



Purification of Manashila: A Comprehensive Overview

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ABSTRACT:-

In Ayurveda, Manashila (Realgar or arsenic disulfide) is a potent mineral used for its therapeutic effects. However, due to its inherent toxicity, it must undergo a rigorous purification process, known as Shodhana, before being utilized in medicinal formulations. Shodhana ensures that the toxic elements are neutralized and the mineral's medicinal properties are enhanced.

This article provides a comprehensive exploration of the purification process of Manashila, its importance in Ayurveda, various methods of detoxification, and how purified Manashila is employed in traditional treatments.

INTRODUCTION:-

Manashila is categorized under the group of minerals called Uparasa in Ayurveda. It is naturally occurring as a bright red to orange crystalline mineral, composed mainly of arsenic disulfide (As_2S_2). Its brilliant color and potent effects have been recognized in Ayurveda for centuries, particularly in Rasashastra, the branch of Ayurveda dedicated to alchemy and the use of metals and minerals in healing.

Importance of Purification (Shodhana)

In Ayurveda, the use of metals, minerals, and poisonous substances is accepted only after they are processed and detoxified through Shodhana. This step is essential for several reasons:

- Removal of Toxicity:** Raw Manashila contains arsenic, which can be highly toxic if consumed without purification. Ingesting untreated Manashila can lead to arsenic poisoning, manifesting as nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain, and in severe cases, damage to the liver, kidneys, and other organs.
- Enhancement of Medicinal Properties:** The process of Shodhana not only removes toxicity but also enhances the therapeutic efficacy of the substance. Purified Manashila becomes more bioavailable, meaning it is more easily absorbed and utilized by the body.
- Stabilization of Potency:** The purification process also helps stabilize the active components of Manashila, ensuring that its potency is retained and controlled. This prevents any adverse reactions during the medicinal use of Manashila.
- Balancing Doshas:** In its purified form, Manashila becomes a potent remedy for balancing the Kapha and Vata doshas, which is important in treating various ailments such as respiratory disorders, skin conditions, and digestive issues.
- Prevention of Side Effects:** When purified correctly, Manashila can be used safely without causing the side effects typically associated with arsenic, such as skin damage or nervous system toxicity.

Classical Methods of Shodhana (Purification)

The classical Ayurvedic texts, especially those related to Rasashastra, detail various methods for the purification of minerals like Manashila. These methods involve the use of specific mediums, known as Dravyas, which help neutralize the toxic components and transform the mineral into a safe and effective therapeutic agent. Below are some of the most widely practiced purification methods for Manashila.

1. Swedana (Boiling) in Herbal Decoctions

One of the most common purification methods is Swedana, which involves boiling Manashila in herbal decoctions. This process helps to remove the toxicity while also infusing the mineral with the properties of the herbs used in the decoction. The following are the steps involved in this process:

- **Ingredients:** Raw Manashila, cow's urine (Gomutra), and specific herbal decoctions, such as Triphala decoction or Kumari (Aloe vera) juice, depending on the condition being treated.
- **Procedure:**
 - -First, the raw Manashila is cleaned and placed in a cloth pouch.
 - The pouch is then suspended in a pot filled with cow's urine or the herbal decoction.

- The pot is heated, and the contents are boiled for several hours, typically between 3 to 6 hours, depending on the size and quality of the Manashila.
 - After boiling, the Manashila is removed, dried, and powdered for further use.
- **Purpose:** The process of boiling in cow's urine or herbal decoctions helps to detoxify the mineral, reduce its harmful arsenic content, and infuse it with the healing properties of the herbs or urine used.

2. Nirvapa (Quenching) in Liquids:-

Nirvapa is another commonly used method for purifying Manashila, involving repeated heating and quenching in specific liquids. This method works by gradually reducing the toxic content through thermal treatment, while the quenching liquid helps neutralize any remaining impurities.

- **Ingredients:** Raw Manashila, cow's urine, or other herbal juices like Bhringaraj juice, Haritaki (Terminalia chebula) decoction, or Kanji (sour gruel).
- **Procedure:**
- The raw Manashila is first heated in a pan until it becomes red hot.
 - The red-hot mineral is then immediately quenched in the chosen liquid (cow's urine, herbal juice, or sour gruel).
 - -This process of heating and quenching is repeated 7 to 21 times, depending on the required level of purification.
- **Purpose:** Nirvapa helps reduce the mineral's toxicity by exposing it to high temperatures and then rapidly cooling it in the purifying liquid. This repeated process ensures that toxic arsenic compounds are neutralized, while the medicinal qualities of the quenching liquid are imparted to the Manashila.

