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### Review Article

## NECESSITY OF RASAYAN IN MODERN ERA

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### ABSTRACT

There has always been an emphasis on acquiring a balanced state of health and prevention from diseases in ancient texts of *Ayurveda*. Even though concepts on immunity in conventional science is highly developed but acquiring the same in terms of physical and mental strength (*Dehabala and Manobala*) still needs to be explored adequately. Prognosis of every disease has certain underlying etiology. Whether age, unwholesome food practices, addictions or invasion of micro organisms, environmental factors all these can contribute to the precipitation of diseases. Hence science from ancient *Ayurveda* provides certain therapeutic management that can help not only combating disease but simultaneously avoid its relapse. *Rasayan* and *Vajikaran* are such unique divisions amongst all in *Ayurveda* that describes the concept of longevity apart from immunity. This article deals with various aspects of *Rasayan* along with its necessity in modern era.

**KEYWORDS**

*Rasayan, urjaskar chikitsa, artasya roganut chikitsa Gramyahar –vihar, kutipravesik rasayan, vatatopic rasayan, kanya rasayan, naimitik rasayan, ajasrik rasayan, ashtang ayurved*

**INTRODUCTION**

Every human being wants to live long healthy & happy life. This natural desire for life is called as *Praneshana* in *Samhita*. [1] Though ageing is natural process of degeneration of basic tissues, premature ageing can be delayed by specialized *ayurvedic* therapeutic management named *Rasayan*. *Rasayan* literally means *rasa's ayana* i.e. the path of *Rasadi dhatu* [2]. *Rasadi dhatu* get enriched with nutrition by *rasayan* therapy [2]. *Rasayan* the clinical specialty of *ayurveda* is included in 8 clinical divisions of *Ayurveda* viz. *Ashtang Ayurved* [3].

- *Kaya chikitsa*
- *Bal*
- *Graha*
- *Urdhvang*
- *Shalya*
- *Danshtra*
- *Jara- rasayan*
- *Vrusha –vajikaran*.

To maintain the health of healthy and to combat the disease in diseased, is the aim of *Ayurveda* [4]. Where *Kayachikitsa* is the division which describes treatment of diseases *artasya roganut bheshaj* [5] and two separate divisions are dealing with maintenance of health *Rasayan* and *vajikaran* i.e. *urjaskar chikitsa* which is for promoting strength, immunity and aphrodisiac [6]

It is mentioned in *Samhita* that *Gramyaahar* [7] is the root cause of all morbidities, and the *yayavar rishi* which consume it, when they were in public contacts, then suffered from unwanted after effects of *gramyaahara* [7] were treated by *Rasayan* therapy .

What is *Gramyahara* ?

It is unwholesome diet which is not nourishing body tissues, contrary adversely affecting their nutrition. It is enlisted as following in *Charaksamhita*.<sup>7</sup>

- Intake of food items having sour, salty, pungent *rasa* and alkaline *guna*.
- Intake of dried vegetables, meat, seeds & paste of sesame seeds and food items prepared by rice flour.
- Germinated pulses, cereals.

- *Virrudhaahara* – incompatible food items. The list of various food combinations which are incompatible are discussed in details [8]
- *Asatymya*- unsuitable food
- Rough ,alkaline food
- *Abhishyandi* -Channel blocking food items.
- Decomposed, heavy, putrefied and stale food items.
- Untimely meals /consumption of meal before the previous food is not completely digested i.e. *vishamashan*

Apart from *gramyaahar Gramyavihara* i.e. some unwholesome activities also described as following

- Sleeping at day time
- Indulging in excessive sexual intercourse
- Indulging in excessive physical exercise
- Affected with fear, anger, grief, greed confusion, exhaustion.

*Gramyahara- vihar* effects :[7]

- Laxity in muscle
- Looseness in joints
- Vitiating of rasa
- Vitiating of blood
- Liquefaction of accumulated fats
- Incomplete formation of bone marrow
- Non ejaculation of *shukra*
- Deterioration of *ojus*

Clinical manifestation observed after *gramyaahar-vihar* consumption [7]

- Malaise
- Depression
- Excessive sleep
- Drowsiness
- Laziness
- Lack of enthusiasm
- Breathlessness
- Incapability of physical work
- Incapability of mental work

- Loss of memory
- Loss of intellect
- Loss of complexion
- Susceptible to all diseases
- Fail to enjoy the normal life span

Health is not mere absence of disease. the above mentioned symptoms and signs without any disease are the warning signal as far as health is concerned. The detail discussion with so many examples of *Gramya ahar - vihar*, their effects upon *dhatu*, consequences described and then *rasayan* drugs are described as remedial purpose. This clearly indicates that *rasayan chikitsa* was very much developed in *Samhita* period.

