

CONCEPT OF RASAYANA AND ITS UTILITY (REJUVENATION THERAPY): A REVIEW

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ABSTRACT

Ayurveda is preponderant and antique health science of prime importance. Being a health science, it adheres to an exclusive approach that is entirely different from contemporary science. It fulfils the goal of health by focusing on maintenance of health and treatment of disease as holistic. *Rasayana* is an important branch of *Ayurveda*. It is one of the eight branches of *Ayurveda* (*Ashtanga Ayurveda*). *Rasayana* is useful for persons of all age groups. It is equally important in the treatment of diseases as well as in maintaining health. Given this plethora of information, it can be rightly stated that *Rasayana* is a boon given to the world by *Ayurveda*. The description of *Rasayana* comes in detail in all the *Ayurvedic* texts. This branch of *Ayurveda* appears to have been practised in ancient lines as an important speciality aiming at rejuvenation and geriatric care. *Rasayana* is one of the eight branches of *Ayurveda*. *Rasayana Chikitsa* plays a critical role in the prevention as well as cure of the disease. In *Ayurveda*, too much importance is given to this branch that the chapters of *Rasayana* find a foremost place in the *Charaka Samhita Chikitsa sthana* whereas in *Sushruta Samhita* it is pushed back to chapters 27-30 of *Chikitsa sthana*. In *Ashtanga Hridaya Rasayana* does not find a special place in *Chikitsa sthana* and is described only briefly in the 39th chapter of *Uttar Tantra*. This reflects on the declining importance of *Rasayana* therapy in the *Samhita* period itself. In *Sushruta Samhita*, which is otherwise considered more precise and practical has given a competitively moderate

description of the *Rasayana* in four chapters out of which two chapters deal with *Divya Rasayana* i.e., the divine drugs, which are not available today.

Keywords: Ayurveda, Ashtanga Ayurveda, *Rasayana*, Rejuvenation, Geriatric Care

INTRODUCTION

A long and healthy life has been canonized by human beings since antiquity. *Ayurveda* is an antediluvian science of life with the dual motto of maintaining the health of a healthy person and alleviating disorders of diseased¹. *Ayurveda* remains a vital health care system even in today's metropolitan advanced world that is suggestive of its intensity and latent strength. Even in the primaeval classical period *Ayurveda* was already a well-developed science of medicine and was practised in the form of *Astanga Ayurveda* i.e., medicine with eight specialities viz. *Kayachikitsa*, *Shalakya Tantra*, *Shalya Tantra*, *Visha*, *Bhoota*, *Kaumara*, *Rasayana* and *Vajikarana Tantra*². The bifold aim of *Ayurveda* can be very well furnished through the special branch *Rasayana*³.

Etymology (*Nirukti*):

The word *Rasayana* (*Rasa* + *Ayana*) appertains to nutrition and its transportation in the body. *Ayana* also may be understood as *Apayana* according to *Yogindranatha* and ergo, *Rasayana* may be taken as the approach or the measure to carry through replenished

and excellent *Dhatu* within the body. Hence, it becomes evident that protocols that are utilized for the subsistence of *Dhatu* or dispensing strength to the latter are addressed as *Rasayana*. *Rasayana* therapy effectuates the normalcy of *Rasa Dhatu* and consequently sustains other *Dhatu* in equilibrium for a longer period⁴. Thus, as a result, obviates ageing and provides longevity which can be intimated as *Vayasthapana* or *Jaranashana*. *Rasayana* also augments individual resistance power against diseases.⁵

Classification of *Rasayana*

Acharya Sushruta has illustrated a thorough classification of *Rasayana*. Commentator *Dalhana* has ameliorated it further⁶ In *Charaka Samhita*, no such absolute classification of *Rasayana* is given, but a detailed narration of methods of *Rasayana* Therapy is available in it⁷

Conforming to the mode of administration, purpose, mode of action, contents, usage and scope of various measures, *Rasayana* may be classified as follows:

