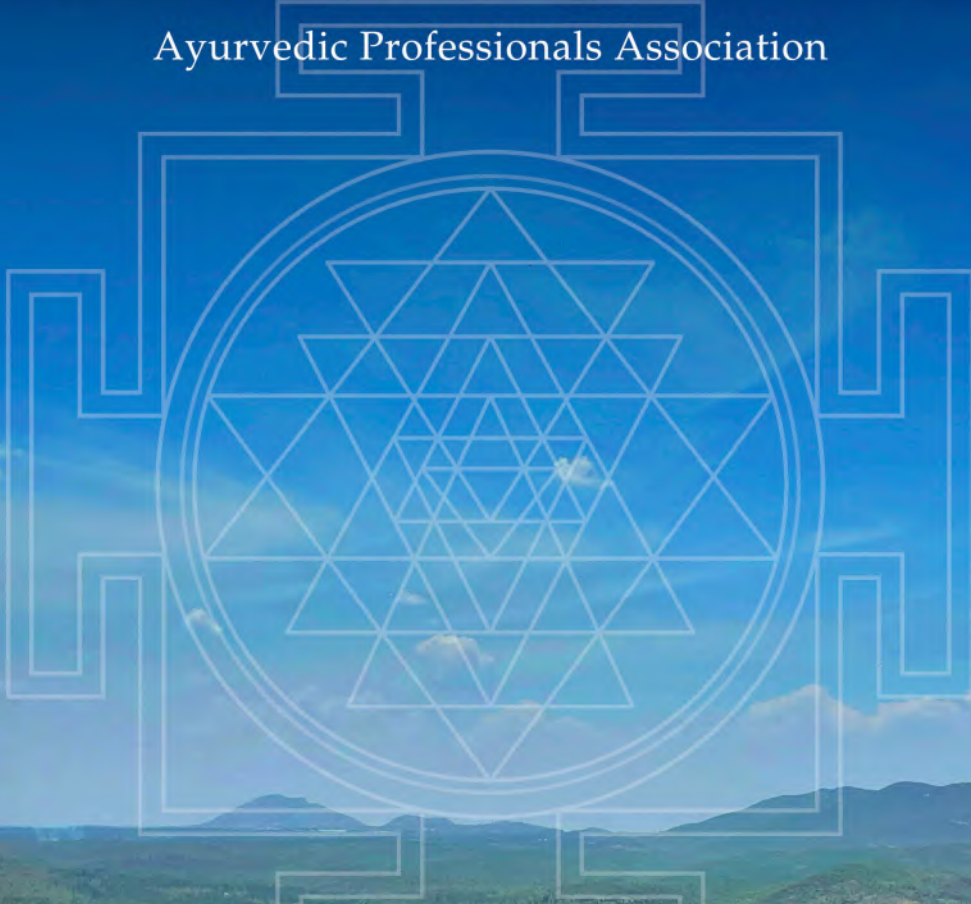




AYURVEDA JOURNAL

Ayurvedic Professionals Association



Spring 2026



Letter From The Guest Editor



Welcome to the Spring edition of the APA Ayurveda Journal. We are absolutely delighted to publish details of the APA's landmark event, AYURFEST 2026, taking place on Sunday, May 24th. We have chosen a very special venue, Colet House – a spiritual centre with a long and fascinating history, including deep roots in Advaita Vedanta philosophy. Join us for a day of exceptional speakers, wonderful exhibitors, Kirtan with Gaiea Sanskrit, and to celebrate Ayurveda's growth and impact in our wider community. Furthermore, this edition features article submissions from Ayurvedic professionals in both the UK and Europe, covering a wonderful range of topics such as Ayurvedic herbs, and Ayurvedic perspectives on concepts such as Auto-immune Diseases.

Thank you to the writers for providing us with such great content. If you would like to contribute to the next Ayurveda Journal edition (perhaps you have an article, research piece or case study to share!), please send it to the following email: info@apa.uk.com.

The next edition of the APA Journal will be published on the 21st June 2026. Please ensure your submissions reach us by the middle of May 2026.

Colette Park

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APA - General Disclaimer

The information contained in this Journal is for informational purposes only and is not intended to be a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis or treatment. The views and opinions expressed here are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the views or official policy of the *Ayurvedic Professionals Association*.



The Pulse of the APA

A Note from the President



Dear APA Members,

As spring begins to unfold around us, there's a quiet sense of renewal in the air. In Ayurveda, this season invites us to gently let go of the heaviness of winter and move towards lightness, clarity, and fresh energy. It's a time to reset—not just in the body, but in the mind and in our intentions.

I'm feeling that same "spring energy" within our APA community. Over the last few months, I've watched us grow, build new connections, and find a real rhythm together. There's a natural momentum building, and honestly, it's been wonderful to witness.

One of the biggest highlights on the horizon is **AYURFEST 2026**.

This is more than just a date in the diary; it's a space for us to be together, share what we know, and celebrate Ayurveda as a living, breathing practice. I'd love for you to be part of it—your voice and your presence are what make this community feel special.

Please do keep engaging with this journal—our next issue is out on 21st June. Your contributions are what keep this community evolving. Spring reminds us that growth doesn't have to be rushed—it unfolds naturally when the conditions are right. Let's keep building that foundation together.

With warm regards,

Dr.(Ayu) Kanchan Sharma

President, Ayurvedic Professionals Association (APA),UK

Ayurveda Consultant, BAMS,PG Dip (Panchkarma),

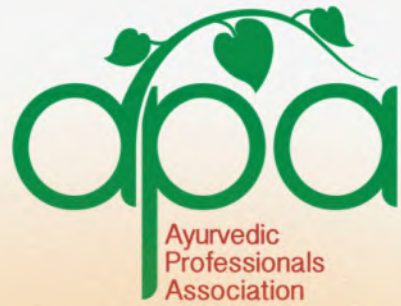
Certified Herbalist and Nutritionist, UK

