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# Akshi Tarpana - An Inside Review

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## ABSTRACT

Eyes are the very important organ for vision. It is proved that 80% of knowledge was gained through eyes. Vision problem are more common once we grow older, hence preventive measures should be taken right from the young age. Today whole world is looking towards Ayurveda for better treatment. Ayurveda emphasizes both on prevention and as well as cure. *Akshi Tarpana* (Eye Care Treatment) is a specialized *Upakrama* of *Panchakarma* treatment used to strengthen the orbital muscles and thus improves the functioning of eye. *Akshi Tarpana* splits into two words "Akshi" means eye and "Tarpana" means nourishment, in healthy people Eye Care Treatment is carried out to protect the eyes from degeneration due to ageing process and to improve the eye sight. The therapeutic effect is advocated for patients suffering from diseases of eye. Thus *Akshi Tarpana* is an excellent soothing, relaxing eye treatment to rejuvenate eyes and surrounding tissues.

**Key words:** *Kriyakalpa, Akshi Tarpana, Eye Disorders, Matrakala.*

## INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda has stated the importance of an eye with quote "Sarvendriyanam Nayanam Pradhanam" i.e. eye is the prime sense organ among the all sense organs. It is described by *Sushruta* in detail. *Sushruta* has written nineteen chapters in *Uttartantra* explaining the medical, surgical and preventive aspect of *Netra*. *Netra* (*Akshi*) is an important organ for *Indriya Janya Gyana* (sensory knowledge) which is considered as a source of *Pratyaksha Gyana* (direct perception). We acquire doubtless knowledge with the help of *Indriya* (sense organ) and out of five *Indriyas*, the most important is the *Netra*. Ancient Indian philosophy is of opinion that all materials, living or non-living are made up of five fundamental

elements called *Panchamahabhutas*, and all parts of body are also made up by the combination of these *Mahabhutas*. In case of *Netra*, there is a dominance of *Teja Mahabhuta*, therefore *Netra* organ has always a threat from *Kapha Dosha*, which has exactly opposite qualities that of *Teja Mahabhuta*.<sup>[1]</sup> Eye is the seat of *Alochaka Pitta*. As quoted in *Ashtanga Hridaya*, sincere efforts should be made by every individual to preserve his / her vision till the last breath of life, because for an individual who is blind, day and night are the same and this beautiful world is of no use to him even if he possesses a lot of wealth.<sup>[2]</sup> All efforts should be made for the strength of eyes, by resorting to *Nasya, Anjana, Tarpana* etc. Once vision is lost the versatility of the world will all become merged to one, of unified darkness. Although modern medical science has made tremendous and remarkable progress and advance in the field of ophthalmology in recent times, the importance of Ayurvedic treatment in the diseases of eye cannot be ignored. *Kriya Kalpas* includes *Seka, Aschyothana, Tarpana, Putapaka, Anjana, Bidalaka, and Pindi*.<sup>[3]</sup> Among all *Kriya Kalpas*, *Akshi Tarpana* is the foremost procedure for eye disorders. *Akshi tarpana* is one of the specialized treatments for various eye disorders. *Akshi Tarpana* acts as both preventive and curative therapy for maintaining normal healthy condition of eyes. It is

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*Brimhana* in nature. The phrase *Akshi tarpana* (also called *Netrabasti*) is from *Sanskrit* where *Akshi* refers to eye and *Tarpana* stands for nourishment or rehydration process.

#### Indications for *Tarpana Karma*<sup>[4],[5]</sup>

- When a patient sees darkness in front of eyes,
- Dryness of the eyes,
- Roughness of the eyes,
- Stiffness of eyelids,
- Falling of eyelashes,
- Dirtiness of the eyes,
- Deviated eyeball or squint,
- In extreme aggravation of the diseases of the eye,
- Injury/traumatic condition of eye,
- *Vata Pitta* predominant diseases.<sup>[4]</sup>

