

## SPECIFIC ROLE OF RASAYANA THERAPY IN THE MANAGEMENT OF AUTOIMMUNE DISORDERS WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO AMAVATA AND KUSHTHA: AN AYURVEDIC REVIEW

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### ABSTRACT

Autoimmune disorders are characterized by an aberrant immune response wherein the body's immune system attacks its own tissues. In Ayurveda, such conditions are interpreted through the lens of *Ama*, *Agni Mandya*, and *Srotorodha*, forming the pathological basis of diseases like *Amavata* and *Kushtha*. Rasayana Chikitsa, a rejuvenation therapy, offers immunomodulation, tissue nourishment, and *Ojas* enhancement, all critical in reversing autoimmune dysfunction. This review aims to specifically analyze the Rasayana approach in the context of *Amavata* and *Kushtha*, citing classical references and contemporary evidence.

**KEYWORDS:** Rasayana, Amavata, Kushtha, Autoimmune, Ayurveda, Guduchi, Ojas, Naimittika Rasayana.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Autoimmune disorders such as rheumatoid arthritis and psoriasis are chronic, relapsing inflammatory conditions. Their

Ayurvedic correlates, *Amavata* and *Kushtha*, are extensively described in the Samhitas. Unlike symptomatic modern pharmacotherapy, Rasayana targets the root cause — impaired digestion (*Agnimandya*), toxin accumulation (*Ama*), and immune depletion (*Ojas kshaya*).<sup>[1–3]</sup>

## 2. Rasayana: Concept and Classification

- Rasayana is one of the eight branches of Ayurveda (*Ashtanga Ayurveda*) focusing on rejuvenation and immunity enhancement.
- Types of Rasayana:
  - *Kutipravesika* (indoor, intensive)
  - *Vatatapika* (outdoor, less intensive)
  - *Ajasrika Rasayana* (daily food-based)
  - *Naimittika Rasayana* (specific to disease conditions)

## 3. Ayurvedic Correlates of Autoimmune Disorders

- *Amavata*: Described by Acharya Charaka and Madhava Nidana as a Vata-Rakta-Ama condition involving joint pain, stiffness, and systemic symptoms.<sup>[1,4]</sup>
- *Kushtha*: A broad category including *Eka-Kushtha* and *Kitibha Kushtha*, correlated with autoimmune skin conditions like psoriasis.<sup>[2,3]</sup>
- Pathogenesis involves *Rasavaha*, *Raktavaha*, and *Mamsavaha srotodushti*.

## 4. Rasayana as Naimittika Chikitsa in Autoimmunity

- *Naimittika Rasayana* is specific to disease and aims to correct pathophysiology.<sup>[5]</sup>
- Rasayana restores balance by:
  - Enhancing *Agni* (digestive and cellular metabolism)
  - Removing *Ama* (toxins)
  - Modulating hyperactive immune responses
  - Enhances *Ojas* (immunity essence)
  - Regulates *Dhatu Poshana* (tissue nourishment) Modulates *Vata* and *Pitta*, the main doshas involved in autoimmune pathologies.

## 5. Important Rasayana Herbs in Autoimmune Disorders

- 1) **Guduchi (*Tinospora cordifolia*)**
  - a. *Tridoshaghna*, *Deepana*, *Rasayana*
  - b. Modern studies: Immunomodulatory and anti-inflammatory
- 2) **Amalaki (*Emblica officinalis*)**
  - a. *Rasayana*, rich in Vitamin C, antioxidant
- 3) **Ashwagandha (*Withania somnifera*)**
  - a. Balances Vata, strengthens tissues
- 4) **Shatavari (*Asparagus racemosus*)**

- a. *Rasayana*, especially in chronic fatigue and tissue depletion

### 5) Pippali (*Piper longum*)

- a. Enhances bioavailability, *ama pachaka*, *rasayana*

## 6. Rasayana Formulations Useful in Autoimmune Disorders

- **Chyawanprasha** – General Rasayana
- **Brahma Rasayana** – Neuroprotective and rejuvenative
- **Ashwagandhadi Lehyam** – For musculoskeletal strength
- **Guduchi Satva** – For autoimmune and febrile conditions

## 7. Rasayana in Amavata (Rheumatoid Arthritis)

- Key Rasayana Drugs:
  - **Guduchi (*Tinospora cordifolia*)** – *Deepana*, *Rasayana*, *Vata-Kapha shamaka*<sup>[1,6]</sup>
  - **Ashwagandha (*Withania somnifera*)** – Vata stabilizer and *Balya*<sup>[7]</sup>
  - **Pippali (*Piper longum*)** – *Amapachana*, *Rasayana*, *Anulomana*<sup>[1,8]</sup>
- Modern Insights: TNF-alpha inhibition, macrophage modulation<sup>[6,7]</sup>

## 8. Rasayana in Kushtha (Autoimmune Skin Disorders)

- Key Rasayana Herbs:
  - **Amalaki (*Embolica officinalis*)** – *Pittashamaka*, antioxidant<sup>[5]</sup>
  - **Nimba (*Azadirachta indica*)** – Blood purifier and Rasayana<sup>[9]</sup>
  - **Haridra (*Curcuma longa*)** – *Krimighna*, *Rasayana*, *Kusthaghna*<sup>[10]</sup>
- Formulations
  - **Mahamanjishtadi Kwath** – for Raktaprasadana
  - **Chyawanprasha** – General Rasayana and immune stabilizer

## 9. Rasayana and Ojas in Autoimmune Balance

- Ojas = supreme essence of Dhatus; depletion is seen in chronic autoimmune pathology.
- Rasayana builds *Ojas* through *Rasadhatu* nourishment.
- Clinical signs of Ojas improvement: better sleep, digestion, skin health, and resistance to infections.<sup>[5]</sup>

## 10. Integration with Modern Approaches

- Rasayana acts as an adaptogen and immunomodulator.

- Can be used as adjuvant therapy with modern immunosuppressants to reduce dose and side effects.
- Improves quality of life, fatigue, appetite, and stress in autoimmune patients.
- Complementary use with immunosuppressants reduces their side effects.
- Rasayana improves patient compliance, vitality, and long-term remission.<sup>[11]</sup>

## 11. CONCLUSION

Rasayana therapy is uniquely positioned in Ayurvedic therapeutics to modulate chronic inflammatory responses seen in autoimmune diseases. In *Amavata* and *Kushtha*, targeted use of Naimittika Rasayana restores digestive function, detoxifies the system, and builds immune resilience through Ojas. This integrated approach offers a sustainable and systemic correction beyond symptom relief.

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