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Ardha Roga Hari Nidra - A Review Article

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ABSTRACT

Nidra being one among the *Trayopasthambha* having its own importance in maintainance of health and prevention of diseases. *Nidra* is prime among the factors responsible for sustainance of life. Proper sleep can destroy half the diseases. One who gets sound sleep at night his *Kayagni* will be enhanced, can easily digest the food, and his body gets nourished. Like proper diet, proper and timely sleep as well as awakening are responsible factors for good physical and mental health. *Tamas* and *Satva* qualities are responsible for sleep and awakening respectively. Sleep is an urge which should not be suppressed otherwise may lead to various diseases. *Ratriswabhaba Prabhava Nidra* is a natural sleep, is called as *Bhutadhatri* and nourishes all living beings.

Key words: Sleep, Awakening, Nourishment, Health, Longevity, Disease.

INTRODUCTION

The evolution of *Sristi* is formed when the *Sristikarta Brahma* is in awakened state and the destruction by *Pralaya* forms when he goes a sleep. Sleep of *Brahma* is destructive state for living beings. But for living beings in the world including plants, the sleep is essential phenomenon like food and water which restores the energy. Our ancient *Acharyas* like *Charak*, *Sushruta*, *Vagbhata* etc. given importance to sleep by considering it one among the *Trayopasthambha*, with their significance and role in maintainance of positive health. All living beings enjoy sleep to keep their body and mind energetic. It also has its specific role in treatment of diseases.

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Definition

Sleep is a state of rest accompanied by altered level of consciousness and relative inactivity and perception to environment are decreased.^[1] Maharshi Patanjali gave clear cut definition of *Nidra* as, Sleep is the mental operation having the cognition of absence for its grasp. It is a state of unconsciousness, but the consciousness remains about his own unconsciousness.^[2] When along with *Manas*, *Indriyas* gets retired from their object of knowledge it is called as *Nidra*.^[3]

Sleep and Health

Life is busy stressful and complicated, ups and downs are totally normal part of life. Without exception there are 3 things everyone needs to focus on in order to be happy and healthy viz, sleep, nutrition, and exercise. Our Ayurveda concept says, *Ahara*, *Nidra* and *Brahmacharya* as *Upathambha* of life.^[4] *Acharya Kashyapa* also highlighted the importance of *Nidra* as, Timely taken sleep is an indicator of good health.^[5] *Acharya Sushruta* opines that, those who takes proper sleep at proper time will not suffer from diseases, their mind will be peaceful, gains strength, complexion, virility, have an attractive body and live healthy for 100 years.^[6] It is said that if a *Rogi* is getting proper sleep, it indicates that half of the *Roga*

is cured and when *Agni* attains normal state *Roga* is completely eradicated.^[7] A person who is enjoying sufficient sleep does not easily become a victim of disease. His life is full of health, vigor, and longevity. In fact our bodies need to sleep in order to perform rejuvenating functions like muscle growth, protein synthesis and tissue repair. We also need to sleep for mental functions that involve learning and memory. As *Nidra* is said to be *Kapha* dominant process, it also maintains equilibrium between three *Doshas*. In classics it is said that in *Kaphajavikaras*, *Nidra* and *Tandra* are commonly seen. In *Vataja Vikara*, *Nidranasha* (loss of sleep) and in *Pittaja Vikara*, *Alpanidra* (less sleep) occurs. Sleep appears to play an important role in helping us manage stress and emotions. Important restorative functions occur during all stages of sleep, especially during phases of deep sleep and REM sleep.^[8] *Nidra* is prime among the factors responsible for sustainance of life.^[9] One who gets sound sleep at night can digest the food well, his *Kayagni* is enhanced and there is proper nourishment of the body. During deep sleep, the body releases growth hormones for healing and growth, which aid in cell repair healthy new cell growth in tissues and organs of the body.^[10] Proper sleep leads to happiness, nourishment, strength, virility, knowledge and long life. Improper sleep may act as cause for misery, emaciation, weakness, sterility, ignorance and even death.^[11] *Charakacharya* says, the treatment of *Atikrasha* (leanness) as *Nidra* (adequate sleep) along with nutritious diet. Proper sleep makes a lean person fatty like *Varaha* (boar).^[12] Circadin release of melatonin causes release of cytokines and regulation of cell mediated immunity. Cytokines amplify, coordinate and regulate sleep. Specific cytokines affect sleep e.g. interleukin-1-alpha, interleukin-1-beta etc. thus several molecules control link between sleep and immune response.^[13]