According to the mode of administration	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Kuti Praveshika</i> (Indoor Regimen) 2. <i>Vatatapika</i> (Outdoor Regimen) 3. <i>Droni Praveshika</i> (Special Regimen)
According to purpose	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Kamya Rasayana</i> (Promotor of normal health) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Prana Kamya</i> (Promotor of life-vitality and longevity) • <i>Medha Kamya</i> (Promotor of intellect) • <i>Sri Kamya</i> (Promotor of complexion and lustre) 2. <i>Naimittika Rasayana</i> (Promotor of specific vitality in specific diseases) 3. <i>Ajasrika Rasayana</i> (Dietary <i>Rasayana</i>)
According to the mode of action	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Samshodhana Rasayana</i> 2. <i>Samshamana Rasayana</i>
According to <i>Achara Rasayana</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Ahara Rasayana</i> (Dietary Modalities) 2. <i>Achara Rasayana</i> (Behavioural Modalities) 3. <i>Dravya Rasayana</i> (Drug based measures)
According to <i>Bheshja Bheda</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Dravya Bhuta Rasayana</i> (Drug <i>Rasayana</i>) 2. <i>Adravya Bhuta Rasayana</i> (Non-pharmacological <i>Rasayana</i>)

In conformity with the need, indications or contraindications, these different varieties of *Rasayana* may be employed discreetly. An extremely remarkable response of the *Rasayana* therapy can be achieved if it is administered as per the norms laid down for it. Pertinent details of these types of *Rasayana* are expounded below:

According to the mode of administration of *Rasayana*

Acharya Charaka depicted three methods for the administration of *Rasayana* therapy. These are as follows:

1. *Kuti Praveshika Rasayana* (Indoor Regimen)

A physician should adhere to the following steps before the administration of *Kuti Praveshika Rasayana Rasayana*. These steps include:

❖ *Kuti Nirmana*⁸

The *Kuti Praveshika* procedure is a specialised indoor regimen of *Rasayana* therapy. The patient is kept in specially built "*Trigarbha Kuti*" (Cottage).

Requirements and recommendations for the construction of *Trigarbha Kuti* –

Suitable place:

- Place or locality inhabited by high profile persons like a king, physician, *Brahamana*, Saints
- Dwelling place devoid of any kind of fear or terror.
- Equipped with all the mandatory appliances.
- 24/7 availability of physician, *Brahamana* and medications.

Architectural Recommendations:

- **Direction:** Should face towards the east or the north.
- Should be capacious enough.

- **Kuti:** *Trigarbha* (three concentric cottages)
- **Ventilation:** To proper ventilation, it should be equipped with strait ventilators.
- **Walls:** Thick-walled
- **Lighting facility:** Well-lightened cottage
- **Season friendly:** It should be cordial to reside in all seasons.
- **Noise proof:** It should be devoid of any unpleasant and undesirable noise.
- It should be pleasant to the mind.
- Women should not be allowed to enter.

❖ Entrance of patient in the cottage -

The appropriate time for entrance –

- *Uttrayana*
- *Shukla Paksha*
- On an auspicious day with an auspicious constellation
- Propitious *Muhurta* and *Karana*

Protocols to be followed while entering in cottage

- Enter cottage after shaving
- The person who is going to receive rejuvenation therapy should be endowed with strong determination power, memory, faith and benevolence.
- The person should be free from any mental tribulation
- The person should perform all the requisite religious acts like worshipping and perambulation of God.

- ❖ ***Samshodhana* before administration of rejuvenation therapy** – Before the administration of *Rasayana Dravya*, the body of the recipient should be cleaned by using appropriate *Samashodhana* therapy.

Steps for *Samshodhana* therapy –

Snehna and *Swedana*



Administration of *Haritakyadi Yoga* with lukewarm water in a dose of 1 *Tola*



Samsarjana Karma

- ❖ **Administration of *Rasayana* drugs** – After the *Samshodhana* and *Samsarjana Karma*, suitable

Rasayana Dravya is administered to the individual considering his age, *Prakriti*, *Koshtha*, *Agni*, etc.

2. **Vatatapika Rasayana (Outdoor Regimen)** – This type of *Rasayana* can be administered outdoors as well as exposure to wind and sun does not affect it.

3. **Droni Praveshika (Special Regimen)** –

Drugs used in *Droni Praveshika*:

(a) *Brahma Suvarchala*

(b) *Adityaparni*

(c) *Nari*

(d) *Kashthagodha*

(e) *Sarpa*

(f) *Soma*

(g) *Padma*

(h) *Aja*

(i) *Nila*

Droni Specifications –

❖ It should be prepared from the greenwood of *Palasha*.

