

## Concept of *Satwavajaya Chikitsa* (Psychotherapy) in Manasroga

Sachinkumar Sahebrao Patil \*

Department of Kayachikitsa, M. A. M.'s Sumatibhai Shah AyurvedMahavidyalaya, Malwadi, Hadapsar, Pune- 411028, India.

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### Abstract

Health is defined as, a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely an absence of disease or infirmity. *Manas* or *Satwa* plays an important role in keeping person healthy, even during the time of physical disorder. *Manas* helps in relieving it. But during present day's lifestyle and stress related environment, human beings are suffering from many psychological disorders, As many as 450 million people suffer from a mental or behavioural disorder. Among them nearly 1 million people commit suicide every year (WHO). So this balancing nature of mind nowadays is getting deprived under the influence of growing stress and strain in life. But treatment is not absolute in the modern science, but Ayurveda may provide better treatment modality in controlling or curing these than other existing sciences. *Satwavajaya Chikitsa* is a unique non-pharmacological approach for treating the mental disorders. It is the first of its kind and if developed can really prove much useful. So *Satwavajaya* plays major role to get rid of these problems. So it is very much essential to understand the concept of *Satwavajaya Chikitsa*.

**Keywords:** *Satwavajaya*; Psychotherapy; Manas; Satva

### 1. Introduction

Acharya *Charaka* explains Ayurveda in the form of *Trisutra* i.e. *Hetu*, *Linga* and *Aushadha*. *Hetu* means the causative factor for the disease, *Linga* means symptoms of the disease and *Aushadha* is explained in the form of medicine.<sup>[1]</sup>

*Chikitsa* is defined as the process in which the vitiated *Doshas* are brought to normal state and this equilibrium state of *Doshas* will be maintained.<sup>[2]</sup>

*Chikitsa* is classified on different basis, as *Dwividha*, *Trividha*, *Chaturvidha Chikitsa* etc. among these, *Trividhachikitsa* is given much importance. *Daivyapashraya*, *Yuktivyapasharya* and *Satwavajaya Chikitsa* are considered as *Trividha chikitsa*.

*Satwavajaya Chikitsa* is one among the *Trividha Chikitsa*, which not only prevents the impairments of *Dhee*, *Dhriti* and *Smriti* but also brings them back to the normal state, playing a significant role in the maintenance of harmonious state between these three factors ultimately leading to happy healthy state of individual<sup>[4]</sup>

The word *Satwa* refers to (mind) <sup>[5]</sup> and *Avajaya* refers to conquering or win over. <sup>[6]</sup> Hence *Satwavajaya* means to have control over the mind and thus abstaining from things that are not good for the health.<sup>[7,8]</sup>

A person is called healthy not only when *Dosha*, *Dhatu*, *Mala* and *Agni* are in equilibrium condition but also the *Manas* should be in normal condition in the presence of *Atma* for proper and healthy state of *Shareera* and *Indriya*.<sup>[9]</sup> So also WHO also considers "Health as a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely an absence of

\*Corresponding author: Sachinkumar Sahebrao Patil

disease or infirmity”.<sup>[10]</sup> So *Manas* or *Satwa* plays an important role in keeping person healthy, even during the time of physical disorder *Manas* helps in relieving it. So *Satwavajaya* has major role in treatment.

Each person is different from another because of his discriminatory, creative and instinctive mind. Mind is a special gift to mankind, which is very complex in nature. It has potentiality to act mainly as dual nature. It is creative as well as destructive, positive as well as negative, active as well as dull, happy as well as sad. All these entities are well balanced by mind knowingly or unknowingly to people in their life. But this balancing nature of mind nowadays is getting deprived under the influence of growing stress and strains in life. Intellect, thinking power, memory, temperament, behavior, social attitude, etc., of an individual depends upon mental faculties. So to get rid of these problems it is very much essential to understand the concept of *Satwavajaya Chikitsa*.

