



Review Article

SATTVAJAYA CHIKITSA: NEED OF TODAY'S ERA

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ABSTRACT

Speed, accuracy and over ambitiousness are the prime demands of today's metaphysical society. People can't even pay attention to their physical and mental health. Irregular food habits, suppression of natural urges, insomnia are becoming the part and parcel of today's life, giving rise to psychosomatic disorders. Ayurveda, the ancient system of Indian medicine evolved through millennium contains clear potentials of the modern understanding of natural science. Inspire of its historically inevitable beginnings, the science took in the ancient period itself the momentous step from the magic-religious therapeutics to rational therapeutics i.e., in the terminology of physicians themselves from *Daivavyapashraya Chikitsa* to *Sattvavajaya Chikitsa*. Ayurveda has considered the mental and physical diseases as two separate specialized subjects in certain contexts. However, no line of demarcation has been drawn between the physical and mental diseases and a flexible psychosomatic approach has been put forward. Ayurveda emphasizes its treatment modalities into three *Chikitsa* viz., *Sattvavajaya Chikitsa*, *Yuktivyapashraya* and *Daivavyapashraya Chikitsa*. *Sattvavajaya* is the mental restraint, or a "mind control" as referred by *Charaka*, is achieved through "spiritual knowledge, philosophy, fortitude, remembrance, and concentration. Health regimens as (*Swasthivritta*), good conduct (*Sadvritta*), and yoga acts as a traditional mental health promoting practices.

INTRODUCTION

Sattvavajaya Chikitsa is one amongst the brainchild concepts of Acharya Charaka. *Sattvavajaya Chikitsa* is not merely a form of treatment, but it is meant to be used for the maintenance of the mental health of a human being as well. The definition of *Sattvavajaya chikitsa* is, "*Sattvavajaya Punah Ahitebhyo Arthebhyo Manonigraha*" which reveals that there are three words namely *Ahita*, *Artha* and *Manonigraha*^[1]. The word *Ahita* refers to something unwholesome to others^[2], the term *Artha* means object of a sense faculty or mind^[3]. The term *Manonigraha* means control of mind which can be both subjective and objective. "Self-control of mind" is one of the most difficult tasks and need a perfect combination of

desire, determination and dedication. According to Lord Krishna in Bhagwad Gita, it can be achieved by *Abhyasa* (practice) and *Vairagya* (detachment)^[4] which is actual *Sattvavajaya*. The tools of *Manonigraha* are- Regulation of thought process (*Chintya*), followed by consideration (*Vicharya*) after logical reasoning (*Uhya*), then concentration on it (*Dhyeya*) and making a determination (*Sankalpa*)^[5]. The mental restraint or the goal of *Sattvavajaya* can be achieved by, "*Manaso Jnana, Vijnana, Dhairya, Smriti, Samadhibhi* viz., *Jnana* (spiritual knowledge), *Vijnana* (skilled/textual knowledge), *Dhairya* (patience and will power), *Smriti* (remembrance) and *Samadhi* (concentration)^[6].

The classical texts of Ayurveda with their commentaries, other Ayurvedic texts and journals, relevant websites, articles and presentation were referred.

The word *Sattvavajaya* comprises of two words '*Sattva*' and '*Avajaya*' where, *Sattva* refers to being existence, entity, intellect, consciousness or mind, and one of three *Gunas* of mind^[7] while *Avajaya* means conquer, victory and control over it^[8]. Thus, the word

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Sattvavajaya refers to self-command, strength of mind or character^[9] whereas *Chikitsa* means treatment/management. *Sattvavajaya Chikitsa* potentiates *Sattva* with the intentions of modifying maladaptive symptoms caused by *Rajas* (arrogance) and *Tamas* (indolence) which are considered as illness-causing mental humors^[10].

There is no harm in correlating Acharya Charaka's *Sattvavajaya Chikitsa* with modern psychotherapy. The comprehensive definition of Psychotherapy given by Wolberg states that "Psychotherapy is the treatment, by psychological means, of the problem of an emotional nature in which a trained person deliberately establishes a professional relationship with the patient with the object of removing, modifying, or mediating disturbed patterns of behaviour, retarding existing symptoms and promoting positive personality growth and development"^[11]. The *Sattvavajaya Chikitsa* also works on the same grounds as modern psychotherapy. It is full-fledged, non-pharmacological psychotherapy described in ancient literature. Acharya Charaka was the first scholar to use the term "*Sattvavajaya*". Acharya Charaka mentioned the *Sattvavajaya Chikitsa* only in one chapter of his classic text^[12], while we find traces of this form of *Chikitsa* all over the *Charaka Samhita*.

