

## REVIEW ARTICLE

# Conceptual Evaluation of *Brahmacharya* as Supreme *Rasayana*

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### ABSTRACT

Among the three fundamental pursuits of every human being, to live longer has been considered the most primary one. *Ayu* - “the span of life” depends on proper incorporation of *Sharira* (physical body), *Indriya* (sensory organs), *Sattva* (mind), and *Atma* (soul), among which *Sharira* plays the most important role as it hosts the other three factors. The physical body consists of *Dosha* (functional element), *Dhatu* (structural element), and *Mala* (waste portions). To live longer, one needs a sound body and a sound body needs proper regulation and functioning of *Doshas* and *Dhatu*. *Dhatu*s are produced within our body from *Ahara Rasa* by the active participation of *Agni*. As one former *Dhatu* partially transforms into the subsequent *Dhatu*, to maintain the qualitative index of each *Dhatu* and to achieve more and more optimum *Dhatu*s, proper functioning of *Agni* is necessary, along with the prevention of erosion within each *Dhatu*. *Ayurvedic* texts describe *Rasayana* as the various ways to achieve *Dhatu*s in their optimal form, which ultimately results in the prevention of senility (*Jara Nashanam*) along with the alleviation of diseases (*Vyadhi Nashanam*) as well as other wholesome effects. All these can only be achieved through *Rasayana* if it is capable of igniting *Agni* as well as the protection of each *Dhatu* from erosion. *Brahmacharya* has been conventionally described as absolute abstinence from sexual activities, although some *Ayurvedic* scholars considered it as regulated sexual activities. *Ayurveda* considers *Brahmacharya* as a type of moral and ethical practice related to social life. *Ayurvedic* texts refer *Brahmacharya* as the supreme pathway for achieving longevity of life along with other wholesome effects. For the attainment of such longevity of life, *Brahmacharya* must act in the same pathway like an ideal *Rasayana*. The present study conceptually evaluated the wholesome effects of *Brahmacharya* on our body in line with *Rasayana* by which it can achieve ignition of *Agni* and production and sustenance of *Dhatu*s in a more proficient way, which ultimately results in achieving longer life, alleviation of disease, and perfection of body, mind, and intellect.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Right from the beginning of civilization, every human has been desirous about to live longer. One of the foremost compendiums of *Ayurveda*, *Charaka Samhita* has described three basic pursuits of every human being - to live longer, be the most primary among them.<sup>[1]</sup> *Ayu* or the span of life, is contributed by the amalgamation of *Sharira* (physical body), *Indriya* (sensory organs), *Sattva* (mind), and *Atma* (soul),<sup>[2]</sup> among them, *Sharira* should be considered as the most important one as it hosts all the other three components. *Sharira* or the physical body is composed of *Dosha* (functional element), *Dhatu* (structural elements, i.e., body tissues), and *Mala* (waste products of

digestion and metabolism). *Agni* is the most crucial factor for the proper regulation of the functions of *Dosha* along with the gradual production of different *Dhatu*s from *Ahara Rasa*. *Dhatu*s are produced from *Ahara Rasa* (ingested food material) through a gradual transformation process, following the theory of *Kshira Dadhi Nyaya* where *Agni* plays as principal agent for such transformation. As *Dhatu*s are the structural unit of the physical body, to retain the body in its finest condition both structurally and functionally, the continuous production of *Dhatu*s and maintenance of their qualitative index is the most essential factor. *Dhatu*s in their optimal condition can keep away senility and lengthen the span of life. *Ayurvedic* texts have described the role of *Rasayana* in this context with great importance. *Rasayana* has been described as the various means in the form of drugs, diets, and activities which are capable of production and sustenance of finest quality *Dhatu*s. Equipped with such qualities, an ideal *Rasayana* can yield multiple wholesome effects on body and mind, among which enhancement of longevity of