So this present review article throws light on the concept of *Satwavajaya Chikitsa* in Ayurveda and its utility in *Chikitsa*.

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## 2. Material and methods

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

### 2.1. Trividha Aushadha

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

- *Daiva Vyapashrya* – divine therapy
- *Yukti Vyapashrya* – rational therapy
- *Satvavajaya* – psycho therapy

### 2.2. Daiva Vyapashraya

It is a sort of divine therapy derived mainly from *Atharveda*. It is a faith therapy used in management of *Manasaroga*. Faith is a part and parcel of human psychology and this treatment is a play of faith where in patient should have full belief in the medicine and the method of treatment.

The term '*Daiva*' essentially refers to, belonging to divine, celestial, to the action of past life. So this therapy is designed to exhaust evil acts of the past to combat *Daivikruta* diseases.<sup>[11]</sup>

The word '*Vyapashraya*' refers to depending on taking refuge with, having recourse to.

*Daivavyapashraya* is literally translated to mean any therapy that depends on or linked to *Daiva* or unknown. As a matter of fact, *Daivavyapashraya* is concerned with all the unknown circumstance, which is beyond the purview of reasoning. Hence this treatment is often referred to as spiritual therapy.

Some of the measures are concerned with religious rituals like benedictions and offerings. Hence the term magico-religious practice has aptly been applied. 'Occult practice', 'Faith practices' are terms which are generally employed to suggest this "*Daiva Vyapashraya*' treatment.

In *Atharvaveda* and *Kousitski Sutra*, the two authentic sources of this therapy, many 'occult' method have been described to deal with demons and with crafts because *Atharvans* were the first to establish relation between demons and diseases.<sup>[13]</sup>

The methods adopted by Charaka as a part of *Daiva Vyapashraya* treatment are

- *Mantra* (Hymns)
- *Aushadha* (Amulets, Talisman)
- *Mani* (Wearing of gems)
- *Mangala* (Auspicious ceremony)
- *Bali* (Offering to god)
- *Upahara* (Gift)
- *Homa*(Oblations)

- *Niyamana* (Observance of scriptural rules)
- *Prayascita* (Atonement)
- *Upavasa* (Fasting)
- *Svastyayana* (Chanting of auspicious, Hymns)
- *Pranipata* (Observance to the god)
- *Gamana* (Going to pilgrimage)

### 2.3. *Yukti Vyapashraya*

The term 'Yukti' refers to union, connection, reasoning device, strategy, artifice, expedients and application.[14] In medical context the word however is in the sense of application of reason to diagnose and treat the diseases. Charaka counts *Yukti* among the means of *Pramana* (valid knowledge) and defines it as utilization of rational faculties by the physician, oath for understanding the causes and the nature of the diseases and for deciding upon proper course of treatment.

*Yukti Vyapashraya* is based on *Yukti*, or rational thinking and represents careful and purposeful employment of a drug or a method of treatment. It's by far the most scientific of the methods in as much as it removes the causes and undertakes to diffuse the pathogenesis.

Charaka defines, *Yukti Vyapashraya Chikitsa* is a judicious use of *Ahara* and *Aushadha* according to proper use, plan or *Yojana*.<sup>[15]</sup>

*Charaka* mentions three types of therapies; *Antahparimarjana* (internal cleansing), *Bahirparimarjana* (external cleansing) and *Shastra Pranidhana* (surgical methods).<sup>[16]</sup>

