), mind (*Manas*), and consciousness (*Atma*).

While, the physical urges shouldn't be willfully suppressed, the *manasika Vegas* should be controlled. <sup>[14]</sup> The *manasika Vegas* enumerated in *Brihathrayee* literature can be included under the *Ari Shad Vargas* (Six enemies of peaceful life). According to Ayurveda and Yoga the *Manas* (Mind) which is considered as a constituent of life, disease, health, happiness and salvation functions differently, with multiplicity of thoughts, and in an unpredictable speed and velocity. These are attributed to its nature embedded with the three primordial qualities namely ***Sattva***, ***Rajas*** and ***Tamas***. The mental urges are due to the action of *Rajas* and *Tamas*. To be healthy and happy, one has to shatter *Tamas*, activate *Rajas* and finally cultivate *Sattva*. To achieve this objective, the mental *urges* should essentially be controlled and not let go on their own ways (*Mano vegaan vidaarayeth*).

Mechanism of the onset of different Psychological and Psychiatric conditions and disorders through the *Manasika Vegas* has been well explained in *Bhagavad Gita*, the very first literature on Indian Psychology and

Counseling which has been presented pictorially.

Attachment (*Sanga*) leads to Desire (*Kaama*) leads to Anger (*Krodha*) leads to Delusion (*Sammoha*) leads to Loss of Memory (*Smrithi Vibhrama*) leads to Loss of Discrimination (*Buddhi Naasha*) results in End of Life (*Pranashyathi*).<sup>[15]</sup>

In order to be free from mental disorders, and lead a healthy and happy life, one has to control these *Dharaneeya Vegas*. These urges can be controlled by establishing mastery over the unstable Mind through the practice of any one or all the different paths of Yoga, namely; *Jnaana Yoga* (Knowledge oriented), *Karma Yoga* (Actions and duties), *Bhakti Yoga* (Divinity) and *Raja Yoga* (Scientific practice).

In order to attain a positive, perfect and holistic health, one has to understand the concepts of Lifestyle management prescribed in Ayurveda and Yoga which essentially encompasses the laid down principles of natural urges. It is also said that the physical urges should never be evacuated by force and their physiological and natural flow should be ensured by following proper daily regimens (*Dinacharya*), seasonal regimens (*Rutu Charya*), *Sadvritta*, seasonal cleansing (*Rutu Samshodhana*) as described in Ayurveda. The mental urges also should never be suppressed

by force but should be controlled by mastering the mind through the practice of Yoga.

### CONCLUSION:

*Vegas* are Involuntary, Natural and Physiological reflexes / urges encompassing both body and mind. Majority of the ancient authors uphold commonality to the enumeration, classification, and pathologic effect in case of violation of the principles of *Vegas*. Suppression of physical urges and non-controlling of the mental urges lead to various physical and psychological symptoms or diseases. Therefore, management of natural urges should essentially be a part of Lifestyle prescription.

The principles of Ayurveda and Yoga can be integrated together with modern medicine to evolve a comprehensive Lifestyle prescription for preventive, therapeutic and rehabilitative management of diseases.

As there are not many research studies on the concept of *Vegas*, its importance and role in causing the disease, it is to be viewed seriously by the scientific committees of research. Also, to create awareness, a comprehensive knowledge of *Vegas* should be introduced into the syllabus of primary and higher education.

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