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A Review on Scattered References of Prakrut and Vikrutnidra (Sleep) from Brihatrayee

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ABSTRACT

Nidrā is one of the most important phenomena which is directly related to and influences the achievement of happiness and misery in a man's life. Similarly, as diet and exercise regimen is important for the health of a human being, Nidrā plays a vital role in maintaining proper health and so is the key to live a successful and healthy life. The importance of Nidrā has also been elaborated by Acharya Charaka as follows: As proper āhār is required for maintenance of health similarly Nidrā is required for happiness and health. Obesity and leanness also depend on Nidrā. Thus, it is stated that when there is decrease in the Satva-Guna in human beings, then it ultimately increases the effect of Tāmasika Guna. Due to increase in the Tāmasa temperament, there is more influence of Nidrā on an individual.

Key Words: Nidrā, Vēda, Bhutadhātri

INTRODUCTION

The word Nidrā means sleep. One can get references for Nidrā from the period of Vēda. The term Nidrā appears in Rigvēda, Yajurvedā etc. Nidrā is mentioned with different synonyms in different periods of Veda, in Rigvēda it is mentioned as "Svapna".¹ In Rigveda, it is mentioned that The Gods never have Nidrā.² This is because they have absence of Tama Guna. This highlights the fact that Nidrā is related to the tama guna of the body. People with the predominance of Satva Guna have fewer Nidrā as compared to those having the predominance of Tama guna. When a person awakens from deep sleep, it is a sense of pleasure and a sense of satisfaction. Lord Shri Krishna has also explained the importance of proper sleep for a Dhyana Yogi in Bhagwad Gitā.³ According to him, both excessive sleep and ceaselessly awakening is not good.

MYTHOLOGY OF NIDRĀ

References about Nidrā in the Vēdika era have been seen. It is known that the period of the earth is divided into four Yuga viz. satayuga, trētāyuga, dvāparayuga and kaliyuga, so the

Nidrā of God viz, at the end of each Yuga is termed as Yoga Nidrā (As mentioned in raghuvamsa 10.14). In other references, it is also mentioned that Nidrā is the great sleep of God bramhā during the period between the Pralaya (destruction) and Utpatti (production) of Sṛsti. God Bramhā creates life on earth whereas God Vishnu maintains it and finally God Śiva destroys it. Nidrā is also said to be the name of Goddess Durgā.⁴ Ayurveda clearly emphasizes on the importance of Nidrā for maintaining a healthy lifestyle. Considering Kāla of Yajurvedā, people of that time period had a very low quantity of Nidrā due to the presence of Satva guna and the absence of Tama guna. But considering this quote from a different angle, it could have been stated for Divāsvapna or too much quantity of night sleep also. Mahābhārata, the great epic of Indian history also mentions the merits of Nidrā and demerits of rātrijāgarana. It states that the persons who are keen for health should not indulge themselves in being awake at night, sleeping in daytime, laziness, getting addicted to bad things and other such factors. Thus, it is stated that when there is the decrease in the Satva Guna in human beings, then it ultimately increases the effect of Tāmasika Guna. Due to increase in the Tāmasa temperament, there is more influence of Nidrā on an individual. The ancient seers of India have not