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life (*Ayu Vivardhanam*), prevention of senility (*Jara Nashanam*), and alleviation of diseases (*Vyadhi Nashanam*) are the most principal ones. Similarly, *Ayurvedic* texts have also discussed the various wholesome effects of practising *Brahmacharya* on the body, mind, and intellect. *Brahmacharya* is a practice which conventionally refers to refrainment from sexual activities, although some scholars of *Ayurveda* consider *Brahmacharya* as controlled sexual activities regulated by the social and moral code of conduct. *Ayurveda* considered *Brahmacharya* as an ideal moral and ethical practice related to social life. All the primary compendium of *Ayurveda* have described the life-enhancing property (*Ayushya*) of *Brahmacharya*, along some of them have referred it as the supreme path for the attainment of physical, mental, and spiritual perfections. *Charaka Samhita* considered *Brahmacharya* along with some other practices, to be essential for the attainment of supreme benefits from any type of *Rasayana*. However, if we meticulously analyse the effects of *Brahmacharya*, such as enhancement of span of life, we will understand that, such as *Rasayana*, *Brahmacharya* should also function in the same way but more efficaciously. Enhancement of the span of life is not possible without enhancing the qualities of *Dhatu*s. Thus, it can be said that if *Brahmacharya* is capable to enhance the span of life, it must be capable of enhancement of qualities of *Dhatu*s - which is considered as the fundamental mode of action of *Rasayana*. Similarly, if we consider *Brahmacharya* as the supreme beneficial practice as mentioned by *Acharya Sushruta*, we should accept the wholesome effect of *Brahmacharya* on body, mind, and intellect, much similar to that of *Rasayana*. Considering all these aspects, the present literary study, will try to conceptually evaluate the effect of *Brahmacharya* in comparison with *Rasayana* and subsequently will establish *Brahmacharya* as the supreme *Rasayana*.

## 2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

The literary information regarding the concept of *Rasayana* and *Brahmacharya* has been taken from principal classical texts of *Ayurveda* such as *Charaka Samhita* of Maharshi Agnivesha, *Sushruta Samhita* of Maharshi Sushruta, *Ashtanga Hridayam* of Maharshi Vagbhata, and *Sharangadhar Samhita* of Maharshi Sharangadhar. Every relevant chapter has been thoroughly evaluated for reference related to *Rasayana* and *Brahmacharya*. No digital equipment or computerized search engine has been used for this purpose. All the literary information has been verified and validated through this study.

## 3. DISCUSSION

To establish *Brahmacharya* as one of the supreme *Rasayana* in terms of its wholesome effects on the human body, mind, and intellect, we need to evaluate the concept of *Rasayana* and *Brahmacharya* separately, followed by a comparative study of both.

### 3.1. Conceptual Evaluation of *Rasayana*

The word *Rasayana* is composed of two separate words: *Rasa* - which refers to *Rasadi Dhatu*, i.e., all the body tissues in their optimum condition, and *Ayana* - which refers to *Marga*, i.e., “a road,” “a path,” “a manner” or “progression towards something.”<sup>[3]</sup> Hence, it can be conceptually said that *Rasayana* are the various means or paths, both objective and non-objective, to achieve various body tissues in their optimum form. *Acharya Charaka* has also echoed this conceptual understanding by defining *Rasayana* as: “*Labhopayo Hi Shastanam Rasadinam Rasayanam*,”<sup>[4]</sup> i.e., *Rasayana* are the various ways to achieve all the *Dhatu*s in their optimum condition. This definition

