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Review Article

AN INTRODUCTION TO *SATTVAJAYA*: PSYCHOTHERAPY IN AYURVEDA

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ABSTRACT

Thought, spirit, mind and body are all interrelated and intermingled. Healthy mind is essential for healthy body. According to Ayurveda *Satva*, *Atma* and *Sarira* are the three pillars of life. Health and life depends upon the proper functioning and co-ordination of these three. A substance which establishes the contact between the Soul and Body regulating the functions of the *Indriya* (sense organs) is defined as a *Satva*. It is responsible for the presence or absence of the knowledge. *Satva* works at three level viz, Perception (Cognitive or Sensory), Stimulation or Initiation (Conation or Motor Reflex) and Discussion & Determination. Default at any level produces diseases defined as psychosomatic disorders. Ever-increasing frequency of psychosomatic disorders in these days due to stress and other influential factors force us to develop proper insight in etiopathogenesis and better management of such diseases. This paper throw light about the Ayurvedic concept of Psyche and different prospective of its management.

Keywords: Ayurveda, Psyche, *Satva*, *Sattvavajaya*, *Manonigraha*, *Acara Rasayana*, *Prajnaparadha*.

INTRODUCTION

The word *Sattvavajaya* is made up of two words, '*Sattva*' and '*Avajaya*'. The word '*Sattva*' means *Manas*¹, '*Avajaya*' is still further can be broken into; *av* + *Ij* + *ac*', '*av*'² means from the base or from the root of it, i.e. uplifting of the *Manas* from the depressed condition or it can also be understood to be in the complete sense and '*jay*' means to overcome or control. i.e. the whole terms means to uplift the depressed *Manas* but such that it is not hyper activated and its functions are in complete control.

According to Monier Williams, *Sattvavajaya* means to control the infidel nature of the *Manas* or giving self command to raise the strength of the Mind or character. It is one of the three types of treatment modalities or *Trividha Chikitsa* described by Carakacarya³.

Having control over the *Manas* such as to control it or withdraw it from coming into contact with harmful or unwholesome objects is the main object of *Sattvavajaya*. Thus it includes all the methods of

- *Manonigraha*,
- *Sadvrtta/Acara Rasayana*,
- Modalities of *Manas Dosa Chikitsa*.

Later in the text, Carakacarya in *Vimana Sthana* described only two types of *Ausadha*, *Daivavyapasraya* and *Yuktivyapasraya*. Here commentator Cakrapan'i states that *Sattvavajaya* can be included in both *Daivavyapasraya* as well as *Yuktivyapasraya Chikitsa*⁴.

When *Sattvavajaya Chikitsa* includes *Drsta* (visible) modalities, i.e. *Dravya* is used in the treatment procedure; it can be included in *Yuktivyapasraya* and when it includes *Adrsta* (invisible) modalities, i.e. it does not include any physical object or *Dravya* for the treatment it can be grouped under *Daivavyapasraya Chikitsa*.

Further elaborating on *Yuktivyapasraya Chikitsa*, Carakacarya states that *Cesta* is considered as *Manas Cesta*, and control over the *Manas Cesta* is a characteristic of *Sattvavajaya Chikitsa*⁵.

Again in *Dirghamjivitiyamadhyayam*, Carakacarya classifies these three types of treatment modalities according to the level of their utility⁶.

For the *Sarira Dosa*, *Daiva* and *Yuktivyapasraya Chikitsa* is advised (denoted by the word '*Purvo*') and for the *Manasa Dosa*, *Jnana*, *Vijnana*, *Dhairyia*, *Smrti* and *Samadhi* is advised. Hence it can be said that these five attributes form the crux of the *Sattvavajaya Chikitsa*. These three treatment modalities go hand in hand, as the psycho and somatic involvement in a disease can never be alienated. Thus *Sattvavajaya Chikitsa* needs to be also supplemented with *Yuktivyapasraya* and *Daivavyapasraya Chikitsa*.

Manas Dosa Chikitsa:

- *Jnanam: Jnanam adhyatmajnanm*

It means *Adhyatma Jnana*, i.e. spiritual knowledge or knowledge that the absolute

Atma or *Brahma* is the only truth and the materialist world along with his own *Pancabhautika* body is only transitory. In the treatise *Bhagvatgita*, Lord Krishna speaks about three types of *Jnana*: *Sattvika*, *Rajasika* and *Tamasika*. Of which only *Sattvika Jnana* is that by which the knowledge of the Supreme being or *Atma*, that it is eternal, omnipresent, immanent and undivided is achieved. On understanding and acceptance of this fact, the consideration of his separate existence or the understanding of 'mine' or 'I', will cease⁷.

