

The Relationship Between *Nidra* (Sleep) and *Prakriti*: An Ayurvedic Perspective on Sleep and Constitution

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ABSTRACT

Ayurveda, the ancient Indian system of medicine, recognizes the significance of sleep (*Nidra* (Sleep)) as one of the three sub-pillars of life alongside diet and celibacy. This study explored the relationship between an individual's constitution (*Prakriti*) and sleep patterns from an Ayurvedic perspective. *Prakriti*, determined at birth by various factors, is characterized by the dominance of specific *Dosha* (*Vata*, *Pitta*, or *Kapha*) and *Guna* (*Sattva*, *Rajas*, or *Tamas*). The study reveals that individuals with *Kapha Prakriti*, associated with *Tamas Guna*, tend to have deep and prolonged Sleep, while those with *Pitta Prakriti*, enriched with *Sattva Guna*, experience moderate Sleep. In contrast, *Vata Prakriti* individuals, who are dominant in *Rajas Guna*, are prone to less interrupted sleep. The onset of sleep is attributed to the predominance of *Tamas Guna* and *Kapha Dosha*, leading to the inactivity of the mind and sensory organs. The study also highlights the influence of mental constitution (*Manasa Prakriti*) on Sleep, with *Tamas*-dominant individuals experiencing heavy Sleep, *Rajas*-dominant individuals experiencing light and disturbed Sleep, and *Sattva*-dominant individuals enjoying peaceful sleep after midnight. Understanding the intricate relationship between *Prakriti* and *Nidra* (Sleep) can provide valuable insights into personalized sleep management and overall well-being in Ayurvedic practices.

Keywords: *Nidra* (Sleep), *Prakriti*, Ayurveda, *Doshas*, *Trigunas*, Sleep patterns

INTRODUCTION

In our daily lives, *Nidra* (sleep) is a highly significant occurrence, which is a normal aspect of our physiology. It offers relaxation and rest to the body, mind, and senses, which have grown weary from the wear and tear that comes with daily life. Consequently, *Nidra* (sleep) is regarded as a fundamental element of life. Under the heading of "*Trayopastambha*," the sub-pillars of life,

Ahara, *Nidra* (Sleep), and *Brahmacharya* are accorded primary priority in *Brihatrayee*.¹ Humans benefit from excellent Sleep in many ways, including enjoyment, nutrition, growth, strength, and immunity. However, excessive sleep, in terms of both the amount and quality, has negative consequences. Life is not complete without *nidra* (sleep). When people do not get enough sleep, it can cause a number of problems in their everyday lives.

If taken correctly, it is more advantageous to life.

- 1) Life benefits from adequate Sleep, whereas life is harmed by insufficient Sleep. happiness and unhappiness, healthy nutrition and bodily waste, strength and weakness, vitality and impotence, understanding and ignorance, and life and death are all examples of these.²
- 2) Enlightenment in the life of yogi is brought about by true knowledge. Additionally, appropriately well People who get enough Sleep are happier and have longer lives.³
- 3) Appropriate weight gain, improved complexion, motivation to work, and a fresh and alert state for sensory organs are benefits of adequate sleep. It also has responsibility for maintaining the equilibrium of body entities.⁴

RELATION BETWEEN NIDRA (SLEEP) AND PRAKRITI

Prakriti, or an individual's constitution, is determined at birth based on a variety of circumstances, including the mother's dietary habits, the predominant level of *Panchmahabhuta*, the condition of the mother's womb, and the *Doshas* at the moment of conception. Understanding *Panchabhautik Sangathan* (physical composition), *Triguna* (*Satva*, *Raja*, and *Tama*), and *Tridosha* (*Vata*, *Pitta*, and *Kapha*) can help you comprehend the *Nidra* (Sleep) in each *Prakriti*. *Brihatrayee* of *Ayurveda* does a good job in explaining the relationship between *Prakriti* and *Nidra* (sleep).

Prakriti and *Nidra* (sleep) are closely related. *Prakriti* is a fundamental principle of *Ayurveda*. This serves as the foundation for the study of a wide range of topics from *Nidana* (the cause of sickness) and *Shareera* (the human body) to *Chikitsa* (treatment). Simply expressed, *Prakriti* can be defined as a person's "structural and functional appearance," which is exemplified by a detailed description of their physical attributes, physiology, and psychological composition. *Prakriti* is a special quality of

humans that is categorized by the particular *Dosha* composition at conception. *Ayurveda* states that people who are *Kapha Prakriti* have a higher *Nidra* (Sleep) than other *Prakriti*.