Director/Founder Ayurveda Heaven Academy UK

<https://apa.uk.com/>

www.ayurvedaheaven.com

https://www.instagram.com/dr.kanchan_sharma_uk



YOU ARE WARMLY INVITED TO THE

APA AYURFEST 2026

LIGHT, LINEAGE & LONGEVITY

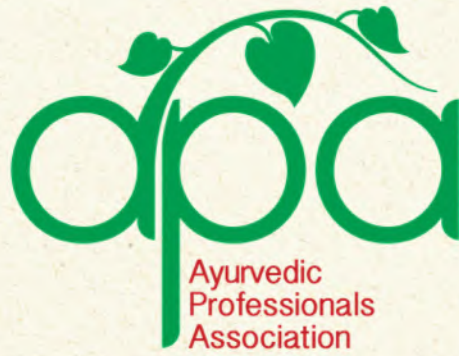
CELEBRATING 21 YEARS OF APA
ROOTED IN TRADITION
RISING INTO TOMORROW

SUNDAY **24** MAY 2026

10:00 AM - 7:00 PM

COLET HOUSE
151 TALGARTH RD
LONDON, W14 9DA

DISCOVER FULL EVENT DETAILS AT
<https://ayurfest2026.eventbrite.co.uk>



AYURFEST 2026
LIGHT, LINEAGE & LONGEVITY
SUNDAY, 24th MAY 2026
10 am to 7 pm

10:00 – 10:30	Welcome & Registration
10:30 – 11:00	Opening Ceremony & the Facilitation of Guests
11:00 – 11:45	Keynote Speakers' Presentations
11:45 – 12:30	First panel – Ayurveda's role in Cancer Prevention
12:30 – 2:30	Lunch Break Visiting Stall Providers Networking
2:30 – 3:30	Keynote Speakers' Presentations
3:30 – 4:30	Second panel – Ayurveda & Longevity
4:30 – 5:45	Tea Break Visiting Stall Providers Networking
6:00 – 7:00	Kirtan with Gaiea Sanskrit

AYURFEST KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

Dr Vijay Murthy | Dr Karen O'Brien-Kop
Dr Christopher Etheridge | Dr Rupy Aujla
Dr Manish Pandit | Dr Harishchandra Patankar
Dr Kanchan Sharma | Mr Lothar Pirc

APA AYURFEST 2026 Speakers



Dr Vijay Murthy ND, BAMS, MS, MPH, PhD, IFMCP is the founder of The Murthy Clinic on Harley Street, London, where he practises integrative and personalised medicine. An Ayurvedic physician and Doctor of Naturopathy, he specialises in precision and personalised healthcare with a strong focus on identifying and addressing the root causes of chronic disease.

He trained in classical Ayurveda in India, earning his BAMS and Master of Surgery (MS) in Ayurveda from Bangalore University. He subsequently completed his Doctor of Naturopathy and Master of Public Health at the University of Auckland, New Zealand, and a PhD in Public Health (Health Services) from the University of Technology Sydney, Australia. He is also a certified practitioner of the Institute for Functional Medicine (IFMCP), USA.

He has served as Vice President of the Ayurvedic Professionals Association (UK) and President of the New Zealand Ayurvedic Association, and previously held the role of Clinical Lead for Ayurveda at the College of Medicine, UK. He has also played a key role in advancing Ayurveda within public health initiatives in the United Kingdom. During the COVID-19 pandemic he developed and delivered the AyurYoga programme, an evidence-informed educational series integrating Ayurvedic lifestyle medicine, nutrition, yoga and breathing practices. The programme was commissioned by the College of Medicine, UK in collaboration with the Ministry of AYUSH, Government of India, with support from The Prince's Foundation, and was offered as a free nationwide programme for the UK public.

He regularly publishes in medical journals, serves as an Associate Editor for peer-reviewed journals, and has contributed to public health education through media as producer and presenter of the UK Health Radio programmes Unlock Your Health and Ayu Well, where he explores integrative and personalised approaches to health and well-being.

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/drvijaymurthy/>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/drvijaymurthy/>

APA AYURFEST 2026 Speakers



Dr Karen O'Brien-Kop (FHEA) is a Lecturer in Asian Religions at King's College London, where she teaches and researches Hindu and Buddhist mind-body philosophies, Sanskrit textual traditions, and the intersection of religion with health, philosophy of mind, and critical/decolonial theory.

She earned her PhD at SOAS University of London for an intertextual study of early South Asian texts describing mind-body philosophies, including the Patanjalyogasāstra, Abhidharmakośabhāya and Yogācārabhūmisāstra.

After a post as Senior Teaching Fellow at SOAS, she lectured in Asian Religions and Ethics at the University of Roehampton before moving to King's College London.

Her research explores the historical and philosophical connections between Hinduism and Buddhism, meditation and yoga practices, and the theory and method of religious studies. She has supervised doctoral projects on topics such as Gelug Tibetan Buddhist responses to contemporary ontology, somatic experience in South Asian contemplative traditions, and Buddhist Āyurvedic therapy for health promotion.

Dr O'Brien-Kop has authored two monographs—Rethinking 'Classical Yoga' and Buddhism: Meditation, Metaphor and Materiality (Bloomsbury Academic, 2021) and Philosophy of the Yogasutra: An Introduction (Bloomsbury Introductions to World Philosophies, 2023)—and co-edited the Routledge Research Handbook of Yoga and Meditation Studies (2020) and Religion, Spirituality and Public Health: Competing and Complementary Epistemes (Liverpool University Press, 2025). She serves as co-chair of the American Academy of Religion's "Indian and Chinese Religions in Dialogue" unit (2020-25), co-convener of the Spalding Symposium on Indian Religions (2021-25), and is a current co-editor of the peer-reviewed journal Religions of South Asia.

APA AYURFEST 2026 Speakers



Dr Rupy Aujla, MBBS, BSc, MRCP, MSc is a London-based doctor, specialising in General Practice and Emergency Medicine, a nutritionist and founder of The Doctor's Kitchen.

He hosts The Doctor's Kitchen podcast with over 20m downloads, YouTube channel and Doctor's Kitchen recipe app that helps over 10,000 people each week use evidence-based food and lifestyle medicine to live healthier happier lives.

Dr Rupy's life was changed after suffering a significant heart condition in 2009. After learning about nutritional medicine, he was able to reverse his condition using a food and lifestyle approach. Influenced by the teachings of both ancient and modern medicine, underpinned by his own clinical experience, Dr Rupy creates recipes that optimise health.

