



## THE CONCEPT OF NIDRA AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE IN PRESENT ERA

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## ABSTRACT

*Nidra* is one of the three major life milestones listed in the Ancient *Ayurvedic* texts together with *Ahara* and *Brahmacharya*; it is highly important for people. *Nidra* is a very important component of daily living. Regular *Nidra* usage can prevent major diseases that have an impact on both physical and mental health. Various clinical diseases known as *Anidra* are brought on by a lack of *Nidra* (Primary insomnia). It eventually develops into a chronic disorder known as secondary or tertiary insomnia. *Samhitas* provide the whole study of *Nidra* and its classification in classical science. This paper provides a critical analysis of "*Nidra* and its physiological impact on the Human body."

**Keywords:** *Nidra*, Sleep Physiology, *Ahara – Vihar*, etc.

## INTRODUCTION

The three primary pyramids of life *Ahara*, *Nidra*, and *Brahmacharya* play a crucial role in human health maintenance. Three factors *Ahara*, *Nidra*, and *Brahmacharya* are compared to triangles in the

*Ayurvedic* literature and are known as the three *Upastambha* or Tripods. When describing *Nidra*, *Acharya* claimed that sleep is necessary for the survival as well as for joy development strength and

virility wisdom, The various hypotheses put out in relation to the phenomenon of *Nidra* (sleep), according to *Ayurveda*, is one of the most important components of a happy and healthy existence. Nearly one-third of a person's life is spent sleeping.<sup>1</sup>

Sleep is the natural state of rest for the mind and body with closed eyes characterized by partial or complete loss of consciousness. Loss of consciousness leads to decreased response to external stimuli and decreased body movements. When *Tamas Guna*, one of the *Trigunas* of mind that is responsible for ignorance, predominates together with *Kapha*, the seat of *Chetana* is covered, and sleep ensues. The person sleeps when their mind and soul are worn out or stop moving, and when their sensory and motor systems are likewise non-responsive. When *Tama* naturally predominates at night and the mind and intellect are in a profound state of relaxation, sleep appears. Sleep happens when *Srotas* collect in *Kapha*, and the mind loses contact with the sensory organs due to exhaustion.<sup>2</sup>

#### DEFINITION OF NIDRA

A. According to "*Mandukya Upanishad*," *Nidra* is a situation in which "*Atma*" has no dreams or desires, and this condition is referred to as "*Susupti*."<sup>3</sup>

B. *Acharya Charak* asserted that Sleep occurs when the sensory and motor organs become inactive, the intellect (as well as the soul) becomes fatigued, or both.<sup>4</sup>

C. *Acharya Susruta* stated that sleep takes place when *Tamas* is covering the *Hridaya*, the seat of the *chetana*.<sup>5</sup>

#### SYNONYMS OF NIDRA

In *Amarkosha*, four synonyms have been mentioned.

- 1) *Shayanam* 2) *Svapah* 3) *Svapnah* 4) *Samvesh*

Similarly, in *Vaidyaka Shabda Sindhu*, three synonyms are available.

- 1) *Sambhashah* 2) *Suptih* 3) *Svapanam*

In *Charaka Samhita*, *Bhutadhari* has been used as a synonym and in *Sushruta Samhita*, the word *Vaishnavi Maya* is used.

#### TYPES OF SLEEP

*Charaka Samhita* mentions six types of sleep.

They are.

