

**ROLE OF IDEAL NIDRA IN MAINTAINING GOOD HEALTH: AN AYURVEDIC
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ABSTRACT

Millions of people are yearly dying due to unhealthy conditions. Even with the advent of excellent techniques and astonishing advancement in medical science and technology, the humanity is left with innumerable health problems and hazards. Most of the diseases have direct or indirect link with the type of food consumed, food habits and/ or life style. Any disturbance in the equilibrium of *Dhatus* is known as disease and on the other hand the state of their equilibrium is health. Health and disease are also defined as pleasure and pain respectively.⁸ In order to prevent the unmanifested diseases and to cure the manifested ones, an individual desirous of happiness, should follow the regimen prescribed in text of *Ayurveda*. All the psychosomatic activities, of living beings, are directed towards the aim of achieving happiness. Lifestyle means the way in which a person lives. *Ahara Vidhi*, *Vihara* and *Achara* comes under the title Lifestyle. In almost all *samhitas*, there is detail description of *Dinacharya*, *Ratricharya*, *Ritucharya*, *Ahara Vidhi*, *Adharaniya* and *Dharaniya vega*, *Sadvritta* etc. is given which are very helpful to an individual for healthy life and prevention of diseases. *nidra* is part of lifestyle and may cause many diseases if it is not ideal, so why ancient seers have well elaborated this topic in their literatures.

KEYWORDS: *Nidra*, Lifestyle, *Divaswapan*, *Ratrijagran*.**INTRODUCTION**

The word *Nidra* is derived from the prefix “Ni” is the Sanskrit root of our English word “Nether” or down as in “nether world” (under world). While the suffix “dra” may be cognate with the English “drowsy”, to be half asleep, to be inactive or present an appearance of peaceful inactivity or isolation.

The word *Nidra* is a feminine gender, the root “dra” means undesired and “gatau” to lead; it is a state which is hated, there for turned as “*Nidra*”.

The different interpretations about the phenomenon of *Nidra* may be classified under three groups.

Upanishad Concept, Ayurvedic Concept, Yogic Concept.

The ancient theories discussed here are based on the available Indian literature and Ayurvedic literature at present.

a. The fatigue theory of sleep is just in the pattern of the modern physiology; concept of sleep has been

explained with an example of a bird. A Falcon or any other bird. A falcon or any other bird after having flown in the sky when gets tired returns in the nest by folding wings.

- b. According to some others, sleep is caused by the sense of being absorbed in the highest sensation or the mind, just similar as the rays of sun become collected in the bright disc at the time of sunset. So do all senses become collected in the mind. This is the reason why man is not able to hear, to see or to smell in deep sleep.
- c. This statement can be further exemplified according to the reason of sleep is that the mind is merged into the ocean of light, when he is overpowered by light, then does the soul see no dreams and at that time great happiness arises in the body.
- d. Another theory says that sleep is caused by the soul getting lodgment in the arteries. When a man is fast asleep, being happy, come across no dreams as the soul has moved in the arteries during that state.
- e. The sleep is found to be explained in other ways also. According to the sages, the sleep occurs in the mind is merged in prana.

- f. According to *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad*, *Nidra* occurs when the soul goes to rest in the space inside the heart
- g. In *Ayurveda*, the *Nidra* (sleep) has been said to be due to *Ratriswabhava Prabhava*. *Acharya Charaka* has rightly told that the sleep caused by the nature of the night is the sleep par excellence and is called as *Bhutadhatri* and it nurses all the living beings. when body (motor senses) and mind feels fatigue, then they become unable to respond to subjects of all senses, and this provokes *Nidra*.

In ancient times, people were following ideal Lifestyle. Therefore people were not much get affected by various types of diseases. Afterwards, it has been turned into sedentary lifestyle. In modern era of civilization, due to growing use of technologies and increasing competition, changing lifestyle especially sleeping pattern has become a leading cause for manifestation of many diseases like Hypertension, Migraine, Rhinitis, Diabetes mellitus, Obesity etc.