He is a Sunday Times bestselling author and has 5 cookbooks to his name as well as a Masters in Nutritional Medicine. Dr Rupy founded Europe's first non-profit Culinary Medicine programme for medical schools in 2017 that teaches undergraduates the foundations of nutritional medicine and how to cook. Known for his BBC shows "Cooking in the Doctor's Kitchen" as well as Channel 4's Secrets of the Glucose Goddess with Jessie Inchauspé and Cook Clever Waste Less with Dame Prue Leith, Dr Rupy inspires audiences with easy, budget-friendly recipes that promote well-being. Regularly appearing on programs like This Morning and Saturday Kitchen, Dr. Rupy is on a mission to make healthy cooking accessible and enjoyable for all.

APA AYURFEST 2026 Speakers



Dr Christopher Etheridge PhD
MCPD MRSC, BSc (Hons) Phyto, BSc
(Hons) Chem, CChem, DoIC, ARCS
Chris holds a first-class honours BSc
and a PhD in Medicinal Chemistry
from Imperial College, London.

He was a Lecturer and Research Fellow
in Gene Therapy at Imperial's
Department of Chemistry and at the
Department of Biochemistry and
Molecular Genetics at St Mary's
Hospital from 1995-2002, where he

taught on the undergraduate and postgraduate courses. He published a diverse range of research in areas including synthetic, medicinal and biological chemistry, and biochemistry. After this, Chris completed his professional training on the four-year Herbal Medicine degree programme at the College of Phytotherapy, East Sussex, where he graduated in 2006 with a first-class honours BSc.

His dissertation on quality control in herbal medicine was subsequently published. Chris currently works full-time as medical herbalist and runs two busy practices in Central London and Epping, as well as holding various positions as a guest lecturer, writer and scientific advisor. Chris is President of the College of Practitioners of Phytotherapy (CPP) (thecpp.uk), Chair of the British Herbal Medicine Association (BHMA) and Chair of the BHMA's Herbal Practitioner Supplier Section (bhma.info), and Chair of the European Herbal Traditional Medicines Practitioners Association (EHTPA) (ehtpa.org). He is also a member of the British Pharmacopoeia's Expert Advisory Group on Herbal and Complementary Medicines.

APA AYURFEST 2026 Speakers



Lothar Pirc is an internationally recognized proponent of Ayurveda and holistic health. He is the Founder and President of the award-winning Maharishi AyurVeda Health Center Bad Ems, Germany, which has treated over 30,000 patients.

For more than 40 years, Mr. Pirc has introduced the proven, time-tested principles of Maharishi AyurVeda to thousands of people worldwide. He has lectured extensively to physicians, national health organizations, and government and business leaders across Europe, Russia, India, Japan, the Middle East, Africa, Mexico, Brazil, Canada, Nepal, and the United States.

He was one of the initiators and founding board members of the Germany Ayurveda Umbrella Organization (ADAVED) and its associated charitable foundation, supporting the development and promotion of Ayurveda throughout Germany. Mr. Pirc is a certified teacher of the Transcendental Meditation® program and has been actively involved in its international initiatives for world peace for over four decades. He is General Secretary, EURAMA (European Ayurveda Medical Association) since 2008 and Director, International Maharishi AyurVeda Foundation, Netherlands since 2014.

In 2012, Mr. Pirc founded the Nepal Maharishi Foundation for Vedic Culture, a German charitable foundation supporting over 90 Guru Schools in Nepal, dedicated to preserving Nepal's unique and timeless Vedic traditions. Since 2023, he has been teaching Ayurveda and Vedic Sciences to more than 12,000 students as Professor of Practice at DPU Dr. D. Y. Patil Vidyapeeth – Centre for Online Learning, Pune (Deemed University), India.

Awards and Honors:

Global Hakim Ajmal Khan Award (2007) for Organizational and Social Vedic Services, presented by the Chief Minister of Delhi, India.

Gold Medal "For Honor and Good" (2006) from the Moscow Academy of Sciences, awarded by the Russian charitable organization Patrons of the Century.

Lifetime Achievement Award (2023) from the International Maharishi AyurVeda Foundation for his lifelong dedication to Ayurveda

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APA AYURFEST 2026 Speakers



Dr Manish Pandit is a Consultant in Nuclear Medicine and Clinical Director for Physics and Nuclear Medicine at Sandwell and West Birmingham NHS Foundation Trust (Midland Metropolitan University Hospital).

A graduate of BJ Medical College, Pune, he initially trained as a surgeon (FRCSEd, FRCS Glasg) before specialising in nuclear medicine, earning an MSc with Merit from King's College London.

He also serves as Training Programme Director for Nuclear Medicine in the West Midlands Deanery and as an Honorary Senior Clinical Lecturer at the University of Birmingham.

Alongside his medical career, Dr Pandit is a prolific independent filmmaker through Saraswati Films. With no prior experience, he accidentally began directing when a cameraman dropped out, leading to nearly 40 films and documentaries. His work spans NHS training and education (including grand rounds, a lung cancer awareness film, and an NHS 70th anniversary short), as well as investigative pieces on politics and religion such as *Krishna: History or Myth*, *The Ishrat Jahan Conspiracy*, *Mumbai: Pani Mafia*, and *Sai Baba: An Indian Jesus*.

Dr Pandit is also recognised as an expert in Mahabharata astronomy. Using archaeoastronomy and textual evidence, he has authored books including *3067 BCE: A Fresh Perspective on the Astronomy of the Mahabharata War* (and its sequel), building on the research of his mentor Dr Narahari Achar to support a 3067 BCE date for the war.

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APA AYURFEST 2026 Speakers



Dr. Harishchandra Patankar is a distinguished Ayurvedic physician, visionary educator, and global ambassador of Ayurveda with over two decades dedicated to advancing and modernizing this ancient science. A B.A.M.S., M.D. (Kriya Sharir), and Ph.D. scholar, he integrates classical wisdom with modern science in clinical practice, education, and research.

He is the Founder and Director of Keshayurved, India's first Ayurvedic Hair Testing Laboratory and Research Centre, revolutionizing Ayurvedic trichology through diagnostic innovations and personalized care. Under his leadership, Keshayurved has grown to more than 100 centres across India, Europe, and beyond, earning him the AYUSH Startup Award 2022, presented by the Honorable Prime Minister of India.

Dr. Patankar also directs Kayayurved and established Prachin Sanhita Gurukul, reviving traditional learning through classical texts and experiential education. As Chief Faculty at MUHS, Nashik, he has trained over 1,500 Ayurvedic doctors in cosmetology, trichology, and Nadi Parikshan.