They, then advised this treatment specialty which includes pharmacological and non pharmacological management for delaying ageing, preventing diseases and many more health benefits as well.

Specialist with this specialty treatment faculty, used to treat the person outdoor as well as indoor facility, under vigilance of *Vaidya*. [9]

There is mention of name of various sages in *Samhitas* who had taken and experimented the specific *rasayan* and were benefited e.g. *Maharshi Chyvana (chyvanprash)* [10], *Vasistha ,kashyapa, angira, jamadagni, bharwaj, bhrig,* (*amalakaayas bhramyarasayan*) [11] *vaikhanas, valakhilya* and other sages (*bhramarasayan pratham, dwitiya*) [12] took *rasayana*, and obtained benefits of *rasayan*, longevity, maintaining youthfulness .

Definition of *rasayan* –

- The *rasayan* is the promotive treatment by which one attain excellent *rasadi* seven *dhatu*. [2]
- The treatment specialty which alleviates ageing and diseases. [14]

Basically *rasayan* are categorized into following groups.

***Kamyas rasayana*** – it is focused to certain aim (*hetu, kamana*) [13]

e.g.

- i. *Prankamiya* – promotes longevity of life
- ii. *Medha kamiya* – promotes intelligence.
- iii. *Shrikamiya* – promotes complexion

***Namittika rasayan*** – recommended for specific time for combating disease

e. g .i. Use of *Bhallatak Semecarpus anacardium Linn* has been stated in accordance with disease, constitution and adaptability of a person. It is mentioned that it is highly effective in all sort of *kaphaj* disorders and *vibandha* –blockages [15]

ii.*Pippali rasayan Piper longum Linn* is stated for *pranavah srotas* disorders like *kasa,shwas, hikka shosha ,vaisvarya* etc.[29]

**Ajasrik rasayan** – is in the form of specific diet [13]e.g. use of *gruta* clarified butter /*dugdha* milk for *dhatuwardhan*

**Achara rasayan** –mainly describes practice of good conduct and social behavior.[16]

**Kutipravesnik rasayan** –Specific indoor arrangement is required while administering this rasayan.[17]

**Vatatapic rasayan**- Here the daily routine is not needed to change while administering *rasayan* [17].

Thus *Rasayan chikitsa* consist of multifold management which aims to obtain longevity of life, to prevent morbid conditions, and to combat diseases.

It is rejuvenating process. It includes either consumption of herbal or herbomineral drugs or sometimes only specific diet, which nourishes the *dhatu* have been suggested..By the treatment plan of drug, diet or certain regimen advised,are having potential to rejuvenate the body ;cause tissues are able to get optimum nutrition after digestion, assimilation of food and remains in its excellent state. *Rasayan* also acts on *agni* and *srotas*, increases digestive power, improves metabolism, improves macro and microcirculation, strengthen body, mind, sense organs, and organ of actions and increases immunity. It destroys diseases,delays ageing process.

To obtain the said benefits of *rasayan* the *agnibala*, normal *vatadosha* movement and clear sero passages *vimal srotas* are required. So for many *rasayan* therapy along with drug, specific diet and code of conduct is suggested. Apart from that daily regimen, seasonal regimen, certain dos and donts while adapting to new seasonal regimen, code of conduct for social behavior *sadvrutta* should also be followed, as it helps to maintain *agnibala* and also helps to avoid blockages in micro and macro channels in the body.