The classical texts of Ayurveda with their commentaries, journals, relevant websites, articles and presentation were referred.

Trividha Aushadha

The method of treatment in Ayurveda as a whole has been classified into three categories by Charaka.

1. *Daiva Vyapasrya* – Divine therapy
2. *Yukti Vyapasrya* – Rational therapy
3. *Sattvavajaya* – Psycho therapy

Modalities of Manas Dosa Chikitsa

The treatment of the *Manasika Vyadhis* is explained as-

1. **Trivargasya Anveksan:** To repeatedly recollect and attend to the course of conduct related to the virtues of *Dharma*, *Artha* and *Kama*. Charaka states that a person should strive to discard the harmful and unwholesome regimens and adopt the wholesome regimens in regard to the above virtues.
2. **Tatvidya Seva:** To render service to those who are well versed in the nature and cure of psychic diseases.
3. **Atmadinam Sarvasah Vijnanam:** To obtain all round knowledge of the *Atma*, *Desa*, *Kula*, *Kala*, *Bala* and *Sakti*. Such knowledge should be repeated from time to time and revised according to *Desa* and *Kala*.^[13]

These three steps are advised as treatment for *Manasa Dosas*.

- Acharya Vagbhatta also described the treatment of *Manas Dosa* as *Dhi* (*Buddhi* or intellect), *Dhairya* (fortitude) and *Atmavijnana*.^[14]
- In the description of *Sattvika Buddhi*, Bhagvad Gita states that it is that intellect which correctly determines the paths of activity and renunciation, what ought to be done and what should not be done, what is fear and fearlessness and what is bondage and what is liberation.^[15] Such *Dhi* of *Sattvika* dominance needs to be inculcated in the process of *Sattvavajaya Chikitsa*.

While describing the principles of treatment Acharya Charaka depicted the line of treatment for *Manas roga* specifically caused by *Manasa Dosha* as-^[16]

1. **Jnanam** (Spiritual knowledge or understanding)
2. **Vigyana** (Specific knowledge or scriptural knowledge)
3. **Dhairya** (Patience or controlling power)
4. **Smriti** (Memory or recall)
5. **Samadhi** (concentration)

These five aspects of *Sattvavajaya Chikitsa* contain in itself all other therapies advised for *Manas*. Also the whole of the modern psychiatry can be included into these five types-

Jnana

It means *Adhyatma Jnana*, i.e., spiritual knowledge or knowledge that the absolute *Atma* or *Brahma* is the only truth. For attaining this *Atmagyana*, Acharya Charak introduced the concept of *Satya Buddhi*, which depicts true knowledge. The emergence of this *Satya Buddhi* (*Samyak Jnana*) will decrease the *Ahamkara* of the person and will further cause declination of all desires and wishes^[17] called the *Upadha* which is the main cause of all *Dukha*^[18]. By complete avoidance of *Upadha* and understanding it the root cause of all problems, will permanently relieve the person of all *Vyadhis* and mitigate the *Rajas* and *Tamas*, similar to the description of the *Apta*, who is relieved of his *Rajas* and *Tamas* by *Jnana* and *Tapa*^[19].

Vigyana

Knowledge of the scriptures and texts which takes the person towards true knowledge is *Vigyana*. *Shastra* teaches the path of *Pravrutti* (engagement in worldly affairs) or *Nivrutti* (renunciation) to the people. Cognitive behavioral therapy can be correlated with it. Acharya Charaka in treatment of *Atatwabhinivesha* suggested to have friends and supporters to is till *Vigyana* i.e., true knowledge into them^[20]. It acts to gradually diminish the *Rajas* and *Tamas* and increase the *Sattvika Guna* of the *Manas*.

