

# BRIGHTER SIDE OF MERCURY

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In recent days, Ayurveda has started to see the glorious future. Ayurveda is originally based upon the concept of human-nature relationship. Ayurveda has believed that there is an immense similarity between body and nature. So, pharmacopoeia of ayurveda mainly show the medications prepared by combinations of different herbs and minerals. The herbal preparations and the metallic preparations.

People recognize ayurveda because of its herbal preparations. But, the herbo-mineral preparations have always seen the darker side whereas these are the inseparable part of ayurveda. But in recent years since community have raised concerns about the use of metallic preparations in the daily practice;

1)United Nations Environment Programme [UNEP] released a report “Mercury-Time to Act”<sup>(1)</sup>.

2) The toxicity studies of mercury and lead.<sup>(2)</sup>

“*Rasashastra*” and the “*Rasaushadhis*” are the majorly occupied part in the ayurveda. They have got great role in the ayurvedic treatment.

The main component of many *Rasaushadhis* *Parada* (Mercury). Many preparations such as *Rasaparpati*, *Panchamruta parpati*, *Sutshakhar rasa*, *Arogyavardhini vati* etc. are the ones which are regularly used in day-to-day life.

To make the *Parada* safe and harmless different *shodhan sanskar*<sup>(3)</sup> are done over it such as *shodhana*, *murchana*, *mardana* etc. are sanskar done on mercury to make it useful in therapies.

A *Rasashastra* text informs that *Parada* with attributes of a blue tinge internally and brilliant whiteness externally must be considered as pure.

Purification of *Parada*-

*Swedana* (steam), *mardana* (rubbing), *murchana* (swooning), *uthapana* (upliftment), *bodhana* (awakening of *Parada*),

*patana* (sublimation of *Parada*), *niyamna* (control the moments of *Prada*), *deepana* (potentiating *Parada*).

For the above purification procedures herbal drugs are used.

Like about *shodhana* sanskar different guidelines are told by samhitakars. The amount of mercury used during the *shodhana*. *Parada* should be taken in quantity of 2000 *pal* (80 kg), 1000 *pal* (40 kg), 100 *pal* (4 kg), 28 *pal*, 10 *pal*, 5 *pal*, 1 *pal* <sup>(4)</sup>. The preparations are to be administered orally along with specific *Anupana*. *Anupana* such as milk, honey, lukewarm water, ghee etc. are the vehicles or the *Rasaushadhis* are to be given with these substances. These decrease the risk of adverse reactions.

These are different forms of mercurial compounds such as elemental (or metallic) mercury, inorganic mercury compounds and organic mercury compounds. The inorganic mercurial compounds have very low rate of absorption (10-15%). While the organic mercurial compounds have high rate. Positively, the inorganic mercurial compounds are not lipid soluble hence; they cannot cross the blood brain barrier and even the placental barrier. Researchers and studies have proven the preparations to be inorganic mercurial compounds.

*Rasaushadhis* not only contain single ingredient but have different combinations which make the end product responsible for great therapeutic use.

Studies on preparations such as *Panchamruta* are concluded to treat tuberculosis, diarrhea, and abdominal diseases etc. The *Anupana* told is hingu, saindhava and jeeraka. Dose confirmed 2 *gunja*.

*Lohaparapati* another mercurial preparation treats the rheumatic arthritis, anemia, jaundice etc. *Anupana* told cold water and the dose confirmed 15 *gunja*.

There are number of factors which affect the effect of drug over the body. Correct usage of drug in proper dose by right route with respective *Anupana* told by scholars, these will definitely be beneficial. The issue as raised due to incidence of overuse, underuse or misuse of the ayurvedic medications<sup>(5)</sup>.

Due to some fault herbo-mineral medications are suffering darker days. But by following standardization rules we hope traditional medicines will soon face brighter days ahead and use of mercury in ayurvedic medicines will become more easy as well as authenticated.

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#### **References-**

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- 3) Rasahrudtantra chapter second- shlokas 1, 2.
- 4) Rasaratna sammuchyaya chapter 11- shlokas 27, 28.
- 5) Centre for Disease control and Prevention. Lead poisoning in pregnant women who used Ayurvedic medications from India- New York city 2011-2012.