



CONCEPT OF VARNA AND VARNYA WITH ITS UTILITY IN IMPROVING SKIN COMPLEXION ACCORDING TO AYURVEDA

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ABSTRACT

Health is equilibrium of *Dosha, Dhatu, Mala, Agni* which leads to happiness of *atma*(soul), *indriya*, and *mana*(mind). In *indriya* 5 sensory organs viz eye, ear, nose, tongue and skin are included. Thus, good skin complexion is also important aspect of health. *Varna* word in Ayurveda denotes skin complexion. Means or methods through which *varna* can be improved is called *Varnya*. The concept of *Varna* and *Varnya* is scattered throughout *Ayurvedic* texts. In this article compilation of the terms *Varna* and *Varnya* is done from *Bhruhattrayee* which illuminates in understanding these concepts and further help in its application in practical life. This study shows that complete skin care is mentioned in *Ayurveda* which if harnessed well can contribute towards acquiring naturally glowing skin desired by one and all.

Key Words: Ayurveda, Indriya, health

INTRODUCTION: Studying the *Ayurveda* fundamentals in *Samhitas*(Ayurvedic texts) without disfiguring their originality is the need of the time. This would help in bringing the immortal and authentic concepts mentioned in *samhitas* to practice which is the primary goal of every *Ayurvedic* Physician. Understanding of *Ayurvedic* concepts requires detail and minute study of our classical texts. To get jewels from these ocean of knowledge stated in *samhitas* one has to dig deep down the sea of *samhitas* to get valuable practical knowledge for maintaining healthy life. Keeping this in view the terms related to skin like *Varna, Varnya, Twakprasadhana*(Improving skin texture), *twachaya*(beneficial for skin) etc. are thoroughly searched in *Ayurvedic* texts. These extensive searching shows that in our *Ayurvedic* texts every aspect to keep

skin healthy is very well described. This study draws our keen attention towards many preventive and curative aspects needed to maintain good health of our skin. The word *Varna* means the “outward appearance, exterior form, figure, shape, colour”, “colour of the face”, “good colour or complexion, lustre, beauty¹”. This *varna* word is commonly used in *samhitas* to describe skin complexion. Thus, this concept is widely studied in this article so as to highlight its relevance.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

AIMS

To Study concept of *Varna* and *Varnya* with its utility in improving skin complexion according to *Ayurveda*.

OBJECTIVES

To collect and compile word related to *Varna* and *Varnya* from *Bhruhattrayee*

To study the relevance of references on skin and gain their utility for application in practical life.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

This is a literature study, in which collection and compilation is done from

Charak Samhita², Sushrut Samhita³, Astang Hridaya⁴ and other relevant reference books¹.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Table 1:- Reference of Varna and Varnya in Astanga Hridaya

