

Review of nasya karma and it's mode of action

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ABSTRACT:

Ayurveda is a science and art of appropriate living which helps to achieve longevity. *Ayurveda* prescribes *Panchakarma* Therapy for the cleansing of body toxins. It is the process, which gets the root cause of the problems and corrects the essential balance of 'Tridosha' in the body. In our day to day life due to medicines, tobacco, alcohol, irregular food habits, Sleeping disturbance, pain-killers, antibiotics, oral-contraceptives, steroids, suppression of urges, mental stress, depression, night awaking & day sleeping mankind get *ShiroGataRoga* and suffered from many painful diseases. *Nasa* is considered as one among the *Panchagnanendriya*, whose functions are not only limited to olfaction and respiration but also considered as a pathway for drug administration. Since it is described as nose is the gateway for the *Shiras*. *Nasya Karma* is the special procedure where the drug is administered through that pathway. The medicine that is put in to nostril moves in the channels up to the *Shringataka* spreads to whole of the interior of the head and to the junction place where all the channels related to the eyes, ears, throat situated together i.e. *Saptapathi* thus shows influence on *Shiras* by removing out the accumulated *Doshas* localized in *Shiras* i.e. from all sinuses in the skull the action is known as *Shirovirechana*. So it is the demand of time to know about *Nasya Karma* in *Panchakarma* & its importance by which a common man get healthy life without having any disease.

Kew Words- Panchakarma, Nasya Karma, Shirogat Roga

Introduction:

In *Panchakarma* there are different types of *AbhyangaKarma* (herbal massages), *Swedana* (fomentation's such as steam), *Snehan* (external oil treatments), *Basti* (medicated enemas), *Virechana* (purgation through herbs), *Vamana* (emesis through herbs), *Nasya* (nasal administration of oils etc.). There are two types of processes in *Panchakarma* :-

1. *Purvakarma*: Pre-purification Measures for *Panchakarma*.

2. *Pradhanakarma*: Main Purification measures of *Panchakarma*.

Nasyakarma is a process wherein the drug/herbalized oils and liquid medicines is administered through the nostrils in a specific manner, to cure different systemic disorders.

"सिरासि इन्द्रियानी इन्द्रिय प्रानवहानि च
स्रोतामसि सूर्यमिव गबस्थयह सम्प्रितानि" ²

The senses and the channels carrying the sensory and motor impulses from the shiras are like the rays from the sun. *Nasa* is considered as one among the *Panchagnanendriya*, whose functions are not only limited to olfaction and respiration but also considered as a pathway for drug administration. Since it is described as nose is the gateway for the *Shiras*. *Nasya Karma* is the special procedure where the drug is administered through that pathway. Medicine given through nostrils travels the entire passage and reaches the cribriform plate, which is porous in nature. From there it is absorbed and reaches the tissues of brain. It is like the local application on the tissues of brain. In our day to day life due to medicines, tobacco, alcohol, irregular food habits, Sleeping disturbance, pain-killers, antibiotics, oral-contraceptives, steroids, suppression of urges, mental stresses, depression, night awaking & day sleeping mankind get *ShiroGataRoga* and suffered from many painful diseases. So it is the demand of time to know about *Nasya Karma* in *Panchakarma* & its importance by which a common man get healthy life without having any disease.

Etymological derivation of nasya

The word *nasya* is derived from 'NAS' dhatu. It conveys the sense of Gati-Motion (*Nasa Gatau*) and *vyapti* means pervasion (*Nasa Vyaptau*). In Ayurvedic texts, *Nasa Dhatu* is used in sense of nose (*Nasa Nasikayam*).

"नासिकयो हितान् तत्र भवो वा यत् नासा देश"³

The literary meaning of the word *nasya* is being in the nose or the things beneficial to the nose. Vachaspathyam derives word 'Nastah' which means beneficial for the nose.

Definition of *nasya* ⁽³⁾:

In Ayurveda, the word has been taken specifically to mention the root administration of the drug.

As stated by Sushruta, medicines, or medicated oils administered through the nose are known as *nasya*.

IMPORTANCE OF NASYA KARMA

Ayurveda prescribes *Panchakarma* Therapy for the cleansing of body toxins. *Nasya* - nasal cleansing by the application of medical oils or powders. The nostrils are considered the doorway to the brain and nasal application of oils is helpful in conditions like allergic sinusitis, migraines and epilepsy. If the *Nasya* therapy has been carried out effectively, *Kapha* related toxins from the para nasal sinuses are eliminated and the region nourished. Due to this, the patient feels great relief in the head and clarity of the sense organs. Breathing becomes completely unobstructed which gives sound sleep at night. Olfactory improvement is also felt. *Nasya* is excellent for chronic sinusitis, headaches, throat diseases, chronic colds, chest congestion, epilepsy, catarrh, migraine, voice constraint, eye diseases and cervical spondylitis.