Nidra Viparyaya leading to disease

One should not indulge in both untimely sleep and excessive sleep as these will take out both happiness and longevity of life.^[14] However, research done by the national sleep foundation indicates that more than 35% of adults get less than the optimal 7 to 8

hours of sleep per day. If you are one of them you need to reconsider the importance of sleep.^[15] Awakening at night leads to dryness of the body which may be the cause for undernourishment. Whereas day sleep increases the *Snigdhatwa* (unctuousness) in the body and may act as a cause for over nourishment leading to obesity. But sleeping in sitting posture during day time does not increase either *Rukshata* (dryness) or *Snigdhatwa*, thus may not cause emaciation nor obesity.^[16] Like proper, diet proper sleep is very essential for maintainance of health. Improper sleep will lead to various diseases like *Halimaka*, headache, heaviness of body, fever, giddiness, mental disturbances, obstruction of channels, diminution of *Agni*, oedema tastelessness, nausea, rhinitis, half headache, itching, body ache, urticaria, ulcers, cough, drowsiness, diseases of throat and features of poisoning.^[17] Improper sleep may be taken as untimely sleep, excess sleep or sleeplessness. These all things contribute for the above diseases. It is one among the nonsuppressible urges, if controlled produces various diseases.^[18] Lack of sleep affects function of central nervous system. Prolonged wakefulness is often associated with progressive malfunction of the thought process and even causes abnormal behavioral activities. The whole day is divided into two parts in that night is reserved for *Nidra* and day is for *Karma*.^[19] Humans sleep and awake at a fairly constant 24 hour rhythm called Circadian rhythm. When we attempt to stay awake against the schedule dictated by our circadian clock our mental and physical performance greatly diminishes. People working in night shifts may experience the effects of a disrupted circadian rhythm such as excessive sleepiness, poor sleep, loss of concentration poor motor control, slowed reflexes, nausea and irritability. Researches shows that shift workers may suffer from diminished performance, alertness and may be prone to accidents. There is also evidence that taking a nap in the middle of the night shift may help.^[20]

Method of Sleep

After taking food the person should walk for a hundred feet slowly, that will reduce the heaviness of

the food and gives feeling of easiness at neck, knee and waist. Simply sitting after the food intake produces stupor and sleeping leads to plumpiness of the body but short and slow walking leads to long life. But life runs out quickly for him who runs after meals. After lapse of one *Muhurta* after meals the person may lie down for a period of eight breathings in supine position. Then for a period twice than that (16 breaths) in right lateral position, later for double than that time (32 breaths) on left lateral position. Afterwards one can sleep in any position according to his convenience. In living beings, *Anala* (digestive fire) is present on left lateral side, above the umbilicus, hence the person who has taken meals should lie down on left lateral position for the purpose of better digestion.^[21]

Sleep is a fundamental need of every living human being. The various organs and parts of the body can be given rest independently but complete rest is possible only during sleep. Our *Acharyas* recognized the natural constructive power of sleep and explained it as a super natural power which is beneficial for health, happiness and longevity of life

CONCLUSION

Sleep is the prime factor for sustainance of life. Proper sleep helps to maintain physical and mental wellbeing of an individual. Like food sleep also plays an important role in the nourishment of body. Half of the diseases can be cured by proper sleep.

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