A renowned Nadi Vaidya, he has presented at international symposia, authored acclaimed books like Dravyaguna Vidnyan and Keshayurved, and represented Ayurveda at G20, BRICS, and global forums. Honored with multiple national awards, Dr. Patankar continues his mission to establish Ayurveda worldwide as a scientific and ethical healthcare system.



APA AYURFEST 2026 Speakers



Dr. Kanchan Sharma is an internationally recognised leader in integrative healthcare and currently serves as President of the Ayurvedic Practitioners Association (APA) UK, where she is leading the organisation with a forward-thinking vision to elevate Ayurveda through regulation, research, clinical integration, and professional excellence across the United Kingdom. Under her leadership, the association is strengthening practitioner standards, expanding academic collaboration, and advocating for responsible integration of Ayurveda within modern healthcare frameworks.

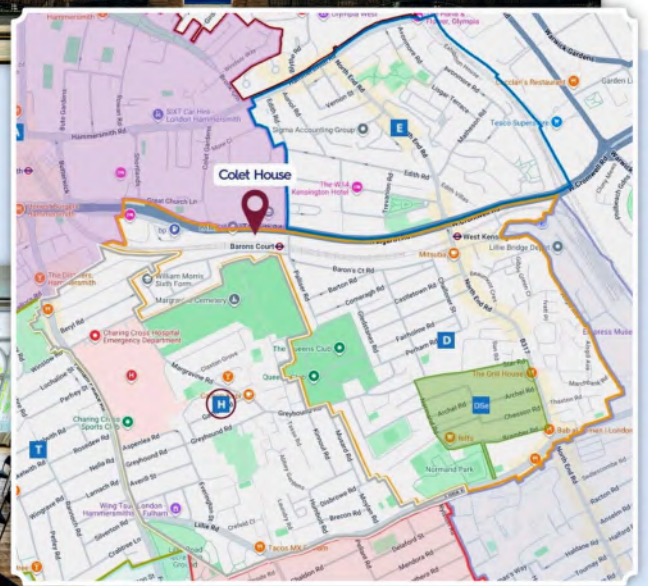
With nearly two decades of dual expertise across Western clinical research and traditional Ayurvedic medicine, Kanchan represents a new generation of healthcare leadership — combining scientific rigor with holistic patient-centred care. She brings extensive clinical trials leadership experience within the UK healthcare system. Her work spans clinical trial governance, audit leadership, regulatory compliance, study feasibility, SIVs, and close-out processes, operating within GCP and ICH frameworks.

She is Founder /Clinical Director of Ayurveda Heaven, a successful multi-clinic Ayurvedic practice in London offering medically supervised Panchakarma therapies and integrative treatment pathways delivered by a highly trained multidisciplinary therapy team.

She owns the NHS community Pharmacy where she applies her Accuracy checking Technician Expertise.

AYURFEST 2026 Venue - Colet House

<https://www.colethouse.org/>



[Click here for travel info](#)

AYURFEST 2026 - Exhibitors

- [The School of Ayurveda, UK](#)
- [Shiranee Murugason Ayurveda](#)
- [Ayurveda Yoga Wellbeing & Ayurveda Pura Academy](#)
- [Jivita Ayurveda](#)
- [Barberyn Resorts](#)
- [Ocean Elementary Ltd](#)
- [Earthen Living](#)
- [Association of Ayurveda Academy \(UK\)](#)
- [Rina Golan](#)
- [Kedgerree Design](#)

Spices in the Ayurvedic Tradition

by Vasile Scarpet

Since ancient times, the Ayurvedic system has paid special attention to the use of spices, with the idea that they contribute to our general state of health and global harmony (Svasthya).

Thus, the general role of spices is to stimulate digestion, contributing to the strengthening of the digestive fire (Agni), which has an essential role in the balance and harmony of each being. There are several factors that intervene here, namely:

1. *Rasa* (taste) - in the Ayurvedic tradition, 6 tastes are known, namely: sweet, salty, sour, spicy, bitter and astringent, each of which has its own characteristics and effects. Their suitability to the Ayurvedic typologies (Dosha) is essential
2. *Virya* (energy or active power), which gives a preparation, spice, food, etc., a certain physical and subtle effect, in equal measure.
3. *Vipaka* (post-digestive effect), which means that each substance (food, spice, plant, etc.) that come into contact with us triggers, primarily etherically, certain effects on different planes.
4. *Prabhava* (paradoxical effect), which contradicts in certain situations the rasa-virya-vipaka circuit. Thus, for example, a spice like mint, for example, although it has a cooling effect (Sheeta guna), actually has a hot energy (Ushna guna).



A deep understanding of these notions, through direct observation and practice, can be of great help to us when we want an improvement our lives, in all its chapters.

It is known that food (Ahara) represents one of the 3 pillars of our state of health, along with Nidra (sleep) and Brahmacharya (control of subtle energies). The quality, freshness and subtle energies of food and spices affect the quality and duration of our lives: food and spices have the role of a true healing agent.

Spices in the Ayurvedic Tradition

by Vasile Scarpet



In general, spices have a warming effect and Ayurvedic cuisine uses many of them, e.g. ginger, curry, basil, pippali, turmeric, etc. In addition, there are generic spice mixtures like Masala, which are mixtures of the strongest and most aromatic spices such as ginger, pepper, curry, etc. There are several types of Masala, such as Garam Masala, Chanda Dal Masala, etc.

Spices potentiate the taste, energy and quality of food to the highest degree, giving it a distinct aroma, improving digestion and helping to assimilate nutrients from food.

Very widely used and extremely beneficial in Indian and Ayurvedic cuisine, in particular, is ghee (clarified butter), which decisively helps to

purify tissues (in the first phase), then to hydrate and nourish them. It is used in cooking, the best ghee being considered that made from cow's milk, a true elixir of longevity and wellbeing. It stimulates the digestive fire, helps to cleanse the subtle channels (Srotas), gives the skin a glow, improves vision, gives strength to the entire body and has rejuvenating virtues (Rasayana). The most beneficial is ghee prepared at home, with its unaltered qualities, an essential condition being that it be kept (ideally) in a clay pot, which preserves and enriches its properties. It is also used, among others, in the famous elixir with a rejuvenating effect, Chyawanprash.