Dhairya

The aim is to bring strength or firmness by calming down the vitiated or hyper-excited state of the *Manas*. i.e., increasing the patience of the person by counselling or meditative procedures. It gives the person the courage to bear pain and other challenges in life. It can be attained by using of sound therapy create positive vibrations to result in calmness of mind which help in generating a hope in a patient to live life. This support is to give maximum empathy and create a matured level of awareness and judgement. Thus, *Dhairya* signifies level of patience

Smriti

Trying to memorize the past incidences, as Charakacharya states that only if one remembers the real nature of things he gets rid of miseries^[21]. The capacity to call up the desired object before the mind repeatedly by the use of that energy because memory is impaired in depression due to vitiated *Rajas* and *Tamas Guna*.

There are eight causes given for the improvement of *Smriti*, which could also be practiced as therapeutic measure if the person has *Alpa Smriti* and requires improvement of *Smriti* for the mitigation of the disease condition^[22].

Samadhi

Samadhi is the ultimate stage in the practice of *Yoga*, which is a state of unwavering concentration. Promoting *Samadhi* in a diseased state is trying to minimize the mental fluctuations, reduce the wavering ultimately leading to focus and tranquilized mind. It is a stage that can be achieved after diverting the *Indriyas* into *Manasa* to attain the stage of stillness. Hence there is complete cessation of all types of *Vikara* or *Dukha* or urges.^[23]

So, it can be said that *Vigyan* is better than *Jnana*, *Dhairya* is better than *Vigyan*, *Smriti* is better than *Dhairya*, *Samadhi* is better than *Smriti*.

Jnana < Vigyana < Dhairya < Smriti < Samadhi

Hence, all these five steps of Chikitsa help in normalisation of mental symptoms with physiological functions by balancing *Doshas* or hormonal level or neurotransmitters of body. So, there is no doubt, if it is said that Ayurveda has many methods as comparison to modern.

DISCUSSION

The elemental approach for treating psychiatric and psychosomatic problem in Ayurveda is *Sattvavajaya Chikitsa*. In broader context, for the cure of physical diseases, as most of the diseases are associated with some form of stress and all the patients need supportive therapies like assurance etc. Although the applied application of the *Sattvavajaya*

Chikitsa is not mentioned, we can try and apply this module to our daily habits.

- **Avoiding Pragyapradham:** (Intellectual blasphemy) impairment of *Dhee*, *Dhriti*, *Smriti*. Such persons look wholesome as unwholesome and unwholesome as wholesome.^[24]
- *Dharniya vega* is the concept to be engaged in our behavioural patterns i.e. Controlling the impulses of greed, fear, anger, jealousy, excessive attachment and malice to avoid mental illness^[25]
- **Achara Rasayana:** It refers to behavior of a person like saying only truth, devoid of anger, abstaining from alcoholic drinks and sex, abstaining from violent activities, weariness, teachers and elders, having compassion, consuming milk and ghee daily, possessing good conduct, not being mean, inclined to studying books having spiritual knowledge, controlling of senses, respecting elders, regularly studying scriptures and having self-control. The code of conduct and *Achara Rasayana* both have a basic and easy methodology to gain a peaceful mindset.^[26]
- **Sadvrittapalana (Following good conduct):** In Ayurveda good conduct is called *Sadvrittam*, which means leading a good life. Acharya Charaka has laid down the rules to be followed to attain good health and control sense faculties to prevent mental illness^[27]

The utilization of these techniques will assist our minds to develop a virtuous mindset and will aid to build integrity. Thus, emphasizing having a positive attitude and compassion towards life, this treatment model can be used by every individual to increase the quality of life.

Many of these techniques are also mentioned and preached by Lord Buddha. The Buddha elaborates on controlling the mind as 'Just as an archer straightens his arrow, a wise person straightens his restless and unsteady mind, which is difficult to guard and control and explained the path of purification of mind'.

CONCLUSION

Sattvavajaya Chikitsa can be a key to the empowerment of people with mental disorder as it is a holistic non-pharmacological approach and has various basic techniques to encourage personal development by involving the person himself. As the complete description of Ayurvedic psychotherapy mentioned, its utility is not only limited in mental disorders but also in systemic disorders. The one-track cognition of using this treatment model just for treating disease might be slightly incorrect. The broader concept of using the principles and dimensions of *Sattvavajaya Chikitsa* in day-to-day life

is a way to manage and cope with the challenges in life. These psychotherapeutic techniques were initially also available in spiritual and philosophical compendia like *Shrimad Bhagavad Gita. Mahabharata* is a great textbook on psychopathology and *Bhagavad Gita* is a great treatise in psychotherapy.

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