### 2.4. *Satwavajaya Chikitsa*

As there is detailed description of *Yukti Vyapashraya Chikitsa* (rational therapy) for the treatment of *Sharirika Roga* (somatic diseases) in Ayurvedic texts,<sup>[17]</sup> a specific line of treatment is essential for the management of *Manasa Roga*[18] to normalize *Manasa Doshas* similar to the Tridosha theory related to bodily disorders. It should be different from *Daiva Vyapashraya Chikitsa*, which to some extent also include treatment of psychiatric disorders. So considering these factors *Satwavajaya*, a special method of treatment especially for mental diseases has been found very effective. It was Acharya *Charaka*, who introduced *Satwavajaya Chikitsa* for mental disorders,<sup>[19]</sup> which is a non-pharmacological approach equivalent to modern psychotherapy. The word *Satwavajaya* comprises of 'Satwa' and 'Avajaya'. The word 'Satwa' is derived from the Sanskrit root 'Sat' by adding suffix 'Ktva'. The word 'Avajaya'- Ava + Ji - Achaparajaye 'Yenendralokhavajayaya' means overcoming, victory, conquer<sup>[21,22]</sup> and the word 'Satwavajaya' refers to self command, strength of mind or character.<sup>[22]</sup>

In other words, *Satwavajaya* literally means overcoming of mind or victory over mind or control of mind.<sup>[23]</sup>

*Satwavajaya* therapy aims at the control of mind by restraining the mind from desires for wholesome objects.

Acharya *Charaka* was the first person to use the word *Satwavajaya* but only once. No further description of *Satwavajaya* is available in *Charaka Samhita*. Even, this word is never mentioned anywhere else in the ancient literature. It seems that Acharya *Charaka* used the word to name the treatment of the diseases where *Satwa's* balance is interfered with. Hence, he has defined it as a method of controlling or restraining the mind from unwholesome objects. It can be achieved by increasing *Satwa* to subdue the exaggerated *Rajas* and *Tamas*. The definition gives a lot of scope for expansion i.e. "*Satvavajayah Punah Ahitebhyo Arthebhyo Mano Nigraha*" A look at the above definition shows 3 words i.e. *Ahita*, *Artha* and *Mano Nigraha*.

- *Ahita* - Does not carry any special meaning, it just conveys that something is unwholesome to the other.
- *Artha* - It is a wide variety of objects each *Indriya* has its own object that only it can perceive, i.e. *Gandha* is the object of *Ghranendriya* etc.

*Satva* which is considered as *Ubhayendriya* has been referred to as having at least five *Artha*. Apart from these five, anything that can be perceived by *Satva* can also be included in this category.<sup>[24]</sup> It can be inferred that *Artha* can be either *Panchendriyarth* or *Mano Artha*. But in *Satwavajaya*, it is quite logical to consider *Mano Artha*, though it may not be objectionable include *Panchandriyarth* because ultimately it is *Satva* that materializes the perception of the objects,

not *Indriyas*. *Asatmendriyarth Samyoga* is regarded as one of the principal causes of disease. So, avoidance of *Ati*, *Hina*, and *Mithya* Yoga of *Chintya*, *Vicharya*, *Uhya*,

*Dhyeya* and *Sankalpa* should serve to cure the Psychiatric disorders. E.g. sitting in darkness is *Hinayoga* for *Chaksurendriya* leads to abnormal thought process in mind leads to different *Manasa Roga*.

*Asatmyennndriyarth Samyoga* (Incompatible contact of *Indriyarthas*) is regarded as one of the principal causes of disease (physical or mental). So avoidance of excessive, deficient and or erroneous (*Hina*, *Mithya*, *Atiyoga*) usage of *Chintya*, *Vicharya*, *Uhya*, *Dhyeya* and *Samkalpa* should serve to cure the psychiatric disorders.

## 2.5. Mano Nigraha (control of mind)

This mind control 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.

It can be achieved as per Lord Krishna in Bhagavadgita through *Abhyasa* (practice) and *Vairagya* (detachment).<sup>[25]</sup>

In *Rigveda*, the controlling of the mind, has been described by comparing it with binding of yoke with a strap.<sup>[26]</sup>

The other types of *Mano Nigraha* which are physician’s interference with patients mind control.