*Acharya Vagbhata* has further added a list of diseases specifically selected for *Tarpana Karma*. They are *Kricchronmilana* (difficulty in opening eyes), *Siraharsha* (congestion of conjunctival blood vessel), *Sirotpata* (episcleritis), *Tama* (blackout), *Arjuna* (subconjunctival haemorrhage), *Syanda* (conjunctivitis), *Adhimantha* (glaucoma), *Anyatovata* (referred pain in the eye or sphenoidal sinusitis), *Vataparyaya*, *Avrana Shukra* (corneal opacity).<sup>[5]</sup>

#### Contraindications for *Tarpana Karma*<sup>[6]</sup>

According to *Acharya Sushruta*, *Tarpana* is not indicated;

- On a cloudy day,
- Extreme hot or cold seasons,
- In conditions of worries and anxiety,
- In conditions of tiredness and giddiness of eyes,
- In complications of eyes,
- In the condition of acute pain,
- Inflammation, redness etc.

#### Procedure

##### *Poorva Karma*

*Tarpana* therapy should be done to the patients who have been purified both in their head (by nasal medications) and the body (by emesis, purgation and enema therapies). Later *Sthanika Abhyangam* (Local Massage) and *Mridu Swedana* (Mild Sedation) is done.

##### *Pradhan Karma*

*Akshi Tarpana* is performed during temperature seasons, both in the morning or evening. Patient is made to lay in supine position with his face upwards, in a room devoid of wind, sun and dust. *Yava* (barley) A wall is made of flour of *Masa* around the eye socket (resembling a well) to a height of 2 fingers and breadth keeping the eye lids closed. *Go Ghrita* or any medicated oil liquefied by hot water should be poured in to the well up to the level of tips of eye lashes. The patient should then be asked to open his eyes slowly and retain the drug. Then *Matrakala* should be counted.

#### *Sneha Dharana Kala according to Dosha Prakopa (Matrakala)*

<i>Doshabheda</i>	<i>Su.Sa.</i>	<i>As.Hr.</i>	<i>Sh.Sa.</i>	<i>Bp</i>
Healthy Eye	500	500	500	500
<i>Kapha Prakopa</i>	600	500	500	500
<i>Pitta Prakopa</i>	800	600	-	600
<i>Vata Prakopa</i>	1000	1000	1000	1000

*Su.Sa.* - *Susrutha Samhita*, *As.Hr.* - *Ashtanga Hrudaya*, *Sh.Sa.* - *Sharangadhara Samhita*, *Bp* - *Bhavaprakasha*.

#### *Sneha Dharana Kala according to Adhishthana of disease (Matrakala)*

<i>Adhishthana</i>	<i>Su.Sa.</i>	<i>As.Hr.</i>	<i>Sh.Sa.</i>	<i>Bp</i>
<i>Sandhigata</i>	300	300	500	500
<i>Vartmagata</i>	100	100	100	100
<i>Shuklagata</i>	500	500	600	

<i>Krishnagata</i>	700	700	700	700
<i>Drishtigata</i>	800/1000	800	800	800
<i>Sarvagatha</i>	1000	1000	1000	1000
<i>Su.Sa. - Susruta Samhita, As.Hr. - Ashtanga Hrudaya, Sh.Sa. - Sharangadhara Samhita, Bp - Bhavaprakasha.</i>				

**Paschat Karma**

After retaining of *Ghrita* for a stipulated period, the *Ghrita* is drained out through a hole made at the bottom of dough wall, near the outer canthus of the eye and the eye is irrigated with lukewarm water fomentation. The *Kapha* which has already been stimulated by the potency of *Ghrita*, should be eliminated by *Shirovirechana (Nasya)*, and fumigation (*Dhoompana*) with the *Kapha* suppressive drugs. Patient is instructed to keep away from exposure to bright lights, wind, sky, mirrors and luminous bodies.<sup>[7]</sup>

**Samyak Tarpita Lakshana<sup>[8]</sup>**

- *Sukhaswapana* - good (sound) sleep
- *Avbodhatva* - blissful awakening
- *Vaishadhya* - clearness of the eyes
- *Varnapatava* - discernment of individual colours
- *Nivriti* - feeling of comfort
- *Vyadhividhvansa* - cure of the disease
- *Kriya laghvama* - easiness in closing and opening the eyes
- *Prakash kshamta* - ability to withstand bright light

