



## Review Article

## Acharya Rasayana (code of conduct) as an Ancient Indian Tool for Psychosocial and Behavioral Health

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## Abstract

*Acharya Rasayana* (code of conduct) described in the classical Ayurveda compendium *Charaka Samhita* – refers to a “rejuvenation through conduct,” encompassing a code of ethical, psychosocial, and lifestyle guidelines. This article examines *Acharya Rasayana* as an ancient framework for psychosocial and behavioral health, integrating textual perspectives with contemporary empirical research. We review classical descriptions of *Acharya Rasayana* (e.g. truthfulness, non-violence, moderation in diet and sexual activity, regular sleep, compassion, and spiritual practice) and explore their alignment with modern findings in psychology, psychiatry, and public health. A narrative literature review was conducted, drawing on Ayurvedic texts and current scientific studies. Thematic discussions compare *Acharya Rasayana*'s principles to interventions such as cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT), mindfulness-based practices, and lifestyle psychiatry approaches. Modern clinical studies are highlighted – for instance, research shows that cultivating honesty, altruism, adequate sleep, and other behaviors emphasized by *Acharya Rasayana* yields benefits for mental and physical well-being. *Acharya Rasayana*'s emphasis on enhancing *sattva* (mental purity) while reducing *rajas/tamas* (agitation/inertia) is discussed in the context of psychophysiological stress reduction. Applications in integrative mental health care are proposed, such as incorporating *Acharya Rasayana* guidelines into preventive counseling, lifestyle modification programs, and public health campaigns. The review concludes that *Acharya Rasayana*, though formulated millennia ago, anticipates many elements of contemporary psychosocial interventions and offers a culturally rich, holistic paradigm for promoting mental health and resilience and merits evidence-based research in this arena of psychosocial health.

**Keywords:** *Ayurveda*, *Acharya Rasayana*, Psychosocial health, Code of conduct, Behavioral health, Lifestyle psychiatry

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## Introduction

Mental health and well-being are understood today as products of not only biology but also behavior, lifestyle, and psychosocial context. Modern definitions of health echo a holistic vision, such

as the World Health Organization's definition of health as “a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being”. Interestingly, classical Indian medicine – Ayurveda – long ago espoused a similarly integrative view. *Acharya Rasayana*, a concept introduced by *Acharya Charaka* (circa 200 BCE) in the *Charaka Samhita*(1), exemplifies Ayurveda's holistic approach to mental and behavioral health. The term combines *acharya* (“conduct” or “behavior”) with *rasayana* (“rejuvenation” or “longevity-promoting therapy”). It refers to a set of ethical and lifestyle practices that serve as a non-pharmacological rejuvenative, essentially a behavioral prescription for sustained mental, social, and physical health. Unlike herb-based *rasayana*

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therapies, *Acharya Rasayana* requires no ingestible drugs; rather, it is achieved through virtuous living and disciplined habits.

*Acharya Rasayana's* relevance in the present era is compelling. Modern life, with its high stress, sedentary routines, and erosion of social bonds, has led to the rising prevalence of psychosomatic and psychiatric illnesses. Issues such as anxiety, depression, substance abuse, and lifestyle diseases often co-occur, reinforcing the need for integrative interventions. There is growing recognition in contemporary psychiatry that factors like chronic stress, poor sleep, sedentariness, substance misuse, and social isolation can precipitate or aggravate mental disorders. In response, fields like lifestyle psychiatry have emerged, promoting diet, exercise, sleep hygiene, and mind-body techniques as adjuncts to standard care. Likewise, psychotherapies such as cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT)(2,4) and mindfulness-based interventions(5) explicitly target maladaptive thoughts and stress, acknowledging the role of behavior and cognition in mental health. In this context, *Acharya Rasayana* offers an ancient analogue – a comprehensive lifestyle regimen addressing diet, sleep, ethical conduct, emotional regulation, and spiritual outlook – which closely mirrors many evidence-based recommendations today.(3)

Despite being formulated thousands of years ago, *Acharya Rasayana* resonates with modern concepts such as positive psychology's focus on character strengths, lifestyle medicine's health behaviors, and preventive psychiatry's emphasis on resilience and coping. For example, *Acharya Rasayana* advocates truthfulness, compassion, and non-violence – virtues now studied for their impact on psychological well-being and social health. It advises regular sleep-wake cycles and moderation in consumption, aligning with current findings in sleep medicine and nutritional psychiatry. It includes practices like chanting or meditation (japa) and scriptural study, which echo mindfulness and meaning-based interventions used for stress reduction and therapy. These parallels invite a scholarly examination: can *Acharya Rasayana* be seen as an early framework for psychosocial well-being, and how does it compare to or enhance contemporary psychosocial interventions?