REVIEW FROM AYURVEDIC LITERATURES

Importance of proper sleep

Acharya Sushruta in 24th chapter of *chikitsa sthan* said that "Wholesome and timely sleep brings about homeostasis in bodily tissue."^[1]

Merits and demerits of proper and improper sleep

It is said in *Charak Sutra sthan* 21st chapter that Happiness, misery, nourishment, emaciation, strength, weakness, virility, sterility, knowledge, ignorance, life and death—all these occur depending on the proper or improper sleep. Proper sleep leads to increase in *Agni* (digestive proper) and *Dhatusamy* (proper structure and functioning of *Dhatu*).^[2]

Abnormal sleep pattern: (*Divaswapna* and *Ratrau jagarana*)

(A) *Divaswapna*

Sleep during day time increases unctuousness in the body.^[3]

Demerits of *Diwaswapa*:^[4]

If one sleep in daytime, whom it is contraindicated, then he may suffer from *Halimaka* (serious type of jaundice), *Shirahshula* (headache), *Staimitya* (timidness), *Gurugatrata* (heaviness of the body), *Angamarda* (malaise), *Agninasha* (loss of digestive power), *Hridaya Pralepa* (a feeling as if phlegm adhered to the heart), *Shopha* (oedema), *Arochaka* (anorexia), *Hrillas* (nausea), *Pinasa* (rhinitis), *Ardhavabhedaka* (hemispheric), *Kotha* (urticaria), *Aru* (eruption), *Pidaka* (abscess), *Kandu* (pruritus), *Tandra* (drowsiness), *Kasa* (coughing), *Galamaya* (diseases of the throat), *Smriti-Buddhi Pramoha* (impairment of the memory and intelligence), *Srotasaam sanrodha* (obstruction of the circulating channels of the body), *Jwara* (fever), *Indriyanam asamarthya* (weakness of sensory and motor organs) and

Vishavega pravardhana (enhancement of the toxic effects of artificial poisons).

(B) *Ratrau jagarana*

Remaining vigil during night causes roughness in the body.^[5]

Demerits of *Ratrau Jagarana*

If one remains awake in *Vatakala* i.e. in late night (approx. 2 am to 6 am if sunrise at 6 am), then *Vata* gets vitiated which vitiates the *Agni* and leads to inappropriate digestion of food. Vitiating of *Vata* is more harmful for digestion than *Pitta* and *Kapha*. If one remains awake in *Kapha* and *Pitta kala* i.e. first two *Praharas*, and sleep in *Vatakala* i.e. in last *Prahara* then definitely food gets digested properly.

Effect of bed (*Shayya*) on Sleep (*Nidra*)

Sleeping on a cot is *tridosha shamaka* and is a promoter of good health. Sleeping on a bed on the ground neutralizes *vata* and *kapha*, sleeping on the ground results in obesity, increases virility, increases *vata* and dryness in the body and neutralizes *Rakta pitta*. Sleeping on a plank of wood increases *vata*. Sleeping on a comfortable bed in general increases happiness, sexual desire and virility and helps in getting rid of excess of *vata* and exhaustion.

Sleeping Posture

After taking the dinner when a person goes to sleep first he should lie down in recumbent posture taking 8 times breath. According to *Yogratnakar*, he should change the posture to right lateral till taking 16 times breath and there after to left lateral till taking 32 times breath and then he can sleep at any posture according to his wish. But it is always advised to sleep in the left lateral position because *agni* lies in the left side of the body above the *nabhi*, which is responsible for the proper digestion.

Relationship between *Nidra* and *Dosha, Dhatu Malas*

As *Nidra* is said to be *kapha* dominant process it also maintains the equilibrium between three *doshas*. In classics, it is mentioned that in *kaphaja vikaras nidra* and *tandra* (sleepiness) are commonly seen and in *vataja vikaras nidranasa* (Loss of sleep) occurs and in *pittaja vikaras alpanidra* (Less sleep) manifest. By means of proper sleep the *dhatusamy*, nourishment of the body, increase of strength and the stability of *Ayu* are achieved.

By proper sleep the digestive power is properly maintained and the *agni* functions remains in normal condition. Evacuation of the bowel and emptying of urinary bladder take place properly if a person sleeps well.

Bad habits like *ratri-jagarana* (waking up during night) and *diva-swapana* (sleeping in the day) have been stated to provoke all the three *doshas*.

Different types of beds and their effects on health have been described by *Acharya Sushruta and Kaiyyadeva*.

Types of bed and their effects:^[6,7]

1. **Anukula shayya (Comfortable bed):** It is considered good for proper sleep, nourishment, pleasure, relieves tiredness, pacifies the vitiated *Vata*, and aphrodisiac.
2. **Bhumishayya (On ground):** It can pacify the vitiated *Vata*, nourishes human body gives strength and aphrodisiac.
3. **Khatva (Cot):** Causes vitiation of *Vata*.
4. **Darupatta (Wooden planks):** It is unctuous and highly vitiates *Vata*.
5. **Andolika (Hanging bed):** It relieves tiredness, leads to long life, plumpness aphrodisiac, alleviates vitiated *Vata*, decreases sweating, pleasing to mind.
6. **Talpa:** It helps to decrease weight. It is good for health of skin.