Understanding the *Bhoutika* composition of *Triguna* (*Satva*, *Raja*, and *Tama*) and *Tri-Dosha* allows one to comprehend *Nidra* (sleep) for each individual. Sleep is referred to by *Acharya Sushruta* as *Tama guna Pradhan*, and the *Bhoutika Sangathan* of *Kapha* is comparable to *Tamo Guna*.⁵ As a result, the *Kapha Prakriti* person Sleeps soundly and deeply. Additionally, *Kapha Prakriti* individuals are referred to by *Acharya Vagbhata* as *Nidralu* (good slumber).⁶ Excessive Sleep is a characteristic of *Kaphavruddhi*.⁷ The *Tama Guna* cannot affect the *Pitta Dosha*, which is *Satva Guna Pradhan* (enriched with *Satva Guna*). People with *Pitta Prakriti* (body composition dominated by *Pitta Dosha*) slept well, although moderately. This confirms that *Pitta Vruddhi Lakshana* is a sign of *Alpa Nidra* (Sleep) or lack of sleep. Because of its *Chala* (movement) and *Rukshadi Guna*, *Vata Dosha* is typically dominant with *Vayu Mahabhuta* and *Raja Guna*.⁸ As a result, *Vata Prakriti* individuals would have less and interrupted Sleep.

METHODOLOGY

References were collected from classical *Ayurvedic* texts as well as from previous research works, research articles, Internet and modern science literature, *Ayush* research portal, Google Scholar, etc. The collected references were then systematically organized and analyzed to extract relevant information on *Ayurvedic* principles and practices. This comprehensive review aims to bridge the gap between traditional *Ayurvedic* knowledge and modern scientific understanding. The findings from this literature review provide valuable insights into the potential applications of *Ayurvedic* medicine in contemporary healthcare settings.

Prakriti

Charaka Samhita: In 9th chapter of *Sutrasthana*, it is mentioned that any disturbance in the equilibrium of *Dhatu* known as disease and on the other hand state of equilibrium is health i.e. *Prakriti*. The primary cause of *Prakriti*'s creation is nothing but a state of equilibrium of *Sattva*, *Rajas*, and *Tamas*. However, *Vikara* and *Prakriti* are taken from a different perspective. Here, *Dhatu* takes the place of *guna*. *Dhatu* consists of *Vata*, *Pitta* and *Kapha*; *Rasa*, *Rakta*, *Mamsa*, *Medas*, *Asthi*, *Majja* and *Shukra* and all *Upadhatu*. Any deficiency or excess in normal quantities of *Dhatu* causes *Vikara* (disease), and the equilibrium of all these is health (*Prakriti*). In 10th chapter of *Sutrasthana*, importance of *Prakriti* in prognosis is given.⁹ In *Sharirasthana*, *Prakriti* is mentioned as the basis of philosophical background.¹⁰ He also explained about *Loka* and *Purusha Siddhanta*.¹¹

In *Vimanasthana* 8th chapter, *Prakriti Pariksha* is described under *Dashavidha Pariksha* in *Vimanasthana*. The seven types of *Prakriti* also described.¹² The influencing factors of *Prakriti* are described in *Indriyasthana*.¹³

In *Sharirasthana* 4th Chapter, seven type of *Deha Prakriti* and sixteen type of *Manas Prakriti* is mentioned.¹⁴

In *Vimanasthana* 6th chapter also description of *Vatika*, *Paitika* and *Kaphaja Prakriti* are explained. The characteristics of different *Prakriti* are described also.¹⁵

Kashapa Samhita: The development of *Prakriti* according to *Lehadhyaya* of *Sutrasthana* They are of three types *Vata Sthuna*, *Pitta Sthuna* and *Kapha Sthuna*.¹⁶ The characteristics of different *Prakriti* are described in *Shishyopakramaniyaadhyaya*¹⁷ and in *Sharirasthana* four philosophical descriptions are mentioned.¹⁸