## Objectives

This paper aims to

1. Detail the classical description of *Acharya Rasayana* from Ayurvedic literature
2. Review modern empirical research related to each of its prescribed behaviors or principles
3. Compare *Acharya Rasayana's* approach with established psychosocial interventions like CBT, mindfulness practices, and lifestyle-focused psychiatry, and
4. Explore applications of *Acharya Rasayana* in integrative mental health care and public health promotion. By bridging ancient wisdom and modern science, the discussion will elucidate how cultural insights from Ayurveda can enrich global approaches to mental and behavioral health.

## Methods

This study employed a narrative (qualitative) review methodology to integrate classical Ayurvedic literature with modern scientific research. Ayurvedic texts (primarily the *Charaka Samhita* and its commentaries) were examined for descriptions of *Acharya Rasayana* and related concepts of mental well-being (*sattva*, *sadvrta* or good conduct, etc.). Key verses were identified and interpreted using contemporary translations and Ayurvedic scholarly analyses. In parallel, a literature search was conducted in

scientific databases (PubMed, PsycINFO) and Google Scholar for empirical studies and reviews pertinent to each *Acharya Rasayana* element (e.g. honesty and health, anger and cardiovascular risk, sleep and mental health, meditation and well-being, etc.). Inclusion criteria for modern studies emphasized meta-analyses, systematic reviews, and well-cited empirical papers to ensure robustness of evidence. Sources include biomedical journals, clinical trial reports, and authoritative health organization reports. The information from classical and modern sources was then compared and synthesized under thematic headings.

## Literature Review

### *Acharya Rasayana* in Classical Ayurveda

*Charaka Samhita*, a foundational Ayurvedic text, defines the goal of medicine as maintaining the health of the healthy and curing the illness of the sick. Within *Charaka's* chapter on *Rasayana* (rejuvenation therapy), the concept of *Acharya Rasayana* is introduced as a set of behavioral disciplines that confer the benefits of *rasayana* without any herbal elixir. *Charaka* enumerates approximately 25 key behaviours that constitute *Acharya Rasayana*. These can be grouped into several thematic domains (Table 1), as described by *Charaka Samhita*, *Chikitsasthana 1 (Rasayana Chapter)*:

- **Ethical Virtues:** Truthfulness (*satya*), non-violence (*ahimsa*), calmness and forgiveness (freedom from anger, *akrodha*), compassion (*karuna*) and charitable giving (*dana*) are strongly emphasized. *Charaka* states one should always speak the truth (*satyavadin*), refrain from harming others (*ahimsaka*), and avoid anger (*akrodha*). Such a person maintains a peaceful temperament (*prasanta*) and pleasant speech (*priya-vadin*). The individual practices mercy and empathy at all times (*nitya-karunavedin*). These virtuous qualities were believed to cultivate a *sattvic* mind (a state of purity and clarity in Ayurvedic psychology) and thereby promote mental equilibrium. Classical texts note that the opposite behaviors – e.g. falsehood, cruelty, anger – arise from *rajas* and *tamas* (forces of agitation and darkness/inertia) and are causes of mental disturbance and physical disease. For instance, uncontrolled anger was said to aggravate the *pitta Doshha* (bioenergy of transformation) and *rajas*, leading to psychosomatic issues – a prescient observation consistent with modern findings that chronic anger elevates stress hormones and cardiovascular risk(7).
- **Psychosocial Conduct:** *Acharya Rasayana* outlines ideal social behaviors that preserve harmony and mental health. One should be respectful to elders, teachers, and those deserving honor (daily honoring God, *gau* [cow], *brahmana*, *guru* and seniors is advised). One should associate with the wise and self-controlled (revering *astika* – believers in virtue/divine – and *jitatman* – the self-disciplined). Maintaining *saucha* (cleanliness of body and mind) is mandated. *Anayasa* (avoiding excessive strain or overexertion) is recommended – implying one should balance work and rest to prevent exhaustion. The person's conduct (*sista-acara*) is to be virtuous and disciplined at all times. These guidelines reflect an understanding that one's social environment and daily interactions significantly affect mental well-being. By promoting positive relationships (through kindness, respect, and gentle speech) and discouraging conflict or overwork, *Acharya Rasayana* aims to reduce psychosocial stressors. Notably, many of these behaviors align with what modern psychology calls *pro-social behavior* and *emotional regulation*. For example, speaking kindly and refraining from lying would reduce interpersonal conflicts and

inner guilt, thereby lowering stress – an insight supported by a contemporary study where individuals who told fewer lies reported significantly fewer mental health complaints and less tension(6).

