

PHYSIOLOGICAL STUDY OF RASAYANA ON AGING AN AYURVEDIC PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

Akalaja jara is a multidimensional process of physical, psychological & social change. Ayurveda is unique system of medicine which has holistic approach to treat individuals. Ayurveda is divided into eight branches. *Rasayana* is one of them. Rasayana is a therapy mainly aiming for prevention from untimely *Akalaja Jara* (ageing) & disease which deteriorate the life in old age. Properly used *Rasayana* drugs, diet, regime gives wonderful results. *Rasayana* has given powerful contribution to overcome age related disorder & act essentially on nutrition dynamics & rejuvenate the body & mind.

KEYWORD: *Rasayan, Aging, Jara, Panchkarma.*

INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda & other Indian traditions considered the total span of life over one hundred years. The Vaidic hymns proclaim an active, healthy life of hundred years-“ *Jivem Saradaha Satam, Pasyem Saradaha Satam. Aitaraiya Brahmana, Kathopanisd, Charak & Vagabhatta* described an active life span of hundred years. *Chandogyopnisad* emphasizes that a man enjoy 116 years of life. The total life span has been divided into three categories.

Susruta gives an elaborate & systematic classification of age.^[1]

- 1) *Balyavastha* – Before 16 years
 - a) *Kshirapa* – Only milk consumption, Upto 1 year
 - b) *Kshirannada* – Milk & solid food, Upto 2 years
 - c) *Annada* – Only solid food, More than 2 years Upto 16 years.

- 2) *Madhyamavastha* – 16 – 70 years
 - a) *Vridhhi* – Upto 20 years
 - b) *Youvana* – 21 – 30 years
 - c) *Sampornata* – 31 – 40 years
 - d) *Hani* – 41 – 70 years

3) *Vridhnavastha* – 71 – 100 years

Sarangdhara present an interesting schemes of loss of different biological factors during life as a function of aging.^[2]

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|---------------------------|---|--------------------|---|----------------|---|--------|
| 1) First decade of life | – | <i>Balya</i> | – | Childhood | – | 1-10 |
| 2) Second decade of life | – | <i>Vridhhi</i> | – | Growth | – | 11-20 |
| 3) Thired decade of life | – | <i>Chavi</i> | – | Beauty | – | 21-30 |
| 4) Fourth decade of life | – | <i>Medha</i> | – | Intellect | – | 31-40 |
| 5) Fifth decade of life | – | <i>Tvaka</i> | – | Health of skin | – | 41-50 |
| 6) Sixth decade of life | – | <i>Dristi</i> | – | Vision | – | 51-60 |
| 7) Seventh decade of life | – | <i>Sukra</i> | – | Sex | – | 61-70 |
| 8) Eight decade of life | – | <i>Vikrama</i> | – | Strength | – | 71-80 |
| 9) Ninth decade of life | – | <i>Buddhi</i> | – | Wisdom | – | 81-90 |
| 10) Tenth decade of life | – | <i>Karmendriya</i> | – | Activity | – | 91-100 |

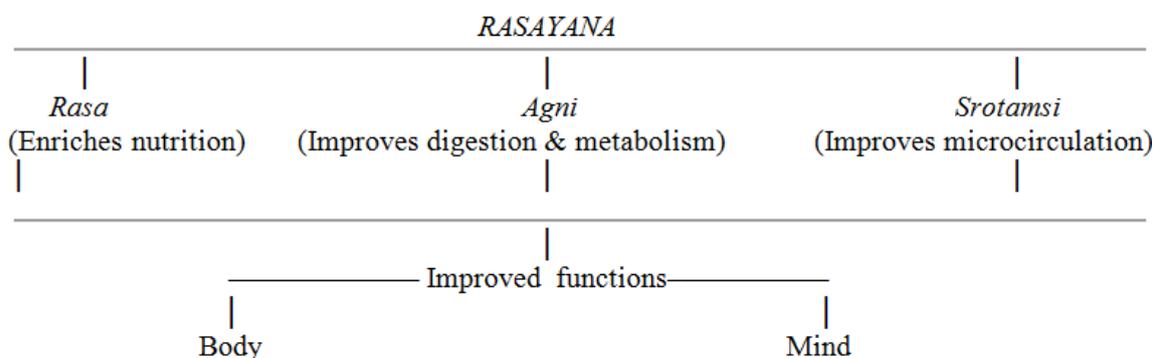
Ageing is essential a physiological phenomenon usually defined as the progressive loses of biological functions accompanied by decreasing fertility & increasing mortality with advancing age. It represent structural & functional changes of an organism over its life span. Ayurveda considers *Akalaja Jara* as *Jaivika Swabhava* or biological nature of the living being & believes in the natural cycle of birth senescence-death-rebirth as the very destiny of life. As per the fundamental principles of Ayurveda the balance state of *Vata, Pitta, Kapha doshas* maintains the health of an individual by controlling the physiological factors in the body. Ayurveda *Susruta Samhita* has clearly emphasized that the *Vata Doshas* increases greatly during old age. So it is responsible for most of the manifestations of ageing. There are tendencies of gradual diminution of all *Dhatu, Indryas, Ojas*, during *Akalaja Jara* because in old age *Vata* predominates & its fundamental properties precipitates the *Soshana & Kshaya* of different *Dhatu* which are responsible for the most of the manifestations of *Akalaja Jara*.^[3] Ayurveda has elaborated that Agni represents the digestive & metabolic functions of the body which consist of the digestive juices & different kinds of hormones, enzymes & co-

