

## Rasayana and Medhyarasayana: Traditional Ayurvedic nutrition methods for Physical and Mental Health

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### ABSTRACT

*Veda signifies wisdom. Various branches of science Geometry and logic, cognition, Medical, Physics and astronomy and other fields were all included in Vedic knowledge. However, Ancient India science not only based on the Vedas but also on their appendices, called as the Vedangas (i.e., shiksha, phonetics, chhandas, metrical structures, etymology, nirukta, grammar, vyakarana, and astronomy, and kalpa, conduction of ritual with its basis in geometry, mathematics, and calendrics). Another branch of the Vedas is Ayurveda. It is recognized as the Atharva Veda's upaveda. In Ayurveda, daily and seasonal routines, dietary and social codes of conduct, and the use of Rasayana are all addressed as means to this end. One of Ayurveda's comprehensive disciplines, rasayana, involves the specialized use of herbs, herbomineral formulations, food items, lifestyle, self-discipline, and social etiquette to achieve the optimal state of the body's tissues and systems and minimize the impact of etiological factors on the body. The ancient Ayurvedic tridosha theory is the source of Plato's three elements theory in Greek medicine: the gall, the wind, and the phlegm. In Ayurveda, to enhance Medha, or Intelligence, both Vata and Kapha Doshas have to be balanced. The fire element, or Pitta Dosh, is crucial for raising IQ and mental acuity. Ayurveda makes reference to both individual drugs and a class of pharmaceuticals known as "Medhya Rasayanas" in the Charaka Samhita aims to achieve this goal by balancing the Tridosha. Every medical system places emphasis on curing disease; but, in Ayurveda, maintaining and keeping health is the primary goal of health care plans, with disease treatment always coming second.*

**Keywords:** Charaka Samhita, Tridosha and Vedangas

### I INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda is a traditional Indian medical discipline based on plants which has been practiced for over 7000 years in India, Sri Lanka, and other nations. India has approximately 45000 plant species, which have various medicinal properties out of which 2000 were discussed in many literature (Jain 1994). 700 medicinal plants

and their medical applications were documented in ancient texts such as the Atharvaveda (c. 1200 BC), Charak Samhita and Sushrut Samhita (c. 1000–500 BC). It is founded on solid philosophical and experiential principles. Ayurveda continues to be predominant in Indian healthcare compared to Western medicine, especially when it comes to treating a range of chronic illness conditions (2). Indian healthcare is characterized by medical pluralism. (fig 1).



**Fig 1-Rasayana Chikitsa, source; Ayurvedic treatment in Chennai**

The fundamental ideas of Ayurveda on nutrition and dietetics, which pertain to health and healing in the digital era, still center around life, health, happiness, and quality of life; they also address disease and its treatment, drawing from a variety of philosophical and scientific frameworks. Preventive and curative treatment are the two categories under which traditional Ayurvedic medicine operates. Every Ayurvedic principle is profound and well-founded, but the theory of Tridosha, which comprises vata (movement or neurological function) and pitta (transformation and metabolism or endocrinological function), is the most significant since it forms the foundation of western concepts of physiology, pathology, pharmacology, biochemistry, diagnosis, diet choice, and therapeutic management.

Eight disciplines make up Ayurveda: Internal medicine (Kaaya Chikitsa), pediatrics (Baala Chikitsa), psychology (Graha Chikitsa), demonology (Urdhvaanga Chikitsa or Shalaky Chikitsa), surgery (Shalya Chikitsa), toxicology (Damstra Chikitsa), geriatrics (Rasayan/Jara Chikitsa), rejuvenation (Aphrodisiac therapy) and aphrodisiac therapy (Vrsha Chikitsa). The last two, Rasayana and Vajikarna, are distinct in their own right and have received very little research, in contrast to the first six disciplines, which are readily connected to relevant subjects in contemporary medical science. Rasa and Ayana are the two words that make up the word Rasayana. Rasayana is a regimen or drug that helps one achieve, metabolize, and channelize the higher quality of Rasa Dhatu and other Dhatus up to the smallest unit of the body, as per literary sense of the words Rasa and Ayana. According to Sushruta, rasayana is a science that promotes long life, relieves illness, and helps restore youth. The body's various dhatus, or tissues, are impacted by the characteristics of the rasa-dhatu. As a result, medications that enhance rasa quality are known as Rasayanas, and they reinforce or promote the attributes and general health of all bodily tissues. Rasayana was associated with elixirs, tonics, and alteratives that aid in the renewal of the body's systems and lengthen human life. Vatatapika, or the outdoor