Consequently, I highly recommend the use of spices in food, both Indian and European, for the benefit and global health of our beings.

AHARAM SVASTHYAM SATYAM SUNDARAM! (Food gives us health, truth and joy) – an aphorism of Ayurvedic wisdom that reveals the direct and intrinsic connection between these aspects of Manifestation.

You can find out more details during a personalized Ayurvedic consultation and the Ayurvedic nutrition seminars that I support.

Vasile Scarpet

Lecturer, consultant and Ayurvedic therapist

<https://vasile-scarpet.ro/>



APA WEBINAR

EFFECTIVE CLINICAL PRACTICE
INCLUDING SATTVAJAYA CHIKITSA
BY MYRA LEWIN

Saturday, 18th April 2026
10 am - 11.30 am (BST)



Booking link: <https://tinyurl.com/mr23vwt3>

About the speaker:

Myra Lewin is an Ayurvedic Practitioner (AP) and Ayurveda Yoga Therapist (AYT) with over 35 years of experience. After healing from rheumatoid arthritis through Ayurveda and Yoga, she dedicated her life to sharing this powerful wisdom. Myra studied with renowned teachers, including Dr Sunil Joshi, Dr David Frawley, Dr Robert Svoboda, Patabhi Jois, Betty Eiler, Richard Freeman and Sandra Kozak.

In 1999, she founded Hale Pule School of Ayurveda & Yoga. She's the author of acclaimed books on Ayurvedic cooking and eating: *Freedom in Your Relationship with Food*, *Simple Ayurvedic Recipes*, *Dine with Myra* and *Simple Ayurvedic Recipes II*. She's the host of the *Everyday Ayurveda and Yoga Podcast* on holistic healing and has guided thousands to balanced living and natural healing.

Currently based in Bali, Myra offers online training and mentoring in Ayurveda and Yoga, including certifications for Ayurveda Health Counsellors. She embodies the principles she teaches with integrity and simplicity.



APA WEBINAR

CHRONIC SKIN DISORDERS
- SECRETS OF EFFECTIVE
AYURVEDIC TREATMENT
BY DR KRUSHNA NARAM

Tuesday, 5th May 2026
6 pm - 7.30 pm (BST)



Booking link: <https://tinyurl.com/2b8eyndv>

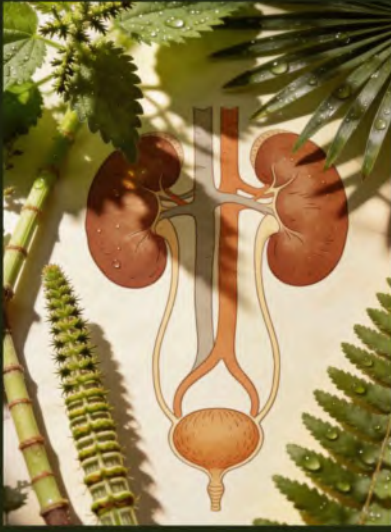
About the speaker:

Dr. Krushna Naram carries forward a 2,500-year-old lineage of healing, originating with Jivaka, the personal physician of Buddha. This sacred tradition, passed down through generations of masters, integrates pulse diagnosis, herbal remedies, and lifestyle guidance to address chronic and critical health challenges.

Trained by his parents—renowned healers with the ability to precisely diagnose through pulse touch—Dr. Naram began learning this art as an infant. Today, he has conducted over 30,000 pulse consultations in 12 countries and 35 cities, helping over 8,000 individuals each month and transforming the lives of more than 1.5 million people globally.

Specialising in conditions like diabetes, autoimmune diseases, joint degeneration, cancer, Alzheimer's, and more, Dr Naram combines ancient wisdom with practical solutions for those who have found no relief elsewhere.

He is the next evolving leader of Ayushakti Group, offering healthcare services and products through the use of Ancient and Authentic Ayurveda perspicuity and healthcare services. Ayurveda has been one of the oldest and most effective ways of treating any health issue by removing toxins from within, and Ayushakti has been offering these solutions to transform people's lives and make this planet a happy and healthy one. Dr Krushna aims to lead this vision with great potency and continue the legacy beyond.



APA WEBINAR

AYURVEDIC UROLOGY -
THE MOST PROMISING BRANCH
AN EVIDENCE-BASED APPROACH
BY DR NARAYAN SHAHANE

Saturday, 13th June 2026
10 am - 11.30 am (BST)



Booking link: <https://tinyurl.com/bde2mt93>

About the speaker:

Prof. Dr. Narayan G. Shahane is a pioneering Ayurvedic urologist and Medical Director of Brahma Ayurveda Multispecialty Hospital and Research Academic Centre in Nadiad, Gujarat, India, where he runs the world's first dedicated Ayurvedic Urology center.

Holding an M.S. in Shalya Tantra and a fellowship from the World Endourology Training Institute, he has specialized since 2003 in non-surgical management of lower urinary tract disorders such as urethral stricture, BPH, interstitial cystitis, recurrent UTIs, and urinary incontinence, achieving high success rates.

He serves as Honorary Ayurvedic Urologist Consultant to the Honorable Governor of Gujarat, contributed a chapter on therapeutic nutrition in Ayurvedic urology to a 2024 CRC Press publication, and is a member of the Ministry of AYUSH's Core Group of Experts for Insurance in the AYUSH sector. Renowned internationally, he has delivered keynote addresses and guest lectures at events like the 8th International Ayurveda Congress (2025), 10th World Ayurveda Congress (2024), and conferences in Nepal, USA, Canada, Japan, and Russia, earning awards such as the Ayurveda Shiromani Award and multiple best research paper honors.

Avartaki (*Cassia auriculata*) in Ayurveda

by Andrew Mason



Avartaki - *Cassia auriculata*

Cassia auriculata or Tanner's Cassia, holds a revered place in the ancient healing systems of both Ayurveda and Siddha medicine, where it is celebrated for its multifaceted therapeutic potential. In Sanskrit, this plant is referred to as Pitapuspa or Aaval, Vamavarta etc. names that tend to reflect its vibrant yellow flowers that bloom profusely upon this leguminous shrub. Its Latin name comes from the Greek *Kasian* (aromatic bark) and *auriculata*, meaning, small eared.

