



AN AYURVEDIC PERSPECTIVE TO COGNITIVE BEHAVIOURAL THERAPY VIS A VIS SATWAVAJAYA CHIKITSA

Dipti Rekha Sarma^{1*}, Karab Ali², Jyotirmoy Sarmah³

¹PG Scholar, ²Assistant Professor, Department of Samhita and Siddhant, Govt. Ayurvedic College & Hospital, Guwahati, Assam, India.

³Lecturer, Dept. of Shalakra Tantra, Govt. Ayurvedic College & Hospital, Guwahati, Assam, India.

ABSTRACT

Ayurveda, the science of life is regarded as the complete health care system for prevention as well as treatment of different diseases. It emphasizes on sustaining the equilibrium of body, mind and soul for the maintenance of proper health. Based on these three aspects Ayurveda suggested three treatment modalities i.e. *Daivavyapashraya*, *Yuktivyapashraya* and *Satwavajaya Chikitsa*. *Satwavajaya* is the comprehensive psychosomatic-spiritual approach to the preservation and treatment of both physical and mental health and is described as the major non-pharmacological approach to the treatment of different diseases. Though Psychotherapy is only a century old in western medicine, it is nothing new in Ayurveda, as the ancient system was well aware of psychic means of curing diseases. In fact, in the history of Ayurvedic medicine, Psychotherapy is as old as drug therapy. When the contemporary art of psychotherapy and the knowledge of ancient science of Ayurveda is integrated, it becomes a powerful combination. Cognitive behavioral therapy which is a part of psychotherapy is widely in practice in the present era. This paper is an attempt to highlight the practice of age old concept of mental and health termed as *Satwavajaya chikitsa* and its current practice in the contemporary science as Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for the management of psychic disorders.

KEYWORDS: *Ayurveda*, *Satwavajaya*, Cognitive Behavioral Therapy.

INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda stands for the wholesome physical, mental and spiritual growth of health around the world. Thus Ayurveda, the biological science is based on the principle of *Trisutra* i.e., *Hetu* (etiology), *Linga* (symptomatology), *Ausadha* (knowledge of therapeutics) as a means to the well being par excellence to the healthy and the diseased. Here "*Ausadha*" or "*Cikitsa*" is defined as the process in which the vitiated state of *Dosha* or *Dhatu* will be brought back to normal state and this equilibrium state of *Dosha* will be maintained.¹ Based on the different aspects, *Chikitsa* is classified into *Trividha Chikitsa*, i.e. *Daivavyapashraya chikitsa*, *Yuktivyapashraya chikitsa*, and *Satwavajaya chikitsa*.²

As there is a detailed description of rational therapy by the heading of *Yuktivyapashraya chikitsa* for the management of somatic diseases, similarly *Satwavajaya Chikitsa* implies the remedies for psychic disturbances. In the term "*Satwavajaya chikitsa*"; the word "*Satwa*" refers to Entity, Reality, Excellence, Intellect or Mind and "*Avajaya*" refers to victory, overcoming, conquering or win over. Hence it cumulatively means to have control over the mind and thus abstaining from things that are not good for health. In the modern contemporary science, the ancient Ayurvedic concept of *Satwavajaya chikitsa* is quite similar to the principles of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, popularly used as a major non pharmacological approach for many psychological disorders. Cognitive Behavioral Therapy is a psychotherapeutic approach in psychology, that is intended to help individuals to learn to cope with

anxiety inducing or stressful situations by rationally addressing faulty cognition and the ways in which it leads to inappropriate and self-defeating behavior.³

Aims and Objective

This paper is an attempt to highlight the modern day practices of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy in the light of the knowledge of *Satwavajaya chikitsa*. So the aims of this paper are as follows.