- *Tamobhava* (Caused by *Tamas*)
- *Shleshmsamudbhava* (Caused by *Kapha*)
- *Manah Shareer Shram Sambhava* (Caused by physical and mental exertion)
- *Aagantuki* (Adventitious)
- *Vyadhyanuvartinee* (As sequelae to a disease)
- *Ratriswabhavprabhava* (Normal sleep that occurs at night).<sup>6</sup>

According to *Acharya Vagbhata*, sleep that occurs at night is natural and all other types are abnormal. Three categories are identified by *Acharya Sushruta Vaishnavi* (formed by the sustaining deity, a natural one), *Tamasi*, and *Vaikariki* (due to diseases).<sup>7</sup>

#### SIGNIFICANCE OF NIDRA

*Nidra* determines the variables *Sukha* (happy), *Dukha* (unhappiness), *Pushti* (good physique), *Karshya* (emaciation), *Vrushta* (sexual strength), *Klibata* (impotence), *Gyan* (knowledge), *Agyan* (illiteracy), *Jivita* (long life), and *Ajivita* (death). *Sukha*, *Pushti*, *Bala*, *Vrushta*, *Gyan*, and *Jivan* are provided by *Samyak Nidra*. *Dukha*, *Karshy*, *Abala*, *Klibata*, and *Agyan* are caused by *asamyak nidra*. Similar to a healthy diet, getting enough sleep is crucial for maintaining excellent health. Sleep is a phase that allows the body and nervous system to recover rather than just serving as a periodic rest situation for them.<sup>8</sup> In order to maintain excellent health and wellbeing throughout life, sleep is essential. At the appropriate periods, getting adequate restful sleep may assist safeguard the safety, quality of life, physical health, and mental well-being. Proper sleep is necessary for happiness, healthy nutrition, strength, virility, wisdom, and even life itself. It enhances the body's development, energy, strength, and complexion. It improves digestion, eliminates fatigue, and restores the natural balance of physiological tissues. Even the human lifetime is increased by getting enough sleep.

#### NIDRA TIMING

According to *Kaiyadeva Nighantu*, the best time for sleeping is after the first two *Yamas* or around six hours after sunset. For a healthy person, sleep typically takes place at night, around the same time, and

lasts for a specific amount of time. This sleep is referred to as *Ratrisvabhava Prabhava* in *Ayurveda*. Additionally, it is advisable to avoid sleeping in the early and late hours of the night and to wake up before sunrise.<sup>9</sup>

#### **DURATION OF TIMING FOR NIDRA**

Sleep requirement is not constant. However, the average sleep requirement per day in different age groups is:

1. Newborn infants: 18 to 20 hours
2. Growing children: 12 to 14 hours
3. Adults: 7 to 9 hours
4. Old persons: 5 to 7 hours

Childhood is characterized as a *Kapha* dominant time and naturally results in increased sleep, which is necessary for healthy growth and development. *Pitta* is dominating in the middle period of life when substantially less sleep is needed. As one ages, *Vata* predominates, and sleep time naturally shortens.<sup>10</sup>

#### **MODERN CONCEPT OF SLEEP**

Sleep is the natural state of rest for the mind and body with closed eyes characterized by partial or complete loss of consciousness. Loss of consciousness leads to decreased response to external stimuli and decreased body movements. The depth of sleep is not constant throughout the sleeping period. It varies in different stages of sleep.<sup>11</sup>

#### **PHYSIOLOGY OF SLEEP**

When the mind is worn out, sleep happens. According to Howell, cerebral ischaemia is the cause of sleep. The pre and post-central gyrus and associated region, among other higher centers, are located in the cerebral cortex and are correlated with the mental processes mentioned in *Ayurveda*. Thus, because of the decrease in cerebral blood flow, the mind becomes tranquil, which promotes sleep.<sup>12</sup>

#### **CRITERIA FOR BETTER SLEEP**

*Ayurvedic* scriptures provide suggestions to improve restful sleep. Avoid sleeping on an uneven bed, that has no pillows or linens, or is too tiny or narrow for comfort. Avoid lying on your back when you sleep. Clean bed sheets and a tidy bedroom are ideal. A good night's sleep is encouraged by comfortable bedding, which also promotes happiness and rest.