Siddha medicine, deeply-rooted in Tamil tradition, integrates the plant into formulae extensively for its astringent effect, whilst Ayurveda similarly favours this plant for its stypitic effects. This entire plant, from its ear-shaped leaves, to its bright blooms, bark, seeds, and roots, serves as a cornerstone in many herbal formulations, as well as medicinal beverages.

Historical Use

The use of *Cassia auriculata* can be traced back to both ancient texts and oral traditions. Its use has been documented in the regional Siddha compendium a collection of medical insights, formulas, and materia medica from the Tamil Nadu area, approximately 8th century CE. This plant also appears in Vrikshayurveda of Parashara (circa 300 CE) where a yellow-flowered species was praised for its treatment of certain types of skin ailment.

In the classical Ayurvedic text *Kaiyadeva Nighantu* (15 century CE), various parts of the plant are highlighted for the management of diabetes, or diabetic conditions referred to as Prameha. During the later medieval period, in South India, texts such as the *Kerala Tamil Medicinal Codex* emphasised its role in alleviating inflammatory skin disorders and swellings.

Commercial use

Cassia auriculata is a resilient evergreen shrub, native to the dry and semi-arid regions of southern India. Today it thrives in states like Tamil Nadu,

Avartaki (*Cassia auriculata*) in Ayurveda

by Andrew Mason

Karnataka, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, as well as parts of Maharashtra, Gujarat, and Rajasthan and is commonly found in woodlands, scrub forests and stony hills. It may also be discovered along the roadside or upon wastelands. Historically, it had been a significant crop in areas such as Chennai, Hyderabad, and Mysuru, where it was cultivated extensively for its tannin-rich bark.

This plant's adaptability to highly arid conditions has led to its use in soil reclamation through afforestation. Its ability to bind soil slows erosion and the formation of ravines, gullies, and sand dunes. It serves as a soil binder and green manure, particularly for paddy fields, contributing nitrogen and potash.

Growth Cycle

The typical growth cycle of *Cassia auriculata* begins with propagation through seeds or stem cuttings, often sown or planted 5-12cm apart, in rows. Its seeds are resistant to desiccation, and so the plant establishes quickly, is fast-growing and multi branched, reaching a height of around 7 meters, with a trunk diameter of up to 20 cm under optimal conditions. In general, this plant prefers bright direct sunlight, a moderate temperature, and a well-drained soil (optimum pH of 7.0–8.5). Careful cultivation and weeding will stimulate growth, but are not essential. *Cassia auriculata* coppices well, and regrows vigorously after cutting.

Typically, there are two main flowering periods, connected to the monsoon periods: one in the early

June–July, the other in late monsoon, September–October. Its bright yellow flower appear, closely followed by the appearance of its flattened cylindrical seed pods, containing 10–20 seeds.

Manual harvesting cycles vary by plant part, with its flowers, highly prized for their medicinal and dyeing properties. These are typically harvested in early summer when its flavonoid (antioxidant) and anthraquinone (laxative) levels peak.

Flowers are handpicked to avoid heat stress and then shade-dried. Small-scale farmers in Tamil Nadu commonly harvest them in June for optimal potency. Bark harvesting begins from the third year after establishment, focusing on twigs without corky bark for the best tannin yield. The bark is sun-dried in small pieces for storage or market. Leaves and young pods are harvested as needed, often during vegetative growth phases, for use as fodder, vegetables, or green manure, with no strict seasonal cycle but generally aligned with post-monsoon periods for freshness.

Medicinal parts

In Ayurveda and Siddha medicine, all parts of *Cassia auriculata* possess some medicinal value. However, its flower is arguably the most medicinally prominent part. Its flower is most commonly prepared as a herbal infusion tea, or dried and powdered to help regulate blood sugar levels, and support overall metabolic health. The flower is rich in flavonoids such as quercetin, tannins, polyphenols and glycosides, all of which

Avartaki (*Cassia auriculata*) in Ayurveda

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Avartaki - *Cassia auriculata*

contribute to strong antioxidant, anti-inflammatory, and hypoglycaemic effects.

In Siddha (and Ayurveda), flower-based preparations such as Avarai Panchanga Chooranam are prepared for diabetes, urinary disorders, skin purification and cooling the body, as well as promoting longevity and vitality. Here Panchanga refers to its five parts or ingredients, which are the flowers, leaves, roots, bark, and fruits pods of the same plant, dried and powdered; choornam meaning powder.

The leaves of *Cassia auriculata* are often used in external applications or internal powders and decoctions, though they are more laxative than the flower and thus used a bit more cautiously for

long-term intake. Note: this variety can be mildly laxative, but not to be confused with *Cassia angustifolia/acutifolia*, which have a stronger laxative effect.

The bark is highly valued for its strong astringent qualities due to high tannin content (historically used for tanning leather, hence its popular name tanner's Cassia). The bark serves as an alterative, used in gargles for oral issues, to treat skin diseases, eye troubles, rheumatism, and is a useful blood purifier. In some Siddha traditions, bark decoctions also address fever, urinary complaints, and general inflammation.

The seeds and roots also hold some medicinal potential, though they are used less frequently as a standalone remedy. Seeds are noted for their use in eye diseases, gout, and diabetes support.

The root is used in decoctions for fevers, urinary system disorders, constipation, tumours, asthma, and skin issues. Both contain anthraquinones, glycosides, and other compounds contributing to antidiabetic, antimicrobial, and hepatoprotective effects, but they tend to appear more in polyherbal or regional formulations rather than as the dominant part.

The fruits (pods/legumes) are occasionally used for their antidiabetic and astringent properties, often included in whole-plant preparations like Avarai Panchanga Chooranam (as previously mentioned), but they are not as prominently singled out as are its flowers and leaves.

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In summary, the plant's most celebrated use is through the flower, followed by its leaves. For external application to the skin, its bark and leaves take precedence. For any whole-plant use, its Panchanga (5 parts) is perhaps the safest way to use this plant.

Main uses

Traditionally, *Cassia auriculata* is employed as a potent anti-diabetic agent, with extracts from flowers, leaves, and seeds helping to regulate blood sugar levels and support metabolic health, often administered as both a tea or in powder form. It also serves in treating urinary tract issues, such as dysuria and infections, due to its diuretic and antimicrobial properties. For skin conditions, the plant's astringent qualities aid in healing wounds, reducing inflammation, and managing disorders like eczema (or leprosy-like ailments), in older texts.