- Lifestyle and Health Habits:** Several *Achara Rasayana* tenets pertain to lifestyle choices that have direct health implications. *Charaka* instructs to abstain from excessive alcohol intake and illicit or excessive sexual indulgence (*nivṛtta madya-māithuna*). Moderation in sexual activity (observing *brahmacharya* appropriately for one’s life stage) and avoidance of intoxication were believed to preserve one’s vital essence (*ojas* or vitality) and prevent neurophysiological derangements. Modern medicine concurs that substance abuse and risky sexual behavior can harm mental health; for instance, chronic alcohol use is known to deplete serotonin and worsen depression risk. *Achara Rasayana* also emphasizes proper sleep and daily routine: one should go to bed and rise at appropriate times (maintaining *sama jagaraṇa-svapna*, a balanced sleep-wake cycle). Classical texts warn that deranged sleep (e.g. insomnia or oversleeping) disturbs bodily *doshas* (bioenergies) and mental stability. This anticipates modern findings that chronically poor sleep is both a cause and effect of mental disorders, and that improving sleep quality yields significant reductions in depression, anxiety, and stress symptoms (with meta-analytic effect sizes ~0.5–0.6)(9). Additionally, *Charaka* advises consuming wholesome foods like milk and ghee daily (*nitya kṣīra-ghṛta-abhyasa*). In Ayurveda, milk and ghee are *sattvic* foods thought to nourish the mind and promote *ojas* (immunity/vitality). Modern nutritional science, while having mixed opinions on dairy fat, acknowledges that dairy provides calcium and beneficial fatty acids, and that certain components in dairy (like whey proteins or fermented products) can support neurological and metabolic health. Thus, *Achara Rasayana*’s dietary advice reflects a proto-“nutritional psychiatry,” recognizing diet as integral to mental and physical resilience. While *Charaka* did not explicitly mention *exercise* in *Achara Rasayana* (likely because moderate physical activity was assumed in daily life), balancing activity with rest (*anayasa*) is advised, echoing the principle of avoiding extremes—an insight now corroborated by lifestyle psychiatry research on the mental health benefits of regular physical movement.(3)
- Spiritual and Cognitive Orientation:** A significant portion of *Achara Rasayana* involves one’s inner life and worldview. The individual is encouraged to engage in *japa* (repetition of mantras or holy chants) and *tapas* (austere practices or meditation) regularly. They should cultivate an inclination toward spirituality and self-realization (*adhyatma-pravane indriya*, i.e. directing the senses toward the spiritual). Daily study of *dharma śāstra* (scriptures or inspirational literature) is prescribed. These practices aim to foster *sattva*, the quality of clarity, wisdom and equanimity. In Ayurvedic psychology, *sattva guna* is associated with virtues like contentment, faith, modesty, and mental peace, whereas *rajas* evokes anger, passion, and *tamas* leads to ignorance and depression. By strengthening *sattva* through spiritual study and mantra meditation, *Achara Rasayana* is effectively a form of mental training or *sattvavajaya* (mind-conquest therapy) geared toward resilience. This is remarkably parallel to modern mindfulness and meaning-based interventions, which have been empirically shown to improve emotional regulation and reduce stress and mood disturbance. Additionally, having a spiritual or philosophical orientation is often linked with greater life meaning and social support, further buffering stress. *Charaka*’s

inclusion of devotion, mantra, and scriptural wisdom as medicine for the mind presages the holistic treatments now used in integrative mental health.

In summary, *Achara Rasayana* in classical Ayurveda is a multidimensional lifestyle protocol targeting mental, social, and spiritual domains. It was explicitly stated to bestow the full benefits of *rasayana* (rejuvenation) – including longevity, cognitive acuity, disease resistance, and mental tranquility – “without consuming any drug, simply by disciplined conduct”.

Table 1 categorizes the *Achara Rasayana* factors as described by *Charaka* into psychological, social, spiritual, and lifestyle domains. These ancient precepts reflect an astute understanding of the mind-body connection and the social determinants of health. *Charaka* notes that a wholesome mental state helps prevent both mental and physical illnesses, whereas negative emotions can precipitate disease: for example, excessive fear can cause diarrhea, and anger can induce fever according to case stories in the *Saṁhita*. Conversely, cultivating virtues and a balanced lifestyle *increases sattva guna* and keeps mind-body equilibrium, thereby preventing illness. Such statements echo in contemporary psychosomatic medicine, which recognizes stress and negative emotions as risk factors for conditions ranging from heart disease to immune dysfunction.

