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## THE CONCEPT OF SATTVAJAYA CHIKITSA – AYURVEDA PSYCHOTHERAPY

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### ABSTRACT:

Acharya Charaka introduced Sattvavajaya Chikitsa, a psycho-spiritual method for managing mental disorders. This Ayurvedic therapy focuses on enhancing sattva (mental clarity and balance) while controlling the influences of rajas (activity) and tamas (inertia), which cause mental disturbances when imbalanced. Sattvavajaya involves fostering positive thoughts, eliminating negative patterns, and promoting emotional regulation through meditation, mindfulness, and spiritual practices. By strengthening sattva, this approach restores mental harmony and addresses the root causes of psychological distress, offering a holistic solution for mental well-being. In contemporary times, Sattvavajaya Chikitsa is recognized as an effective approach to mental health management, as it addresses the root cause of psychological disturbances by promoting mental resilience, positivity, and emotional balance. It integrates the spiritual dimension of mental well-being, making it a holistic solution for the challenges posed by modern-day mental health issues.

**KEYWORDS:** Sattvavajaya Chikitsa, Psychotherapy, Mind, Manas.

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**INTRODUCTION:**

Sattvavajaya Chikitsa is the ancient ayurved chikitsa for manasroga. Sattvavajaya Chikitsa is meant for the mind and related attributes with psycho-spiritual approach. Sattvavajaya consist of words Sattva and Avajaya where, Sattva means mind, intellect, consciousness and Avajaya means control over it<sup>1</sup>. Chikitsa refers to treatment<sup>2</sup>. Mind (Manas) is an important component of the Ayu (life) in along with the other three components Sharira (physical body), Indriya (sense organs) & Atma (Soul)<sup>3</sup>. The existence of Manas (mind) has been accepted by the ancient as well as the modern sciences. Sattvavajaya Chikitsa exclusively focus on positivity of thoughts and eliminating negative vibes<sup>4</sup>. This chikitsa is intended to cure maladaptive symptoms caused by Raja (arrogance) and Tama (indolence)<sup>5</sup>. Sattvavajaya Chikitsa is based on Pratipaksha bhavana that is thinking about the thoughts of opposite quality and aimed at Mano nigraha which means controlling of mind from *Ahita vichara* (unwholesome thoughts)<sup>6</sup>. In modern science the definition of psychotherapy is given by Wolberg as, "Psychotherapy is the treatment, by psychological means, of 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 retarding existing symptoms, mediating disturbed patterns of behaviour, and promoting positive personality growth and development"<sup>7</sup>. The term Psychotherapy covers the entire spectrum of psychological treatment methods like managing manoeuvres of the therapist-patient relationship, intra-psychic processes, attempt to alter neural mechanisms, strategies like establishment of adequate communication, verbal and non-verbal.

**Need of Sattvavajaya chikitsa:** Now-a-days everyone is adopting western culture which is vibrant and dynamic. We are enthusiastic for anything like new technological and philosophy. Yet, this fascination badly impacting humans, many people feel lonely, frustrated, disturbed and also, they are disconnected from the great traditions that have provided guidance and nourishment since thousands of years, for which sattvavajaya has potential to provide a strong psychological support in the crisis situations<sup>8</sup>.

**Concept of sattvavajaya chikitsa:** Sattvavajaya chikitsa is the spiritual therapy which helps in controlling mind with Vichara (thinking). Thus, it's helpful to achieve positive mental health<sup>9</sup>. Sattvavajaya chikitsa promotes Dynana (knowledge) and Vidynana (scriptural knowledge) in individuals. It directs to control the mind and thus enables us to have control over unwholesome thoughts, all five senses & perceptions<sup>10</sup>. Sattvavajaya chikitsa pacifies the impaired *Raja* and *Tama doshas* of mind and in other hand increases the Sattva *guna* of mind (balanced consciousness), Dhriti, Dhairya (fortitude), Smriti, and Samadhi (a state of complete cessation of all types of Vikara). These are considered as the goals achieved by Sattvavajaya chikitsa<sup>11</sup>. Sattvavajaya chikitsa regulates Dhee (intellect), Dhriti (determination) and Smriti (memory). It also brings them back into the normal state<sup>12</sup>. Pradynaparadha (intellectual blasphemy) is considered to be one of the main causes for the development of mental disabilities. Here sattvavajaya chikitsa corrects the Pradynaparadha. Thus, the therapist develops various strategies to replace the negative thoughts with positive one<sup>13</sup>. The concepts, principles of Ayurveda if integrated, it becomes a powerful therapeutic combination and worldwide western therapeutic intervention is almost melted with the Ayurvedic holistic principles.