of *Rasayana* by *Acharya Charaka* should be considered as the most sophisticated one as it includes all the possible ways of achieving optimum *Dhatu*s as *Rasayana*, such as administration of drugs and therapies, regulation of diet, lifestyle modification, and controlling body-mind senses. By this definition, *Acharya Charaka* has not restricted the concept of *Rasayana* essentially within the purview of *Dravyabhuta Chikitsa* (administration of *Aoushadha Dravya* [drug] and *Ahara Dravya* [diet]) but also within the purview of *Adravabhuta Chikitsa* (administration of various procedures, activities, and lifestyle modifications). Later, *Acharya Vagbhata* also supported this view, which justifies its worthiness. Considering the dominant hypotheses regarding *Dhatu Paka* (process of formation of *Dhatu*s), mainly *Khsira Dadhi Nyaya* (theory of gradual transformation) which was propounded by *Acharya Charaka* and subsequent commentaries on this topic by *Acharya Chakrapani* and his introduction of the theory of *Poshya* and *Poshaka Bhava* in *Dhatu*s;<sup>[5]</sup> it can be said that to achieve *Dhatu*s in their most possible excellent state, two conditions are necessary. First, *Agni* (in the form of *Dhatwagni* specifically) should be ignited properly, as it is the most important factor for the conversion of *Poshaka* portion of one *Dhatu* into the subsequent *Dhatu*. Second, the *Poshya* portion of every *Dhatu* should be protected from erosion to maintain its excellence. Therefore, *Rasayana* should have a two-way approach - one, it should have *Agni Dipana* property; two, it should have *Bala Vriddhikara Bhava*, i.e., which enhances the protective property toward *Dhatu*s - which will prevent their depletion and maintain their excellence. *Agni*, when properly ignited, helps to regulate the functions of *Sharira Doshas* as well as *Manas Doshas*. Similarly, *Dhatu*s in their optimum condition, in association with ignited *Agni* and regulated *Doshas* can perform their designated functions properly, which will help to maintain the homeostasis of the body. Therefore, armed with such properties, *Rasayana* should yield multiple positive effects on the human body and mind, which will ultimately help in achieving the two primary goals of *Ayurveda*: *Swasthasya Swasthya Rakshanam* (maintenance of health in a healthy individual) and *Aturasya Vikara Prashamanam* (eradication of disease in a diseased person). Again, as *Rasayana* helps to maintain the excellence of *Dhatu*s by enhancing their qualitative and quantitative index, this will inevitably help to prevent *Jara Avastha* (senility), as such conditions are caused by depletion of *Dhatu*s - both structural and functional, as described by *Acharya Charaka*. It is interesting to note that *Acharya Vagbhata* has termed *Rasayana Chikitsa* as *Jara Chikitsa*, which points to the fact that *Rasayana* has definite anti-ageing properties. To summarize the generalized effect of *Rasayana* as described by the various scholars of *Ayurveda*, the authors of this article have categorized them as shown in Table 1:

### 3.2. Conceptual Evaluation of *Brahmacharya*

*Ayurveda* has accepted *Brahmacharya*, along with *Ahara* (proper diet) and *Nidra* (proper sleep) as *Trayo Upastambha*, i.e., three pillars which are essential for sustenance of life.<sup>[10]</sup> In Indian moral and ethical tradition, *Brahmacharya* has been considered as one of the four essential stages of human life, which should be followed by *Garhasthya*, *Vanprastha*, and *Sannyasa*. Conventionally, *Brahmacharya* has been interpreted as a state of continence and chastity.<sup>[11]</sup> Grammatically, the word *Brahmacharya* is composed of two separate words - “*Brahma*” and “*Charya*.” The word “*Brahma*” is derived from the root word “*Bruhi Vriddhau*”; “*Bruhati Vardayati Praja Iti Brahma*.” “*Bruhi*” means something which helps in the growth or development of the individual.<sup>[12]</sup> Whereas the word