### Modern Empirical Support for *Achara Rasayana* Principles

A striking feature of *Achara Rasayana* is that it anticipated many determinants of health that are now scientifically validated. Modern research across psychology, epidemiology, and neuroscience provides evidence – directly or indirectly – for the health benefits of the behaviors and qualities extolled in *Achara Rasayana*. Here we review key empirical findings corresponding to each thematic domain:

- Ethical Virtues and Mental Health:** *Honesty, altruism, and kindness* – core virtues in *Achara Rasayana* – have been linked to positive health outcomes in numerous studies. For example, a randomized experiment (the “Science of Honesty” study) found that individuals instructed to significantly reduce lying over 10 weeks **showed** fewer mental health complaints than a control group(6). The act of lying can create inner conflict and stress, whereas truth-telling promotes psychological coherence and better social relationships. Similarly, altruistic behavior and compassion have been associated with greater well-being, lower stress, and even longevity(8). A review by Post (2005) concluded that people who regularly engage in other-regarding actions tend to have better mental health, lower rates of depression, and longer lifespans. Conversely, anger and hostility – which *Achara Rasayana* warns against – are confirmed risk factors for ill health. Chronic anger has been tied to higher anxiety, hypertension, and immune impairment. A 2024 NIH-supported clinical trial demonstrated that frequent anger can impair vascular function (via endothelial dysfunction), helping explain the observed link between high trait anger and elevated heart attack/stroke risk(7).
- Social Behavior and Support:** *Achara Rasayana* promotes positive social interactions – respectful, benevolent, and community-oriented behavior. Modern psychosocial research underscores the health value of such conduct. Positive social support is one of the strongest predictors of mental well-being and resilience. Acts of kindness and volunteering have been linked to lower depression, reduced blood pressure, and stronger social connections. *Achara Rasayana*’s call for serving elders, honoring teachers, and treating everyone with love and

courtesy would foster strong social networks and intergenerational bonds. Epidemiological findings also indicate that integrity and fair behavior correlate with better health outcomes, presumably via lower interpersonal stress. Thus, living in accordance with moral values and maintaining strong social ties – as *Acharya Rasayana* prescribes – helps cultivate *sattva* and buffer psychosocial stress.

- **Lifestyle Factors (Sleep, Diet, Substance Use, Exercise):** Contemporary research in lifestyle medicine validates the critical role of daily habits in mental health, echoing many *Acharya Rasayana* recommendations. Sleep is a prime example: a 2021 meta-analysis of 65 randomized trials found that interventions improving sleep quality yielded medium-size improvements in overall mental health, depression, and anxiety symptoms(9). Diet and nutrition are increasingly recognized as pivotal to mental well-being, spurring the field of “nutritional psychiatry.” Meanwhile, *Acharya Rasayana*’s emphasis on avoiding intoxication resonates with modern evidence linking excessive alcohol to depression and anxiety. Though *Acharya Rasayana* does not explicitly mention a structured “exercise” regimen, its counsel to avoid physical or mental overexertion while remaining disciplined is consistent with today’s lifestyle psychiatry stance that balanced physical activity is protective against depression(3).

- **Cognitive and Spiritual Factors:** Research in psychology and psychiatry increasingly acknowledges the importance of belief systems, mindfulness, and spiritual practices in mental health. A neuroscientist, James Hartzell (2011) studied what he coined as the “Sanskrit effect” - measurable cognitive and neurological benefits – such as improved memory, focus, and brain structure – observed in those who practice intensive Sanskrit mantra recitation.(10) *Japa*, the repetitive chanting of mantras, is a core component of *Acharya Rasayana* and scientific studies show that this practice calms the mind, enhances concentration, and promotes overall well-being, linking the traditional wisdom of *Japa* with modern findings on the Sanskrit effect. Mindfulness meditation, akin to the contemplative aspects of *Acharya Rasayana*, has robust support for reducing stress, anxiety, and depressive relapse. Furthermore, having a sense of meaning or spiritual orientation – as promoted in *Acharya Rasayana*’s scriptural study and mantra chanting – is associated with higher resilience, social support, and positive emotional states. Some parallels exist with cognitive-behavioral approaches as well; *Acharya Rasayana* implicitly advises replacing negative or harmful thoughts and actions with constructive ones, akin to the *cognitive restructuring* of CBT.