The mattress should be comfortable and soft, and the bed should be at knee-joint level. One should only think of good deeds at the start and end of the night, or when falling asleep and waking up, and should shun all bad ideas.<sup>13</sup>

In contrast, lying down in a different position will have the opposite effect. Lying down in an easy position on a comfortable bed eliminates weariness, calms or soothes *Vata Dosh*, promotes sleep and *Dhriti* (lost memory to the mind), and is aphrodisiac and beneficial to the growth of the body. Sleeping with a cool wind is relaxing in hot regions, repels flies and mosquitoes, stops sweating, eliminates weariness, prevents fainting and fits, and eases any burning, burned, or parched sensation. *Samvahana*, or gentle massage, has calming, sedative, and aphrodisiac effects. It eliminates the *Kapha* and *Vata Dosh*s, takes away weariness, and calms the blood, skin, and muscles.<sup>14</sup>

#### **HOW SLEEP WILL BE REGULATED**

The interplay of two primary networks of nerve cells, in the upper portion of the pons and in the midbrain, which produce acetylcholine as their neurotransmitter (NT), transmits signals to the thalamus to activate it, keeps the brain aware throughout wakefulness. An awake Electroencephalography (EEG) pattern is created as a result of the cerebral cortex being activated in turn. The cholinergic nerve cells, thalamus, and cortex are in a state that resembles awake during Random Eye Movement (REM) sleep, but the brain is experiencing sleep. Three groups of nerve cells on the top of the brain stem provide the difference: the neurotransmitter-containing nerve cells.<sup>15</sup>

Two groups of nerve cells in the hypothalamus govern the brain stem cell groups that control arousal. The ventrolateral pre-optic nucleus has a collection of nerve cells that release inhibitory NT and GABA. The suprachiasmatic nucleus, which regulates the body's circadian rhythm, has a significant impact on the sleep cycle. The clock genes in the hypothalamus' nerve cells go through a biochemical cycle that lasts nearly exactly 24 hours, regulating hormones, sleep, and other body processes.<sup>16</sup>

## FUNCTION OF SLEEP

Sleeping at night promotes the balance of the body's components (*Dhatu samya*), alertness, clear vision, healthy skin, and strong digestion. According to *Acharya Susruta*, those who takes proper sleep-in the proper time will not suffer from any type of disease, the mind of them will not suffer from any type gain in potency and good features, good virility, their body will be good-looking, they won't be weak or obese and they live healthy long life.<sup>17</sup>

## DISCUSSION

*Nidra* (sleep), according to *Ayurveda*, is one of the most important components of a happy and healthy existence. Getting a good night's sleep is a healthy and normal occurrence. The importance of getting enough sleep and its benefits for quality of life. People can stay healthy and perform at their best because of a variety of crucial physiological changes that take place when they sleep. Good sleep is a sign of health since it reduces stress and restores the body's physiological functions. In every area of life, *Sharira* and *Satva* interact with one another, according to *Ayurveda*. Sleep is very important to psychiatric disease and is typically included in the diagnostic standards for certain illnesses. Therefore, *Nidra* should be given top priority in order to maintain a healthy body, mind, and soul.

Due to hectic schedules and overload, individuals do not get enough sleep these days. As a consequence, work hours have taken over sleep time. Another factor that decreased the amount of time spent sleeping was tension. A healthy individual will become a patient if they don't get enough sleep. At first, it's not a major issue. But later on, it causes a variety of health problems and maladies.<sup>18</sup>

## CONCLUSION

This article's primary goal is to introduce and emphasize the concept of *nidra* and its significance to human life. *Nidra* is one of the most significant variables to be examined in the modern period. *Nidra* is an important component of a healthy lifestyle. In the modern world, when many people have demanding

jobs and study schedules, *anidra* is a significant feature. Prior to 5000 years ago, Our *Acharyas* had previously discussed *Nidra*, its upkeep, and the meanings of *Ritu* according to *Ahara* and *Vihara*. Additionally, *Acharyas* discussed the etiology, symptoms, diagnosis, and therapy of *anidra*.

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