“*Charya*” is derived from the root word “*Ir Gatau*.” “*Charya*” means move or to follow.<sup>[13]</sup> Hence, linguistically, *Brahmacharya* means following the path of individual growth and development.<sup>[14]</sup> The principal texts of *Ayurveda* addressed the topic of *Brahmacharya* in multiple ways. The most prominent commentator of *Charaka Samhita*, *Acharya Chakrapani Dutta* defined *Brahmacharya* as: “*Indriya Samyama Soumanasya Prabhrityo Brahmajnananuguna Grihyate*,” i.e., regulated control over sensory organs as well as mind for the growth or to attain the knowledge of *Brahman* should be considered as *Brahmacharya*.<sup>[15]</sup> Further, he clarified: “*Yaduktam Tad Ritukale Yathavidhi Krit Maithunapratishehakamiti Na Virodhah*” - in *Brahmacharya*, abstinence from sexual act is not necessary always; involving in sexual activities, maintaining all the disciplines advised in seasonal regimens is also considered as *Brahmacharya*.<sup>[16]</sup> Thus, *Acharya Chakrapani* took a detour from the traditional view of *Brahmacharya* by allowing regulated sexual activities, maintaining all the prescribed seasonal regimens. This view about *Brahmacharya* should be considered as secondary to the primary concept of absolute abstinence from sexual activities - both physically as well as mentally. At the beginning of the compendium of *Charaka Samhita*, *Brahmacharya* has been shown as one of the quality of ancient sages, who were the seekers of truth.<sup>[17]</sup> Later, *Acharya Charaka* advised to practice *Brahmacharya* along with *Jnana* (knowledge), *Dana* (offerings), *Maitry* (harmony), *Karunya* (compassion), *Harsha* (happiness), *Upeksha* (detachment), and *Prashama* (peace) as part of moral and ethical practices related to social life.<sup>[18]</sup> Most significantly, *Acharya Charaka* described *Brahmacharya* as one of the *Upastambha* (pillar sustaining life) along with *Ahara* (proper diet) and *Nidra* (proper sleep). He also considered *Brahmacharya* as the foremost means of attaining longevity of life (*Ayushyanam Agratamam Uchyate*)<sup>[19]</sup> as well as referred *Brahmacharya* as the greatest path among all paths for the attainment of physical, mental, and spiritual virtues (*Ayananam*).<sup>[20]</sup> In the time of an epidemic disease outbreak, *Charaka Samhita* advised practicing *Brahmacharya* to save the lives of humans.<sup>[21]</sup> In relation to *Rasayana Vidhi*, abstinence from sexual coitus has been regarded as one of the favourable conditions to attain the optimum benefits of *Rasayana Yoga*.<sup>[22]</sup> This abstinence from sexual coitus should be regarded as the practice of *Brahmacharya* - which is commonly known as *Acharya Rasayana*. This compendium also considered the inherent tendency of following *Brahmacharya* as one of the characteristics of a specific type of mental faculty called *Arsha Sattva*.<sup>[23]</sup> The same opinion has been reflected in another principal compendium - *Sushruta Samhita*.<sup>[24]</sup> *Sushruta Samhita* described *Brahmacharya* as one of the optimum beneficial practices for humans – “*Pathyatama*,” which will ultimately help in the attainment of a healthy and prolonged life.<sup>[25]</sup> This compendium also mentioned *Brahmacharya* as one of the therapeutic procedures for *Vataja Roga*.<sup>[26]</sup> In relation to *Rasayana*, *Acharya Sushruta* mentioned *Brahmacharya* as *Ayushyam*, i.e., which increases the longevity of life, in the same line as *Acharya Charaka* did.<sup>[27]</sup> *Ashtanga Hridayam* also described *Brahmacharya* as one of the practices that is beneficial for the enhancement of the span of life.<sup>[28]</sup> Opinions of different compendiums regarding *Brahmacharya* has been summarized below:

### 3.3. Conceptual Evaluation of *Brahmacharya* as Supreme *Rasayana*

#### 3.3.1. *Brahmacharya* as regulator of *Agni*

Previously, we have discussed how to produce optimum *Dhatu*, an ideal *Rasayana* needs to be a good regulator of *Agni*. *Acharya Charaka* has mentioned several factors related to our mental faculties which