**Ati Tarpita Lakshanas<sup>[8]</sup>**

- *Netragaurava* - heaviness in eyes
- *Avilta* - indistinct vision
- *Atisnigdhatva* - excessive oiliness
- *Ashru Srava* - lacrimation
- *Kandu* - itching
- *Upadeha* - stickiness
- *Dosha Samutklishta* - aggravation of *Dosha*

**Heena Tarpita Lakshanas<sup>[8]</sup>**

- *Netrarukshata* - dryness of eye
- *Avilta* - indistinct vision
- *Ashrusrava* - lacrimation
- *Asahyam Roopdarshan* - difficulty in vision
- *Vyadhivridhi* - aggravation of disease

**Formulations used for Tarpita**

*Triphala Ghrita, Mahatriphala Ghrita, Patoladi Ghrita, Jeevantyadi Ghrita.*

**DISCUSSION**

The *Kriyakalpa* are common practices told in Ayurveda from ages are still functional and result oriented. The word *Tarpita* literary means gladdening (Make glad or happy) bestowing contentment, satisfaction or strength by the use of nutritious foods and other materials. *Akshi Tarpita* is to strengthen eyes and improve vision. *Akshi Tarpita* aims to provide optimum rejuvenation or gladdening of eyes.

**Mode of action of Netra Tarpita Karma**

In modern sciences the ocular therapeutics includes the medicines in the form of drops, ointments, gels and accusers. These are the modes of topical installations of medicines in the eye. Eye drops are the easiest and most convenient method of topical application. Aqueous solutions and aqueous suspensions are the two forms of drug instillation in eye. In aqueous solution form the drug is totally dissolved, so the drug is completely available for immediate action. But it gets quickly diluted by tears and drains through nasolacrimal duct. Hence, it causes low tissue contact time. Whereas in suspension forms the drug is present as small particles suspended in aqueous medium and these do not leave the eye as early as solution. Hence it increases the tissue contact time. Ointments and gels have more bioavailability of drug which increases tissue contact time and prevents dilution and early absorption. Accusers are placed in upper and lower fornix for upto one week and allows a drug to be

released at a constant rate. The drug is delivered through a membrane. In cornea the epithelium and endothelium is lipid permeable i.e. lipophilic whereas stromal layer is hydrophilic. Hence the lipophilic and hydrophilic drugs are effectively delivered to cornea, whereas the drug permeability across the sclera depends upon the molecular size and weight of the drug. The drugs used in *Tarpana* procedure is the combination of *Ghrita* and decoction of medicines, hence the drug can easily cross the corneal epithelium (being lipophilic) and endothelium (being hydrophilic). Also due to more contact time the active component of drug used in *Tarpana* will be absorbed more to cure the diseases. The *Ghrita* with decoction of medicines has the quality of trespassing into minute channels of the body, hence when applied in the eyes; it enters deeper layers of *Dathus* and cleans every minute part. The lipophilic action of *Ghrita* facilitates the transportation of the drug to the target organ and finally reaches the cell because the cell membrane also contains lipids. This phospholipid nature of medicine facilitates the entry of the drug into the eye ball through the corneal surface. Since the corneal epithelium is permeable to lipid soluble substances and lipid soluble substances crosses the corneal epithelium irrespective of the molecular size. Moreover, the medicine preparations used in *Akshi Tarpana* is in the form of suspension containing different particles of the drug and the particles do not leave the eye as quick as a solution. Tissue contact time and bioavailability is more and hence therapeutic concentration is achieved by *Netra Tarpana*. This facilitates the action of drug by two ways, first by allowing more absorption of the drug, by the corneal surface, and secondly by exerting direct pressure up on the cornea. There may be changes of refractive index of the cornea causing less convergence of light rays.

## CONCLUSION

Eye is considered to be the most important and noblest sense organ of human body, so sincere efforts should be made by every individual to preserve his / her vision till the last breath. It is known fact that prevention is better than cure. Ayurveda is found to

possess vivid information about the life style leading to healthy life and also preventive strategies in general. Eye is considered to be a local route of drug administration. Systematic absorption from this route is minimal or absent in contrast to this high concentration of drug can be achieved locally by applying the medicines to eye. *Akshi Tarpana* is one of the local therapeutic procedure which if promptly used shows objective evidences of excellent responses.

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