This can be achieved by various ways:

- By regulating the thoughts process – *Chintya*
- By analyzing the thoughts and ideas – *Vicharya*
- By channeling the presumptions with logical reasoning - *Uhya*
- By polishing the objectives by concentrating on it – *Dhyeya*
- By proper guidance and advice for taking right decision – *Sankalpa*.<sup>[27]</sup>

While describing the principles of treatment Acharya Charaka prescribes the line of treatment for *Manasa Roga* specifically caused by *Manasa Dosha*.

- *Jnanam* (spiritual knowledge or true understanding)
- *Vijnanam* (specific knowledge or scriptural knowledge)
- *Dhairya* (patience or controlling power)
- *Smriti* (memory or recall)
- *Samadhi* (mental equanimity, meditation or concentration).<sup>[28]</sup>

Reconcile the causative factors of *Manasa Roga*. The same methods like *Dhee*, *Dhairya* and *Atmadi Vigyana* have also been mentioned.<sup>[29]</sup>

Acharya Charaka has mentioned the following line of treatment for management of *Manasa Roga* which resembles the techniques of *Satwavajaya Chikitsa*.<sup>[30]</sup>

- *Ahitanam Anupsevana* and *Hitanam Upasevana*

One should strive for discarding *Ahitakara* (harmful) and adopting *Hitakara* (useful) after careful consideration. In other words, it has been advised that mind should be restrained from unwholesome objects and engaged in wholesome, which is infact *Satwavajaya* or Ayurvedic psychotherapy.

- *Trivarga Anvekshanam*

While treating the mentally ill person, the course of conduct relating to *Trivarga* i.e. three objectives of life viz. *Dharma* (virtue), *Artha* (wealth) and *Kama* (desire) should be attended because *Trivarga* is responsible for *Sukha* and *Dukha* etc. Therefore, contemplation of *Trivarga* is must, which can be attained by *Jnana* (knowledge or cognition).

- Tadvidyaseva

One should go in the service of those who are well versed in nature and treatment of mental diseases i.e. specialities of the therapy and the therapy should be done by them. It seems that *Saywavajaya Chikitsa* was done by specialities at that time.

- Atmadi Vigyanam

One should attain the knowledge of Atma (self), Desha (place), Kula (family), Kala (time factor), Bala (mental strength), and Shakti (capacity). The knowledge of Atma (self) implies the knowledge as the 'who I am' and 'what is conducive to my health'. Similarly, the knowledge about Desha implies the knowledge of the locality and propriety of regimen prescribed in the local conditions. In the same way knowledge with regards to the Kula, Kala, Bala and Shakti also play an important role in the treatment of Manasa Roga.

## 2.6. Other Psycho-supportive techniques

While describing the management of *Unmada Roga* (psychosis), *Madatyaya* (substances induced disorders) and other ailments like *Jwara*, *Atisara*, *Hikka*, *Chardi* of psychogenic origin, Acharya *Charaka* has mentioned some psychological supportive techniques which can serve as measures of *Satwavajaya Chikitsa*. The same has been described in *Astanga Hridaya*. These are summed up as follows:

### 2.6.1. Jwara (fever)

- *Ashvasana* - (assurance)
- *Harshana* - (excitement)
- *Ishta Labha* - (attainment of desired and pleasant objects)
- *Kama Jwara* - Krodha
- *Bhaya* and *Shoka Jwara* - Kama, Krodha
- *Krodha Jwara* - Ichha

### 2.6.2. Madataya (alcoholism)

- *Harshani Kriya* (recreational therapy)

### 2.6.3. Hikka (hiccup)

- *Trasana* - (frightening)
- *Vismapana* - (doing surprising acts)
- *Vismarana* - (dememorising)
- *Bhaya* - (creating fear)
- *Harsha* - (sudden excitement)
- *Sahasa* - (Exertion)