Sushruta Samhita: *Avyakta*, *Mahat*, *Ahamkara* and five *Tanmatra*, these eight (cause of all things) are *Prakriti*.¹⁹ First chapter of *Sharirasthana* deals with the *Sadkarana* as *Swabhava*, *Ishvara*, *Kala*, *Yadriccha*, *Niyati* and *Parinama*, which are

prime cause of all.²⁰ *Swabhava* has been given prime importance in *Sushruta* as it signifies *Prakriti*.²¹ In addition, seven types of *Prakriti* are described.²² Classification of *Prakriti* according to *Panchamahabhuta* and also characteristics of *Prakriti* is described.²³

Harita Samhita: According to *Harita Samhita* in the first chapter, *Prathama Sthana*, *Vatadi Prakriti*, and their characteristics are described. The best *Madhya Prakriti* who belongs to main characteristics of *Sthula Sharira* is also described.²⁴

Bhela Samhita: According to 4th chapter of *Vimanasthana*, *Roga Prakriti Vinischaya* mentioned details about *Prakriti* same as *Charaka Samhita* as single *Dosha Prakriti-Pravara* (best), *Dwandwaja Prakriti-Madhya* (medium) and *Snnipatika Prakriti-Jaghanya* (poor).²⁵

Astanga Samgraha: In 8th chapter of *Sharira Sthana*, seven types of *Prakriti* mentioned i.e., *Jati*, *Kula*, *Desha*, *Kala*, *Vaya*, *Bala* and *Atma*.²⁶

Astanga Hridaya: In 3rd chapter of *Sharira Sthana* the seven types of *Doshika Prakriti* mentioned as *Charaka Samhita* and *Sushruta Samhita*.²⁷

Sarangadhara Samhita: In this *Samhita*, the *Sharirika/Manas Prakriti* description is provided.²⁸ The description of *Deha Prakriti* pertaining to *Sushruta Samhita* and *Manas Prakriti* is not mentioned here.

Nidra (Sleep)

Definition:

Since the beginning, people have wondered what sleep is, how it happens, and how it affects health and disease treatment.²⁹ Researchers have attempted to understand this phenomenon of sleep. This is regarded as one of the fundamental functions of living things in *Upanishadas* and *Ayurvedic* texts.

1) *Maharshi Patanjali* has given the perfect definition of *Nidra* (Sleep) that Sleep is the mental operation having the absence of cognition for its grasp. The commentator *Maharshi vyasa* clarified that Sleep is a state of unconsciousness,

but consciousness remains about his own unconsciousness.³⁰

- 2) *Nidra* (Sleep) as the resultant state of *Shareerashrama*, predominance of *Tamas* and *Kapha Dosha* and *Swabhava*.³¹

Definitions in Ayurvedic Classics

- 1) *Acharya Charaka* explained that when the mind gets exhausted or becomes inactive and the sensory and motor organs also become inactive then the individual gets Sleep.³²
- 2) *Acharya Sushruta* regards the heart as the seat of the mind, and person experiences Sleep when their mind is consumed by *Tamoguna*.³³

ONSET OF NIDRA (SLEEP)

When *Mana* and *Indriya* get tired (*Klanta*) because of indulgement in their normal functions, this theory of fatigue leads to *Nidra* (Sleep). Therefore, they (*Mana* and *Indriya*) withdraw from their *Vishayas*.

Nidra (Sleep) (Sleep) is the combined stage of a tired mind and body. This means that when the mind withdraws its attention from its work and the sense organs get tired due to a heavy workload, this leads to *Nidra* (Sleep).

At the time of *Sarga*, *Tamoguna* was prominent, and due to the prominence of *Tamoguna* at night, *Nidra* (sleep) occurred. Hence, they are called *Tamomula* and *Tamomayi*. Because of the *varana* of *Kapha*, *Shleshma* in *Strotasa* and *Shrama* *Indriyas* retired from *Karmas* and *Nidra* (sleep). *Nidra* (Sleep) (Sleep) is the illusive energy of God and naturally has sway over all created beings. It appears first in the beginning of the world, and *Tamasaguna* plays an important role in its formation. Therefore, *Nidra* (Sleep) is also called as “*Tamo-Mula*”. *Tamasaguna* rises at its peak during *Nidra* (sleep); hence, it is also named *Tamomayi*. The *Tamasaguna* appeared at night. According to *Ayurveda*, three vital substances are present in the human body. These are the *Vata*, *Pitta* and *Kapha*. These three *doses* regulate the body under normal

conditions and may also cause diseases in their improper condition. *Kapha* play an important role in human sleep. Whenever there is a rise in *kapha* or, whenever naturally, it has its sway, the sleep appearing at that time is called normal sleep. This means that the *Kapha Dosha* and *Tamasaguna* play an important role in the onset of sleep. Following may be the reason for the urge of *Nidra* (Sleep)