are considered to be responsible for diminution of *Agni* like *Kama* (sexual desire), *Krodha* (anger), *Lobha* (greed), *Moha* (clinging to sensory objects), *Irshya* (envy), *Abhiman* (emotional crisis), *Udvega* (anxiety) and *Bhaya* (fear).<sup>[29]</sup> Conventionally, it has been considered that *Brahmacharya* or celibacy regulates the human mind and produce psycho-immunity. A person who practices *Brahmacharya* attains a stable mind which can control itself and do not fall prey to different psychological crisis such as sexual desire, anger, and greed. This aspect of *Brahmacharya* has been portrayed on some of the greatest mythological characters like *Hanuman*, as in the epic *Ramayana*, where it has been shown that, a true practitioner of *Brahmacharya* attains an ideal character which is devoid of six negative aspect of human characters such as anger, lust, greed, delusion, attachment, and jealousy - together known as *Shada Ripu*. All *Ayurvedic* texts also mention longevity of life as the supreme effect of *Brahmacharya* [Table 2]. To attain longevity of life, the fundamental condition is to produce optimum body tissues continuously, which will be essential for the proper sustenance of life. Production of optimum body tissues needs proper regulation of *Agni*, and if *Brahmacharya* helps to achieve longevity of life through sustained production of optimum *Dhatu*, it can be hypothetically said that *Brahmacharya* must help in proper regulation of *Agni* also. Thus, it can be said that both an ideal *Rasayana* and *Brahmacharya* possess the quality of regulation of *Agni*.

#### 3.3.2. *Brahmacharya* as protector of *Dhatu*s

As we have previously discussed, to produce optimum *Dhatu*, the second quality of an ideal *Rasayana* should be the protective aspect against any erosion or depletion of *Dhatu* (*Dhatu Kshaya*). In other words, an ideal *Rasayana* should provide adequate protection against *Dhatu Kshaya*. *Brahmacharya* directly helps to preserve *Shukra Dhatu* and acts against its loss. *Acharya Charaka* has beautifully demonstrated how excessive loss of *Shukra Dhatu* leads to overall depletion of all the *Dhatu*s resulting in to production of *Sosha* or *Rajayakshma*.<sup>[30]</sup> Such kind of ascending erosion of body tissues as seen in *Sosha* or *Rajayakshma* is known as *Pratiloma Kshaya*. *Brahmacharya* successfully arrests this type of ascending erosion of body tissues, thus helping in to attainment of optimum stable *Dhatu*s. Moreover, *Acharya Charaka* has considered *Shukra Dhatu* as the outcome par excellence of *Ahara*.<sup>[31]</sup> Preservation of *Shukra Dhatu* helps to maintain the homeostasis of the body and thus contributes to the proper regulation of *Dhatu Paka*. Thus, it can be said, such as an ideal *Rasayana*, *Brahmacharya* helps to protect *Dhatu*s from erosion and subsequently contributes toward the production of optimum *Dhatu*s.

#### 3.3.3. *Brahmacharya* as anti-aging agent

*Jara* or *Jeerna Avastha*, as aging or senility is known in *Ayurveda*, has been considered as an essential and unavoidable condition which every individual has to face in their life; thus *Jara* has been considered as one of the *Swabhavika Vyadhi* or natural ailments by *Acharya Sushruta*.<sup>[32]</sup> Conceptually, it has been said that every phase of life is regulated by the function of one principal *Dosha*, *Vata* being the dominant *Dosha* during old age. *Vata Dosha* gets vitiated during old age due to depletion of *Dhatu*s. Different types of physiological and psychological stresses vitiate *Vata Dosha*.<sup>[33]</sup> Among those stressful conditions, *Vyavaya* (sexual coitus), *Chinta* (anxiety), *Shoka* (grief), *Krodha* (anger), etc., are mentioned with great importance by *Acharya Charaka*. Although *Jara* or senility is an unavoidable condition, frequent vitiation of *Vata Dosha* accelerates this process leading to premature ageing. *Brahmacharya* helps to regulate the mind and body in the form of abstinence from stressful conditions, negative thoughts,