Additionally, it has been used for respiratory problems like asthma, rheumatism, dysentery, and even eye complaints such as conjunctivitis, with the bark historically valued for tanning leather, extending its utility beyond a medicine.

Energetic properties

Ayurveda categorises *Cassia auriculata* as:

- *Guna*: light and drying
- *Rasa*: Bitter and astringent
- *Veerya*: Cooling
- *Dosha*: -PK +V

- *Karma*: Vajikarana actions, decreases uterine secretions, heals wounds, improves vision.

Its cooling, astringent and bitter tastes, make it particularly effective for pacifying Pitta and Kapha doshas while mildly aggravating Vata in excess.

Its energetic profile contribute to its detoxifying and anti-inflammatory actions, promoting tissue preservation and reducing excess heat in the body. In Siddha, it aligns with similar principles, enhancing vitality and supporting the body's innate healing processes.

Popular Cassia Tea

Avaram flower tea or Avarampoo tea - is a traditional herbal infusion made from the dried yellow flower. This soothing, mildly astringent drink is prized for its cooling properties, ability to support blood sugar regulation, promote skin health, aid digestion, and provide gentle detoxification. It has a subtle floral taste with natural sweetness, when enhanced with a little palm jaggery, making it refreshing and easy to enjoy daily.

While ideal for daily consumption to support diabetes management, urinary health, or as a cooling summer drink, it is always best to start with small amounts to assess tolerance.

Ingredients (1-2 cups)

- 1-2 teaspoons dried Avarampoo flowers or 1 teaspoon of Avarampoo powder
- 500ml (2 cups) of water

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- 1-2 teaspoons of jaggery, for natural sweetness
- Optional: 2-3 cardamom pods (crushed) for enhanced flavour and digestion

Preparation

1. Rinse the dried flowers briefly under cool water to remove dust.
2. Bring the water to a boil in a saucepan.
3. Add the Avarampoo flowers (and cardamom, if using) to the boiling water.
4. Reduce heat to low and simmer for 5-10 minutes to allow full infusion.
5. Turn off the heat, cover, and let it steep for another 5 minutes.
6. Strain the tea into a cup using a fine mesh strainer.
7. Stir in palm candy or jaggery while hot until dissolved. Avoid refined sugar to keep it traditional.
8. Serve warm or at room temperature. Enjoy 1-2 cups daily, preferably in the morning or before meals.

Milk-Based Avarampoo Tea: a traditional Siddha-style tea.

A richer variation often recommended in Siddha practices for enhanced nourishment, skin glow, and vitality. The milk tempers the astringency and adds creaminess.



Milky Avarampoo tea

Ingredients (for 1 cup)

- 1-2 tablespoons dried Avarampoo flowers (or 1-2 teaspoons powder)
- 1 cup (250 ml) whole milk
- 1-2 teaspoons jaggery
- 1-2 cardamom pods (or a pinch of cardamom powder)

Optional: A small piece of fresh ginger (for added warmth and digestion).

Preparation

1. Crush the cardamom pods and palm candy together in a mortar and pestle (or blender) with the Avarampoo flowers/powder to form a coarse mix.

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2. Bring the milk (or milk-water mix) to a gentle boil in a pan.
3. Add the crushed mixture (and ginger, if using) to the boiling milk.
4. Simmer on low heat for 5-8 minutes, stirring occasionally to prevent scorching.
5. Turn off the heat and let it steep covered for five minutes.
6. Strain into a cup, pressing the solids gently to extract flavour.

7. Serve hot. This version has a mildly sweet, comforting taste and is especially valued for its skin-purifying and rejuvenating effects.

Contraindications

If you have any existing medical condition, take medications, are pregnant, or when used inappropriately or excessively, as previously mentioned, this herb can have a laxative effect.

For more on Ayurveda, Rasa Shastra, Jyotish & Hasta Rekha Shastra, visit my Substack: <https://vedicalchemy.substack.com/>

Ghee and Metabolic Health: Beyond the Cholesterol-centric Paradigm

by Dr. Harishma Asok

Introduction

Ghee (clarified butter), traditionally valued for both culinary and therapeutic purposes, is often portrayed as a contributor to elevated cholesterol levels and cardiovascular disease because of its saturated fat content. This perspective reflects a narrow, lipid-centric interpretation of metabolic risk.

Metabolic syndrome (MetS), characterised by central obesity, dyslipidaemia, hypertension, and impaired glucose regulation, is a complex,

multifactorial disorder. Its development is driven predominantly by insulin resistance, chronic low-grade inflammation, sedentary lifestyle patterns, and excess calorie intake. This article re-examines ghee within a broader metabolic context rather than through an isolated lipid lens.

Metabolic Syndrome: A Regulatory Disorder

Insulin resistance and visceral adiposity represent the core pathophysiological features of MetS. Impaired insulin signalling disrupts lipid metabolism, resulting in elevated triglyceride-

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rich low-density lipoprotein (LDL) particles and reduced high-density lipoprotein (HDL) cholesterol levels.

Emerging evidence also suggests that an imbalance in cellular polyunsaturated fatty acids (PUFAs) contributes to insulin resistance by altering phospholipid composition, membrane fluidity, and insulin receptor function¹.

From an Ayurvedic perspective, these processes correspond to Agniduşti (impaired metabolic efficiency), Kapha–Medo duşti (dysregulation of adipose tissue and lipid storage), and Srotorodha (functional obstruction of metabolic pathways). This framework conceptualises metabolic syndrome as a disorder of systemic metabolic regulation rather than the result of excessive intake of a single macronutrient.