patient department, and Kuti Praveshika, or the indoor patient department, are two methods for Rasayana preventive therapy. Rasayana therapy prolongs life, prevents aging, boosts IQ and memory, encourages physical fitness, restores youthful physical states, makes the body more vibrant, increases the effectiveness of various cognitive functions, and strengthens intrinsic health. Additionally, it stops the disease from progressing, reverses the course of the illness, and restores our body's essential fluids.

## II LITERATURE REVIEW (SOME RECENT WORK ON RASAYANA)

Puri (1970a, b, 1971, 1972) investigated a range of herbs used for manufacturing of Rasayanas drug. The first person to investigate the impact of Rasayana plants on psychosomatic stress was Udupa (1973). Singh and Murthy (1989) treated patients with epilepsy syndrome with Rasayana for a year, with positive outcomes. Rasayana formulations were tested as immunomodulators and adaptogens on individuals exposed to high elevations by Srivastava et al. (1990). Pathak et al. (1992) treat osteoarthritis patients by giving them physiotherapy, which involved heating the body systems and massaging them to induce perspiration. This was followed by the administration of a polyherbal Rasayana preparation that contained ashwagandha, guggulu, and other herbs. Mice were shielded from cyclophosphamide-induced leukopaenia by oral administration of Rasayana formulations (Kumar et al. 1994). Wagner (1994) concluded that the Rasayana preparations (operate as herbal immunostimulants and adaptogens) regulate the endocrine and immunological systems at relatively low doses without impairing the organisms' autoregulatory processes. Strong immunostimulants were seen in herbal preparations used as Rasayana by Mulgund et al; (1994).

Menon et al. (1996) mentioned the Brahma Rasayana, successfully stopped methylcholanthrene (200µg) from causing sarcomas to form. The preparation decreased carcinogenesis by 80% and increased mice longevity. Dahanukar et al; (1997) noted in a review article that Rasayana reduced mortality rates, decreased recovery times, and shielded animals from infections. Dwivedi et al; (1992) recommended Medhya Rasayana, a herbal remedy as a brain tonic. These preparations kept the mind cool and collected while lowering tension and trepidation. Srivastava (1995) investigated the impact of Ayurvedic adaptogens on the psycho-physiological performance of volunteers. The sensitivity index of oxygen availability and physical performance were enhanced by these herbs.

### III CONCEPT OF RASAYANA

Rasayana are substances that treat physical and mental health, boost mental capacity, prevent aging, provide energy and power, enhance vision, impart intelligence and fortify memory, promote healthy digestion, and promote clear skin (Shastri, 1979). By combining Rasa, the primordial tissue that is the basis of all food that humans eat and that the body is capable of assimilating, Rasayana nourish the body. When the nutrients in meals are evenly distributed throughout the body, the body stays healthy. Rasayana's physico-chemical effect purifies and enhances dhatus (tissue). They increase the body's resilience to illness, boost its potential for healing responses, and combat all harmful effects, including aging. Through anabolic processes, the Rasayana maintains the proper functioning conditions of tissues, enzymes, membranes, and mental serenity. Alteratives, which function as blood cleaners due to their diuretic and antihepatotoxic properties, can be

likened to rasayana. Additionally, alternatives improve health and vigor and help the body return to its normal functioning (Hoffmann, 1998). They modify the body's metabolism to optimize the tissue's ability to carry out various functions, including digestion and excretion. Certain herbs help the body expel waste through the skin, kidney, liver, or lung; others stimulate the digestive system; and yet others have antibacterial properties. Agni, the biological fire that burns within the body, reacts with food to improve the digestive process and produce energy. Several functions may be disrupted if waste is not adequately eliminated from the body and ama accumulates in the tissues. The main aims of Rasayana drug is to fortify the tissue and offset all of ama's negative effects.