and sexual activities. Thus, *Brahmacharya* helps to regulate all the *Doshas* within body, specifically it helps to pacify the vitiation of *Vata Dosha*. *Acharya Sushruta* has mentioned the role of *Brahmacharya* in combating various *Vataja* diseases. Vitiation of *Vata Dosha* leads to destruction of *Bala* (strength), *Varna* (complexion), *Sukha* (feeling of happiness), *Ayu* (longevity of life), etc.<sup>[34]</sup> which are common findings in *Jara Avastha*. *Brahmacharya* helps in arresting those changes by means of pacifying aggravated *Vata Dosha*. *Ayurveda* texts define *Rasayana* as a way of arresting premature ageing (*Jara Nashanam*). From our above discussion, it is evident that *Brahmacharya* helps to combat senility by pacifying the vitiation of *Vata Dosha* along with the regulation of *Agni* and prevention of *Dhatu Kshaya*.

### 3.3.4. *Brahmacharya as curative element from diseases*

Apart from anti-ageing property, the second aspect of *Rasayana* function is to alleviate disease – “*vyadhi Nashanam*” as mentioned by *Acharya Sushruta* and *Acharya Sharangadhar*. *Acharya Charaka* has mentioned the life-saving role of *Brahmacharya* in case of an epidemic outbreak. It indicates the curative and preventive aspects of *Brahmacharya*, similar to *Rasayana*. As we have discussed, *Brahmacharya* has its role in the regulation of *Agni*, protection of *Dhatu*, and maintenance of equilibrium between *Doshas* by virtue of its capacity to pacify the vitiated *Vata Dosha* - armed with such capacities *Brahmacharya* can correct the disequilibrium state of *Doshas* and *Dhatu*, which is the root cause for the genesis of any disease. According to conceptual understanding, a disease is produced due to hypo-functioning of *Agni*, vitiation of *Doshas*, and erosion of *Dhatu*. All these can be corrected by practising *Brahmacharya* as we have already discussed, thus *Brahmacharya* can alleviate certain diseased conditions like an ideal *Rasayana*. Moreover, if we consider *Brahmacharya* as absolute abstinence from sexual intercourse or controlled sexual act as mentioned by *Acharya Chakrapani*, then we can find textual examples where uncontrolled and unethical practice of sexual coitus has been mentioned as the primary causative factor of diseases such as *Kushtha*, *Asrigodara*, *Netra Roga*, *Yonikanda*, *Rajyakshma*, *Kshataya* and *Kshayaaja Kasa*, *Vatavyadhi*, *Raktapitta*. Thus, it can be hypothetically said that practising *Brahmacharya* has definite preventive and curative role against the aforesaid diseases.

### 3.3.5. *Brahmacharya as the gateway of achieving finest human qualities*

We have already discussed how *Brahmacharya* can be held responsible for the maintenance and regulation of *Agni* as well as the production and sustenance of optimum *Dhatu*. A properly regulated *Agni* is responsible for the maintenance of *Ayu* (span of life), *Varna* (complexion), *Bala* (strength and immunity), *Swasthya* (overall health), *Utsaha* (enthusiasm), *Prabha* (aura), *Oja* (nectar of *Dhatu*), *Teja* (temperature), and *Prana* (vitality).<sup>[35]</sup> By regulating *Agni*, *Brahmacharya* can also yield these wholesome effects on the human body. Similarly, an ideal *Rasayana* also possesses such functions like enhancement and maintenance of *Ayu*, *Vaya*, *Tarunya*, *Prabha*, *Varna*, *Swara*, *Kanti*, etc., as discussed in Table 1. Thus, it can be concluded that, like an ideal *Rasayana*, practising *Brahmacharya* can also provide a gateway of achieving the finest human qualities.