1. To explore the literature regarding conventional psychotherapy of modern medical science with special reference to Cognitive behavioral therapy.
2. To review the literature related to the concept of *Satwavajaya Chikitsa* mentioned in the Ayurvedic Classical texts.
3. To co-relate the principles of treatment of these two above mentioned concepts of psychotherapy of different ages i.e., *Satwavajaya Chikitsa* and Cognitive behavioral Therapy.

Materials and Methods

This is an Extensive literary work conducted using different classical textbooks of Ayurveda along with electronic databases like "PubMed", "Google Scholar" "Scopus" and "DHARA". Literature regarding the concept of *Satwavajaya* was properly explored and screened in Ayurvedic Texts. The review was conducted with an interactive strategy of combining the keywords Ayurveda, *Satwavajaya*, Cognitive Behavioral Therapy.

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy is a therapeutic approach in psychology that is intended to help individuals learn to cope with anxiety inducing or stressful situations by rationally addressing faulty cognition and the ways in which it leads to inappropriate and self-defeating behaviors. Simply it is a talking therapy that can help to manage problems by changing the way one thinks and behaves. This therapy is based on the principle of combination of basic behavioral and cognitive principles. This technique acknowledges that there may be behaviors that cannot be controlled through rational thought, but rather emerge based on prior conditioning from the environment and other external or internal stimuli.⁴

CBT is the combination of two psychotherapeutic techniques. As the name suggests it is comprised of Cognitive Therapy and Behavioural Therapy. Cognitive therapy is based on the fact that the thoughts, feelings and behavior are all connected, and that individuals can move towards overcoming difficulties and meeting their goals by identifying and changing unhelpful or inaccurate thinking, problematic behavior, and distressing emotional responses.

On the other hand Behaviour therapy aims to analyse the behavior of an individual. In a broader sense, the methods focus on either just behaviors or in combination with thoughts and feelings that might be creating diseases. Behavior therapy can be classified into two disciplines: Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) and Cognitive Behavior Therapy (CBT). ABA focuses on the application of learning theory to assess potential behavior-change procedures and CBT focuses on the thoughts and feelings behind mental health conditions with treatment plans in psychotherapy to lessen the issue.

CBT is effective for a variety of conditions, including mood, anxiety, personality, eating, addiction, dependence, and psychotic disorders and all these are responsible directly or indirectly in the disruption of sleep. So eventually CBT is established as a very effective treatment in the management of Insomnia.

The goal of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy is not to diagnose a person with a particular disease, but to look at them as a whole and decide what needs to be fixed. The basic steps in a Cognitive-Behavioral Assessment include.⁵

Step 1: Identify critical behaviors.

Step 2: Determine whether critical behaviors are excesses or deficits.

Step 3: Evaluate critical behaviors for frequency, duration, or intensity.

Step 4: If excess, attempt to decrease frequency, duration, or intensity of behaviors; if deficits, attempt to increase behaviors.

CBT has six phases⁶

1. Assessment or psychological assessment
2. Reconceptualization
3. Skills acquisition
4. Skills consolidation and application training
5. Generalization and maintenance
6. Post-treatment assessment follow-up

Mainstream cognitive behavioral therapy assumes that changing maladaptive thinking leads to change in the

affect and behavior; that is producing self control over the mind. Which is similar to the concept given by Ayurvedic Acharyas in *Satwavajaya Chikitsa*.

Satwavajaya Chikitsa

The ancient Ayurvedic Acharyas had postulated several treatment modalities based on the disease condition and involvement of *Tridosha*. *Trividh Chikitsa* is one of such contributions in the field of treatment. Ayurvedic Acharyas postulated the line of treatment that is specific to mental diseases. Naturally, it was to be based on normalizing *Manodosha* i.e., subsiding the effect of *Raja* and *Tamoguna* and implementing more of *Satwaguna* to the mind. All these factors were considered before finally introducing a special method of treatment called *Satwavajaya Chikitsa*. *Satwavajaya* is a method of restraining mind from unwholesome objects.⁷ Acharya Charaka was the 1st person to elaborate and explain the term "*Satwavajaya*". Unfortunately its applied aspects has not been explained vividly in Ayurvedic literature. It seems that Acharya Charaka used the term to name the treatment of the diseases where *Satwa* or *Mana's* balance is interfered.