VARNYA	INDICATION	REFERENCES
<i>Twakaprasadkaram</i>	<i>Udavartan</i> ²⁵ (Powder scrub)	<i>Ash Hri Su 2/15</i>
<i>Varnakrut</i> (developing skin complexion)	<i>Navneet</i> (Butter)	<i>Ash Hri Su 5/35</i>
<i>kantidam</i> (Glowing skin)	<i>Ghrut</i> ²⁰ (Butter)	<i>Ash Hri Su 5/37</i> <i>Su su 45/96</i> <i>Cha Su 13/13</i>
<i>Varnarthinah</i> (beneficial for skin)		
<i>Twakdoshakrut</i> (Vitiating skin)	<i>Taila</i> (oil)	<i>Ash Hri Su 5/55</i>
<i>Twakdoshkrut</i>	<i>Umakusumbha Taila</i>	<i>Ash Hri Su 5/60</i>
<i>Varnakrut</i>	<i>Madya</i> ²¹ (<i>yuktikyukta</i>) (alcohol)	<i>Ash Hri Su 5/63</i>
<i>Twakamayaghna</i> (curing skin ailments)	<i>Yava</i> ²⁴ (Barley)	<i>Ash Hri Su 6/94</i> <i>Su Su 46/42</i>
<i>Varnya</i>	<i>Vartakadi Mansa Guna</i>	<i>Ash Hri Su 6/58</i>
<i>Vaivarnaghana</i> (to cure skin pigmentation)	<i>Haritki</i>	<i>Ash Hri Su 6/155</i> <i>Cha Chi 1/1/33</i>
<i>Twakarogjit</i> (curing skin ailment)	<i>Triphala</i>	<i>Ash Hri Su 6/159</i>
<i>Bhavarnaprakashakam</i> (improving skin complexion and texture)	<i>Aganeyam</i> (having hot properties)	<i>Ash Hri Su 9/7</i>
<i>Varnaya</i>	<i>Madhur Rasa</i> ¹⁶ (Sweet taste)	<i>Ash Hri Su 10/7</i> <i>Su Su 42/12</i> <i>Cha Su 26/42(1)</i>
<i>Twakaprashadhanah</i>	<i>Kashaya Rasa</i> ¹⁷ (Pungent taste)	<i>Ash Hri Su 10/21</i>
<i>Prabhahani</i> (glow reducing)	<i>Pitta kshaya</i> (decrease)	<i>Ash Hri Su 11/16</i>
<i>Shawaitya</i> (whihtish skin pigmentation)	<i>Kapha Vruddhi</i> (increase)	<i>Ash Hri Su 11/7</i>
<i>Pita Twaka</i> (yellow skin discolouration)	<i>Pitta Vruddhi</i>	<i>Ash Hri Su 11/7</i>
<i>Karshanaya</i> (blackening skin discolouration)	<i>Vata Vruddhi</i>	<i>Ash Hri Su 11/6</i>
<i>Prabha</i> (glow)	<i>Pitta Prakrut karma</i> (normal function)	<i>Ash Hri Su 11/4</i>
<i>Sparshan Indriya</i> (sensory organ skin)	<i>Vata Sthan</i> (location)	<i>Ash Hri Su 12/1</i>
<i>Sparshan</i> (skin sense)	<i>Pitta Sthan</i>	<i>Ash Hri Su 12/2</i>
<i>Varna</i>	<i>Udanvayu karma</i> ⁵	<i>Ash Hri Su 12/5</i>
<i>Twaka Sthan</i> (skin location)	<i>Bhrajak Pitta</i> ⁶	<i>Ash Hri Su 12/14</i>
<i>Syava, Arun varna</i> (browinish, reddish discolouration)	<i>Vikrut Vayu varna</i>	<i>Ash Hri Su 12/51</i> <i>Cha Su 20/12</i>
<i>Pandu arun varjitah</i> (except pale and reddish color)	<i>Vikrut pitta varna</i>	<i>Ash Hri Su 12/52</i> <i>Cha Su 20/15</i>
<i>Shweta</i> (white)	<i>Vikrut Kapha Varna</i>	<i>Ash Hri Su 12/54</i> <i>Cha Su 20/18</i>

<i>Varnaya</i>	<i>Rodhradi</i> ³⁶ <i>Gana</i>	Ash Hri Su 15/26,27 Su Su 38/14,15
<i>Varnayah</i>	<i>Nyagrodhadi</i> ³⁵ <i>Gana</i>	Ash Hri Su 15/41,42
<i>Varnaprashadhanah</i>	<i>Eladi</i> ³⁷ <i>Gana</i>	Ash Hri Su 15/43,44 Su Su 38/24,25
<i>Varnayuktah</i>	<i>Sneha sevan phala</i>	Ash Hri Su 17/46
<i>Syavah</i> (browinsh color)	<i>Atisthambhit Lakshan</i>	Ash Hri Su 17/21
<i>Prashanna Twak</i> (healthy skin)	<i>Nasya Guna</i> (Medicated nasal drops)	Ash Hri Su 20/39
<i>Prashanna Varna</i>	<i>Vishudha Rakta Purusha</i>	Ash Hri Su 27/53 Cha Su 24/24
<i>Varna Utpatti</i> (skin origin)	<i>Chaturth Masa</i> (4th month) <i>Shasta Masa</i> (6th month)	Ash Hri Sha 1/57 Cha Sha 4/22
<i>Varnahinashcha</i>	<i>Amrut Prasha Ghrut</i> ⁴⁰	Ash Hri Chi 3/100
<i>Varnakarah</i>	<i>Nagabaladi Kalpa</i>	Ash Hri Chi 3/119
<i>Varnya</i>	<i>Nagabaladi Ghrut</i> ⁴¹	Ash Hri Chi 3/125
<i>Varnavardhanam</i> (increases good skin texture)	<i>Agastya Haritki</i> ⁴⁹	Ash Hri Chi 3/426
<i>Varna</i>	<i>Sukumar Taila</i> ⁴²	Ash Hri Chi 13/46
<i>Varna</i>	<i>Takrarishta</i>	Ash Hri Chi 8/47
<i>Varnavardhanam</i>	<i>Matulungadi churna</i>	Ash Hri Chi 10/62
<i>Varnakrut</i>	<i>Kshiradi Basti</i>	Ash Hri Ka 4/21
<i>Varnakarah</i>	<i>Suvarnayukta yoga</i>	Ash Hri Uta 1/47-49
<i>Varnadam</i>	<i>Rajanayadi churna</i>	Ash Hri Uta 2/40
<i>Varnadam</i>	<i>Balahitkari ghrit</i>	Ash Hri Uta 3/53
<i>Kantidam</i>	<i>Kalyanak Ghrit</i> ³⁹	Ash Hri Uta 6/31
<i>Kantidam</i>	<i>Jeevantayadi Ghrit</i> ⁴³	Ash Hri Uta 13/54
<i>Varnakarah param</i>	<i>Kaliyakadi lepa</i>	Ash Hri Uta 26/62
<i>Varnakrut</i>	<i>Kumukumadi Taila</i> ⁴⁴	Ash Hri Uta 32/30
<i>Varnadayam</i> <i>Varnaparam</i>	<i>Rasayan Guna</i> (rejuvenation)	Ash Hri Uta 39/1 Cha Chi 1/1/7
<i>Surupah</i> (good complexion)	<i>Amalki Rasayan</i>	Ash Hri Uta 39/32
<i>Kantih</i> <i>Varnaprasadam</i>	<i>Chawanprasha Rasayan</i> ⁴⁶	Ash Hri Uta 39/40 Cha Chi 1/1/73
<i>Varnavardhini</i>	<i>Medhavruddhikar Rasayan</i> ⁵²	Ash Hri Uta