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only recognized the natural constructive power of sleep but have also attributed to it, a supernatural power that is beneficial for health, happiness and longevity. The daily rhythm of life is thus an instinct related to the rhythm of night and day existing in nature. Ayurveda regards Nidrā as one of the most essential factors responsible for a healthy and fulfilled life. It is one of the Trayopastambhas or three great supporting pillars on which the health of a person is firmly balanced. Every country has had great scientists who have tried to study sleep, its nature and its causes. Sleep is the non-deliberate absence of thought waves or knowledge. Dreamless sleep is an inert state of perception in which the sense of existence is not felt. In sleep, the senses of perception rest in the mind, the mind in the consciousness and the consciousness in the being. In deep sleep, the senses of perception cease to function because their master, the mind is at rest. When the Chitta becomes exhausted, it goes inward, away from the sense impulses of worldly objects; hence the sleep is a resting phase of the mind. At that time, there is the absence of knowledge about the orientation of time and place. In this condition, it is believed that the Chitta resides in the MedhyaNādi. Acharya Dalhana has explained the importance and benefits of good Nidra when there is sama yoga of MedhyaNādi and Manah through which pleasure is obtained by the Deha and Indriya. The references of Nidrā areas such mentioned in the Vēdic era and are also available in scattered form in the Ayurvedic classics. In the Ayurvedic classics, the usefulness of sleep and its role in the maintenance of health is elaborately discussed. It is to be considered that all the living creatures must enjoy the sleep in quality and quantity to keep themselves fit. Acharya Charak propounded a theory that explains why human beings sleep. According to Acharya Charak, Nidrā is nothing but a combined stage of tired mind and body. It means when the mind takes out its attention from its work and the sense organs get tired due to heavy workload then this combined stage leads to sleep. From the very birth, the amount of sleep (in hours) of a newborn is maximum. Generally, sleep occurs during the night and at about the same time for a particular duration every day and as such in Ayurvedā, Nidrā is said to be RatrisvabhāvaPrabhava (Prakriti Nidra). According to Sushruta Samhita, Nidrā is provoked due to nature and considered as SvabhavikaRoga. Therefore, the Acharyas have advised that a man should not suppress this important natural urge. It is quite evident from the above discussion that sleep is one of the basic need of every living being. Any living organism of whatever nature always feels the need for resting after an activity. The various organs and the parts of the body can be given rest independently but complete rest for the entire organism is possible only when it goes to sleep. Similarly, in nature, it is observed that not only animals but plants also enjoy recreation in the night by contracting the petals of the flowers, leaves etc., at the time of sunset and in the next morning relaxing and reopening.

Occurrence of Nidrā

It is a question from time immemorial as to what sleep is and how it occurs and what is the role of sleep in health. Scientists have tried to think over the phenomena of sleep.

Etymology and Synonyms of Nidra

The derivation of the word 'Nidra' is as follows:

The term 'Nidrā' is derived from the root 'da' with prefix 'ina' means undesired to lead, it

is a state which is hated, therefore, it is termed as 'Nidrā'.

In Samhitākala the terms used for Nidrā are

1. Vaishnavi
2. Bhutādhātri
3. Pāpmula
4. Tamobhava
5. Tāmasi

Here, Nidrā is stated as the energy of God and naturally, it has its effects over all created beings. So it is termed Vaishnavi, as it is the energy of God Vishnu. All the animals are created by God, hence Nidrā has its effect on them.

Similarly, Bhutadhātri term mentioned for Nidrā by Acharya Charak is explained as follows-

Dhatri- Responsible for nourishment, nurturing.

Thus Bhutadhātri is the one which is protective, nurtures and responsible for the growth of all living beings.

The word dhātri indicates, to take care and the word bhuta is mentioned for all the created living beings. Hence collectively the word bhutadhatri indicates or holds up the life without causing any symptoms or diseases.

Pāpmula or pāpmānam because it destroys the effect of all good works and has its effect on all the created beings. Nidrā& some other term: [Tamomāyi and Tamomulā]-

In the occurrence of Nidrā, Tama is the basic cause and Nidrā is its effect, so Nidrā is also known as tamomula.⁴⁻⁶

Nidrā is also called 'Tamo-mayi'. Tamasa guna rises at its peak during Nidrā (sleep) hence it is also named "Tamomayi". Tāmasa guna appears at night.

Nidrā as the Trayopastambhas (3 Pillars of Life)

Nidrā is also one of the only Adharniyavegas which is given as the importance to be included in Trayopastambhas. Diet, Sleep and non-celibacy if indulge with good adequate sense then they hold the body as that of pillars that holds a house.

In Ayurveda, it is accepted that body, sense organs, Satva and ātma are the components of life. And it is rightly mentioned that Nidrā gives rest to the sensory organs, the mind and the body also which indicates that the components of life and the life itself cannot sustain without proper Nidra. Hence, Nidrā

is placed as one of the trayopastambhass in Ayurvedā.

Acharya Charak has also beautifully explained that adequate Nidrā helps a man to become stout and achieve strength like a pig.

But on the other hand, if sleep is not taken regularly then it may directly affect the health.

The strategy behind this is that the sleep not taken for 2 to 3 days or more irregularly affects mostly on the mind and the strength of the working organs.^{4,5}

BENEFITS OF NIDRĀ FOR SHARIR BHAVAS

Acharya Sushrut states that Nidrā taken at the proper time gives us stoutness, glowing of skin, strength, activeness, proper digestion and most importantly Dhatusamya which is the one of the goal of Ayurveda from the treatment point of view.