### 2.6.4. Atisara (dysentery)

- *Bhayaja Atisara* - Ashvasana
- *Shokaja Atisara* - Harshana

### 2.6.5. Chardi (vomiting)

- *Manonukula Vakya* - (teaching pleasant statement)
- *Ashvasana* - (assurance)
- *Harshana* - (excitement)
- *Lokaprasidha Shruti* - (telling mythological stories)
- *Hitavihara* - (providing suitable activities)

### 2.6.6. Unmada (insanity)

- *Ashvasana* - (assurance)
- *Santvana* - (consoling the patient)
- *Suhrid Vakya* - (proper guidance and suggestions)
- *Dharamartha Vakya* - (preaching with religious sermons and moral statements).

- *Ishtvinashana* - (announcing the news of loss of some dear one)
- *Adbhuta Darshana* - (by exhibiting surprising events or showing extra ordinary things).
- *ParasparaPratidwandwa* - (Replacement by opposite emotions)
  - *Kamaja Unmada* - Krodha
  - *Shokaja Unmada* - Harsha
  - *Ershya Unmada*- Lobha
- *Ishta Dravya Vinashat Tatsadhrishya Prapti* (Regaining of similar objects)
  - *Santvana* (consolation)
  - *Ashvasana* (assurance)

In nutshell *Satwavajaya* i.e. Ayurvedic Psychotherapy includes promotions of *Jnana, Vigyana* by improving *Dhee, Dhriti* and *Smriti* i.e. by avoiding *Pragyaparadha*.

It can be achieved by cordial doctor - patient relationship; observance of good conduct and *Chintya, Vicharya, Uhya, Dhyeya* and *Sankalpa*.

There are some psycho-supportive techniques like assurance, guidance and suggestions, education and awareness, induction of verbal, physical and mental shock, replacement of emotions, psycho-shock therapy and recreational therapy etc.

*Satwavajaya* is that typical Ayurvedic approach which not only prevents the impairment of intellect, patience of memory, but also bring them back to a normal state, whenever they are impaired. Thus *Satwavajaya* plays a significant role in the maintenance of a harmonious state between these three important factors – intellect, memory and patience, ultimately leading to a happy healthy state of the individual.

It is quite logical here to state that patience (*Dhriti*) has a very important role to play for the successful management through *Satwavajaya*.

Charaka says that, it is the patience that restrains the mind from its harmful objects. It is a known fact that *Satwavajaya* is nothing but restraining the mind from the harmful objects. A good clue is, control the patience and control the mind.

The applied aspects of *Satwavajaya* can be summarized as follows;

- Assurance (*Ashvasana*)
- Replacement of emotions (*Pratidwandwa Chikitsa*)
- Regulation of thought process (*Chintya*)
- Retraining of ideas (*Vicharya*)
- Channelling of presumptions
- Corrections of objectives and ideas (*Dhyeya*)
- Proper guidance and advice for taking right decisions (*Sankalpa*)
- Proper control of patience (*Dhriti*)
- Fear therapy or psycho-shock therapy (*Mano Kshobha Chikitsa*)

*Satwavajaya, Ayurvedic* approaches of its own kind if developed can really prove much useful both for curative as well as a preventive purpose.

## 2.7. Uses of *Satwavajaya Chikitsa*

*Satwavajaya* is an approach which prevents the impairment of intellect, patience and memory and brings them back to normal state. There by all the measures included under *Satwavajaya* i.e. *Vijnanam, Dhairya, Smriti, Harshana, Ashwasana*.

- Individual to discriminate between thoughts and actions.
- To divert mind and makes the patients to involve with commitment in other (or) next activity.
- To regulate thought process.
- To take out phobic nucleus by making awareness of subject knowledge and true facts.
- Retraining of ideas.

- For proper guidance and advice for taking right decisions.
- They initiate Bhakti (or) regard (or) strengthen his belief in god.

These measures convey the idea of health to subconscious mind through scientific imagination. There by *Satwavajaya Chikitsa* uplift the *Satva* of the patients.