		39/45
Tejahkanti diptiwan(gives good skin color,texture, glow)	Bramhi adi rasayan ⁴⁸	Ash Hri Uta 39/52
Surupah	Gokshuradi Rasayan ⁵¹	Ash Hri Uta 39/57
Kantih	Chitrak Rasayan ⁵³	Ash Hri Uta 39/64

Table 2:- Reference of Varna and Varnya in Shushrut Samhita

Varnakarah ¹³	Tejas Dravya	Su Su 41/6
Twakaprashadanam, Varnakaram	Taila	Su Su 45/112
Kantikara	Eranda Taila ⁴⁵	Su Su 45/114
Varnya	Madhu(honey)	Su Su 45/132
Varnakara	Pakwarasa seedhu(type of fermented beverage)	Su Su 45/183 Cha Su 27/185
Varnakrut	Apakwarasa seedhu	Su Su 45/185
Varnayoh	Ikshurasa Asava	Su Su 45/190
Varnaprashada	Aahara(diet)	Su Su 46/3
Varnakrut	Raktashali(brown rice)	Su Su 46/6
Varnaprashadhanah	Titirih Mansa	Su Su 46/62
Varnapradah	Hansa Mansa	Su Su 46/107 Cha Su 27/65
Varnakarah	Amra phala(pakwa)	Su Su 46/152
Varnakara	Lahsun(garlic)	Su Su 46/244
Varnaprashadanah	Ghrut nirmit padarth	Su Su 46/411
Twakapradushanah	Taila nirmit padarth	Su Su 46/412
Varnakaram	Samyak Anupan Guna(beverage)	Su Su 46/443
Varnakar	Snigdha Guna	Su Su 46/523
Varna	Basti guna(medicated enema)	Su Chi 36/31
Kanti	Tambul guna(betel leaf mixture)	Su Chi 24/22
Varnapradah	Abhayanga ²⁷ Guna(massage)	Su Chi 24/30
Kanti	Vyayam ³⁰ guna(exercise property)	Su Chi 24/39
Kantam	Snana ²⁶ ke guna(bath property)	Su Chi 24/66
Varnavivardhanam	Kawacha ²⁸ dharan(armour or covering)	Su Chi 24/74
Varnya	Chatra ²⁹ dharan(umbrella covering)	Su Chi 24/76
Varna	Visharam ³² ke guna(rest property)	Su Chi 24/78
Varna	Marga gaman ³³ guna(walking property)	Su Chi 24/79
Twakaprashadakaram	Samvahanam(soft massage)	Su Chi 24/83
Varna	Nidra ³¹ (sleep)	Su Chi 24/88
Varnaya	Mahaneel Ghrut	Su Chi 9/38
Varna	Shatapaka bala taila	Su Chi 16/42

