

**"RASAYANA" WAY OF REJUVENATION AND LONGEVITY**

<sup>1</sup>\*Dr. Preetesh Kumar Agnihotri, <sup>2</sup>Dr. Pawan Kirar, <sup>3</sup>Dr. Srinarayan Tiwari and  
<sup>4</sup>Dr. Omprakash Shukla

<sup>1</sup>M.D. Scholar, <sup>2</sup>(M.D. Ph.D.) Assistant Professor, <sup>3</sup>(M.D. Ph.D.) Associate Professor,  
<sup>4</sup>(M.D) Assistant Professor,

Department of Samhita-Siddhant, Govt. Ayurved College Rewa (M.P.).

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**\*Corresponding Author****Dr. Preetesh Kumar****Agnihotri**

M.D. Scholar, Department  
of Samhita-Siddhant, Govt.  
Ayurved College Rewa  
(M.P.).

**ABSTRACT**

*Ayurveda* is the ancient system of medicine in the world. It has two aims i.e. prevention and promotion of health and secondly cure from the diseases. *rasayana* may be employed for fulfilling both of them i.e. protection and promotion of health and curing diseases. It is the path of rejuvenation and a science of revitalisation. After birth, growth and senility ultimately leading to death are inevitable processes. It is correctly stated that aging before birth and continues throughout life at different rates, in different races for different individuals and for different tissues of the body. It involves two opposite process that simultaneously come into operation i.e. growth and atrophy. Aging represent structural and functional changes of an organism over its

entire life span. *Rasayana* therapy has been described in *ayurveda* as a systematic and scientific medical discipline. *Rasayana* drugs are those medicines which are capable of imparting superior *rasas* and *dhatu*s to the body and toning up the system of healthy person. *Rasayana* essentially means nutrition at all levels from macro to micro cellular level. *Rasayan* therapy replenishes the vital fluids of the body, boost the *ojas* (vital force of life) and the immune system, thus keeping away from diseases and prevents against ill effects of advance age.

**KEYWORDS:** *rasayana*, health, *rasas*, immune system, aging, prevention.

**INTRODUCTION**

*Aurveda* the science of life and longevity has been practised in india since inception in an *astang* from through its eight speciality branches. One of the eight branches is specially

devoted to uplift of nutrition, immuno-modulator and longevity. It is called as *rasayana chikitsa*. The term *rasayana* refers to the procurement of nourishment for formation of best qualities of *dhatu*s or body tissue which leads in turn to improved physiological state, immunity, bio-strength, mental competence and longevity.

### Classification of rasayan

In *ayurveda rasayana* is not mere remedy or a recipe. It is a rejuvenative regimen and is an approach to positive health. *Rasayana* is practised as a routine open life style form or an intensive indoor regimen depending upon the need and the feasibility for a client. The *rasayana* therapy can be categorised in the following manners.

#### Based on method of use

*Vatatapika rasayana* or outdoor practice

*Kutipraveshika rasayana* or intensive indoor regimen (inclusive of *panchkarma*)

#### Based on application

***Kamya rasayana***: For the promotion of health of the healthy. Further sub categorised as

*Sri kamya*: To promote lusture and beauty

*Prana kamya*: To promote longevity

*Medha kamya*: To promote mental competence

***Naimittik rasayana***: To impart bio-strength in a diseased person to fight better with his existing diseases.

***Ajasrika rasayana***: Daily dietary *rasayana* approach consuming *sattvika* nourishing elements of diet viz. Ghee, milk, milk product, fruits and vegetables etc.

#### Based on mode of action

*Sanshodhan rasayana*

*Sashamana rasayana*

***Achara rasayana***: Healthy rejuvenative life style and conduct.

#### Mode of action of rasayana

*Rasayana* are used for preservation of positive health. *Acharya shusruta* defines a healthy man as one who has equilibrium of *doshas*, normal function of *agni*, normal condition of

seven *dhatu*s, besides his soul the sense organs and mind should be happy and cheerful. *Rasayana* stands as an answer to solve the problem of healthful longevity including mental development and resistance against disease. *Rasayana* is a specialized type of treatment influencing the fundamental aspect of the body i.e. *dhatu*, *agni* and *srotasa*. All *rasayana* measures and remedies produce their effect in mind-body system through one or all of the following three modes.

1. At the level of *rasa dhatu*s by directly acting as a nutrient in itself enriching the nutrient value of *poshak rasa* in the plasma, the examples are a range of nutrient *rasayana* like *shatavari*, *sharkara*, milk, *ghrita*, *praval*, *mukta* etc.
2. At the level of *agni* by promoting the bio-fire system of the body with positive digestive and metabolic function in turn promoting nutrition such as *pippali*, *sunthi*, *chitrak* etc
3. At the level of *srotas* (micro-circulation) by inducing *srotoprasadan* effect improving the competence of inner transport system. Micro-circulation and tissue perfusion such as *guggulu*.