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### 3. Discussion

*Satwavajaya* is a therapeutic technique described specifically for the management of mental disorders. It refers to control the mind by withdrawing it from undesired objects. Information available in Ayurvedic classics reveals that as there is a detailed description of rational therapy for somatic diseases, similarly *Satwavajaya* implies the remedies for mental disturbance. Although elaborate descriptions of psychotherapeutic techniques are available not only in Ayurvedic texts but also in spiritual, philosophical compendia like *Shrimad Bhagawad Gita*. [31]

Lord Krishna was the first counsellor who delivered the message of Gita to Arjuna in the battle field of Mahabharata when the latter got depressed. This is a beautiful example of counselling, a sort of psychotherapy. [32]

On exploring the literature it has been found that concept of *Satwavajaya* i.e. psychotherapy has been described in brief and concise form in Ayurvedic literature. Controlling or restraining the mind from desire for unwholesome objects is nothing but *Satwavajaya*, which can be achieved by increasing *Satwa* to subdue the vitiated *Manasa Dosha* i.e. *Rajasa* and *Tamasa*.

The application of *Satwavajaya* have not been described as such in any literature, but on compilation of different procedures mentioned in Ayurvedic and allied literature, associated with control of mind can be considered as the different approaches of psychotherapy.

The best approaches to achieves the goal of *Satwavajaya* is by developing the, *Vigyana*, *Dhairya*, *Smriti* and *Samadhi*. Avoidance of *Pragyaparadha* plays an important role in *Satwavajaya Chikitsa*.

Emphasizing on need of compassion and positive attitude towards the patient in administrating *Satwavajaya*, it is said that the patient should be calmed down after establishing friendly doctor-patient relationship.

The other psycho-supportive techniques like assurance, consoling the patient by proper guidance and suggestion, preaching religious and moral statement, quoting well known references and mythological stories with good moral, giving verbal mental and physical shocks, replacing the emotions, entertaining the patient with recreational therapy and psycho-shock therapy i.e. by creating fear and terror also come within the limits of definition of *Satwavajaya*.

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### 4. Conclusion

*Satwavajaya Chikitsa* is a unique non-pharmacological approach for treating the mental disorders. It is the first of its kind and if developed can really prove much useful. helps to attain a stable and harmonious equilibrium between man and his environment needed to reduce man's vulnerability to mental diseases and to permit him to lead a more productive and satisfying life.

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### Compliance with ethical standards

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Authors declares that there is no conflict of interest.

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### Author's short biography



**Dr. Sachinkumar Sahebrao Patil**, M.D. (*Kayachikitsa*) Medicine, Ph.D. (*Kayachikitsa*) Medicine, M.B.A. (H.R.), P.G.D.E.M.S., D.Y.A.

Professor and H.O.D., Ph.D. Guide, M.D. Guide, Department of Kayachikitsa, M.A.M.'s Sumatibhai Shah AyurvedMahavidyala, Malwadi, Hadapasar, Pune - 411028, Maharashtra State, India.

He is working as a Ayurved Physician, Panchakarma Specialist since 17 Years. He is BOARD OF STUDIES MEMBER for Paraclinical Ayurved Board of Maharashtra University of Health Sciences Nashik. He is a FACULTY MEMBER for Post Graduate ParaclinicalAyurved Board of Maharashtra University of Health Sciences, Nashik. He is working as a Research Faculty for Research Methodogy and Medical Statistics of Maharashtra University of Health Sciences, Nashik. He is a Ph.D. GUIDE for five Ph.D. *Kayachikitsa*( Medicine) students and M.D. GUIDE for 26 M.D. *Kayachikitsa* (Medicine) students out of which 18 M.D. *Kayachikitsa* (Medicine) students. His research experience is 14 Years. His research interest in Anxiety Disorder, Diabetes Mellitus, Obesity, Hyperacidity, Diarrhoea, Anaemia etc.