#### BENEFITS OF RASAYAN :[19]

- Longevity : long life with morbid conditions makes the person miserable .*Rasayan* therapy assures long life with perfect health.
- Sharp Memory :Though its benefit of *rasayan* therapy, specific *medhya rasayans* are also mentioned in *samhita* which increases intellect and memory.26
- Intelligence

- Devoid of disease: By *rasayan* therapy *dhatav* gets proper nutrition. Increased *dhatubala* is most important factor for good immunity thus who consume *rasayan* will be free from disease
- Youthful age: Use of *rasayan* increase *agnibala*, *dhatubala*, person get rejuvenated .The changes of *Jara*, geriatric signs likes wrinkles ,grey hairs etc are delayed .
- Excellence of luster,aura
- Excellence of complexion
- Excellence of voice
- Optimum development of physical strength.:*Rasayan* yields strength of the body and strong physique. The term *dharnidharsara* [27]and *girisarsar* [28] sounds the same meaning that body becomes strong like iron.
- Strong sense organs & organs of action
- Successful words: in *samhita* this is mentioned as *vaksiddhi*. i.e. what *rasayansevi* speaks comes true. As by taking *rasayan* one get good memory, intelligence, words he utters is based on rational, logical, practical thinking, so what he speaks comes true in the test of time.[25]
- Respectability:.. *Pranati* is explained as *lokavandata*<sup>25</sup>.The person get perfect health ,optimum physical and mental strength, shapes his life successfully ,so gets respected in society.
- Brilliance

In *Charaksamhita* while describing importance of *agni*, is mentioned that whether person will live long life without disease solely depend on one's *agni*.

*Varna*, *bala*, *swasthya*,*utsah*,*upachay*,*praha*,all depends on ignited state *agni*, on the contrary hypo functioning of *agni* is the root cause of diseases [24].Before consuming *rasayan* status of *agni* is examined .Certain line of treatment is planned and executed for hypo functioning of *agni* if needed. After *Rasayan* therapy *agni* get strengthen ,and all the above mentioned benefits are obtained due to optimum *agnibala* and *vimal srotas*, and nutrition of *dhatu* improved .

*Rasayana* classified into two types according to *Charaksamhita* by its method of administrations.

*Kutipraveshik rasayan*: [17]

Certain indoor arrangement ,*Kuti* is required to take *rasayan*, hence named as *kutipraveshik* like-

- Special cottage, on auspicious land, facing eastward northward direction, should be prepared which includes three rooms inside .*trigarbha*
- The rooms should be free from danger, unwanted irritating sounds.
- Having small window *sukshmalochanah*,thick wall ,so that will be comfortable in any season and inmates will not suffer from seasonal changes.

- The individual who wants to take *rasayan* is dwelling in the innermost chamber, so that he will not be exposed directly to air and sun.
- Optimum cleanliness is maintained, should have favorable environment, and should be free from women.
- Well equipped with all necessary accessories, on call physician, with all routine as well as emergency medicines.
- Preparatory *samshodhan* procedure is obligatory before consumption of *rasayan* therapy.[18]
- It is stated that taking *rasayan* without *samshodhan* is in vain, as it will not give desirable effects in unpurified body in the same way as a dirty cloth will not take color on dyeing.
- Certain behavior regimen is stated for purification of mind as well.
- As the indoor programme for stipulated time is expected, the person should be totally focused on *rasayan* procedure and his routine life is totally changed during the regimen
- Though it's a time consuming procedure, but it is comparatively more effective.

#### Vatatic Rasayan:[17]

No specific indoor management is required

- The person is allowed to be in society, there is no need to change his routine hence named as *vatatic* .i. e. direct exposure of sun and air is permitted while consuming the *rasayan* drug .Also named as *Sowryamarutikavidhi* .
- As seclusion is not expected here, comparatively is more convenient, economical
- Comparatively it is less effective

#### Discussion : Necessity of *rasayan* in modern era

- While stating *Ashtang Ayurved* eight divisions of *Ayurveda*, *rasayan* division is stated after *Visha* division[20][3] All types of *vishas* are having qualities which are depleting *oja*. *Visha* either immediately ends the life or shortens the life span and sometimes remains in the body, and increases morbidity or any other diseases. For that, the treatment of *rasayan* is useful, *rasayan* increases longevity, nourishing all *dhatu* & increasing *oja* .
- Use of chemical fertilizers, pesticides, food adulterants raise a question about food quality. Such unwanted chemicals are harmful and having poisonous effect on the body. Thus the food which is having unwanted chemicals when consumed, the quality of *deha dhatu* will not be excellent, for that reason after proper *purifactory* procedure, administration of *rasayan* is beneficial even though the person is disease free.