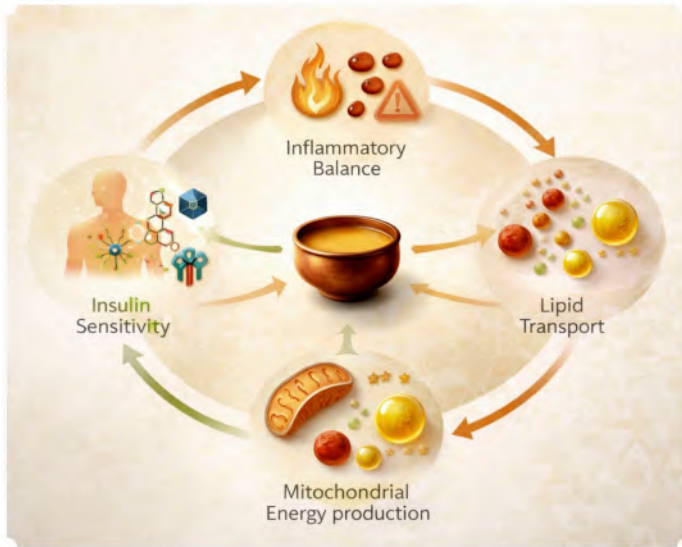
Metabolic Attributes of Cow's Ghee

Cow's ghee contains a heterogeneous lipid profile that may support metabolic function when consumed in moderation. Its composition includes small but biologically relevant quantities of polyunsaturated fatty acids (omega-3 and omega-6), monounsaturated fatty acids (omega-7 and omega-9), medium-chain fatty acids (MCFAs), and fat-soluble vitamins A, D, E, and K₂.

MCFAs are absorbed directly via the portal circulation and preferentially oxidised, supporting energy utilisation rather than fat storage². This pathway may reduce the likelihood of excess fat accumulation compared to long-chain fatty acids. In addition, antioxidant components within ghee may reduce lipid peroxidation and help support

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HDL stability. Experimental observations of enhanced biliary cholesterol excretion further suggest a potential modulatory role in cholesterol homeostasis. The presence of fat-soluble vitamins also supports cellular function, immune modulation and tissue integrity.

Collectively, these biochemical characteristics indicate that the metabolic impact of cow's ghee is dose and context-dependent rather than inherently atherogenic.

Medicated Ghee and Metabolic Modulation

Ayurvedic pharmaceuticals utilise ghee as a therapeutic medium in the form of medicated ghee preparations, in which specific herbs are infused into the lipid base. This process, traditionally described as *Saṃskārasya Anuvartanam*, refers to ghee's ability to carry and enhance the bioavailability of active compounds.

Because cell membranes are lipid-rich, ghee acts as an effective vehicle for intracellular delivery of phytochemicals. These formulations are used under professional guidance and are not intended for unsupervised self-medication.

Medicated ghee preparations incorporating herbs with *Katu*, *Tikta*, *Kaṣāya rasa* (bitter, pungent, and astringent properties), *Laghu Rūkṣa guṇa* (light and drying qualities), *Uṣṇa vīrya* (warming potency), and *Katu vipāka* (post-digestive metabolic effects) are traditionally used to enhance metabolic activity (*Agnidīpana*), support the digestion of metabolic by-products (*Āmapācana*), and restore functional metabolic flow (*Srotoshodhana*).

Classical formulations such as *Trayūṣaṇādi Ghṛtam*, *Guggulu Tikta Ghṛtam*, and *Triphalā Ghṛtam* exemplify this therapeutic approach. Emerging clinical studies suggest these preparations may support lipid regulation and improve quality-of-life parameters in individuals with metabolic dysfunction³.

Clinical Considerations

Ayurvedic practice emphasises individualisation. Factors such as digestive capacity, metabolic status, age, lifestyle, and degree of adiposity guide both the form and quantity of ghee consumption.

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Excessive intake in individuals with marked obesity, sedentary habits, or impaired digestion may worsen metabolic imbalance. Optimisation of digestive function is therefore considered an essential prerequisite before therapeutic ghee use.

Conclusion

The belief that ghee universally worsens cholesterol profiles oversimplifies the complex pathophysiology of metabolic syndrome. Contemporary biomedical evidence, supported by classical Ayurvedic principles, suggests that moderate, context-appropriate consumption of cow's ghee is not inherently harmful and may support metabolic balance when digestive efficiency and lifestyle factors are appropriately addressed.

In metabolic health, precision, moderation, and individualisation are more relevant than the categorical exclusion of traditional dietary fats.

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Autoimmune Disease - A Diagnosis of Convenience

by Dr. Hans H. Rhyner



The term “autoimmune disease” sounds scientifically precise. In reality, it is often a placeholder. It describes a phenomenon but does not explain it. It says: the body is attacking itself. And that is precisely where the problem begins.

From an Ayurvedic perspective, this idea is not only illogical but misleading. The human body is not a self-destructive system. It is a highly intelligent regulatory network that responds to stress and

burden — not out of aggression, but in an attempt to restore balance.

When modern medicine speaks of autoimmune processes, it usually refers to chronic inflammatory conditions whose underlying causes cannot be clearly identified. Instead of continuing to ask why, the process is relabelled: the body becomes the enemy. This is convenient. But it does not help the patient.

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Inflammation is not a malfunction. It is a response — a protective and reparative reaction. Only when this reaction persists for years does it become destructive — not because it is wrong, but because the triggering factors have never been resolved.

Ayurveda therefore asks a different — and less comfortable — question: Why does the body consider this inflammatory response necessary? The answers are rarely spectacular, but they are consistent: impaired digestion, incompletely processed metabolic residues, chronic intestinal irritation, infections, environmental burden, and a nervous system locked in sustained stress. Any of these can keep the immune system in a permanent state of alarm.

Instead of investigating such causes, treatment often relies primarily on acute medical intervention: corticosteroids, immunosuppressants, biologics. These medicines are valuable in acute situations and sometimes life-saving. Yet they are increasingly used as long-term solutions in chronic conditions. The outcome is familiar: short-term symptom relief, long-term new complications. Increased susceptibility to infection, fungal overgrowth of the mouth, gut, or mucosa, exhaustion, and new inflammatory foci. The original condition is not resolved — it is displaced.

The deeper problem unfolds on another level altogether: the patient is told that their body is working against them.

This message undermines trust, hope, and personal agency. It separates the individual internally from their own organism.

Ayurveda tells a different story. Not: your body is broken. But: your body is trying to protect you — with means that are currently overwhelmed.

This change in perspective alters everything. The body is no longer an adversary but a conversation partner. It calls for patience, observation, and investigation of causes. It accepts that healing takes time — more time than suppression, but with more durable results. This does not mean rejecting conventional medicine. It means using it where it belongs: in acute and life-threatening situations. Chronic processes, however, require chronic thinking — not permanent emergency medicine.

What is labelled an autoimmune disease is therefore often less a final diagnosis than an expression of uncertainty. Ayurveda invites us not to accept this uncertainty as the endpoint, but to continue asking questions.

Because the body does not destroy itself. It communicates. And it is worth listening.

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