Nasya karma according to Brihatrayi

1. Acharya Vagbhata-

Nasya Karma ⁽⁴⁾ - The procedure of instilling medicines through the nasal orifice is called *Nasyakarma*. **Types of Nasyakarma-**

1. According to the function the *nasyakarma* is of 3 types ⁽⁵⁾.

1. Virechananasya.
2. Brihmananasya
3. Shamana nasya.

According to the quantity of the *nasya* drug used it is of 3 types

1. Sneha nasya-

- I. Marshanasya
- II. Pratimarsha nasya.
2. Avapeedanasya
3. Pradhamana nasya

1. According to the functions the *nasya karma* is of 3 types-

- Virechana nasya.
2. Brihmana nasya
3. Shamana nasya.

Indications ⁽⁶⁾ -

1. Virechana Nasya

Indications - It is mainly indicated in the diseases of head caused by *Kaphadosha* or its predominance like *Adhigaurava* (Heaviness of the head), *Shophya* (Swelling or tumor in the head), *Upadeha* (Feeling as if something is sticking on the head), *Kandu* (itching), *Stambha* (Stiffness), *Srava* (Excess secretions), *Praseka* (Excess salivation), *Vairasya* (Anorexia), *Arochaka* (Loss of taste), *Swarabheda* (Hoarseness of the voice), *Krimi* (Worm infestation in the head), *Pratishyaya* (Coryza), *Apasmara* (Epilepsy), *Gandha Agynana* (Loss of smell), *Granthi* (Cyst), *Arbuda* (Tumor), *Dadru* (Ring worm infestation), *Kotha* (Blebs).

2. Brihmana Nasya-

Indications - Indicated in *Vataja* or *Vata* pre dominant diseases like *Sooryavarta* (Migraine), *Ardhavabdhaka* (Hemicrania), *Krimija Shiroroga* (diseases of head due to worms), *Akshisankocha* (Constriction of the eyes), *Akshispandana* (Tremors of the eyes), *Timira* (defect of the vision), *Krichravabobhaka* (Difficulty in getting up from sleep).

3. Shamana Nasya-

Indications- Indicated in diseases due to the vitiation of blood and *Pitta* *Raktaja* and *Pittaja* like *Akaalavali* (premature wrinkles), *Palita* (premature graying of hairs), *Khalitya* (Hair fall), *Daarunaka* (Psoriasis of the scalp), *Raktaraaji* (Redness of the eyes), *Vyanga* (Blackish discoloration on face), *Neelika* (bleeding from nose), *Raktapitta*.

According to the quantity of the *Nasya* drug used it is of 3 types.

1. Sneha nasya

- a. **Marsha Nasya** ⁽⁷⁾ It is administered for a particular reason, which may not be disease, but a condition of uneasiness arising from a particular disease. Quantity of the unctuous medicine in *Marshanasya*: 1. *Uttama maatra* - 10 bindu 2. *Madhyama maatra* - 8 bindu 3. *Hrswamaatra* - 6 bindu. Quantity of decoction in *Marsha nasya*: 1. *Uttama maatra* - 8 bindu 2. *Madhyama maatra* - 6 bindu 3. *Hrswa maatra* - 4 bindu

Contraindications⁽⁸⁾-Marshanasya is contraindicated before the age of 7 years and after the age of 80 years.

b. **Pratimarsha Nasya-**

Indications- *urahkshata* (Weak *kshaama* injury to the chest), *trishna* (Thirst), *Mukhashosha* (dryness of the oral Cavity), *Vridhda* (old Age), *Balaka* (Young), *Bheeru* (timid), *Sukumara* (tender or delicate Personality) *Pratimarshanasya* can be administered in *akaala* (unseasonable time), *Durdina* (inauspicious day) and *Varsha* (Rainy season), from *Ajanmamarana* (birth to death)

Contraindications⁽⁹⁾-

Dushta Pratishyaya (Chronic Catarrh), *Bahudosh* *Kriminashiro* (worm infestation and diseases of head involving multiple *Doshas*), *Madyapeeta* (one who drank alcohol), *Durbalashrotra* (weakness of the hearing organ). *Pratimarshanasya* given in these conditions will aggravate the condition as the *Doshas* are in highly aggravated state.

2. **Avapeeda nasya⁽¹⁰⁾- Virechana** or *Shaman Nasya* where the paste of the drug *Kalka* is squeezed into the nostrils called *Avapeeda Nasya*.

3. **Pradhamana nasya⁽¹¹⁾-Virechana Nasya** where the powder choornais used is called *Pradhamana*

Nasya. The quantity of powder required to reach the throat *kanth* when blown through a *6angula* long pipe is the quantity for *Pradhamana Nasya*. This can be repeated multiple times depending on the

intensity of the *Doshas*.