**Techniques of sattvavajaya chikitsa:**

The various techniques of this therapy include

- Manonigraha (mind control methods)
- Pratidvandvabhava (replacement of emotions with opposite thoughts)
- Sadacharah (moral behavioral code)
- Ashwasanadhyaha (counselling)
- Manokshobhanam (psychophysical shock)

These techniques should be used along with following to achieve appropriate results; these are

- Abhyasa (constant practice),
- Pranayama (regulation of elan vital)
- Vairagya (renunciation),

- Adhyatmaavidya (meditation)
- Sadhusangati (associated with pious),  
By this, complete control over mind can be attained<sup>14</sup>.

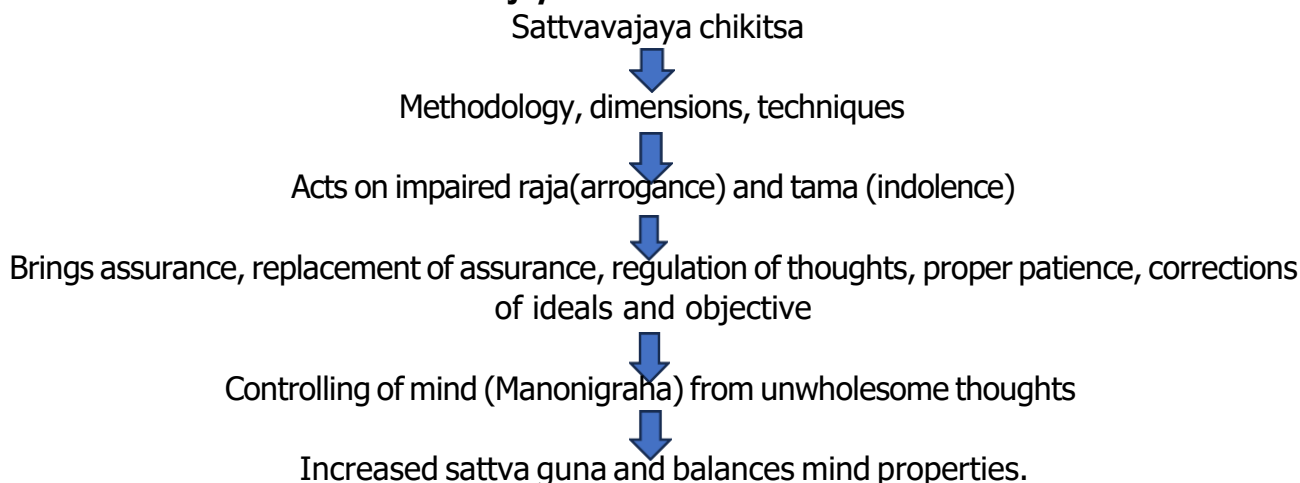
Sattvavajaya chikitsa provide proper and better treatment in controlling & managing the anger, growing stress and strain of mental health than existing sciences. It gives a variety of applied aspect in the areas of regulation of thought process, assurance, reframing the ideas, replacing the emotions, correction of objectiveness, advice for taking correct decision, guidance, control over mind, patience etc<sup>15</sup>.