### IV CLASSIFICATION OF RASAYANA ME BHEJ

Kamya rasayana and Naimittika rasayana are the two types of the Rasayana based on need. Kamya Rasayana supports optimal health by enhancing immunity, general health, and bodily energy levels.(fig2). The Kamya Rasayanas of Pranakamya, Medhakamya, and Srikamya are representative of energy and longevity, intelligence, and complexion, respectively. Naimittika Rasayana aids in the defense against a certain illness. Kuti Praveshika Rasayana and Vatatapica Rasayana are the two varieties of Rasayana on the basis of place of therapy. Vatatapika Rasayana is an outdoor Rasayana therapy, whereas Kuti Praveshika Rasayana includes indoor Rasayana therapy. Based on lifestyle and nutrition, also Rasayana divided into three categories. These three types of rasayana are Asushdha (based on drugs), Achara (based on lifestyle), and Ahara (based on diet) (Dutt, 1997).

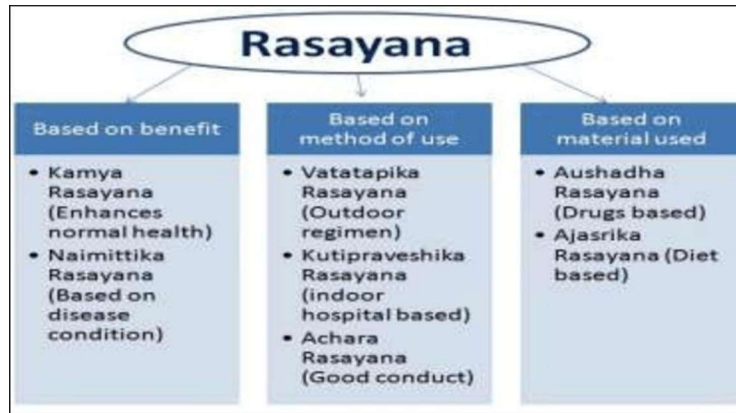


Fig 2- Classification, Source; Research gate

### V THE CONCEPT OF MEDHYARASAYANA

Medha refers to a person's capacity to learn about surrounding objects and develop into a knowledgeable individual. Since each Medharasayana medication has a different set of qualities, it is challenging to describe their

combined effects (Kulkarni et al., 2012). Medha, according to Nagarjuna, acts on the Rasa, Agni, and Srota levels through its Achitya Veerya (Prabhava). Drugs that act on Agni stimulate and enhance its performance; at the Srotsa level, they increase Rasa circulation by cleansing and opening the microchannel; and lastly, they enhance the function of Medha, which is beneficial to both the body and the mind.(fig 3).

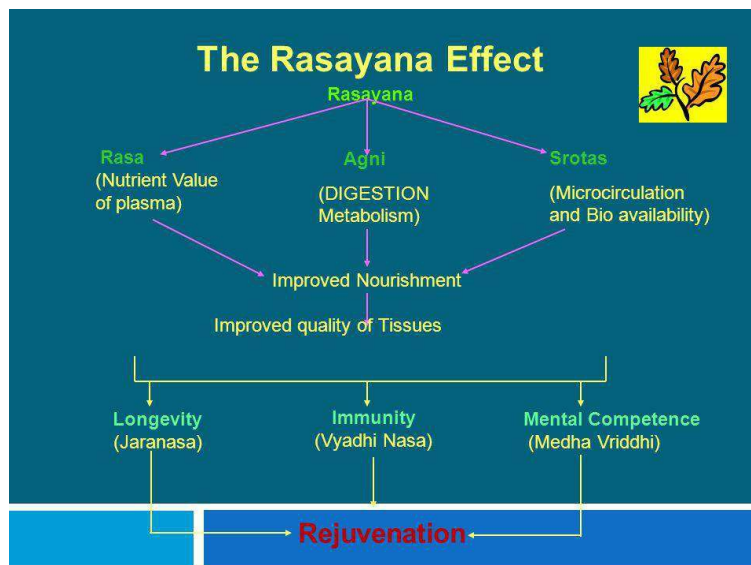


Fig 3- The Rasayana effects, source; <https://slideplayer.com/slide/695342/>

Drugs' pharmacological characteristics were dependent on different Bhoota combinations. Panchamahabhoot has the qualities of three magaguna, namely Satva, Raja, and Tama, according to Ayurvedic principles. Because Satva guna predominates in aakashiya, taijus, and aapya medicines, they enhance the Medha.