Table 3:- Reference of Varna and Varnya in Charak Samhita

Varnavardhanah	Mahasneha ke guna	Cha Su 1/88
Varnya	Mahakashaya ³⁸	Cha SU 4/8/8
Sutwakavarti	Murdhani taila guna	Cha Su 5/03
Sutwak cha jayate	Abhayanga Guna	Cha Su 5/86
Rupa Virajanam	Kshaura karma	Cha Su 5/99
Sparshanhitam	Padatra dharanam	Cha Su 5/100

Vaivarnya	Kshudha nirodha(suppressing appetite urge)	Cha Su 7/20
Varna Upaghataya	Vikrut Vayu Karma	Cha Su 12/3
Varna	Pitta Karma	Cha Su 12/11
Varna Upapannam	Samavatapittakapha	Cha Su 12/13
Twachayam	Taila ke guna	Cha Su 13/15 Cha Su 27/287
Varnaprashadhana h	Sanshodhan ³⁴ (panchkarma)ke labha	Cha Su 15/22 Cha Su 16/18 च
Varnashuddhih	Samayakvirechan	Cha Su 16/5
Twaka ruksha	Rakta Kshaya Lakshan	Cha Su 17/65
Varnaprashadanan i	Prakrut dosha lakshana ⁷	Cha Su 20/9
Vaivarnya	Rakta dustijanya roga	Cha Su 24/13
Varnya	Madhukam	Cha Su 25/40
Twachaya	Tila ke guna	Cha Su 27/30
Varnayoh	Kurma mansa guna	Cha Su 27/83
Varnaya	Khadak Mansa guna	Cha Su 27/84
Varnaya	Sharakarah(sugar)	Cha Su 27/183
Varnarthinam	Mansarasa ²² guna	Cha Su 27/313
Varna	Anna ke guna	Cha Su 27/349
Varnaprasadam	Snigdha Aahar guna	Cha Vi 1/24
Varnakaravvam	Matravat Aahar ke guna	Cha Vi 2/6
Varnakshaya karam	Hina matravat aahar guna	Cha Vi 2/7
Snigdha rakta varna	Rakta Saar ⁹	Cha Vi 8/104
Twaka saar	Rasa Saar ⁸	Cha Vi 8/103
Varna	Meda Saar ¹⁰	Cha Vi 8/106
Snigdha Varna	Majja Saar ¹¹	Cha Vi 8/108
Snigdha Varna	Sukra Saar ¹²	Cha Vi 8/109
Varna Agraya	Aamalak Ghrut	Cha Chi 1/2/6
Twakaprashadana m	Indra Rasayan	Cha Chi 1/3/27
Varna Vardhanani	Char Medhaya Rasayan	Cha ChI 1/3/31
Varna	Indrokata Rasayan Prathama ⁴⁷	Cha chi 1/4/6
Varna	Dronipravesik Rasayan	Cha Chi 1/4/7
Varna karam	Indrokta Rasayan Dwitiya	Cha Chi 1/4/25
Varnakarah	Vajikaran Pinda Rasa	Cha Chi 2/1/41
Varnaya	Vrushaya Ghrut	Cha Chi 2/2/23
Varna	Vrushyoh Dadhi prayoga	Cha Chi 2/2/26
Varnashacha Vardhate	Jwaragat Abhayangadi upchar	Cha Chi 3/1/75
Varna	Amrut Prasha Ghrut	Cha Chi 11/42
Varnarthinam	Pancham Sarpimodak	Cha Chi 11/76
Varna	Punarnavadiarishta	Cha Chi 12/38
Vaivarnaya	Kansha Haritki ⁵⁰	Cha Chi 12/52
Varna	Takra ²³ prayoga	Cha Chi 14/87
Varnaya	Trutiya Pipalayadi Ghrut	Cha Chi 14/118

Varnavardhanam	Sunishanakchengeri Ghrut	Cha Chi 14/242
Varna	Dashmooladi Ghrut	Cha Chi 15/86
Varnakarah	Duralabha Asava	Cha Chi 15/155
Varna	Pipalimuladi Churna	Cha Chi 15/169
Varnavardhanam	Mulak Taila	Cha Chi 18/176
Varnakaram	Dwipanchamooladi Ghrut	Cha Chi 29/70
Varnakaram	Sukumara Taila	Cha Chi 29/102
Varnakari	Palash Basti	Cha Si 3/45
Varnakrut	Panchaprashrutik Basti	Cha Si 8/4