**Table no.1 showing techniques of sattvavajaya chikitsa<sup>16,17</sup>**

No.	Techniques	Goal
1	Dynana (Getting to know self)	To provide support to the patient to develop an insight about himself
2	Vidynana (The textual knowledge)	To provide guidance to understand the nature of illness and improve his coping capabilities
3	Dhairya (Maintenance of mental balance even when one is under stress/ patience)	Development of coping abilities
4	Smriti (Recalling the objects, the object of past experience)	To understand the exact nature of the affecting object
5	Samadhi (Restraining the mind from wordily objects and meditating on the spiritual dimension of personality)	To achieve higher level of awareness
7	Ashwasana (Reassurance)	To achieve stability
8	Pratidvanda Cikitsa (Replacement of Emotions)	Replacement of opposite emotions (eg- Kama for Krodha) is one of the approaches of psychotherapy (Sattvavajaya) in Ayurveda
9	Trivarga anveshana (Dharma) wealth and sensory pleasure (Artha) and enjoyment/ desires (Kama)	Abstaining from unwholesome virtue.

10	Pratyatma Cikitsa (Individual Psychotherapy)	Ayurveda emphasized that every individual is different in its psychosomatic constitution (Deha Prakriti), Psychic personality (Man as Prakriti), Deia (habitat), Ka la (time), Vaya (age), Pratyatma Jeevana Vritta (Individual life situations). Therefore, treatment decisions should be taken after considering all these factors.
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**Probable mode of action of Sattvavajaya chikitsa:<sup>18</sup>**



**DISCUSSION:**

*Sattvavajaya Chikitsa* primarily focuses on increasing the strength of *sattva*, the quality of balance, harmony, and purity. In Ayurvedic philosophy, the mind is governed by the three *gunas*—*sattva* (balance and purity), *rajas* (passion and activity), and *tamas* (inertia and ignorance). Mental disturbances or disorders are believed to arise from the imbalance of these *gunas*, particularly when *rajas* and *tamas* predominate. By reinforcing *sattva*, this treatment aims to restore balance and elevate the mind to a state of clarity, serenity, and self-control. The method of *Sattvavajaya* involves controlling the mind by restraining it from unwholesome or negative thoughts and emotions. It is a therapeutic process aimed at cognitive restructuring, where the focus is on developing positive thought patterns, enhancing emotional regulation, and eliminating negative cognitive influences. The practice of *Sattvavajaya* incorporates

elements of meditation, mindfulness, positive thinking, ethical discipline, and spiritual practices that cultivate mental purity and strength. In contemporary times, *Sattvavajaya Chikitsa* is recognized as an effective approach to mental health management, as it addresses the root cause of psychological disturbances by promoting mental resilience, positivity, and emotional balance. It integrates the spiritual dimension of mental well-being, making it a holistic solution for the challenges posed by modern-day mental health issues. *Sattvavajaya Chikitsa*, as described by Acharya Charaka, aligns with modern psychological principles like cognitive restructuring and mindfulness-based therapies. It focuses on regulating negative thoughts and emotions, much like cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) that aims to change dysfunctional thinking patterns. The emphasis on increasing *sattva*—the quality of clarity and calmness—parallels

contemporary stress reduction techniques like meditation and mindfulness, which are proven to enhance emotional regulation, reduce anxiety, and promote mental resilience. Additionally, *Sattvavajaya* aims to balance *rajas* and *tamas*, akin to moderating hyperactivity and depressive tendencies, helping maintain mental equilibrium. Its holistic integration of mind, body, and spirit is in line with biopsychosocial models that emphasize the interconnection between physical, mental, and emotional health for overall well-being. Thus, the rationale of *Sattvavajaya* as a mental health approach is rooted in fostering cognitive balance, emotional regulation, and psychological resilience through natural, integrative methods.

#### CONCLUSION:

*Sattvavajaya* Cikitsa is the fundamental nonpharmacological approach of Ayurveda for treating psychiatric and psychosomatic problems along with physical disorders, as most of the diseases are associated with stress factors and almost all patients need supportive therapies like assurance etc. Different psychiatric problems required different techniques of *Sattvavajaya* which are already discussed above and given in classics ayurveda books. *Sattvavajaya* Cikitsa triggers the consciousness and acts at the level of judgment and discriminates the negative and maladaptive thoughts, brings stability, and restrains the mind. It is the gift in science of healing the mind. *Sattvavajaya* Cikitsa has potential to provide a new dimension in the field of psychiatry and psychosomatic problems. An Ayurvedic physician or a psychiatrist should follow the *Sattvavajaya* Cikitsa along with psychotherapeutic treatment strategies.

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