enzymes. The optimum activity of *Agni* maintains the vigor & vitality of an individual & also keeps up the growth, development of the body. According to *Ayurveda* with the advancing age that *Ahara Rasa* will not be able to produce satisfactory in elderly persons by nourishing since their tissues are over matured by geriatric decay. According to modern discipline that the ageing is probably the result of the breakdown of the cellular safety nets. Some of the causes are unavoidable such as ultraviolet radiation, free radicals & genetic effects, environmental & behavioural influences. Free radicals which are highly reactive & can do tremendous damage to the cell. They are capable of attacking the healthy cells of the body causes their structure & the function. It appears to be a major contribution to *Akalaja jara* & degenerative disorders in *Akalaja Jara*. Thus cell has responded to this threat by creating various enzymes that bind to free radicals & inactive them which are called antioxidants. So it has been reported by scientific studies that Ayurvedic Rasayana formulations are potent antioxidants drug & having immune-modulatory, anti stress & cytoprotective properties. Ayurveda Rasayana tantra which is exclusively committed to the science of *Akalaja Jara* & prevention with the help of *Rasayana* or rejuvenation therapy. It consists of drugs & specific therapeutic measures which act on *Dhatus*, *Agni*, *Srotas* in the body & results healthy tissues development in the body. Ultimately it gives to the person long life, immunity, strength, happiness & intellect promotion. So all these improvements are considered as anti aging effects.^[4]

DISCUSSION

Vata, *Pitta* & *Kapha* are the three basic constituents of living human body. A balanced state of the structure & function of these three *Doshas* maintains the healthy life & their imbalance is the basis of pathology according to Ayurveda. As per fundamental principles of Ayurveda, *Kapha* is the predominant *Doshas* during childhood, *Pitta* during the adulthood & *Vata* during old age. *Kapha* is the principle humor responsible for growth & development while *Pitta* is responsible for the vigour & vitality of youth. *Vayu* according to its fundamental properties atrophy & involution i.e. *Kshaya* & *Shosha* of *Dhatus* which is responsible for most of the manifestations of aging. A function of aging, with advancing age *Kapha* gets gradually depleted & *Vata* increase spontaneously. *Rasayana* stand as an answer to solve the problem of healthful longevity including mental development & resistance against disease. *Susruta* defines *Rasayana* as a measure which prolongs longevity, develops positive health & improves mental function & provides resistance & immunity against disease. It is a specialized type of treatment influencing the fundamental aspect of the body *Dhatus*, *Agni* &

Srotamsi & help in the prevention of ageing. The word *Rasayana* consist of two words 1) *Rasa* 2) *Ayana*. The word *Rasa* refers to the *Rasa Dhatus* in the context of *Rasadi Sapta Dhatus* & to the pharmacodynamics properties of a drug in the context of *Rasa Guna* etc. *Ayana* means flow i.e. the measures by which one is capable of getting the nourishing *Rasa*. Thus *Rasayana* is that process by which all the body tissue are nourished. Consequently *Rasayana* helps in regeneration, revival & revitalization of *Dhatus*.^[5]



Rasayana drugs act at one or all of the three levels. As a result rich, good & healthy *Dhatus* are provided in the body. This gives to a person longevity, immunity, vitality, happiness & improved intellect etc.

- 1) Acting at all levels of *Rasa* by enriching its nutritional value of the circulating plasma. Ex. *Draksha, Satavari, Salparni* etc.
- 2) Acting at all the level of *Agni* i.e. at the level of digestion & metabolism. This group of drugs improve the digestion, absorption & metabolism & have some anabolic effect. Ex. *Pippalli, Haritaki, Citraka* etc.
- 3) Acting at the level of *Srotamsi* i.e. at the microcirculatory channels carrying nutrition to the tissues. Theses *Rasayana* cleans & activate the micro circulatory channels i.e. *Srotosuddhi* leading to improved tissues health & their quality. Ex. *Pippali, Guggulu, Rasona* etc.

Available evidences faintly indicate that *Rasayana* drugs could influence the secretion of a hormones Dihydroxy Phenyl Alanine (DHEA), the deficiency of which is implicated in the process of aging. Neurotransmitter substance such as Norepinephrine, Acetyl choline or Dopamine are released in stress conditions. Repeated stress on every cell causes aging process. *Rasayana* therapy is thus, associated with multidimensional effect on the physiology.

CONCLUSION

At last it can be concluded that *Rasayana* is a wonderful treatment procedure of *Ayurveda*. By its proper use, a person can live healthy & happy long life. *Rasayana* is not a simple drug therapy but is a specialized therapeutic procedure implicating the fundamental concept of *Ayurveda*. Science of rejuvenation deals with recipes which enable a man to retain his manhood or youthful vigor up to good old age & which generally serve to make the human systems invulnerable disease and decay. The rejuvenation has unimaginable & wonderful effects. It maintains proper balance amongst *Vata*, *Pitta* & *Kapha*. It produces stability, cures stiffness, stimulate digestion & metabolism.

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