The above benefits of Nidrā related to Sharirbhavas are one of the important functions of tridoshas in the body and thus directly states the relation of Nidrā with the normal functions of the body.

SITE OF NIDRĀ

Acharya Sushrut had beautifully explained and mentioned that the heart is the seat of Chetna in the body and when this is invaded by Tamo guna, the body gets Nidrā due to work, mind and sense organs get tired and it further leads to Nidrā. Therefore these (mana and indriya) withdraw from their functions.

THE ONSET OF NIDRĀ

According to Acharya Sushrut, Tamoguna is the cause for Nidrā and satva guna is the cause for bodhana. Nidrā (sleep) is the offspring of Tamo guna and awaking process is the quality of sattva guna. Here, the mythological references about Gods and the predominance of Satva in them resulting in absence of Tamo guna can be correlated. Also, the onset of Nidrā indicates the involvement of the predominance of Satva and tamo guna in human beings and Tamo guna is thus responsible for Nidrā.

FACTORS RESPONSIBLE FOR NIDRĀ

When the sense organs get functionless and tamoguna is greatly increased then Bhutātmā is said to be sleeping though it is not sleeping. These are the important reasons for the Nidrā (sleep). If we glance through them then we can un-

derstand the importance of the Nidrā (sleep) for our daily work and also its importance for our body, sense organs and mind. According to Ayurveda as there are three vital substances present in the body. These are Vata, Pitta and Kapha. These three regulates the body in normal condition and they may also cause diseases in their improper equilibrium. Kapha plays an important role in the sleep of human being. Whenever there is the aggravation of Kapha or whenever naturally it has its sway then the sleep appearing at that time is called normal sleep. It means that the Kapha dosha and the tamasa guna of mind play an important role in the formation of sleep.¹⁻³

Following may be the reason for the urge of Nidrā (sleep) –

1. When Kapha dosha gets increases then it blocks the different systems of the body and this condition generally arises at night time, after a meal. After taking the meal, Kapha dosha increases and due to this it blocks the channels of the body. According to Ayurveda Kapha normally shows its influence in the starting of the digestion, hence one can experience the effect of Nidrā (sleep) after taking the meal. In this process, our sense organs unable to do their proper work and ultimately this results in the Nidrā (sleep).
2. We get knowledge of our surroundings due to our sense organs. But if these sense organs get tired or if they become unable to do their work properly then the body shows the symptoms of Nidrā (sleep) as well.

Review of Vikrut Nidrā

VikrutNidrā can be grouped as the types of Nidrā, i.e. abnormal types of Nidrā. These are explained in the scattered form in Bṛihatrayī.

Types of Nidrā (According to Acharya Charak)

Acharya Charaka 1 mentioned 6 types of Nidrā as

1. Tamobhavā
2. Śleshmasamudbhavā
3. Manahśarirashrāmasambhava
4. Āgantuki
5. Vyādhyinuvartini

These are VikrutNidra elaborated as follows: -

1. Śleshmasamudbhavā - Nidrā which appears due to the excess of kapha dosha then it is called ŚleshmasāmudbhavāNidrā.
2. Manahśarirashrāmasambhava - Nidrā which appears due to the tiredness of mind and body because of heavy work, then it is called as manahsharirashrāmasambhavaNidrā.
3. Mental and physical exertion brings about the inactivity of the mind resulting in the detachment of the mind and the sense organs from their objects which is responsible for Nidrā. But if there is excessive exertion, this may cause vitiation of Vata leading to Anidrā.

Thus even though exertion is the causative factor for Nidrā excessive exertion is responsible for the aggravation of Vata, which causes Anidrā.^{2,3}

4. Āgantuki – Aagantuki type of Nidrā (sleep) is caused due to external factors and as such it is in itself incurable. According to Acharya Chakrapani this type of Nidra is called as ristabhuta i.e. the Nidrā (sleep), which indicates the death signs.
5. Vyadhyianuvartini (Complication of other diseases) - Nidrā which appears due to diseases called vyadhyianuvartiniNidrā. Normally Nidrā appears due to the influence of Kapha dosha hence whenever there is the increase in Kapha dosha more than its normal equilibrium then the sleep appears at that time. This type of sleep is indicative of vyadhi i.e. disease.