### 3.3.6. *Brahmacharya as the supreme path*

*Acharya Charaka* has defined *Brahmacharya* as the supreme path for the attainment of physical, mental, and spiritual virtues. The terminology he has used is: “*Brahmacharya Ayananam Agratamam Uchyate*.” If we consider the term “*Ayana*” as a mean or way to achieve something, then it appears to be similar to that of *Rasayana*. The term *Rasayana* consists of two separate terms, as we have discussed earlier,

i.e., *Rasa* and *Ayana*. Moreover, *Rasayana* is the means to achieve *Prasashta Rasadi Dhatu*, i.e., different body tissues in their optimum condition. Considering *Brahmacharya* as the foremost *Ayana* indicates to the fact that *Acharya Charaka* has considered *Brahmacharya* as the supreme pathway to achieve all positive goals, including the formation and maintenance of different *Dhatu*s in their optimum condition. From that perspective, *Brahmacharya* can be defined as the supreme *Rasayana*. Moreover, in terms of *Acharya Rasayana*, *Acharya Charaka* has mentioned the crucial role of practising *Brahmacharya* to get desired benefits of all types of *Rasayana*. Thus, it clearly indicates the supreme role of *Brahmacharya* over all other *Rasayana* to yield the desired positive effect on the human body and mind.

### 3.3.7. *Brahmacharya as the supreme path for the longevity of life*

All the *Ayurvedic* compendiums have mentioned *Brahmacharya* as the supreme path for the attainment of prolonged life. In this context, *Acharya Charaka* has used the term “*Brahmacharya Ayushyanama*,” *Acharya Sushruta* has mentioned the term “*Ayushyam*” and *Acharya Vagbhata* has considered *Brahmacharya* as among the “*Ayurvridhikrid Gana*.” All these expressions indicate to the central role of *Brahmacharya* as the most important factor for the attainment of a prolonged healthy life. Similarly, in relation to different *Rasayana* preparations and single herbs, the most common benefit mentioned by the aforesaid scholars is the attainment of a prolonged healthy life. Thus, by comparing these two aspects, *Brahmacharya* should be referred as the supreme *Rasayana* as it is the foremost way of enhancement of span of life. *Brahmacharya* like an ideal *Rasayana* can enhance the span of life by regulating *Agni*, maintaining equilibrium between *Doshas*, preventing erosion of *Dhatu*, and by helping to achieve *Dhatu*s in their optimum condition.

The whole discussion can be summarized in following Table 3:

## 4. CONCLUSION

The above discussion shows that, *Brahmacharya* possesses the similar qualities that an ideal *Rasayana* should possess. By practising *Brahmacharya* in an appropriate manner, a person can achieve all the benefits similar to that of administering *Rasayana* but in more optimum form. An ideal *Rasayana* helps us to achieve different *Dhatu*s in their finest condition, which ultimately gives different benefits such as longevity, prevention of senility, alleviation of diseases, enhancement of physical and mental faculties, and so on. Similarly, *Brahmacharya* also helps us to achieve similar benefits. All the previous studies in this context have established the role of *Brahmacharya* as an additional condition to achieve the benefits of *Rasayana* in an appropriate manner. However, the present study has shown the independent role of *Brahmacharya* to achieve similar benefits as described under *Rasayana*. Thus, the present study has established *Brahmacharya* as the supreme *Rasayana*.

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## 9. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

Nil.

## 10. DATA AVAILABILITY

This is an original manuscript and all data are available for review purposes only from the principal investigators.

## 11. PUBLISHERS NOTE

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**Table 1:** Effect of *Rasayana* as per different *Ayurvedic* compendiums

