

## Svarna Prashana: An Ayurvedic Approach for Enhancing Immunity

Vinamra Sharma\*, Rudramma R. Hiremath\*\*

### Abstract

Rasayana is a potentiated branch of Ayurveda, in which various herbals and herbo-mineral/metallic preparations are used. Rasayana means, that which destroys the old age and disease through the conservation, transformation, and revitalization of energy. Among different categories of rasayana yogas (preparations), *Svarna Prashana* is one of the unique formulation in Ayurveda administered to new born for improving immunity. *Svarna Prashana* was administered along with honey and ghee. In classics the reference of *Svarna Prashana* is available in the description of *Jata Karma Samskara* (ceremony conducted just after birth). According to Ayurvedic scholars, this protects baby from infectious diseases, enhances intelligence and acts as memory booster.

**Keywords:** *Svarna prashana*; Ghee; Honey; Immunity; Intelligence.

### Introduction

Ayurveda aimed towards maintaining the healthy state of a healthy individual and treat the cause for longevity of life[1] *Acharya Kashyapa* has stressed over mental health as well as physical health in first decade of brain development before 600 B.C. *Svarna* is one of the noble and therapeutically potent metal, used in the form of *Bhasma* (incinerated ash). In *Svarna prashana*, *Svarna* (bhasma) is a main ingredient and administered along with honey and ghee. The word *Prashana* is to lick/ licking the preparations or medicine which is one of the specific method of drug administration to neonate.[2] The objective of this study was to know the utility of *Svarna Prashana* in neonates according to different Ayurvedic texts along

with its probable mode of action.

### Methodology

As per Ayurvedic classics, *Svarna Prashana* is prepared by rubbing of pure gold over a clean stone along with little quantity of water facing towards East direction by chanting of holy *Mantras*. [2] Then appeared gold particles are licked along with cow's ghee and honey should be given to the child for licking orally. This is said to administer specially in *Pushya Nakshatra* with the help of ring finger or gold or silver spoon. [2,3] In the description of *Svarna prashana*, so many Ayurvedic scholars described different combinations along with *Svarna bhasma*.

Immunity is the state of being immune to or protected from a disease, especially infectious diseases. [4] Immunity involves both specific and non-specific components. The non-specific components act either as barriers or as eliminators of wide range of pathogens irrespective of antigenic specificity. *Svarna Prashana* may be helpful to increase non specific immunity.

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**Author's Affiliation:** \*Research Scholar, Dept of Rasa Shastra, Faculty of Ayurveda, IMS, BHU, Varanasi, UP, 221005, \*\*Associate Professor, Dept of Rasa Shastra & Bhaishajya Kalpana, KLE University's, Shri BM Kankanwadi Ayurvedic Mahavidyalaya & Research Centre, Belgaum, Karnataka, India.

**Reprint's Request:** Dr. Vinamra Sharma, Research Scholar, Dept of Rasa Shastra, Faculty of Ayurveda, IMS, BHU, Varanasi, UP, 221005, India

E-mail: dr.vinamrasharma@gmail.com

### Properties of Svarna Prashana

It will enhance *Medha* (intelligence), *Agni* (digestive energy), *Bala* (strength), *Ayu* (long life), *Varna* (increases complexion) and considered as *Pavitra* (sacred faith). It acts as *Vrshya* (aphrodisiac) and therapeutically used in *Grahabadha* (Psychosis).[2]

Further Kasyapa says that, by administering this for one month continuously, the child becomes more intelligent, not infected by any diseases or immunized. If it is continued for six months the child will become *Shrutadhar* (able to retain words for longer together whatever child hears), *Smrtivan* (improves memory).[2] Described properties are more related to preventive aspect, promoting of physical, mental, social and spiritual health.

### Svarna (bhasma)

The therapeutic properties of *Svarna* are *Agni Vardhak*, *Balya*, *Bramhana* (nourishes body tissues), *Vrshya*, *Hradya* (Cardiac protector), *Ayu Vardhak*, *Vani Shuddhi Kara* (improve pronunciation), *Medhya*, *Smrtiprada*, *Sarva Vishahara* (cures effect of different poisons) and acts as *Shrestha Rasayana* (nutrient to body and mind with adapto-immuno-neuro-endocrino-modulator properties).[5] *Acharya Charaka* says that *No poison can be sustained in the body of people who have ingested Svarna*<sup>6</sup>. In other words, it is capability of the body to resist harmful microbes from entering the body.

### Usage of Svarna bhasma in Therapeutics

*Bajaj et al*, (2001), say that *Svarna bhasma* used in *Ayurveda* exhibited immunostimulant, anxiolytic, antidepressant and anticataleptic activity with wide margin of safety. *Abraham et al* (1998), explored the potential of colloidal *Svarna bhasma* as nervine. *Svarna bhasma* shows effective result in the lower dose 8 mg per day led to the significantly improved the quality of ejaculation and prolonged the duration of sexual act in male infertile patients.[7]