1. When *Kapha Dosha* increases, it blocks the different systems of the body, and this condition generally arises at night after meals. After consuming a meal, *Kapha Dosha* increases, which blocks the working systems of the body. According to *Ayurveda*, *Kapha* normally shows its influence at the start of digestion; hence, one can experience the effect of *nidra* (sleep) after eating a meal. In this process, our sense organs are unable to perform their proper work, which ultimately results in *nidra* (sleep).
2. People can also experience sleep after heavy work. In this procedure, our whole system becomes tired (not taking into account the type of work, whether it may be physical or mental). Therefore, the sensory organs of the body are unable to perform their work. Hence, owing to tiredness, we can experience the effect of *Nidra* (sleep).
3. We obtain knowledge of our surroundings because of our sense of organs. However, if these sense organs become tired or if they are unable to do their work properly, then the body shows symptoms of *Nidra* (Sleep).

Acharya Sushruta said that *Hridaya* is the seat of *Chetna* in *Sharira*. When *Tamoguna* invades this area, the person sleeps. *Tamoguna* is the cause for *Nidra* (Sleep) and *Sattva Guna* is the cause for *Bodhana* (Awakening). This is known as *Swabhavika* cause.

RELATIONSHIP OF NIDRA (SLEEP) WITH PRAKRITI

According to *Prakriti*, Sleep can be divided into two groups.

1) According to *Deha Prakriti* and

2) According to *Manasa Prakriti*.

1) ACCORDING TO DEHA PRAKRITI

Sleep is produced by *Tamoguna* and *Sleshma*. Therefore, the quality and quantity of sleep vary according to the Prakriti of a person. An individual of *Kapha Prakriti* Sleeps more, which is sound, while a person of *Vata Prakriti* Sleeps less and may be disturbed also. Generally, the persons having *Vata Prakriti* had poor Sleep and capacity of excessive *Jagarana*.

2) ACCORDING TO MANASA PRAKRITI

The mind is always flickering because it is governed by the *Prana Vayu*. It is subject to moods, principally *Rajas* and *Tamasa*. The former is a state of emotion and the latter is inhibition. The devoid of the two pure states of mind is *Sattva*. This is surpassed by *Rajasa* and *Tamasa*; however, much remains restrained. Hence, people with excess *Tamasa* in their system sleep heavily. They Sleep both during the day and night. Those with *Rajasa* as the dominant trait slept either during the day or night, and their sleep was light and disturbed. People with *Sattva* were the main trait of sleep peacefully, but never before midnight.

CONCLUSION

Ayurveda considers sleep as one of the three sub-pillars of life alongside diet and celibacy. *Prakriti* (individual constitution) is determined at birth and characterized by dominant *Dosha* (*Vata*, *Pitta*, *Kapha*) and *Guna* (*Sattva*, *Rajas*, *Tamas*). Sleep patterns vary based on *Prakriti*: *Kapha Prakriti* (*Tamas Guna*): Deep, prolonged Sleep, *Pitta Prakriti* (*Sattva Guna*): Moderate Sleep, *Vata Prakriti* (*Rajas Guna*): Less and interrupted Sleep, Sleep onset is attributed to the predominance of *Tamas Guna* and *Kapha Dosha*. The mental constitution (*Manasa Prakriti*) also influences Sleep: *Tamas*-dominant: Heavy Sleep, *Rajas*-dominant: Light and disturbed sleep *saturva*-dominant: peaceful sleep after midnight. The text explores definitions of sleep from various Ayurvedic texts and discusses the factors

influencing sleep onset. Understanding the relationship between *Prakriti* and *Nidra* (Sleep) can provide insights into personalized sleep management and overall well-being in Ayurvedic practice.

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