The emergence of this *Satya Buddhi* (*Samyak Jnana*) will decrease the *Ahamkara* of the person and will further cause declination of all desires and wishes⁸ called the *Upadha*, which is the main cause of all *Dukha* (grief / miseries)⁹. By complete avoidance of *Upadha* (desires/ lust) and understanding it the root cause of all problems, will permanently relieve the person of all *Vyadhis* (psychosomatic disorders due to suppression of desires) and mitigate the *Rajas* and *Tamas*, similar to the description of the *Apta* (spiritual person), who is relieved of his *Rajas* and *Tamas* by *Jnana* and *Tapa*. Secondly, *Adhyatma Jnana* could also mean the complete knowledge of the *Sarira* and *Manas*, and all those things which are beneficial and harmful for it. The thorough knowledge of the diseases afflicted upon these due to the imbalance of their respective *Dosas*, their *Hetus* and the means to avoid them can also be termed as the *Adhyatmika Jnana*. In this perspective the regimen followed in *Swasthavritta* and *Sadvritta* can also be grouped under *Sattvavajaya*. Carakacharya has also given the relation between *Sarira* and *Manas* when he states that at times the *Sarira* follows the *Manas* or vice versa¹¹. Hence any disease of the *Sarira* or *Manas*, it eventually effects the other.

- *Vijnanam: Vijnanam shastrajnanam*

Knowledge of the scriptures and texts which takes the person towards true knowledge is *Vijnanam*. It acts to gradually diminish the *Rajas* and *Tamas* and increase the *Sattvika Guna* of the *Manas*.

- *Dhairya: Dhairyam Anunnatichetasah*

Calming down the vitiated or hyper-excited state of the *Manas* i.e. increasing the patience of the person by counseling or meditative procedures. It gives the person the courage to bear pain and other challenges in life.

- *Smriti: Smriti Anubhutarthasmaranam*

Trying to memorize the past incidences, as Carakacharya states that only if one remembers the real nature of things he gets rid of miseries¹². There are eight causes given for the improvement of *Smriti*¹³, 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.

- *Samadhi*

A condition where after gaining complete contact with the *Atma*, *Manas* loses its contact with the external objects and conjunctions only with the *Atma* is the *Samadhi Awastha*. Here there is complete cessation of all types of *Vikara* or *Dukha*. It is achieved only after following the *Astanga Yoga* techniques and certain other specific techniques like the *mantrajapa* (chanting) etc¹⁴.

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

Further the treatment of the *Manasika Vyadhis* is explained as; *Trivargasya Anveksana*: To repeatedly recollect and attend to the course of conduct related to the virtues of *Dharma*, *Artha* and *Kama*. Caraka states that a person should strive to discard the harmful and unwholesome regimens and adopt the wholesome regimens in regard to the above virtues¹⁵.

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*.

In this context Cakrapani states that the knowledge of the 'Self' implies the knowledge as to 'who I am' and 'what is conducive to my health'. Similarly the knowledge about the place implies knowledge of locality and property of the regimen prescribed in the local conditions. Similarly, the knowledge with regard to the family strength and capacity will also have to be explained. These three steps are well included in the previous five steps advised as treatment for *Manasa Dosas*. Acarya Vagbhata also described the treatment of *Manas Dosa* as *Dhi* (*Buddhi* or intellect), *Dhairya* (fortitude) and *Atmavijnana*¹⁶.

In the description of *Sattvika Buddhi*, *Bhagvata 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 liberation¹⁷. Such *Dhi* of *Sattvika* dominance needs to be inculcated in the process of *Sattvavajaya Cikitsa*.

By consciously improving the *Dhi*, *Dhrti* and *Smriti*, *Prajnaparadha* also, which is the main cause of the mental disorders, can be avoided.

Susrutacharya¹⁸ states that the *Manas Vyadhis* should be treated with the *Sabdadi Varga* according to the choice, which is pleasant for the person. Here Acarya Dalhan'a clarifies that *Sabdadi Varga* includes all the five *Indriya Visaya*.

Sadvritta/Acara Rasayana:

Acarya Caraka states that the normally, mind including sense faculties remains undisturbed. In order that they are not disturbed in any way, one should make all efforts to maintain their normal condition¹⁹. The causes of the disturbance of the mental faculties are the excessive, wrong or non utilization of these faculties on which abnormal mental conditions will prevail²⁰. The technique of maintenance and proper utilization of these faculties itself is the underlying principle of *Sadvritta*.

When emphasizing the importance of *Sadvritta*, Acarya states that the normal condition of the mental faculties can be achieved by the performance of duties after duly considering their pros and cons with the help of the intellect together with the sense faculties applied to their respective wholesome objects and by acting in contradistinction with the qualities of place, season and one's own constitution including temperament. Therefore one who is desirous of his own well being should always follow the *Sadvritta* in its complete sense,

after careful consideration and recollection of the practices advised in the text²¹.