- The rapid industrialization arouses the issue of water, soil, and air pollution. The pollutants when inhaled by breathing, drinking water, consuming food which is derived from polluted soil definitely affect the quality of *dehadhatu*, and further affect the immunity. Besides in day to day clinical practice cases of allergic rhinitis, allergic bronchitis, and contact dermatitis are very common. So after giving some disease specific medicine; for increasing immunity *rasayan* is extremely beneficial.
- The world is coming closer by technology and it has impact on every aspect of human life. The food culture is greatly affected. The common man in any country can acquire knowledge about intercontinental food practices. The local food for the specific territory is gradually replaced by food practices which is sometimes completely incompatible with the environment of that territory, where the individual is dwelling in. Such kind of food consumption for long period also affect the quality of *dehadhatu*. It will not be *prashasta*. *Rasayan* administration with specific diet will help to correct such issue.
- *Rasayan* is attributed to *prashast dhatu nirman*, *dhatu samya* i.e. homeostasis so use of *rasayan* is logical in cancer, where to prohibit the uncontrolled growth of abnormal cells and its invasion is necessary.
- In many chronic diseases including AIDS use of *rasayana* is recommended, as it nourishes the *dhathu*, builds immunity and increases the life expectancy.
- At today's scenario where the threat of epidemic /pandemic diseases and, natural/manmade disasters and post disasters risk of health ailments are increasing day by day, *rasayan* therapy is extremely essential for everyone. Cause *rasayan* builds strong immunity.
- *Rasayan* was first quoted for the solution of consequences caused by *gramyahaar* practices, but such practices are highly increased in today's era too. So to educate the society to refrain *gramyahaar vihar*, take healthy diet and to fix the undesirable effects of *gramyahaar rasayan* treatment is the need of time.
- The increasing stress in today's competitive daily life in modern era, is a causative factor /contributory factor in pathogenesis of many physical and mental ailments. As *rasayan* therapy has been stated for benefits of physical and mental health should be highly recommended in daily clinical practice for stress induced diseases and in prevention of them. Specific *medhya rasayans* are helpful to relieve the mental stress, fatigue for the persons having excess intellectual work. *Achar rasayan* the specific behavior therapy, which yields *rasayan* benefits only by following certain dos and donts are helpful for improving individual's mental health and in turn also helping to improve social health.
- Certain geriatric problems like Alzheimer's disease, dementia, Parkinson's disease, Delirium, osteoarthritis/osteoporosis, vision/hearing loss can be prohibited if *rasayan* treatment is



advocated in middle age as *rasayan* increases *dhatubala* , *manobala*, affords strength to sense organs and organs of actions, sharpens memory.

- Role of *rasayan* in *Avarana chikitsa*.- Use of *rasayans* are mentioned in separate chapters in details , but various examples and references of its use are found while describing treatment of other diseases too. Specific *rasayan* also alleviates diseases. For example while highlighting the importance of diagnosing *avarana* it has been stated in *samhitas* ,that knowledge of diminution (*kshaya*),aggravation (*vrddhi*) Equilibrium (*samatva*) and covering (*avarana*) of *vata* is very important for certainty of treatment.[21] If *Avarana* left undiagnosed, untreated, may result in many complications like cardiac disorders, abscess,spleen enlargement, *gulma* and diarrhea.[22] that means untimely, sudden death by undiagnosed cardiac ailment , which are reported nowadays, can be prohibited by detailed study of *vata avarana* As part of general line of treatment of *avarana* certain *rasayan* formulations are recommended.[23]

- *Shilajatu* with milk
- *Guggul Commiphora mukul* with milk
- *Bhargav prokta leha* i. e. *chyvanprasha* with milk diet
- *Brahmya rasayan*

### Conclusion:

- i. *Rasayan* therapy is definitely a beacon for prevention of diseases and increasing longevity
- ii. Certain *rasayan* cures the diseases as well.
- iii. Besides *rasayan* therapy is not always time or money consuming. Even single herbal drug when used meticulously will yield said benefits of *rasayan*.
- iv. The fast competitive world, *achar rasayan* too has a wide scope. Everyone wishing for mental stability should follow *achara rasayan*.
- v. Though the mortality rate is decreased, morbid conditions in elderly is a challenge for healthcare workers. So taking into consideration of *Dehaprakruti* and family history of certain diseases running into family, specific *rasayan drugs and* behavior therapy will definitely help to break the chain

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