By acting through the above modes *rasayana* karma establishes a positive nutritional status in the body, help in healthier tissue formation, stronger immune system status, improve mental power and long life. All this put together amount to rejuvenation or *kayakalp* of course in a limiting meaning.

### **Planning age specific *rasayana***

Aging is the *svabhava* or the nature of a living –being. The physical body-mind system has been designed to stay for a time bound tenure approximately 100 years. During the life span, the body undergoes progressive involution and decay leading ultimately to decadence and death. *Ayurveda* deliberates on the process of ageing and sequential senile changes in different contexts such as *balyavastha*, *Madhya avstha* and *vridhdhavastha* hallmarked by *kaph*, *pitta* and *vata* activities respectively. *Vata* is drying and decaying force and is the master *dosha* in the aging process.

*Vagbhatta* and *sharangadhara* describe an unique scheme of biological aging in ten decades frame speculating the specific sequential loss of certain bio-values specific to respective decades of life. This information open to possibility of developing specific *rasayana* to restore the likely losses of the particular decade. If *rasayana* therapy is planned in relation to age there is a possibility of retarding the aging process. The following table describes the pattern of age related biolosses and proposes *rasayana* for the purpose.

S.no.	Decades of life span	Natural biolosses (disered effect)	Suggested rasayana for restoration
1.	0-10	<i>Balya</i> – corpulence	<i>Gambhari, kshira, ghrita, suvarna</i>
2.	11-20	<i>Vridhhi</i> – growth	<i>Kashmari, aswagandha, bala</i>
3.	21-30	<i>Chavi</i> – lusture	<i>Amalaki, haridra</i>
4.	31-40	<i>Medha</i> – intellect	<i>Bramhi, shankhapuspi, jyotismati</i>
5.	41-50	<i>Tvak</i> – skin quality	<i>Bhrigraja, haridra, priyal</i>
6.	51-60	<i>Dristi</i> – vision	<i>Triphala, lauh, amalaki, jyotismati</i>
7.	61-70	<i>Sukra</i> – virility	<i>Aswagandha, kapikacchu, satavari</i>
8.	71-80	<i>Vikrama</i> – physical strength	<i>Bala, amalaki</i>
9.	81-90	<i>Buddhi</i> – thinking	<i>Brahmi, sankhapuspi</i>
10.	91-100	<i>Karmendriya</i> – locomotion	<i>Bala, sahachara</i>

### Tissue and organ specific *rasayana*

Although *rasayana* in general is a holistic restorative and rejuvenative modality, one can visualise some *rasayana* remedies and recipes for specific promotion and protection of certain specific tissue and organs. Such *rasayana* can be prescribed in need based manner for promotive or even for curative purposes for organ protection. Some examples are proposed in the following table.

S.no.	<i>Rasayana</i> quality	Purpose	Suggested remedies
1.	<i>Medhya rasayan</i>	Promotion of brain and cognitive function	<i>Brahni, sankhapuspi, madukparni</i>
2.	<i>Hridya rasayana</i>	Cardioprotective	<i>Arjun, puskarmula</i>
3.	<i>Mutra rasayana</i>	Nephroprotective	<i>Punarnava, gokshur</i>
4.	<i>Tvachya rasayana</i>	Skin health	<i>Haridra, somaraji</i>
5.	<i>Chakchusya rasayana</i>	Eye health	<i>Triphala, jyotismati</i>
6.	<i>Kanthy rasayana</i>	Throat and speech	<i>Vacha, yastimadhu</i>
7.	<i>Vrishya rasayana</i>	For virility	<i>Asvagandha, kapikachu</i>
8.	<i>Stanya rasayana</i>	To promote lactation	<i>Satavari</i>
9.	<i>Srotoprasadan</i>	To promote inner transport	<i>Guggulu</i>
10.	<i>Nasya rasayana</i>	To help nose and sinuses	<i>Katphal, apamarga</i>

### Disease specific *rasayana*

Although *rasayan* therapy is primarily a promotive and preventive health care modality, a concept of disease specific *rasayana* therapy has been projected by *shusruta* and his commentator *Dalhan* under the term *naimittik rasayana* i.e. *vyadhi-nimitta rasayan*. *Shusruta* gives only two example for *naimittik rasayana* namely *shilajatu* and *tuvarakarasayana* for

*prameha* (diabetes) and *kustha*(leprosy) respectively. However in contemporary contexts, one can visualise using a range of other *rasayanas* for different diseases. The *naimittik rasayana* is really not a specific treatment of a disease entity, rather is a *rasayana* for promoting the strength and immunity of a patient to fight with his existing disease a few *naimittik rasayanas* are suggested in the following table.

