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IMPORTANCE OF NIDRA[SLEEP]- IN AYURVEDIC AND MODERN ERA –A REVIEW

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ABSTRACT

Nidra gives nourishment to the body, keeping us away from the diseases. Nidra is one which helps to attain longevity, memory, intelligence, and freedom from illness. And maintenance of youthfulness, excellence of luster, complexion, voice, optimum development of physique and sense organs, mastery over phonetics, and brilliance. It is also helpful to increase the immunity of the person to keep him away from the disease, also reverses the disease processes and prevents the reoccurrence. So Nidra is one important *upasthambha* that is described in Ayurveda. Sleep is the periodic state of rest of mind with closed eyes characterised by partial or complete loss of consciousness. Loss of consciousness leads to decreased response to external stimuli and decreased body movements. Depth of sleep is not constant throughout the sleeping period. Sleep is needed for well life and it is proved by researches. Here an attempt is made to describe the importance of Nidra (Sleep) and to enumerate its utility as *upasthambha*.

Keywords: Ayurveda, Trayopasthambha, Swapna, Medhaswi

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INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda is the most ancient science of life, which is having an aim of curing and preventing a disease. It makes the holistic approach to the life and its well being. Ayu the life is considered as four-dimensional entity comprising of the physical body, the senses, the psyche and the soul (consciousness). Ayu the individual life entity is considered as miniature replica of the universe. The Nidra is so important for maintenance of health. This is true in the light of modern scientific knowledge also. According to Ayurvedic concept, the Kapha and Tamas are responsible for Nidra. Sleep production has been attributed to many factors which include stimulation of certain areas of brain, food activities, external stimuli etc. Any variation in the normal sleep pattern is not at all desirable thing and they may cause the serious health problem which demand more proper medical attention.

For maintaining healthy life 3 Upasthambas are needed¹. Charaka and Vagbhata explains Trayopasthamba. Such Trayopasthamba are Ahara, Nidra and Brahmacharya.

The term 'Nidra' origine as "nindyate iti nidra" (Sabdakalpadrumam). The word 'nidra' is derived from nind+ruk+tap= na lopa². Means that "Nothing loss is there". In Upanishads also explanation about Nidra is there. So that while explanation about diff. types of Avastha, like Jagrutavastha, Swapnavastha, Sushiptavastha, and Trutiyavastha³. Nidra

is one among the Adharaniya Vega which was explained in Charaka.⁴

Sleep is a such factor which occupies probably one third of human life span⁵. It is a process the brain requires for proper functioning. Sleep can be associated with the high degree of brain activation. Sleep is regulated by several basic mechanisms and when these systems go wrong sleep disorders occur.⁶

PARYAYAS:

The Paryayas of Nidra ⁷are as follows- Shayaanam, Swapa, Sushipti, Nidra, Swapna.

NIDRA UTPATTI:

Nidra is an essential phenomenon to provide rest and relaxation to the body, mind and senses which gets tired and exhausted ⁸. Sleep also balances mind and emotions. *Nidra* is a state where predominance of *Kapha* and *Tamas* is seen⁹. *Utpatti* (origin) of *Nidra* was explained by giving importance to *Hridaya* which is considered as *Chetana stana*. When *Chetana stana Hridaya* is enveloped by *Tamas*, the person goes to sleep ¹⁰. Also stated that at night *Tamas* being powerful and higher psychic centres being over powered by it, then sleep occurs¹¹.

HETUS OF NIDRA:

The Nidrajanaka hetus are- Abyanga, Utsadana, Snana, Ksheera, Sneha, Madya and Manasukha.¹²

NIDRA LAXANAS:

The Nidra is important psychophysiological states of human being. Yoga sutra describes five altered states of internal

TYPES OF NIDRA:

organs, like Pramana, Viparyaya, Vikalpa, Smruti and Nidra¹². Among these states the Nidra is that condition which takes place on the quitting all the objects¹³.

The types of Nidra are diff. according to diff. Acharyas¹⁴⁻¹⁶.