Through its Laghu property, Deepana-Paachana and Srotoshodhaka action, and promotion of the Medha, Tikta Rasa has performed its job. Additionally, Madhura Rasa nourishes the intellect, the five senses, and the medha. However, the roles of Lavana, Amla, and Katu in the Medha Action are the least significant. The

Saadhak Pitta is stimulated by Ushana Veerya medicines, which also enhance recollection and receiving powers. The majority of Medha

## VI RASAYANA THERAPY

Preceding to the rasayana therapy, the body's internal and external organs were cleansed, making the body more susceptible to absorbing medications. One week before to the commencement of Rasayana therapy, pretreatment was initiated. During this time, only a basic diet consisting of steamed vegetables and fresh fruits was permitted. All animal products,

Rasayan medications contain Madhura Vipaka, which aids in the development of Oja and enhances mental abilities, mental function, and sugar, and alcohol are absolutely forbidden; however, milk and honey are acceptable. Purvakarma, or preparatory treatment, is a vigorous massage using medicinal oils and heat application that greatly increases the body's latent heat. Various techniques, such as Virechna (clean the small intestine) and Basti (clean the big intestine), Vamna (emetics for stomach cleaning), Naysya (nasal drops for respiratory channel clearing), and Raktaoksha (bloodletting by leeches) method was used to clean the internal organs of the body (Panchkarma).(fig 4).



**Fig 4- Rejuvenation therapy, source; <https://ayurmantra.com/effects-of-rasayana-and-vajikarana-drugs-on-immunity/>**

## VII MODE OF ACTION OF RASAYANA DRUGS

According to Sushruta, a person is considered healthy if his doshas like agni, seven dhatus are in equilibrium and feels joyful and healthy physically and mentally. Rasayana drugs directly affects Dhatu, Agni, and Srotasa, the three basic body parts and keep the person healthy. Rasayana effect is not a specific pharmaceutical activity but is a multifaceted phenomenon acting through a comprehensive system involving the

fundamental elements like Rasa-Samvahan, Dhatus, Agni and Srotsa. The Rasayana effects that are described in relation to Vayasthapana, Ayushkara, Medhakara, and Urjaskara are produced by it, meaning that Rasayana medications works at Rasa level by enhancing particular nutritional contents of Poshak Rasa. Medications with attributes of Madhura, Guru, Snigdha, and Sheeta function as Rasayana at Rasa level by enhancing its nutritional content, which ultimately aids in attaining the greatest qualities of Dhatus. The Ushana, Laghu, Ruksha,

and Katu, Tikta, Kashaya Rasa-containing Rasayana medications may be functioning at the Agni level, energizing the organic metabolism and improving the structure and function pattern of Dhatus, which in turn produces the Rasayana effects.

## VIII IMPORTANT DIETARY PRINCIPLES AND RASAYANA

According to Ayurveda, a food only be termed as diet if it has five characteristics: doshasamya (maintain bio-balance), Pathyam (macro and micro channels friendly), Hitam (good for body constitution), Manasa Priyam (pleasing for mind) and produces vital energy and tissue essence known as Ojus and not produce aama a sticky, poison like substance produce in the gastrointestinal tract and other organ systems. A coated tongue, bad breath, dullness of the senses, depression and unclear thinking indicate presence of aama in the system.

According to Charaka Samhita Balanced diet refers to diet which maintaining health and prevent disease, increase stamina, health span, vitality, memory etc., and consists of six components namely: jeebaniya (energy yielding), brimhaniya (structure building), lekhananiya (prevent fat accumulation), bhedaniya (elimination of waste products), sandhaniya (repairing damaged tissues), and deepaniya (promotes digestion).

