



A CRITICAL STUDY ON NIDRA AND SWAPA IN CHARAKA SAMHITA

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ABSTRACT

In *Ayurveda* detailed description of about sleep, sleeping pattern, type of bed etc. is available. There are two different terms that often come across in the context of sleep which are namely *Nidra* and *Swapa*. They seem to be synonyms of each other. *Acharya Charaka* has described *Nidra* in 21st chapter of *Sutrasthana* named *Astauninditiya*. It remains a question always that instead of describing *Nidra* in *Swastha chatushka* of *Charaka samhita* what is the need for describing it in *Ashtauninditiya adhyaya* of *Yojana chatushka*. The present study attempts to differentiate between the terms *Nidra* and *Swapna* mentioned in *Charaka samhita* and find out the reason of explaining *Nidra* in *Astauninditiya adhyaya* of *Charaka samhita*.

Key words: *Ashtauninditiya, Charaka samhita, Nidra, Swapa.*

INTRODUCTION: *Ayurveda* is a complete medical science which deals with treatment as well as prevention of diseases. For prevention of diseases conducts like *Dinacharya*, *Ritucharya* etc. are described.^{i,ii} Also there is detail description available about sleep, sleeping pattern etc.ⁱⁱⁱ There are two different terms come across in context of sleep which are namely *Nidra* and *Swapa* which seems to be synonyms of each other. *Acharya Charaka* has described *Nidra* in 21st chapter of *Sutrasthana* named *Astauninditiya*. It remains a question always that instead of describing *Nidra* in *Swastha chatushka* of *Charaka samhita* why it has been described in *Ashtauninditiya adhyaya* of *Yojanachatushka*?

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES:

1. To differentiate between the terms *Nidra* and *Swapa* mentioned in *Charaka samhita*.

2. To discover the reason of description of *Nidra* in *Astauninditiya adhyaya* of *Charaka samhita*.

MATERIAL AND METHOD: A critical study with the help of *Shabdakalpadruma*, commentaries on *Charaka samhita* like *Ayurveda dipika*, *Jalpakaipataru* have been referred and interpreted.

NIDRA AND SWAPA: Word *Nidra* is derived from Sanskrit *dhatu* '*nid-kutsayam*' i.e. 'despicable'^{iv} which indicates abnormal or undesirable form of sleep. Definition of *Swapna* by *Acharya Charaka* and *Chakrapani*^v and gives the clear-cut idea about normal sleep. In the treatment of *Nidra Vega dharana*, *swapna* has been given as a treatment.^{vi} This clearly shows that *Nidra* and *Swapna* are two different terms with different meaning. In the context of sleep in day time, the word *Divaswapa* has been used and is indicated only in *Grishma ritu* to overcome *Vata prakopa* caused by a reduced amount of sleep due to short night in *Grishmaritu*.^{vii}

But if it is taken in other *ritu* it is stated to be harmful for health.^{viii} *Acharya Charaka*, while describing role of sleep in maintenance of health, has used the word *Swapna* to show its normalcy and any disturbance in normal sleep leads to manifestation of *Sthaulya* and *Karshya*.^{ix} At another place^x commentator *Chakrapani* has specified that the word *swapna* has been used to differentiate it from *Nidra*. While describing *Adravya chikitsa* under the heading of *Upaya*, *Acharya Charaka* has used the term *Swapna*.^{xi} Also in the context of *Achararasayana*, *Acharya Charaka* has used the word '*Samajagaranaswapna*'.^{xii} In the list of symptoms of *kaphaja jwara*, the word *Atinidra* has been used which shows its relation with abnormality.^{xiii}

DISCUSSION: After reviewing and interpreting the literary review of *Nidra* and *Swapna* it can be said that the word *Swapna* is related with normalcy and word *Nidra* is related with abnormality. The word *Nidra* is derived from such Sanskrit *dhatu* which is in the meaning of despicable i.e. abnormal or undesirable form of sleep. As in *Ashtauninditiya adhyaya* of *Charaka samhita* in *Sutrasthana*, eight types of *Nindita* i.e. undesirable body constituents have been described.^{xiv} This *adhyaya* is related with undesirable things which directly related with the health. Also it is mentioned that, in the manifestation and treatment of *Sthaulya* and *Karshya*, sleep and diet play very important role.^{xv} Alike description about *Ahara*, (in *Trividhakukshiya adhyaya* of *Vimanasthana*, *Matrashitiya adhyaya* and *Annapanavidhi adhyaya* of *Sutrasthana*) except in the *Ashtauninditiya adhyaya*, *Nidra* is not explained in detail in *Charaka Samhita*. These two criteria gives a clear-cut idea about its depiction in

Ashtauninditiya adhyaya. Now it can be clear that *Nidra* is related with the abnormal condition while *Swapna* is related with the normal pattern of sleep.

It still remains a question that why *Acharya Charaka* while describing the types of sleep has used the term *Nidra*.^{xvi} Also while stating the importance of sleep^{xvii} why the term *Nidra* has been used in spite of *Swapna*. In the first context amongst the 5 types of *Nidra*, four are abnormal and one is normal i.e. *ratri swabhava prabhava* and in the 2nd reference *Sukha* etc. factors depend upon normal type of sleep i.e. *Samayoga* and *Dukha* etc. factors depend upon 3 abnormal types of sleep namely *Atiyoga*, *Mithyayoga* and *Ayoga*.^{xviii} By the rule of majority (*Chatrinogacchantinyaya*), normal pattern of sleep has also been included under the heading of *Nidra*.

CONCLUSION: The two different terms namely *Nidra* and *Swapna* are not synonyms of each other. In the context of normal sleep, *Acharya Charaka* has used the term *Swapna* and in the context of abnormal sleep pattern word *Nidra* has been used. Derivation of word *Nidra* indicates abnormal or undesirable form of sleep. As in *Ashtauninditiya adhyaya* of *Charaka samhita* in *Sutrasthana*, eight types of undesirable body constituents have been described. This *adhyaya* is related with undesirable things which directly affects the health. Also in the manifestation and treatment of *Sthaulya* and *Karshya*, sleep and diet play very important role. Therefore it has been described in this chapter.

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