### Ghee (Clarified Butter Fat)

The therapeutic properties of ghee are *Agni Vardhak*, *Ayu Vardhak*, *Balya*, *Hradya*, *Kantiprada*, *Medhya*, *Vishahara*, *Oja Vardhak* (increase immunity) and *Rasayana*. [8] Unsaponifiable matter (soluble in fat)- Vit A, B carotene, Xanthophylls, lycopene tocopherol, Sterols, Vit D, cholesterol and cholesterol esters, 7-Dehydrocholesterol, Ergosterol, Xanosterol, Vit K, Hydrocarbons-squalene and various trace elements like minerals like Ca, Mg, Cu, Fe, etc. are the nutritive values of ghee.[9]

### Madhu (Honey)

Honey is a naturally occurring sweet fluid produced by the honeybees by enzymatic transformation of floral nectar ingested by

**Table 1: Showing Different Herbal (s) Used with Svarna Bhasma in Context of Svarna Prashana**

S. no.	Formulations	Vehicle
1	<i>Ananta churna</i> (Svarna bhasma; SB)* <i>Saussurea lappa</i> C.B. Clarke + <i>Acorus calamus</i> Linn*/ <i>Centella asiatica</i> Linn. Urban + <i>Convolvulus pluricaulis</i> Choisy*#@ / <i>Calotropis procera</i> * / <i>Azadirachta indica</i> + <i>Cynodondactylon</i> Linn* / <i>Bacopa monnieri</i> Linn. Wettst + <i>C. asiatica</i> Linn. Urban+	Ghee + Honey
2	<i>C. pluricaulis</i> Choisy@ / <i>Emblica officinalis</i> # / <i>A. calamus</i> Linn+ <i>S. lappa</i> C.B. Clarke+ <i>C. ternatea</i> Linn# / <i>C. procera</i> # / <i>A. indica</i> + <i>A. calamus</i> Linn# / <i>B. monnieri</i> Linn. Wettst. + <i>Svarna Makshika</i> + <i>Terminalia chebula</i> #	
*Susrutha Sharira-10, @Astanga Sangraha Uttaratantra-1, #Astanga Hridya Uttaratantra-1		

them.[10] Its therapeutic properties are *Agni Dipaka*, *Chakshuya*, *Hradya*, *Svara Vardhak* (increase quality of speech), *Vrshya*, *Vishghna*. [10,11] A special property of *Madhu* explained is *Param Yogavahi* and *Sukshma Shrotagami*. [11] Nutritive values of honey are calories 272.46 k.cal, Protein 0.5 g, Carbohydrates 76.23 g, Calcium 45 mg, Iron 4 mg, Ascorbic acid 2 mg, vitamins and minerals (per 100 g, AGMARK). These all properties are helpful to target the efficacy of *Svarna Prashana*.

## Discussion

In *Svarna Prashana*, *Svarna Raja* is administered along with ghee for its better transport and absorption along with the antigenic material honey. As its stated actions are *Rasayana* and *Medhya*, this combination improves the immune system of body and may act as overall immune modulator therapy. *Warad Vijyanand et al* (2011), treatment with *Svarna Prashana* (30 mg/kg, p.o.) for 15 days considerably revealed improvement in short term memory and long term memory. It also inhibited brain acetyl cholinesterase activity.

*Svarna bhasma* is used along with natural sources of energy, vitamins, minerals and Hydrocarbons honey and ghee, which also fulfill the nutritional requirement of the body. These all properties are helpful to target its efficacy in formulation *Svarna Prashana*. In various other combinations of *Svarna Prashana*, *Svarna* is used as one of the main ingredient along with some medicinal herbs (Table No. 1). *Bajaj, S et al* (2001), study on *Svarna bhasma* shows that specific and non specific immune responses were modified in a positive manner in treated mice. *Svarna bhasma* had a stimulatory effect on peritoneal macrophages, which may be helpful to fight against infections.[12]

The huge variety of antigens in the environment provides myriad opportunities for provoking the immune response. Pollens are the best example of the non microbial

antigen presents in the honey.[13] Certain ghee recipes have prescribed to be used up to one year for prevention and promote health measures by nourishing body tissues and memory booster aspects. They are getting absorbed through the sublingual mucosa which is relatively permeable, giving rapid absorption and acceptable bioavailability. The lipophilic nature of ghee facilitates entry of combined active ingredients of the drug into the cell as well as its delivery to the mitochondrium, microsomes and nuclear membrane. The brain blood barriers are highly permeable to water, CO<sub>2</sub>, Oxygen and most of lipid soluble substances.[14] These properties of ghee help the rapid absorption in the systemic level and transport the medicines up to the brain cells.

Within the oral mucosal cavity, the buccal region offers a better route of administration for systemic drug delivery in which the drug is placed under tongue or crushed in the mouth and spread over the buccal mucosa. [15] As per *Amruta S Gaikwad* (2011), *Prashana* has the same concept of route of administration for the children in concern to palatability and convenience. *Ayurvedic* experts suggested *Prashana* to neonates should be given after birth.

## Conclusion

The herbo-mineral, herbo-metallic formulations are in practice in *Ayurvedic* management since long years. The classical preparation of *Svarna Prashana* is already in practice administering to children in Pushya nakshatra. It has rasayana property, improves intelligence, it prevents attack of diseases, enhances digestive power. Six months of continuous use of *Svarna Prashana* improves child intelligence, and he can retain the words all heard by him, means it improves memory and intelligence.[2] As per some research studies, it reveals that *Svarna* has immunomodulatory, memory enhancing effect and ghee is having memory enhancing

activity, immune stimulant activity.

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