Again during the description of *Rasayana*, Acarya again gives a brief account of the *Acara Rasayana*, which is one of the prerequisites for the success of the *Rasayana* therapy²².

Manonigraha:

Manas Nigraha or control of *manas*, requires the increase of *Sattva Guna*, *Dhi*, *Dhrti*, *Smrti*, etc. by following of the *Sadvritta* as well the *Yogika* practices. Yoga is bringing to complete cessation the functional or behavioral modifications of *Citta* or *Manas*. It is possible by the various techniques followed in the *Samadhi Pada* of Yoga Sutra, specifically the *Astanga Yoga*.

In Yoga Sutra, certain techniques are mentioned which steady the *Manas*, i.e. cause *Manasasthiti Nibandhanam*, viz.

1. **Visayavti va pravrttirutpanna** – concentrating the *Manas* towards particular subjects such as to keep it busy with intense activity, so that it is not deviated towards untoward subjects.

2. **Visoka va Jyotismati** – Griefless illumination experienced in the mind. It is the general technique of developing a tendency or activity of the mind to create a subject or object which could be internally experienced.

3. **Vitaragavisayam va Cittam** – By steadying the *Citta* on a subject which has transcended the attachment or passion. An attempt is made to make the mind itself passionless; by self command or telling it to give up the passions as they are trouble producing, the mind may and does obey such suggestions.

4. **Swapnanidrajanalambanam va:** By taking the support of the knowledge or experience gained through the dreams seen in the sleep. The first thing necessary here is to develop a capacity of having dreams. When such a capacity of dream production is developed, the themes prescribed for the dream can be so chosen that the mind will have a very pleasant and enticing experience. Acarya Caraka also when describing the *Adravyabhuta Cikitsa*, describes *Swapna* as one of the treatment modality²³. Though the commentaries have not elaborated on this aspect, practically here *Swapna* can be interpreted as both sleep as well as dreams.

The effect of such dreams is so impressive that the mind even in the wakeful part of the day afterwards, remains inwardly attached to this impression or memory of the dream. This pleasant mood automatically prevents the mind from getting easily perturbed by any disturbing troubles in the day to day life. Thus the *Manasasthitinibandhanam* and subsequent *Citta Prasadnam* can be easily obtained and firmly established by the practice of this technique, once the mastery over the dream production has been obtained. Susruta has not described the particular term of '*Sattvavajaya Cikitsa*' but has described '*Citta Prasadana*'²⁴ which is the goal of *Sattvavajaya Cikitsa*. These practices can be summarized as those requiring physical relaxation, mental relaxation and increased concentration, and suggestibility which are the attributes seen in Hypnotism. A hypnotic trance is hence defined as the state of physical and mental relaxation with increased suggestibility to accept suggestions, when a subject concentrates more or less on one thought which has an early and long lasting impact on the subject. The mind in the modern science can be

understood at two levels, Conscious mind and the subconscious mind; where the subconscious mind is like a warehouse. Herein all kinds of emotions, thoughts, desires, wishes etc are stored and are usually not known to the conscious mind due to a barrier between them.

DISCUSSION

From above all descriptions, it comes to notice that mind is the only creator, regulator, recreator, of all bodily constituents acting through the metaphysical, intellectual and bodily level. The perfect harmony of *Manas* responsible for the perfect harmony of body because physical is merely an out picturing of the mental. Every discordant thought, feeling or emotion must pay the penalty in the physical manifestation of some discord. It is now well established that vicious mental states, violent emotions, explosive passions make chemical changes in the brain and poisons the cell life through the whole body. It is well known that worry, anxiety, fear kill millions and millions of RBC every day. (fear, anger, jealousy, envy, hatred are considered as forerunners of disease and messenger of death). Every disturbing, depressing thought that enters the brain has a simultaneous effect on every cell of the body and tends to produce diseases. Men, women and children get diseased and die around us everywhere as a result of pathological thought, a deranged function of *Manas*. Management as well as intonation of thoughts (*Manonigraha*) by different perspectives of *Sattvavajaya chikitsa* is the foremost therapy for the treatment of psychosomatic diseases.

Sattvavajaya means method of training one thought in positive way to utilize his maximum energy. *Sattvavajaya* can be employed by both medicinal and non-medicinal techniques.

CONCLUSION

We become what we think, mind is powerhouse and thoughts are fuel; *Sattvavajaya* is the method to use this fuel efficiently to bring best outcome in form of good health. Ayurveda advocate good mental health is important constituent of good health. One can't achieve latter in absence of earlier. Good conduct, following ethics of good moral, having spiritual knowledge, believing in Supreme Being, developing forgiving attitude and selfless devotion, meditation are important dimensions of *Sattvavajaya Chikitsa*.

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