In the 11th chapter of Carak Samhita, Sutrasthan, *Satwavajaya* has been defined by the combination of three main aspects i.e. *Ahita*, *Artha* and *Manonigraha*. The word *Ahita* means something unwholesome to the other, *Artha* meaning object of sense faculty and *Mana Nigraha* refers to Control of Mind. It includes all the measures which help in restraining of the *Manas* from craving towards the *Ahita Arthas* (unwholesome objects), and avoid the involvement of the *Manas* in abnormal mental faculties.⁸

Aims of Satwavajaya Chikitsa⁹

1. To help individual to discriminate between thoughts and actions.
2. To divert mind and make the person to involve with commitment in other or the next activity.
3. To help individual to discriminate between objective and imagined dangers and to respond selectively to each.
4. To initiate *Bhakti* or regard or strengthen his believes in *Ishta-Daivam*.
5. To expel out phobia by making awareness of the subject knowledge and the true facts.

Methodology of the Satwavajaya Chikitsa¹⁰

The objective type of *Mano Nigraha* is the actual *Satwavajaya* and warrants a physician's interference with controlling patient's mind. This can be achieved by various ways.

1. *Cintya*- by regulating the thought process
2. *Vicharya*- by replacing the ideas
3. *Uhya*- by channeling the presumptions
4. *Dheya*- by polishing the objective
5. *Samkalpa*- by proper guidance and advice for taking right decisions

There are certain other methods which are also used during the treatment of *Satwavajaya Chikitsa*.¹¹ They are-

1. Gyana

The word *Gyana* stands for *Atmagyana*; i.e., knowledge of self and soul, spiritual knowledge and true

knowledge. For attaining *Atma Gyana*, Acharya Charaka has described various methods but stress has been laid on *Satya Buddhi* i.e., true knowledge or true understanding. *Adhyatma Gyana* also refers to the complete knowledge of the *Sarira* and the *Manas*.

2. *Vijnana*

The scriptural and the textual knowledge which takes the person to the true and the valid knowledge is *Vijnanam*. It gradually diminishes the *Rajasik* and *Tamasik* quality of the mind and increases the *Satwik* quality.

3. *Dhairya*

Dhairya refers to the stability of mind. It is *Dhairya*, which restrains the mind from unwholesome objects and can control the mind. Mind can be restrained only after adopting *Dhairya*, which is an important tool of *Satwavajaya chikitsa*.

4. *Smriti*

Trying to memorize the past incidences. Charaka explains that if one remembers the real nature of the thing he gets rid of all the diseases. *Tatwagyana* can be attained by *Smriti* due to being overcome by *Rajasik* and *Tamasik* quality.

5. *Samadhi*

Samadhi is the condition where after gaining complete contact with the *Atma*, *Manas* loses its contact with the external objects and conjunctions with the *Atma*. It is a specialized concept of *Yoga* mostly regarded as either spiritual or psychological technique to develop the ideal human personality, leading to the state of character transformation and attainment of final goal of life towards salvation.

Dimensions of *Satwavajaya Chikitsa*

1. *Trivarga Anveksana*¹²

Acharya Charaka stated that one should not adopt the mental faculties which are causing mental disorders and should strive for abstaining from unwholesome virtue (*Dharma*), wealth and sensory pleasure (*Artha*) and enjoyment/ desires (*Kama*) and for pursuing wholesome ones. No mental happiness or unhappiness can occur in this world without these three. Hence, this should be practiced and efforts should be made to know about *Atma* (self), *Desa* (place), *Kala* (time), *Sakti* (strength and capacity) properly.