Types of Nidrā (According to Acharya Sushruta):

Types of Nidrā according to Acharya Sushruta 2 –

Nidrā is the elusive energy of God and it has its effect naturally over all created beings. The kind of Nidrā which sets in when the sensation carrying channels of the body are choked by kaphadosha (shleshma), which bounds the quantity of Tamo guna, is known as ‘tāmsiNidrā’. This type of Nidrā produces unconsciousness at the time of death.

The person with the deprived condition of the Kapha dosha & aggravated condition of vāta dosha or suffering from any type of troubles, get very little Nidrā or absolutely no Nidrā.

This type of Nidrā is called ‘VaikarikiNidrā’.

The Nidrā which appears due to the influence of Tama guna called as tāmasiNidrā. It produces unconsciousness at the time of death. This type is similar to the tamobhāvaNidrā said by Acharya Charak.

Types of Nidrā (According to Acharya VrudhaVāgbhata)

Acharya VrudhaVāgbhata 3 mentioned 7 types of Nidrā as –

- Kālasvabhāvaja
- Aāmayakhedaprabhāvaja
- Chittakhedaprabhāvaja
- Dehakhedaprabhāvaja
- Kaphaprabhāva
- Āgantuki
- Tamobhāva

Amongst these except *KālasvabhāvajaNidrā*, the *VikrutNidrā* types are explained here as follows:

1. Aamayakhedaprabhāva –

The Nidrā which appears due to the diseases present in the sharira called aamayakheda

Nidrā. The word āma is used for the factor generates in the sharira due to the undigested food. According to Ayurveda, the āma is responsible for creating various diseases. This type of Nidrā resembles that of Vyadhyianuvartini type of Acharya Charaka and vaikarikiNidrā of Acharya Sushruta.^{3,4}

2. ChittakhedaprabhāvaNidrā –

The Nidrā which appears due to the disturbances in the mind called chittakheda prabhāvaNidrā. This type resembles with manahsharirashramasambhāvaNidrā of

Acharya Charaka and vaikarikiNidrā of Acharya Sushruta.

3. Deha khedaprabhāvaNidrā –

The Nidrā which appears due to tiredness of the body called as dehakhedaprabhāva

Nidrā. This type resembles the manahsharirasramasambhava Nidrā of Acharya

Charaka and vaikarikiNidrā of Acharya Sushruta.

4. KaphaprabhāvaNidrā –

Nidrā which appears due to aggravated Kapha dosha called kaphaprabhāva Nidrā.

Kapha dosha closely resembles the tama guna of the mind and combined they cause

The Nidrā in the night. But when there is the increase in the Kapha dosha of the body, then the

Nidrā also appears in the daytime or may persist for a longer time than normal. In such a condition, the Nidrā is called kaphaprabhāvanidra. This type resembles the shleshmasamudbhāvanidra of the Acharya Charaka and vaikariki of Acharya Sushruta.

5. ĀgantukiNidrā –

ĀgantukiNidrā appears due to external factors like accidents, injuries etc. Hence this type of Nidrā is also considered abnormal. This type resembles that of āgantuki type of Nidrā of Acharya Charaka and vaikariki type of Acharya Sushruta.⁵

6. TamobhāvaNidrā –

This type of Nidrā appears due to the aggravated stage of tamo guna of mind. It results in sinful behaviour. Therefore Acharya Sushruta and Acharya Charaka mentioned it aspāpamula (the root of the bad works). This type of Nidrā mainly appears at the time of death. Acharya Charaka mentioned this as tamobhavaNidrā as Acharya Vagbhata and Acharya Sushruta named this type as tamsinidra. Acharya also mentioned that this type of Nidrā is dangerous for the life of man and may lead to death also.⁶

CONCLUSION

Nidrā is one of the most important phenomena which is directly related to and influences the achievement of happiness and misery in a man's life. Similarly, as diet and exercise regimen is important for the health of a human being, Nidrā plays a vital role in maintaining proper health and so is the key to live a successful and healthy life. The importance of Nidrā has also been elaborated by acharyacharaka as follows: As proper āhār is required for maintenance of health similarly Nidrā is required for happiness and health. Obesity and leanness also depend on Nidrā.

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