**Table 1: Thematic Domains and Key Behaviors of *Acharya Rasayana***

Domain	Representative <i>Acharya Rasayana</i> Behaviors (per <i>Charaka Samhita Chikitsasthana 1</i> )	Classical Ayurvedic Rationale	Modern Correlates / Evidence
<b>Ethical Virtues</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Satya</i> (truthfulness)</li> <li>• <i>Ahimsa</i> (non-violence)</li> <li>• <i>Akrodha</i> (freedom from anger)</li> <li>• <i>Karuna</i> (compassion)</li> <li>• <i>Dana</i> (charitable giving)</li> <li>• <i>Priya-vadin</i> (pleasant speech)</li> </ul>	Cultivates <i>sattva</i> (clarity & purity), prevents mental agitation produced by <i>rajas/tamas</i> ; improper emotions (e.g., anger) believed to disturb <i>Doshas</i> - especially <i>pitta</i> - and trigger psychosomatic illness.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Honesty lowers autonomic stress<sup>1</sup></li> <li>• Chronic anger ↔ ↑ cortisol &amp; CVD risk(7)</li> <li>• Compassion &amp; prosocial acts ↑ well-being, ↓ depression/anxiety<sup>8</sup></li> </ul>
<b>Psychosocial Conduct</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Daily respect to elders, teachers, “god-cow-<i>brahmana-guru</i>” (learned, teachers)</li> <li>• Association with the wise/self-controlled (<i>astika, jitatman</i>)</li> <li>• <i>Shaucha</i> (cleanliness)</li> <li>• <i>Anayasa</i> (avoiding over-strain)</li> <li>• <i>Sista-acara</i> (consistent virtuous conduct)</li> </ul>	Harmonious social milieu lowers interpersonal tension; balanced effort averts exhaustion; positive company reinforces virtue and mental steadiness.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prosocial behaviour &amp; supportive ties buffer stress<sup>6</sup></li> <li>• Excess workload ↔ burn-out &amp; mood disorders<sup>3</sup></li> <li>• Clean, ordered environments linked to lower perceived stress</li> </ul>
<b>Lifestyle &amp; Health Habits</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Nivrtta madya-maithuna</i> (abstain from excess alcohol &amp; sexual over-indulgence)</li> <li>• <i>Sama jagarana-svapna</i> (balanced sleep-wake cycle)</li> <li>• <i>Nitya kṣīra-ghṛta-abhyasa</i> (regular milk &amp; ghee)</li> </ul>	Preserves <i>ojas</i> (vitality); deranged sleep or intoxication disturb <i>doshas</i> , weaken mind-body resilience; wholesome food sustains brain/nervous tissue.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alcohol misuse ↔ depression, serotonin depletion</li> <li>• Poor sleep both cause &amp; effect of mood disorders (meta-analytic <math>g \approx 0.5-0.6</math>)<sup>9</sup></li> <li>• Diet quality tied to “nutritional psychiatry” outcomes<sup>2</sup></li> </ul>
<b>Spiritual &amp; Cognitive Orientation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Japa</i> (mantra repetition)</li> <li>• <i>Tapas</i> (austere practices/meditation)</li> <li>• Daily study of <i>Dharma-śāstra</i> (sciences of righteous duty and skills)</li> <li>• <i>Adhyatma-pravane indriya</i> (orient senses toward spirituality)</li> </ul>	Strengthens <i>sattva guna</i> , fosters equanimity, meaning, and resilient cognition; operates as <i>sattvavajaya</i> (mind-conquest therapy).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mindfulness/mantra meditation ↓ stress &amp; improve emotion regulation</li> <li>• Spiritual engagement linked to greater life meaning, social support, lower depression risk</li> </ul>
<b>Key sources (for modern parallels)</b>	<sup>1</sup> Levine et al., 2013 — honesty & stress biomarkers <sup>2</sup> Firth et al., 2020 — lifestyle psychiatry review <sup>3</sup> WHO/ILO, 2022 — workload & mental-health risk <sup>6</sup> Kelly et al., 2021 — lying frequency & mental complaints <sup>7</sup> Chida & Steptoe, 2009 — anger/hostility and CVD <sup>8</sup> Curry et al., 2018 — prosocial behaviour and happiness <sup>9</sup> Scott et al., 2021 — sleep interventions for anxiety/depression		

In summary, modern evidence largely supports the core elements of *Achara Rasayana* – from ethical conduct and social harmony to sleep hygiene, sobriety, and spiritual contemplation. While not every classical claim can be directly tested (e.g. the exact concept of *ojas*), the overarching lifestyle it prescribes aligns with what current research regards as foundational for mental and physical health.