<i>Charaka Samhita</i> <sup>[6]</sup>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Deergham Ayu</i> (longevity of life)</li> <li>2. <i>Smriti</i> (memory)</li> <li>3. <i>Medha</i> (intellect)</li> <li>4. <i>Arogya</i> (recovery from ailments)</li> <li>5. <i>Tarunam Vayah</i> (maintenance of youth)</li> <li>6. <i>Prabha</i> (aura)</li> <li>7. <i>Varna</i> (complexion)</li> <li>8. <i>Swara Aoudarya</i> (enhancement of voice)</li> <li>9. <i>Deha Indriya Valam Param</i> (optimum physical &amp; sensory strength)</li> <li>10. <i>Vakasiddhi</i> (proficiency of speech)</li> <li>11. <i>Pranati</i> (dignity)</li> <li>12. <i>Kanti</i> (glamor)</li> </ol>
<i>Sushruta Samhita</i> <sup>[7]</sup>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Vaya Sthapanam</i> (anti-ageing activity)</li> <li>2. <i>Ayu</i> (longevity of life)</li> <li>3. <i>Medha</i> (intellect)</li> <li>4. <i>Balakara</i> (enhancing strength)</li> <li>5. <i>Rogapaharanam Samartha</i> (alleviation of disease)</li> </ol>
<i>Ashtanga Hridayam</i> <sup>[8]</sup>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Deergham Ayu</i> (longevity of life)</li> <li>2. <i>Smriti</i> (memory)</li> <li>3. <i>Medha</i> (intellect)</li> <li>4. <i>Arogya</i> (recovery from ailments)</li> <li>5. <i>Tarunam Vayah</i> (maintenance of youth)</li> <li>6. <i>Prabha</i> (aura)</li> <li>7. <i>Varna</i> (complexion)</li> <li>8. <i>Swara Aoudarya</i> (enhancement of voice)</li> <li>9. <i>Deha Indriya Valodayam</i> (optimum physical &amp; sensory strength)</li> <li>10. <i>Vakasiddhi</i> (proficiency of speech)</li> <li>11. <i>Vrishatam Apnoti</i> (enhancing sexual power)</li> <li>12. <i>Kanti Apnoti</i> (enhancing glamor)</li> </ol>
<i>Sharangadhar Samhita</i> <sup>[9]</sup>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Jara Nashanam</i> (prevention of senility)</li> <li>2. <i>Vyadhi Nashanam</i> (alleviation of diseases)</li> </ol>

**Table 2:** Opinions of different *Ayurvedic* compendiums about *Brahmacharya*

<i>Charaka Samhita</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. One among “<i>Trayo-upastambha</i>” - three pillars which sustain our life.</li> <li>2. A type of moral and ethical practice related with social life.</li> <li>3. Foremost mean of attainment of longevity of life.</li> <li>4. The greatest path among all paths for the attainment of physical, mental, and spiritual virtues.</li> <li>5. A practice that can save lives of human during outbreak of epidemic diseases.</li> <li>6. One of the <i>Acharya Rasayana</i> - favorable practice to attain the optimum benefits of <i>Rasayana</i> preparations and therapies.</li> <li>7. A characteristic of <i>Arsha Sattva Purusha</i> (humans having a specific type of mental faculties like that of sages).</li> </ol>
<i>Sushruta Samhita</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. One of the optimum beneficial practices for humans –“<i>Pathyatama</i>.”</li> <li>2. One of the practice that increase the longevity of life – “<i>Ayushyam</i>.”</li> <li>3. One of the therapeutic procedures advised for <i>Vataja Rogas</i>.</li> <li>4. A characteristic of <i>Rishi Sattva Purusha</i> (humans having a specific type of mental faculties like that of sages).</li> </ol>
<i>Ashtanga Hridayam</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. One of the practices which is beneficial for enhancement of the span of life – “<i>Ayurvridhikrid Gana</i>.”</li> </ol>

**Table 3:** Comparison between the effect of an ideal *Rasayana* and *Brahmacharya*

Effect	Ideal <i>Rasayana</i>	<i>Brahmacharya</i>
Regulation of <i>Agni</i>	++	++
Protection against <i>Dhatus Kshaya</i>	++	++
Prevention of senility ( <i>Jara Nashan</i> )	++	++
Alleviation of diseases ( <i>Vyadhi Nashan</i> )	++	++
Supreme path to achieve finest <i>Dhatus (Ayananam)</i>	++	++
Achieving finest physical qualities like <i>Ayu, Varna, Prabha, Bala</i> etc.	++	++
Achievement of prolonged healthy life ( <i>Ayushya</i> )	++	++