The main purpose of all *nasyas* is to expel the *kaphadosha* from the head. So all *Nasya Karmas* are called as *Virechana Nasya*. When strong drugs are used in the *virechananasya* karma it is called as *Shirovirechana Nasya*.

2. **Aacharya Sushruta-**

Aacharya Sushruta has explained 2 major types of the *nasya* which have 5 subtypes⁽¹²⁾.

1. *Shirovirechananasya*

2. *Snehananasya-*

- I. *nasya*
- II. *Shirovirechananasya*.
- III. *Pratimarshanasya*
- IV. *Avapeedanasya*
- V. *Pradhamananasya*.

Among these *Nasya* and *Shirovirechananasya* are the two main and important ones. *Pratimarshanasya* is a type of *Nasya*.

Avapeedanasya and *pradhamananasya* are the types of *Shirovirechananasya*⁽¹³⁾.

Indications of The Snehana Nasya⁽¹⁴⁾- The *snehana nasya* is administered to make up the deficient oily matter in the head in cases like *Shoonyashirasa* (Emptiness of the Head), *Greeva*-skandha-urasobala *Jananartham* (To impart strength to neck, shoulders, chest), *Dristiprasad* (to improve the vision), *ajananartham*. In conditions like the *Vataja Shiroroga* (diseases of the head due to the vitiation of wind), *Danta-keshasmashrupaata*, *Karna shool* (Earache), *Karnakshweda* (Tinnitus), *Timira* (Defective vision), *Swaropaghata* (Hoarseness of the voice), *Nasaroga* (Diseases of the nose), *Aasyashosha* (Dryness of the mouth), *Avabahuka* (Frozen shoulder), *Akaalajavali-palita* (Premature wrinkles-graying of the Hairs), *Vata Pittaja Vikaras* (Disorders arising due to wind and fire), *Mukharogas* (Diseases of the oral cavity).

Matra⁽¹⁵⁾-

1. *Pradhaanmatra-* 8 *Bindus* 2. *Dwiteeyamatra-* *shukti* 32 *Bindu* second dose. 3. *Triteeyamatra-* *Paanishukti* 68 *Bindu*.

Indications For Shirovirechana Nasya⁽¹⁶⁾- *Taalukanthashira* affected by *Kaphadosha* (Conditions of palate-throat-head due to the vitiation of *Kaphadosha*), *Arochaka* (Anorexia), *Shirogaurava* (Heaviness of the Head), *Shirashoola* (Head ache), *Peenasa* (Coryza), *Ardhavabedhaka* (Hemicrania), *Krimi* (worm infestation), *Pratishyaya* (Coryza), *Apasmara* (Epilepsy), *Gandhaagynana* (loss of the smell sensation), *Kaphaja Shiroroga* (Diseases of head due to *Kapha Dosh*).

Drugs- Unctuous substance prepared by the *Shirovirechanad* drugs.

Quantity of medicines for *Shirovirechana Nasya*⁽¹⁷⁾-

(1). Minimum dosage: 4 *Bindu*

(2). Medium dosage: 6 *Bindu*

(3). Maximum dosage: 8 *Bindu*

Indication for Pradhamananasya⁽¹⁸⁾ -

In cases of *Chetanavikriti* (derangement of the Mind), *Krimi* (worm infestation), *Vishapeedita* (Poisoning). In these conditions one of the *Shiro virechana* drug is powdered and spread in to the nasal orifice.

3. **Aacharya Charaka –**

Drugs useful in *shirovirechana* and their indication⁽¹⁹⁾.

Drugs useful in shirovirechana: *Apaamaarga Beeja, Pippali, Mareecha, Vidanga, Shigru, Sarshapa, Tumburu, Ajaaji, Ajagandha, Peelu, Ela, Harenuka, Prutweeka, Surasa, Shweta, Kutheraka, Phaninjaka, Shireeshabeeja, Lashuna, Haridra, Lavanadwaya, Jyotishmati, Naagaraare* used for the *Shirovirechana* or *Nasyakarma*.

Their indications: These drugs are used for *Shirovirechanain* conditions like *Shirogaurava* (heavyness of the head), *Shirashoola* (headache), *Peenasa* (rhinitis), *Ardhaavabdhaka* (hemicranias), *Shirogata Krimi* (worm infestation of head), *Apasmara* (epilepsy), *Ghraananaasha* (derangement of smell sensation) *Pramohaka* (fainting).

Aacharya Charaka explains about the time and its benefits in *Dinacharya* chapter ⁽²⁰⁾.

Time- Every year one should undergo the *Nasya Karma* with *Anuthailam* in *Praavrit* (rainy season), *Sharad* (autumn) and *Vasanta* (spring) season *Ritus* when the sky is free of clouds. But in emergency condition the *nasya* procedure can be done in other seasons also like in *Greeshmaritu* it should be administered in the *poorvahnna* (morning), in *sheetaritu* it should be done in the *Aparahnna* (noon) and in *Varsha Ritui* it should be done when the sky is not covered by clouds.