❖ It should be smeared with *Sneha*.

Procedure –

Intake of *Svarasa* of either drug by a person to his full capacity



A person should lay down in the prepared *Droni* without wearing any clothes



Droni should be then covered with the lid due to which the person becomes unconscious

According to purpose

Based on the purpose, *Rasayana* is classified into 3 categories:

a. *Kamya Rasayana*

b. *Naimittika Rasayana* (Promotion of specific vitality in specific diseases)

c. *Ajasrika Rasayana* (Dietary *Rasayana*)

A. *Kamya Rasayana*

Indications

- Indicated for healthy persons

Purpose

- For preservation and promotion of health.
- To promote vigour and vitality.

Classification

It is further categorized into the following three types:

Type of <i>Rasayana</i>	Purpose of <i>Rasayana</i>	Drugs used
1. <i>Prana Kamya</i>	For the promotion of life vitality and longevity	<i>Triphala Rasayana, Haritaki Rasayana</i>
2. <i>Medha Kamya</i>	For the promotion of intellect and mental functions	<i>Brahmi, Shankhpushpi</i>
3. <i>Sri Kamya</i>	For the promotion of strength, vigour, complexion and lustre	<i>Amalki Rasayana, Loha Rasayana</i>

B. *Naimittika Rasayana*

Indications

- Indicated for both healthy and deceased persons.

Purpose

For healthy persons

- Promotion of *Oja*, *Ayu*, and *media*.

For patients

- Mitigation of diseases.
- Promotion of health.

Drug specific Naimittika Rasayana Dravya

Sr. No.	Disease	Drugs used
1	Eye diseases (Especially vision-related disorders.)	<i>Jyotismati, Triphala, Shatavari, Yashtimadhu</i>
2	Heart Disease	<i>Shalaparni</i>
3	Skin ailments and <i>Kushtha</i>	<i>Tuvarak, Bhallataka, Vidanga, Somaraji, Gandhaka</i>
4	<i>Granthi and gulma</i>	<i>Pippati, Bhallataka</i>
5	<i>Yakshma</i>	<i>Rasona, Nagabala, Shilajatu, Pippaladi</i>
6	<i>Pandu</i>	<i>Loha</i>
7	<i>Shvasa</i>	<i>Agastya Rasayana, Bhallataka</i>
8	<i>Aamvata</i>	<i>Amrita Bhallataka</i>
9	<i>Vata Vyadhi</i>	<i>Rasona, Guggalu, Bala, Nagbala</i>
10	<i>Prameha</i>	<i>Shilajatu, haridra, Amalaki</i>
11	<i>Medoroga</i>	<i>Guggulu, Haritaki</i>
12	<i>Raktagata Vata</i>	<i>Rasona, Bala, Rasna, Medhya Rasayana</i>
13	<i>Nimna rakatchap</i>	<i>Kasturi, Kupilu,</i>
14	<i>Shitapitha</i>	<i>Haridra</i>

C. Ajasrika Rasayana**Elements of Rasayana Therapy in Ayurveda**

Samsamana group of *Rasayanas* are used in larger extent in comparison to *Samsodhana Rasayanas* e.g., *Nagabala, Cayavanaprasa, Brahma Rasayana, Amalaki Rasayana, Bhringaraj, Guduci, Brahmi, Bhallataka, Pippali, Gambhari, Silajatu, Sankhapuspi, Triphala Rasayana, Yashtimadhu and Punarnava* etc. This type of *Rasayana* drugs promote longevity, intellect, strength and lusture of the body. These *Rasayanas* are used in a routine fashion.

4. *Achara Rasayana* (Conduct *Rasayana*): *Ayurveda* identifies at least three distinct modalities of *Rasayana* to optimise cellular nutrition and thereby attain rejuvenation. These include

- (i) *Ahara Rasayana* (Dietary Modalities)
- (ii) *Achara Rasayana* (Behavioural Modalities)
- (iii) *Dravya Rasayana*

(i) Ahara Rasayana (Dietary Modalities)

state of equilibrium the wholesome and compatible diet which is responsible to produce pure *Ahara Rasa* results in dynamic tissue element.