SL. No	Charaka	Sushruta	V.vagbhata	Vagbhata
1)	Tamobhava	Tamasi	Kalaswabhavajanya	Mithyayoga
2)	ShleshmoSamudbhava	Swabhavaki— a)Tamobuyishta b)Rajobuyishta c)Satwabhuyst	Amayaja	Hinayoga
3)	Manashramasambhava	Vaikariki	Chittakedodbhva	Atiyoga
4)	Shareashrama sambhava		Dehakedodbhava	Samyakyoga
5)	Aaguntaki		Shleshmaprabhava	
6)	Vyadinuvartini		Agantubhava	
7)	Ratriswabhava Prabhavaa		Tamobhava	

A human being is needed minimum hours in different avasthas(age) as Shows general recommendations of sleep for different age groups^[17].

Age	Recommended amount of sleep
Newborn	16-18 hrs a day
Pre-school aged children	11-12 hrs a day
School aged children	At least 10 hrs a day
Teens	9-10 hrs a day
Adults (including the elderly)	7-8 hrs a day

FUNCTIONS OF NIDRA:

Happy status of mind, nourishment of the body, strength of body, virility, knowledge, and life are gifts of sleep. Sleep is one of the factors responsible for sustaining living body. It participates in happiness, misery, nourishment, emaciation, strength, weakness, sexual

urge, impotency, learning and illiteracy, life and death.

Nidra is one among the adharneeya Vega, if we have done dharana it causes the Jrumba, Angamarda, Tandra, Shiroroga and Netraroga.¹⁸

BENEFITS OF SLEEP

Sleep is one of the four basic, natural instincts and is considered as the pioneer for health, the remaining three being the desire to eat, drink and have sexual contact. Properly and timely taken sleep brings the happiness, nourishment, strength, virility, knowledge and maintains the life. As the real knowledge brings about *Siddhi* in a *Yogi* similarly properly taken sleep brings about longevity in human beings. Sleep makes the balance of the body constituents, provides alertness, good vision, complexion, strength and digestive power. Sleep also necessary for the mental functions like peaceful mind, enthusiasm, learning, memory and happiness.

An experimental study published in BMJ says that, an illustrated by the expression 'beauty sleep' an individual's sleep history may play an integral part in the perception and judgement of his or her attractiveness and health. Sleep deprived people are perceived as less attractive, less healthy, and more tired compared with when they are well rested. Recent work points to sleep acting as an adjuvant to enhance the early stage of immune response. It has been observed that people sleeping for 7-9 hours /day have significantly lower rates of illness¹⁹.

DIWASWAPNA²⁰:

If we have done sleep at day time, it causes *snigdhatā*, if we awaken at night time it causes *rukshatā* in the body. *Diwaswapna* if done in *Greeshma* *rutu*, its good for health. But in some persons who are indulged in *madyapaan*, *vamana*, suffering from *ajirna*, *atisara*, who are

vridhdha, *balaka*, such persons are able to have *nidra* in day time.

DIWASWAPNA NISHEDHA: Our Acharyas are rejected to have sleep at day time because its cause for *kapha vridhdhi* and *pitta prakopa*. So in other *ritus* one should not take sleep at day time. The persons who are *medhaswi* (increase *Medho Dhatu*), *snehanitya*, *kapha prakriti purusha*, *kapha rogi*, *dushi visha rogi*, in these persons its strictly prohibited to have day time sleep. If we have sleep in day time it causes harmful effects such as- *Haleemaka*(*Chlorosis*), *Shirashula*, *Stimitya*, *Guru Gatrata*, *Angamarda*, *Agninasha*, *Kasa*, *Pinasa*, *Kandu*, *Ardhavabedaka*, *Kantharogas*, *Buddhibramsha*, *Smritinasha*, *Srotoavarodha*, *Jwara*, *Indriyas Asamarthya*, *Vishavega Prarambha* all these are harmful effects of *diwaswapna*.

