An Appraisal of Methods to Protect and Preserve Eye Health in *Āyurveda*

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Statement of Problem: *Āyurveda,* India's ancient holistic science of life, proclaims that the eyes are the most important among the sense organs. Through a set of intricately-related parts, the eyes enable perception of the world through vision. Any affliction of the eye invariably results in improper function of these parts, and impaired vision in the long run. Hence, ocular health needs to be constantly maintained. *Āyurveda* defines health as the equilibrium of *Doṣa* (humors), *Agni* (gastric fire), *Dhātu* (tissue), and *Mala* (excretory products); and pleasantness of *Ātma* (soul), *Indriya* (sensory organs), and *Mana* (mind). Different methods to preserve and protect health are explained by *Āyurveda*, *viz.*, *Dinacarya* (daily regime), *Rātricarya* (nocturnal regime), *Ṛtucarya* (seasonal regime), and *Pathyāpathya* (wholesome and unwholesome habits). The purpose of this study is to analyze these methods in the light of ocular health.

Methodology: A comprehensive review of available literature, including *Samhitās* (*Āyurvedic* texts) and published material, was undertaken.

Findings: Aspects such as *Abhyaṅga* (massage) with oil over the head and feet, *Snāna* (bath), *Añjana* (collyrium), *Nasya* (nasal medication), regular *Śodhana* (purification), *Śarat Ṛtucarya* (autumnal regime), consuming *Triphala* (fruits of *Terminalia chebula* Retz., *Terminalia bellerica* Linn., and *Emblica officinalis* Gaertn.), ghee (clarified butter), and honey at night, regular intake of foods such as pomegranate, old barley and wheat, green gram, and other foods that pacify *Kapha* and *Pitta*, and a pleasant and calm mind are useful to promote and preserve eye health.

Conclusion and Significance: Proper eye health ensures good vision. The aspects of promoting health described by *Āyurveda* that have a role in eye health perform such actions as increase circulation, remove excess *Doṣās* from the body, provide requisite nutrients to the eye, and eventually cool the body down. The delicate balance of heat and cold in the body enables the eye to function effectively and allows for more nutrition to reach the eye. Intraocular pressure can be maintained and the refractive media can be clear. In the end, the eye enables proper vision to see the world and its myriad of colors.

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