In *Ayurvedic* text, *Acarya Dalhana* in his commentary on *Susruta Samhita* described this type of *Rasayana* as *Ajasrika Rasayana* where it is stated that in this type of *Rasayana*, daily use of milk (*Dugdha*) and *Ghee* in the diet enhances the essence of tissue elements which rejuvenate the individuals.

(ii) Achara Rasayana (Behavioural Modalities)

The quality of cellular nutrition is also greatly influenced by the behaviour of the individual and this behaviour embodies somatic and psychic dimensions. For example, the significance of an exercise in *Rasayana*. The psychic dimensions of these modalities emphasize positive mental attitudes. Traits like self-containment, love, compassion helping attitude etc. are considered in *Ayurveda* to work like *Rasayana* and thereby down-regulate the ageing process. Negative attitudes like anger, jealousy, greed tend to cause a constriction of circulatory channels and thereby block the flow of nutrients. This can be well understood by the example of *Ajirna* (indigestion) caused due to a negative attitude. *Rasayana* therapy plays important role in the Prevention of interception wears and tears of body tissues and advocacy of total health content of an individual. Thus, *Rasayana Chikitsa* has got importance from both the preventive and curative aspects of the disease.⁹ We all want to look forever young and increase our lifespan by staying healthy. *Rasayanas* or vitalizers, as they are called, do the same. They replenish the vital fluids of our body, thus keeping us away from diseases. *Charak* starts *Chikitsa Sthana* with *Rasayan* and *Vajikaran* giving still more priority to *Rasayan*. The reason to which given by *Chakrapani* is that, as they are *Mahaphaldayi* and among them, *Rasayana* is the one which endows strength and

immunity resulting in 100/1000 years of long and contamination-free life. Persons who are truthful and free anger, who are devoid of alcohol and sex indulgence, who do not indulge in violence or exhaustion, who are peaceful and pleasing in their speech, who practise Japa (incantation) and cleanliness, who are dhira (stable and steady), who are regular practise charity and tapas (panance), who regularly offer prayers to the gods, cows, brahmanas, teachers, preceptors and old people, who are absolutely free from barbarous acts, who are compassionate, whose period of awakening and sleep are regular, who habitually take and milk and ghee, who are acquainted with the measurement of the country and the time, who are experts in the knowledge of rationality, who are free from ego, whose conduct is good, who are not narrow minded, who have love for spiritual knowledge, who have in excellent sense organs are conditions, who have reverence for seniors, astikas and persons having self-control and who regularly study scriptures, get the best out of rejuvenation therapy. If persons endowed with these qualities practise rejuvenation therapy, they get all the rejuvenation effects described above.¹⁰

DISCUSSION

IMPORTANCE OF RASAYANA

Details of description are available about Rasayana in classical Ayurvedic treatises. Considering newer techniques of research some very well-known Rasayana medicines are explored. Ashwagandha is well known medicinal herb used as Rasayana.¹¹ The root extract of Ashwagandha has also shown good effect in relieving pain disability caused in patients with osteoarthritis of the knee.¹² Also, the extract of leaves of Amalaki (*Emblica Officinalis*) is found to exert rapid protective effects against lipid peroxidation by scavenging free radicals and reducing the risk of diabetic complications.¹³ Amalaki is told to be the best medicine as Vayasthapana. Triphala another abundantly used medicine for various purposes also possesses Rasayana effects. Another famous Rasayana medicine Bilva has also shown strong antitumor and antioxidant activities. Some of the classical Ayurvedic formulations such as Laxmivilas Ras, Agnitundi Vati, Ajmodadi Churna,

Tribhuvankirti Rasa and Sitopladi Churna, when tested for their antioxidant effect, they were found to possess efficient scavenger of superoxide radical, and all medicines were found to possess scavenging activity and inhibitory concentration 50%.

CONCLUSION

The approach of treatment that is explained by means of Rasayana is a novel concept. Hardly any of health sciences is found to have put thrust as huge as Ayurveda has. It gives an insight into what should the treatment aim at – the establishment of Dhatu Samya. Hence treatment of any disease would not be complete without using Rasayana. Use of Rasayana, specific to that disease, is mentioned in the treatment of each disease, is mentioned in each Adhyaya of Samhitas and is broadly explained in separate Adhyayas dedicated to it.

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