### Thematic Discussion

*Achara Rasayana* emphasizes the importance of ethical conduct, positive behavior, and mental discipline for maintaining health and longevity. *Achara Rasayana* is fundamentally different from taking a *rasayana* medicine or herb because it is a non-pharmacological, behavior-based approach rather than a substance-based therapy. Unlike conventional *Rasayana* therapies, which focus on herbal formulations and rejuvenating substances, *Achara Rasayana* centers on cultivating virtues such as truthfulness, non-violence, compassion, self-control, respect for elders, and a positive attitude towards life. It explores the profound impact that “doing good” has on emotional and mental well-being. By adhering to these moral and social codes, individuals can achieve mental clarity, emotional stability, and a harmonious balance between body and mind, ultimately leading to overall well-being and disease prevention. This holistic approach illustrates the Ayurvedic belief that a healthy mind and righteous living are as crucial as tangible remedies in achieving true health. While *Rasayana* (rejuvenating and anti-ageing formulations in Ayurveda work through the medium of the body to the mind, *Achara Rasayana* works in reverse. This aspect of the *Rasayana* effect is the opposite of influencing the body through the mind. Ayurveda philosophy considers it the ideal way to achieve the purest level of health and slow down or retard the catabolism (and aging processing) of the body.

### *Achara Rasayana* and Contemporary Psychosocial Interventions: A Comparative Analysis

Ayurveda’s *Achara Rasayana* concept can be viewed as a precursor to several modalities in today’s psychosocial and behavioral health management. Here we compare *Achara Rasayana* with three prominent approaches – Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT)(2),(4), Mindfulness-Based Interventions(5), and Lifestyle Psychiatry(3) – highlighting similarities, differences, and potential synergies.

**CBT vs. *Achara Rasayana*:** CBT is recognized as one of the most evidence-based psychotherapies, with hundreds of RCTs and meta-analyses demonstrating its efficacy for various mental disorders(4). It works by restructuring maladaptive thoughts and behaviors. *Achara Rasayana*, on the other hand, offers a lifelong code of conduct and daily habits aimed at preventing the emergence of mental disturbance. However, both emphasize the role of *right thinking* and *right action* in mitigating distress. *Achara Rasayana*’s moral-ethical dimension could complement CBT’s skill-based exercises by providing a deeper, virtue-oriented framework for behavior change.

**Mindfulness vs. *Achara Rasayana*:** Mindfulness-based programs (e.g. MBSR, MBCT) reduce stress and relapse of depression by training non-judgmental awareness of the present moment, with meta-analytic support for moderate effect sizes(5). *Achara Rasayana* similarly urges cultivation of inner calm, compassion, and self-control through spiritual practices. The main difference is that *Achara Rasayana* prescribes a more elaborate ethical foundation (truthfulness, non-violence, etc.), while secular mindfulness interventions typically focus on attentional training.

In practice, they can be synergistic: *Achara Rasayana*’s moral guidelines reduce interpersonal and intrapersonal conflict, while mindfulness techniques help individuals respond to stressors with equanimity.

**Lifestyle Psychiatry vs. *Achara Rasayana*:** Lifestyle psychiatry promotes evidence-based improvements in diet, exercise, sleep, and substance use to enhance mental health(3). *Achara Rasayana* similarly highlights wholesome diet, balanced rest/activity, and sobriety. Moreover, it adds a strong emphasis on pro-social behavior and spirituality, broadening the notion of “healthy lifestyle” to include ethical and spiritual well-being. Emerging public health data show that interventions combining lifestyle changes with social support and meaning-based practices can yield significant benefits for mental health. This aligns closely with *Achara Rasayana*’s integrated approach to body, mind, and community.

### Applications in Integrative Mental Health Practice

- 1. Therapeutic Education and Self-Care Plans:** Clinicians could introduce *Achara Rasayana* guidelines as part of psychoeducation on self-care and preventive health. Patients might receive an “Ayurvedic lifestyle checklist” covering honesty, kindness, sleep hygiene, dietary considerations, and moderate habits. This can serve as a low-cost adjunct to psychotherapy or pharmacotherapy, especially for those interested in holistic or culturally rooted approaches.
- 2. Integration with Psychotherapy:** CBT practitioners can incorporate *Achara Rasayana* principles by inviting clients to experiment with truth-telling, forgiveness, or altruistic acts (parallel to CBT’s behavioral activation). The sense of moral or spiritual growth might reinforce therapy goals. Similarly, mindfulness-based interventions can augment their training in present-moment awareness with *Achara Rasayana*’s ethical precepts, fostering compassion and non-violence.
- 3. Mind-Body Programs:** Clinics offering yoga, meditation, or Ayurveda could build dedicated “*Achara Rasayana*” modules to address stress, anxiety, or mild depressive states. Such programs might combine guided meditation and chanting (*dhyana* and *japa*) with group discussions on applying ethical-lifestyle tenets in daily life. Early-stage research in India suggests that including *Achara Rasayana* prescriptions in holistic treatment can improve coping and quality of life.(11). In scenarios where one in four people are considered to have mental disorders(12) and where negative emotions like anger(13), fear, worry, jealousy among others can manifest as psychosomatic diseases, psychosocial methods like *Achara Rasayana* become even more vital to be integrated in the public health and clinic programs.
- 4. Public Health and Community Promotion:** Beyond individual therapy, *Achara Rasayana* principles could inform community-based mental health initiatives. Schools might weave character-building lessons (honesty, non-violence) into curricula, while public campaigns highlight the role of sleep, sobriety, and compassion in preventing mental illness. These strategies mirror “Blue Zones” research linking longevity with community bonds, moderate living, and purposeful life.(14) *Achara Rasayana* offers a culturally rich blueprint for reinforcing such protective factors.
- 5. Culturally Tailored Care:** For populations in South Asia or those inclined toward Ayurvedic frameworks, *Achara Rasayana* resonates with traditional beliefs. Clinicians can harness it to enhance patient engagement, offering a culturally