About height of bed

According to the classical texts of *Ayurveda*, bed should be at the level of knee and it should be soft.

About bed

- a. One should sleep on comfortable and well covered bed,
- b. One should not sleep without a pillow.

About sleeping position

Sleeping in prone position should be avoided.

Prataha Utthana: (early awakening)

Acharya Vagbhatt have advised to get up from bed during *Brahma muhurta*.^[8] (According to *Indu*, last *Yama* i.e. last three hours of night is known as *Brahma Muhurta*).

Role of improper Nidra in disease manifestation

1. According to Charak Sleeping in day time except in *Grishma ritu* causes vitiation of *Kapha* and *Pitta*.
2. It can cause *Krimi*, *Prameha*, *Sthaulya*, *Visarpa*, *Medovaha Strotas Dushti*, *Yonikanda*, *Asrigdara*.
3. Sleeping on Cot (*Khatva*) leads to vitiation of *Vata*.
4. Sleeping on wooden planks can highly vitiate *Vata* because it is un-unctuous.
5. Excess sleeping leads to *Kaphaparakopa*,^[9] *Antarvidradhi*.^[10]
6. Sleeping on uncomfortable bed leads to *Vatavyadhi*.^[11]
7. Excess sleep especially in day time leads to *Kaphaparakopa*, *Pratishyaya*, (Allergic Rhinitis) *Arsha* (piles).
8. Sleeping in day time and keeping awake in night time leads to *Samana Vata Dushti*, *Shiroroga*, *Urustambha*, *Vatarakta*, *Ajirna*, *Nijashotha*, *Vatavyadhi*.
9. Sleeping in irregular posture leads to *Vata-gulma*.

10. Keeping awake at night leads to *Udavarta*, *Punaravartaka Jwara*, *Stanyaroga*, *Pratishyaya*, *Kshaya*.
11. Sleeping without taking pillow under the head leads to *Kaphaparakopa*, *Shiroroga*.
12. Sleeping improperly or too much in quantity or in lateral position or with covered face leads to *Pratishyaya*.
13. Sleeping with keeping pillow very low or very high under head leads to *Pratishyaya*.
14. Sleeping with face down leads to *Mukharoga*.
15. Sleeping in daytime by *Rajaswala* (menstruating woman) leads to birth of a child who is always sleepy
16. Sleeping in day time during the period of *Snehapana* leads to *Sneha-vyapada*.
17. Constantly giving into sleep by pregnant woman makes the offspring drowsy, dull and deficient in digestive power.
18. Sleeping in day time by *Sutika* leads to *Sutikaroga*.
19. *Divaswapna* causes impediment in healing the ulcers and also causes pain.
20. Sleeping by patients suffering from *Shotha*, *Jwara*, *Visarpa*, *Vatarakta*, *Kushtha*, *Netraroga* leads further complication related to disease.

Role of Nidra in Treatment

1. **Treatment of Ratrau Jagarana:** A person should sleep on proper time at night as much as desirable and become habituated to it. If he has been awake at night due to non-habitation, he should sleep for half that period on the next morning without taking any food.
2. One should sleep on comfortable bed. It alleviates the vitiated *Vata*, and work as aphrodisiac.
3. Sleeping on floor alleviates the vitiated *Vata*, nourishes, gives strength and it is aphrodisiac.
4. **Ratrau jagarana as a treatment of disease:** *Sthaulya*, *Kaphaja Madatyaya*, *Prameha*
5. **Nidra as a treatment of disease:** *Karshya*, *Unmada* (insanity)
6. **Sukha Shayya as a treatment of disease:** *Karshya*, *Vatarakta*
7. **Asukha Shayya treatment of disease:** *Atinidra*

CONCLUSION

Causes of rapidly increase in non-communicable diseases are mostly related to Lifestyle such as physical inactivity etc. Increasing sedentary lifestyle due to growing use of technologies in daily life causes higher levels of physical inactivity. The disturbed sleep pattern and wrong dietary habits are also a part of changing lifestyle which leads to onset of many diseases like Hypertension, Diabetes mellitus, Obesity etc. Ancient description of *Ayurveda* and *Yoga* have given importance to sleep and described different patterns of sleep with their significance in the maintenance of positive health. It has been observed that all the living beings enjoy sleep to keep their body and mind energetic. Lord Krishna has also explained the

importance of proper sleep for yogi in *Bhagavat-geeta*. He also mentions to Arjuna that the excessive sleep or awaking is not good.

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