According to Preventive strategies of Ayurveda food works for prevention and cure of disease because both the body and disease are product of food. As per ayurvedic principle the food should be taken only after complete digestion of previous meal which have four characteristics i.e, hita bhojan (right quality of food), mita bhojan (right quantity), kala bhojan (in right time), along with jitendriya (control of need and greed). If diet intake is correct, utility of medicine is secondary. To get optimum results the food should have eight factors, which determine the nutritional significance of the food: Prakriti (natural food of quality), karana (processing), samyoga (combination), rashi (quantity), desha (regional

influence), kala (influence of time), upayogasmstha (the rules in dietetics) and upoyokta (the person who consume). Suitable diet enhance the health span and disease non-susceptibility of the person as per its prakriti. Prakriti is the inherent property of the individual, which includes physical, physiological, psychological, immunological and spiritual aspects of life and vary person to person. As per ayurvedic text some person have predominance of vata (ectomorph), some of pitta (mesomorph), some of kapha (endomorph) and others are sama prapriti (equilibrated). Ancient literature divided the stomach into four quadrants on basis of quantity of food and fluid out of which two quadrants were exclusively for solid, one for liquid food and rest quadrant should be left empty for vata movement, pitta and kapha and digestion aid. Vridhha Aahar (dietetic incompatibilities) is the unique concept of ayurvedic medicine, according to it food of improper combination or wrongly processed is avoided. Vridhha aahar cause formation of aama in body and causes various types of health disorder. Acharya Charaka give full description various factors responsible for dietetic incompatibilities. In ayurved there is a very minor dissimilarity between food and drug on the basis of rasa (taste), guna (properties) virya (active principle), vipaka (digestive effect) and prabhava (specific action). Drugs are dominated with virya, vipaka and prabhava and the foods are dominated with rasa and guna.

## IX AYURVEDIC DIET AS PER VARIOUS DOSHA

To restore the health of human body Vata, Pitta, and Kapha are the three types of body or doshas, are used in Ayurveda. In the future, the food will grow the prevalent dosha and cause disease if the diet has similar qualities to dosha. Conversely, if the food has qualities that are in opposition to the dominant dosha, it can aid in dosha balance and maintain bodily health. Each dosha is distinct and depends on the physical and psychological qualities of the individual. Their emotional,

mental, and physical states may cause the constitutions to alter. Some useful Rasayana:

- (a) **Chyavanprasha:** Chyavanprash is a well-known home remedy that falls within the category of Rasayana. It keeps the body vigorous and youthful and slowing down the aging process. It's improve the body's resistance against the disease.
- (b) **Brahma Rasayana:** Brahma Rasayana is used to treat mental stress, which includes anxiety, impaired mental function, and difficulty focusing.
- (c) **ArjunaKshirapaka:** Terminalia arjuna (T. arjuna) bark powder and cow's milk are the main ingredients of Arjuna Ksheerapaka (AKP), a traditional Ayurvedic treatment. Its cardioprotective properties make it useful.
- (d) **Shilajatu Rasayana:** Shilajatu in modern perspective as utilized in Diabetes, Osteoarthritis, Hypertension, Depression and other non-communicable disorders.
- (e) **Brahmighrit:** Brahmi Ghrita (BG) can help those with memory and learning issues.
- (f) **Medhyarasayana:** This remedy was utilized to enhance memory, cognitive processes, intelligence, and intellectual capacity. It is growing more significant now because of the demanding and stressful lifestyle. It can ease mental tension and enhance one's capacity for reasoned thought and reasoning.

## X CONCLUSION

Rasayana therapy have potential to improve the quality of life. Ancient literature like Atharva veda and Charak Samhita provides comprehensive and clear instructions to apply different Rasayana for various health issues and disease. Rasayana therapy aims to strengthen the body, promote longevity and good health, and prevent disease. Sufficient range of Ayurvedic Rasayana drugs to treat various ailments and symptoms in the elderly. Rasayana is a specific technique used in dietary regimens form, rejuvenative recipes, and unique conduct and

behavior that promotes health rather than pharmacological therapy.

The Rasayana are essentially molecular nutrients for many organs and tissues that support critical nourishment and aid in system regeneration and repair. Additional aspects include the requirement for long-term consumption, intangibility of effects, and complexity related to its use. Notwithstanding these drawbacks, Rasayana's potential should be reconsidered in contemporary environment sense of extending life expectancy and the ensuing rise in the need for senior care. It is plausible that these could yield an increasing number of novel, beneficial treatments for the amelioration and management of numerous human ailments for which no effective treatments are currently identified. It is our responsibility to highlight the potential of such an Ayurvedic medication at this time, when the entire world is working to develop medications that improve a person's quality of life. Rasayana medications are able to satiate this human need.

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