congruent rationale for lifestyle change. Qualitative reports suggest that when health advice is aligned with an individual's value system, adherence and outcomes often improve.

### Cultural Insights and Global Relevance

Although rooted in ancient Indian thought, *Acharya Rasayana's* emphasis on ethical living, self-regulation, spiritual awareness, and balanced routine is universal. Similar virtues appear in most major religious or philosophical traditions (e.g. truthfulness, non-harm), and many cultures have equivalent holistic health teachings. The distinct contribution of *Acharya Rasayana* is its explicit positioning of moral-spiritual disciplines as a rejuvenative therapy with tangible benefits for mental and physical health.

From a global public health perspective, *Acharya Rasayana* dovetails with modern lifestyle psychiatry(3), positive psychology, and integrative medicine, all of which endorse dietary prudence, regular sleep, exercise, and psycho-spiritual practices. Moreover, *Acharya Rasayana* recognizes social and behavioral factors, like honesty, compassion, and respect, as integral to

health. This aligns well with contemporary research linking prosocial behavior to well-being<sup>8</sup>. Thus, *Acharya Rasayana* can be reframed in secular terms for broad audiences, while retaining its time-tested wisdom. Communities worldwide can adapt it to their cultural context; e.g. substituting local spiritual/ethical practices – while upholding the core principle: “a wholesome life arises from wholesome conduct.”

### Key takeaway

*Acharya Rasayana* offers a virtue-centered, lifelong lifestyle framework that overlaps with CBT (behavior change), Mindfulness (inner calm & compassion), and Lifestyle Psychiatry (diet-sleep-exercise sobriety). Integrating the ethical-spiritual strengths of *Acharya Rasayana* with the empirically validated protocols of modern interventions could create a more comprehensive, culturally sensitive approach to mental-health promotion and relapse prevention.

The entire article can be summarised as given in the table below –

**Table 2: Comparative Summary of *Acharya Rasayana* with Psychosocial methods**

Dimension / Feature	<i>Acharya Rasayana</i>	Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT)	Mindfulness-Based Interventions (MBSR, MBCT, etc.)	Lifestyle Psychiatry	Practical Synergy / Complementarities
<b>Historical origin</b>	c. 200 BCE ( <i>Charaka Samhita</i> )	1960-70s (Beck, Ellis)	1970s-1990s (Kabat-Zinn, Segal)	2010s (integrative psychiatry)	Combines ancient preventive ethos with modern clinical science
<b>Core aim</b>	Lifelong prevention & rejuvenation via virtuous conduct, balanced living, spirituality	Symptom reduction via restructuring maladaptive thoughts & behaviors	Stress-reduction & relapse-prevention through non-judgmental awareness	Improve mental health through optimized diet, exercise, sleep, substance use	Use <i>Acharya Rasayana</i> virtues to deepen motivation for CBT skills and healthy habits
<b>Primary techniques / prescriptions</b>	• 25 ethical & lifestyle vows (truth, non-violence, compassion, sobriety, balanced sleep, mantra, study)	• Cognitive restructuring • Behavioral activation • Exposure / skills training	• Breath/ body scanning • Open monitoring • Loving-kindness	• Mediterranean-style diet • Regular physical activity • Sleep hygiene • Substance-use reduction	Integrate mantra or loving-kindness inside CBT homework; apply <i>Rasayana</i> dietary & sleep vows inside lifestyle plans
<b>Ethical/spiritual content</b>	High – explicit moral codes & devotion	Generally value-neutral (may adopt client's values)	Low-to-moderate (ethics implicit; secular formats often value-neutral)	Low (focuses on health behaviors)	<i>Acharya Rasayana</i> adds purpose-driven, virtue-oriented frame to otherwise secular methods
<b>Scope of lifestyle advice</b>	Diet, sleep-wake rhythm, sexual moderation, sobriety, social harmony	Limited (sleep / activity only as homework)	Often limited (informal mindful eating / walking)	Central element (food, exercise, sleep, substances)	<i>Rasayana</i> can broaden CBT & mindfulness homework to full lifestyle portfolio; Lifestyle Psychiatry can adopt <i>Rasayana's</i> prosocial & spiritual layers
<b>Time horizon</b>	<b>Lifelong daily code</b>	Typically 8-20 session protocol	8-week courses + home practice	Ongoing self-management	CBT / mindfulness graduates can adopt <i>Rasayana</i> vows for maintenance; <i>Rasayana</i> practitioners can use CBT sessions for acute symptom relief
<b>Evidence base</b>	Historical/observational; emerging correlational data	<b>Hundreds of RCTs &amp; meta-analyses</b> for anxiety, depression, etc.	Dozens of meta-analyses (moderate effect sizes for stress, relapse-prevention)	Growing RCTs & meta-reviews on diet, exercise, sleep	Future RCTs can test <i>Acharya Rasayana</i> + CBT / MBSR / <b>lifestyle package</b> vs. standard care