Benefits- The healthy person who undergoes the *Nasya Karma* in suitable season with suitable drugs will never suffer from the impaired functions of eyes, nose, and ears. The hairs of the scalp, beard will not fall and will not turn *Kapilavarna* (white or grey). The scalp hairs will start growing. *Nasya Karma* performed in conditions like *Manyastambha* (torticollis), *Shirashoola* (headache), *Ardita* (facial paralysis), *Hanusangraha* (lockjaw), *Ardhavabdhaka* (hemicrania), *Peenasa* (chronic coryza), *Shirakampa* (head tremor) helps to cure those conditions. *Anuthaila Nasya* administered in the suitable season nourishes the *Siras* (veins), *Sandhis* (joints), *Snayu* (ligaments), *Kandara* (tendons) of the head and makes them strong. The person becomes *Mukha Prasannata* (face becomes cheerful and well developed). His voice will be melodious *Upachit*, *Snigdha*, *Sthira* (stable), *Mahan* (grave). It imparts *Vaimalya* (clarity) and *Bala* (strength) to all sense organs. It prevents the diseases of supraclavicular region of the body. Even when the person is aging his supraclavicular region will not show any symptoms of aging.

In *Siddhithana Acharya Charaka* described 5 types of *Nasya Karma* ^{(21) & (22)}

1. *Navanasya*- (i) *Snehan Nasya* (ii) *Shodhan Nasya*.
2. *Avapeeda Nasya*- (i) *Shodhan Nasya* (ii) *Sthambhan Nasya*.
3. *Dhmapan nasya*

4. *Dhuma* – (i) *Prayogic* (ii) *Virechanik* (iii) *Snehik*

5. *Pratimarsha*- (i) *Sneha* (ii) *Virechana*

Indications for Shirovirechana- Disorders of the head and teeth, *Manyastambha* (stiffness of the neck region), *Galaandhanugraha* (stiffness of throat and jaw), *Peenasa* (rhinitis), *Galashundika* (uvulitis), *Shaaluka* (tonsillitis), *Shukraroga* (disorders of cornea) *Timira* (defects of vision), *Vartmaroga* (diseases of eyelids), *Vyanga* (blackish discoloration of facial skin), *Upajihvika*, *Ardhavabdhaka* (hemicranias) disorders, *Galaganda* (Goiter), *Dantashoola* (toothache), *Dantaharsha* (tingling sensation of teeth), *Dantachaala* (looseness of teeth), *Akshiraaaji* (redness of eyes), *Arbuda* (tumour), *Swarabedha* (hoarseness of voice), *vaakgraha* (obstructed speech), *Gadgada* (stammering), *Krathana* (loss of speech) etc. diseases of the supraclavicular region of the body and chronic *Vaata Vikaras*. In these conditions *Acharya* says the *Shirovirechana* is the best treatment as it enters the head and expels only the vitiated *Doshas* from the head.

Mode of action of nasya karma:

In *astanga samgraha* it is explained that *nasa* being the entry to *shira*, (head), the drug administered through, nostril reaches *shringataka* a *sira marma* by *nasa srotas* and spreads in the *murda* (brain) reaches at the junctional place of *netra* (eyes) *srotra* (ears), *kantha* (throat) *Siramukhas* (opening of the vessels) etc and remove or detach the morbid *doshas* present above supraclavicular region and expel them from the *uattamanga*. According to *Acharya Charaka* *Nasa* is the portal (gateway) of *Shiras*. The drug administered through nose as *Nasya* reaches to the brain and eliminates only the morbid *doshas* responsible for producing the disease. The *Dravya* administered by *Nasya Karma* enters into the *Shira* (head) and draws out exclusively the morbid matter as the path (*isika*) is taken out after removing the fibrous coating of *Munja* (a type of grass) adhered to it. *Acharya Sushruta* has explained *Sringatakamarma* as a *sira marma*, present in the middle of the confluence of *sira* supplying nourishment to the *nasa* (nose), *karna* (ears), *chakshu* (eyes) and *jivha* (tongue) fatal point at the confluence of veins (inside the head) by name “*sringataka*” under the complication of *nasya karma* *sushruta* noted that the excessive eliminative nasal therapy (*Shodhan nasya*) may cause *mastulunga* (CSF) to flow out, this shows the relation between the *nasa* as the gateway of *shira*.

Conclusion:

Nose is the gate of the head, *nasya dravya* is reaching the brain and acting on important centers controlling different function and thus showing systemic effects and *Nasyakarma* is the treatment for all the *Siro-roga* ⁽²³⁾. So everyone should know about that and be careful for their health.

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