DISCUSSION: After above compilations it is seen that equilibrium of all three doshas are equally important for keeping good complexion. Pitta dosha and vata are main factor controlling varna of individual. Vata dosha does this job through Udan vayu⁵ and pitta dosha through bhraja pitta⁶. Normal state of kapha is also needed as varna is advocated as one of the function of prakrut(normal) kapha⁷. Prakrut Rasa⁸ and rakta⁹ are two main dhatus responsible for lustrous skin. Acharaya charak has also stated prakrut meda¹⁰, majja¹¹ and sukra¹² dhatus snigdha guna responsible for good complexion. Direct relationship with mala and varna is not identified but sweda and twacha are linked. Sweda helps in keeping moisture and softness of the skin texture of the body. Sushruta Samhita explains the Varna Utpatti where in Tejo mahabhuta¹³ plays a major role in the formation of Varna and ¹⁴four varieties of Prakrita Varna i.e. Goura(white), Krishna(black), GouraShyama(blackish white), KrishnaShyama(blackish brown) have been explained. ¹⁵Acharya charak states mainly four varieties of Prakrita Varna i.e. Krishna(black), Shyama(brown), Shyaamaavadata(blackish white) and Avadata(white). Thus, these are natural skin color of people across the globe. So it should be our focus to identify these natural complexion and help people in maintaining it. Madhura rasa is chief rasa

responsible for keeping prakrut varna¹⁶. Madhura rasa has madhura vipak and sheeta virya thus these two are also needed. So Madhura Rasa pradhan dravya should be included in our diet. Also Kashaya rasa helps in twaka prasada¹⁷ so in proper amount it should also be included in our diet. Lavana rasa¹⁸ and amla rasa¹⁹ are culprit in vitiating our skin by causing various skin ailments. Ghrut²⁰, madya²¹, mansa rasa²², takra²³, yava²⁴ are dravyas which should be included daily in our diet for radiating skin. Udvartan²⁵, snana²⁶(bathing), abhyanga²⁷(body massaging), kawach²⁸ and chatra dharan²⁹, vyayam³⁰(exercise), nidra³¹(sleep), vishram³²(resting), marg gaman³³(walking) are daily chores which promotes skin texture. Sanshodhan³⁴ i.e. Vaman, virechan, basti, nasya and rakta mokshan are advocated to improve complexion. Nyragrodhadi gana³⁵, rodradi gana³⁶, elaadi gana³⁷ and varna mahakashaya³⁸ have skin glorifying properties. Many medicated ghee and taila shows skin texture improving qualities. Eg:- kalyanak ghrut³⁹, amrut prash ghrut⁴⁰, nagabaladi ghrut⁴¹, sukumar taila⁴², jeevantayadi taila⁴³, kumkumadi taila⁴⁴, eranda taila⁴⁵ etc. Many Rasayan(rejuvenating) are mentioned in our samhitas showing varnya properties. Eg:- chawanprash rasayan⁴⁶, indrokta rasayan⁴⁷, bramhayadi rasayan⁴⁸, agastra haritki rasayan⁴⁹, kansa haritki rasayan⁵⁰,

*gokshuradi rasayan*⁵¹, *medhavrudhikar rasayan*⁵², *chitrak rasayan*⁵³ etc.

CONCLUSION: Ayurvedic physiology, diet, lifestyle promoting skin complexion, various rejuvenating and medicated formulations and many more aspects are mentioned in *samhitas* which promote good skin health. From above discussion it is observed that every aspect of skin care is well thought and described in our *samhitas*. In today's era of social media updates healthy complexion is vital as it helps to boost confidence and adds unique identity to one's personality. By following the above measures mentioned for improving *varna* one can very well keep our skin radiant.

Abbreviations- Cha Si- Charak Siddhisthan

Cha Su- Charak Sutrasthan

Cha Chi- Charak Chikitsasthan

Cha Vi- Charak Vimansthan

Su Su- Sushrut Sutrasthan

Su Chi- Sushrut Chikitsasthan

Ash Hri Su- Astang Hridaya Sutrasthan

Ash Hri Chi- Astang Hridaya Chikitsasthan

Ash Hri Sha- Astang Hridaya Shareersthan

Ash Hri Uta- Astang Hridaya Uttarsthan

Ash Hri Ka- Astang Hridaya Kalpasthan

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