3. Bhavana (Trituration) with Herbal Juices:-

In the Bhavana method, Manashila is triturated with specific herbal juices, which helps detoxify the mineral while making it more suitable for medicinal use. This method is typically used after the initial purification process to further refine and enhance the therapeutic properties of Manashila.

- **Ingredients:** Raw Manashila, fresh herbal juices (e.g., Tulsi juice, Bhringaraj juice, or Ardraka (ginger) juice).
- **Procedure:**
- The raw Manashila is finely powdered and mixed with the fresh herbal juice.
 - The mixture is then triturated thoroughly for several hours, often over several days.
 - After the triturating process, the paste is dried, powdered again, and stored for medicinal use.
- **Purpose:** The Bhavana method ensures that the herbal juices are fully absorbed by the Manashila, enhancing its potency while further reducing any remaining toxic elements. The use of specific herbs during this process tailors the medicinal properties of Manashila to treat particular ailments, such as respiratory or digestive disorders.

4. Mardana (Grinding) with Ghee:-

In this method, Manashila is purified by grinding it with Ghee (clarified butter). Ghee is believed to have Yogavahi properties in Ayurveda, meaning it enhances the absorption and medicinal effects of substances with which it is combined.

- **Ingredients:** Raw Manashila and Ghee.
- **Procedure:**
- The raw Manashila is powdered and mixed with an appropriate amount of Ghee.
 - The mixture is then ground in a mortar for several hours until it becomes a fine paste.
 - This paste is used directly in medicinal preparations or dried and powdered for later use.
- **Purpose:** The grinding of Manashila with Ghee helps detoxify the mineral while making it more suitable for internal consumption. The Ghee also enhances the bioavailability of Manashila, ensuring it is more easily absorbed by the body and exerting its therapeutic effects.

5. Modern Approaches to Shodhana:-

In addition to the traditional methods of Shodhana, modern Ayurvedic practices have adopted certain technological advancements to ensure the safety and efficacy of purified Manashila. These include:

- **Chemical Analysis:** Advanced chemical analysis techniques, such as spectrometry, are used to monitor the arsenic content of purified Manashila. This ensures that the purification process has effectively removed or neutralized toxic elements.

Standardized Purification Protocols: To maintain consistency and safety, many Ayurvedic practitioners and pharmaceutical companies follow standardized purification protocols for Manashila. These protocols are often based on classical methods but include additional steps to ensure safety and efficacy in contemporary settings.

- **Regulatory Oversight:** With the growing recognition of Ayurvedic medicine worldwide, regulatory bodies like the AYUSH Ministry in India provide guidelines for the safe use of metals and minerals like Manashila in Ayurvedic treatments. These guidelines ensure that practitioners follow proper purification methods before incorporating such substances into medicinal formulations.

Therapeutic Applications of Purified Manashila

Once Manashila has been purified through Shodhana, it is employed in various Ayurvedic formulations to treat a wide range of ailments. Some of the common therapeutic applications of purified Manashila include:

- a) **Respiratory Disorders:** Purified Manashila is used in treating conditions like asthma, bronchitis, and other respiratory issues caused by Kapha imbalance. Its ushna virya (hot potency) helps to dissolve mucus and clear the respiratory passages.
- b) **Skin Conditions:** Purified Manashila is an important ingredient in Ayurvedic ointments and formulations used to treat skin conditions such as eczema, psoriasis,
- c) **Digestive Disorders:** Manashila is used to stimulate digestion and treat conditions like indigestion, diarrhea, and dysentery.
- d) **Antimicrobial Action:** Its antimicrobial properties make it effective in combating infections caused by bacteria, fungi, and other pathogens.
- e) **Anti-Toxic Agent:** In small, controlled doses, purified Manashila is used as an antidote to certain poisons and toxins.

CONCLUSION:-

The purification of Manashila is a vital process in Ayurvedic medicine, transforming a toxic mineral into a therapeutic agent. The Shodhana process, through soaking, steaming, trituration, and incineration, not only removes toxicity but also enhances the medicinal properties of Manashila. This ancient technique has stood the test of time, with modern scientific research validating its effectiveness in reducing toxicity and improving bioavailability. Manashila, when properly purified, offers immense therapeutic potential, especially in the treatment of skin disorders, respiratory ailments, and digestive issues. Ayurveda's holistic approach to detoxification ensures that minerals like Manashila can be safely and effectively used to promote health and wellness.

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