ATINIDRA: To avoid the *atinidra* one should undergo for the *virechana*, *nasya*, *vamanam* and make the person to experience *bhaya*, *krodha*, *shoka*, *chinta*, has to undergo *dhumapana*, *vyayama*, *raktamokshana*, *upavasa*. Not only these the other reasons are like to take sleep in *asatmya kala*, *prakriti*, and also it leads in *vata vridhdhi*

ANIDRA: To avoid *Anidra* one should take every day the *abhyanga*, *utsadana*, *snana*, *gramya*, *anupa mamsa rasa*, *dadhi*, *ksheera*, *sneha* and *madya*. And one should have *netratarpana*²¹,

DISCUSSION

Now in modern text books scholars are more focusing over the water, food, sleep. But about this, before thousand years our Acharyas have told about Nidra and ahara under the heading of Trayopasthamba. As pillars support the house in the same way food, sleep, and sexual activities support the living body.

Now a day's one of the common problems for infertility is Nidra. The people now a day in their busy schedule are not having the proper time for food and sleep. Some people are having the duty at night time, and then they are not able to take sleep. Due to not getting sleep at day time, the persons are suffering from anxiety and other psychological problems which will leads to infertility. So, our Acharyas have given importance to sleep as one of the pillars for life.

And also, while explanation of the Paryayas the word shayana is mentioned it may be due to the sleep should be done in shayavastha because only by sitting we cannot sleep properly, so this word may used. swap and swapna indicates about dreams where Nidra is required to experience swapna.

While explanations about the types of Nidra all are telling the same types and giving the same meaning. Only numbers are mentioned differently.

More than half of the life is invariably spent in sleep hence if it is not enjoyed properly it may lead to several disturbances and at the same time if it is properly enjoyed it proves most beneficial to the life.

Importance of sleep is highlighted by considering sleep as one of the Trayopasthamba. The timely taken sleep is an indicator of good health because it brings the normalcy in body tissues and relaxes the person, like food the adequate sleep is essential for maintenance of the body. While looking into the de- scription of *Nidra*, one can also classify sleep as *Kalaja* and *Akalaja*. When the mind including sensory and motor organs is exhausted and they dissociates themselves from their objects which is produced by the accustomed time (night) then it can be con- sidered as *Kaalaja Nidra* (Timely taken Sleep). Sleeping during day time (except in some condi- tions), due to effect of diseases, excess fatigue of body and mind, excessive increase in *Kapha* and *Tama Guna* leads to *Akaalaja Nidra* (untimely taken sleep).

Irregular and unnatural food habits, suppression of natural urges or inappropriate sleep habits due to work shifts, watching T.V or electronic gadgets till late night etc have become inseparable parts of daily routine. In Ayurveda these factors have mentioned under *Aharaja* and *Viharaja Nidana*. One feels sleepy when body, mind and senses are in rest or in relaxed state. But in present era stress and strains of day to day life increases tension, anxiety, fear etc. People themselves are inviting various physical as well as mental disorders, because of indulging in *Manasika Nidana*. In *Nidranasha* premonitory symptoms are *Avyaktha* (not clearly manifested) but when person develops problem in

initiating and /or maintaining sleep then that can be considered as a premonitory symptom of *Nidranasha* and effort should be made to find the root cause for the disturbance of sleep and advice is given to avoid the causative factor or treatment should be started at the earliest for the early recovery. While looking into the symptom like *Jrumbha*, *Angamarda*, *Shirogurava* etc one can elicit the vitiation of *Vata* and *Kapha Dosha*. This is the reason all *Vatahara* and *Kaphakara* treatment measures are considered as *Upashaya* to *Nidranasha*. One which gives psychic pleasure like meditation, *Pranayama*, relaxation technique and soothing music can be practiced in the present era.

CONCLUSION

Timely sleep offers appropriate weight gain, better complexion, desire to work, fresh and alert status of sensory organs. It is also responsible for balanced status of the body entities. Gaining or losing weight is directly dependent on their principle factors in physiology of living being namely *ahara*, *nidra*, *brahmacharya*. Thus, these are proved as *Trayopasthambha*.

Sleep if not taken in appropriate quantity will lead to several diseases. Thus, proper *Nidra* is essential to fulfill both the aims of *Ayurveda* that is prevention and cure of diseases.

Sleep plays a very essential role in physical and mental wellbeing. Abnormal sleep patterns lead to misery, improper

growth, weakness, sterility, ignorance, and finally death. So, while treating *Nidranasha* physician should give importance to *Nidana Panchanka* for better management of *Nidranasha*.

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