2. *Tadvidyaseva*¹³

Service to those who are well versed in scriptures and treatment of mental therapy should be done by them. It seems that *Satwavajaya chikitsa* was done by specialists at that period of time.

3. *Atmadi Vijnanam*¹⁴

Attainment of the knowledge of *Atman*, *Desa*, *Kula*, *Kala*, *Bala* and *Shakti* etc. *Jnana* (cognition) in this particular reference is used for the spiritual knowledge for all practical purposes. The methods for improving *Prajna* (cognition) and its components like *Dhi* (intellect), *Dhrti* (controlling power) and *Smrti* (recollection and recall) are considered as a component of *Satwavajaya Chikitsa*.¹⁵

The applied aspects of *Satwavajaya chikitsa* can be summarized as under:¹⁶

1. Assurance
2. Replacement of emotions
3. Regulation of thought process
4. Re-framing of Ideas
5. Channeling of Presumptions
6. Correction of objectives and ideals
7. Proper guidance and advice for taking right decisions
8. Proper control of patience

The features and the principles of *Satwavajaya Chikitsa* can be correlated to the Modern psychotherapeutic concept of Cognitive Behavioural Therapy.

DISCUSSION

Though Psychotherapy is a century old concept in the modern contemporary medicine, it is nothing new in Ayurveda, as the ancient system was well aware of psychic means of treatment. In fact, in the history of Ayurvedic medicine, Psychotherapy is as old as drug therapy. In modern, mental-health, psychotherapy is defined as the treatment by psychological means, of problems of an emotional nature in which an expert deliberately establishes a professional relationship with the patient with the object of (1) removing and modifying or retarding existing symptoms, (2) of mediating disturbed pattern of behavior, (3) of promoting positive personality growth and development.¹⁷ Ayurveda describes three *Guna* of Mind and named as *Satwa* (Balance), *Raja* (Arrogance) and *Tama* (Indolence). Mind is called '*Manas*'. Ayurveda describes that a possibility for disease is due to imbalance of the '*Rajas*' or '*Tamas*' in the mind which vitiate the mind and leading to emotional imbalance, also results in psychological disturbances, hence *Rajas* and *Tamas* are termed as '*Doshas* of mind'. *Satwavajaya* as psychotherapy, is the mental restraint, or a "Mind control" therapy as referred by Charaka, is achieved through "spiritual knowledge, philosophy, fortitude, remembrance and concentration". According to Ayurveda, "*Prajnaparadha* (volitional transgression)" is "the main etiopathological factor" in mental illness, and can be corrected through psychotherapy or *Satwavajaya Chikitsa*. *Satwavajaya* is that method of treatment through which one tries to bring the intellect (*Dhi*), fortitude (*Dhrti*) and memory (*Smrti*) of the patient into a proper condition. Two methods of *Satwavajaya*: (1) Assurance to the patient of the lost objects or persons. (2) Inducement of emotions opposite to those associated with patient's distress, are usually in practice.¹⁸

CONCLUSION

The modern roots of CBT can be traced to the development of behavior therapy in the ancient literature of Ayurveda. Charaka was the only Ayurvedic scholar to explain the concept of *Satwavajaya Chikitsa* in Ayurveda. As such, there is no fundamental difference between *Satwavajaya chikitsa* and modern psychosomatic approach of Cognitive Behaviour Therapy. Both involve controlling mind from harmful sense-objects. When contemporary art of psychotherapy with the ancient science of Ayurveda is integrated then it becomes a powerful combination known as Psychveda. Thus the knowledge of both these unique concepts helps us to rediscover the critical knowledge

about mind and thus to prevent from psychological illnesses.

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*Address for correspondence

Dr. Dipti Rekha Sarma

PG Scholar,

Department of Samhita and Siddhant,
Govt. Ayurvedic College & Hospital,
Guwahati-14, Assam.

Email: diptirekhas10@gmail.com

Ph no- 09864770910