<b>Stress-reduction pathway</b>	Ethical harmony → ↓ guilt/anger → <i>sattva</i> → resilience	Cognitive re-appraisal ↓ threat perception	Non-reactive awareness ↓ rumination	Biological regulation (inflammation, sleep)	Combining <b>ethical harmony + cognitive re-appraisal + mindful awareness + physiologic regulation</b> may yield additive benefits
<b>Social/community emphasis</b>	Strong: charity, pleasant speech, honoring elders	Situation-specific (social-skills modules)	Occasional compassion practices	Mainly individual behaviors; social support secondary	<i>Rasayana</i> 's prosocial focus can fill social-support gap in lifestyle plans
<b>Typical delivery</b>	Self-practice; guidance by Ayurvedic physician/mentor	Licensed therapist (individual / group)	Certified instructor (group / app)	Clinician, coach, or public-health program	Multidisciplinary teams can offer an <b>integrative pathway</b> (CBT sessions + mindfulness course + <i>Rasayana</i> lifestyle coaching)

## Conclusion

“*Achara Rasayana* as an Ancient Indian Tool for Psychosocial and Behavioral Health” has been explored through the dual lenses of classical Ayurvedic wisdom and contemporary scientific research. We found that *Achara Rasayana*'s multifaceted guidelines – ranging from truthfulness and compassion to sleep hygiene and meditation – closely parallel many strategies now deemed effective for promoting mental well-being and preventing illness. Classical texts envisioned an ideal individual, whose mind, behavior, and lifestyle are in harmony with natural and moral law, resulting in enhanced mental equilibrium (high *sattva*), robust health, and longevity. Modern evidence largely corroborates the health value of *Achara Rasayana*'s recommendations: honesty and altruism contribute to psychological and even physical health; controlling anger helps reduce stress-related disease risk(7); regular sleep, balanced diet, and abstinence from substance abuse are fundamental to positive mental health outcomes; and contemplative spiritual practices improve emotional regulation and resilience.

Comparatively, *Achara Rasayana* shares common ground with CBT(2,4), mindfulness practices(5), and lifestyle psychiatry(3), yet it is distinct in offering a unified ethical-spiritual framework underpinning behavioral prescriptions. This ancient approach does not compartmentalize “therapy” versus “prevention” or “mental” versus “physical” health – it tackles all simultaneously by advocating a way of life. It can add a preventative, virtue-oriented dimension to CBT, a values-based context to mindfulness, and a spiritual motivation to lifestyle changes. Further clinical research is encouraged to formally test *Achara Rasayana*-inspired interventions in diverse populations.

In closing, *Achara Rasayana* exemplifies the profound foresight in ancient health sciences regarding the mind-body connection and the impact of lifestyle on well-being. It stands as a testament that psychosocial health is deeply rooted in how we live our daily lives and how we treat others, not just in our neurochemistry. By integrating *Achara Rasayana*'s timeless wisdom with modern empirical knowledge, we move toward a more integrative and humanistic model of mental health – one that attends not only to illness in the brain, but also to the *wellness of the soul*. Such a model is globally relevant in addressing contemporary health challenges. The ancient Ayurvedic sages sought to create a society of healthy, content, and virtuous individuals. In our modern pursuit of the same goal, *Achara Rasayana* may well serve as both inspiration and guide, proving that sometimes the oldest tools in the box are remarkably effective for the newest problems of the age.

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