<b>Selected diseases</b>	<b>Suggested <i>naimittik rasayana</i></b>
Diabetes mellitus	<i>Shilajatu, haridra</i>
Leprosy and dermatoses	<i>Tuvarak, haridra, somaraji</i>
Bronchial asthma	<i>Haridra, shirisha</i>
Hypertension ans IHD	<i>Sarpagandha, puskarmula, arjun</i>
Urinary disorders	<i>Punarnava, goksura</i>
Arthritis	<i>Bhallatak, eranda, guggula</i>
Neurodegenerative diseases	<i>Brahmi, asvagandha</i>
Dementia	<i>Brahmi, shankhapuspi</i>
Immunodeficiency	<i>Amalaki, guduchi</i>

#### ***Achar and ajasrika rasayana***

*Achar rasayana* is an unique concept in *ayurveda* which implies that a moral, ethical and benevolent conduct viz. truth, nonviolence, personal and public cleanliness, mental and personal hygiene, devotion, compassion and yogic life bring about rejuvenative state in body-mind system. A person who adopts such a life-style and conduct gains all benefits of *rasayana* therapy without physically consuming any material *rasayana* remedy and *rasayana* recipe. All form of *sadvritta*, *achar* and practice of yoga and spirituality produce such a quantum *rasayana* effect in a non-pharmacological way. This can be practiced alone or combine with material substance *rasayana* therapy.

The term *ajasrika rasayana* refers to daily rejuvenative dietetics with adequate quantity of nourishing *satvika* elements of diet viz. *ghee*, milk, fruits, vegetables. *Ajasrika rasayana* is used alone or along with material *rasayana* remedies.

#### ***Samsodhana for rasayana therapy***

Besides *achara* and *ajasrika* components another important requirement for use of material *rasayana* therapy is *samsodhan* through appropriate *panchakarma* procedures. *Ayurveda* emphasis that a *rasayana* remedy yields its full effect only when the body has been therapeutically purified by *langhan*, *dipan*, *pachn*, *snehan*, *svedan*, *vaman*, *virechan*, *basti*, *shirovirechan* etc. If the *srotamsi* i.e. micro-channels of the body are clean and competent with their physiological integrity at the time of administration of the *rasayana* remedy. It is

fully utilized by the systems and its bioavailability is ensured. Hence *samsodhana karma* should be planned accordingly. The most appropriate choice of age for use of *rasayana* therapy is *purva-vaya* or *Madhya-vaya* i.e. young or adult age, not the actual old age when irreversible senile changes might have already occurred.

### Guidelines to select a *rasayana*

In all procedures of *rasayana* therapy a physician is expected to take due consideration of many individual and environmental factors while selecting a *rasayan* remedy for a particular client. Few of the factors to be considered are mentioned below:

1. *Vaya* – age group of individual
2. *Prakriti* – constitution of the individual
3. *Agni-bala*- digestive and metabolic status
4. *Dhatu status* – consideration of the status of *sapta dhatus*
5. *Oja bala* and *ojo dosha* – vitality and immune status as well as immune disorders if any.
6. *Srotas status* – status of functioning of the inner transport system and micro circulation.
7. *Desh satmya* – climatic variation viz. *Sadharan desha*, *jangal desha*, *anoop desha*
8. *Ritu satmya* – consideration of six *ritus* as well as *adaan* and *visarga kala* of the year.
9. *Vyadhi* and *vyadhi bala* - disease status if any
10. *Manobala* or mental stamina

Person with different categories and features of the above mentioned factors would need different *rasayanas* in consideration of their biological features to yield best results. Some decades of life are associated with different specific biological losses due to aging and hence there is a need to compensate these losses with specific *rasayana* remedies as mentioned earlier in this article using *sarangadhara*'s scheme of aging as a guideline.

### CONCLUSION

The context of *rasayana* therapy and its *ajasrika*, *achara* and *divyaausadhi* components are largely unexplored part of ancient wisdom. However, the prevalent *rasayana* procedures and recipes are of great current value in promotive, preventive and therapeutic aspects of aging health care. There is a great need to acquaint the professionals as well as the public about the use of *rasayana* remedies and recipes besides the pro-*rasayana* dietetics and life-style regimen described in *ayurvedic* texts.

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