



Asian Journal of Modern and Ayurvedic Medical Science | ISSN 2279-0772

[ONLINE] Volume: volume1, number 1 | publication Date:
Sunday, July 01, 2012, Published by Mpasvo [article url
[http://www.ajmams.com/viewpaper.aspx?pcode=ef370253-
c78a-4bb8-8852-2fe3d818e0c9](http://www.ajmams.com/viewpaper.aspx?pcode=ef370253-c78a-4bb8-8852-2fe3d818e0c9)

**Published papers title : The Concept of
Swapna (Dream) in Ayurveda- A Literary
Review**

**Authors : Sahu Divya 2. Singh Rani 1. Jr III,
Deptt. of Siddhant Darshan, Faculty of Ayurveda
, IMS, BHU. 2. Assistant Professor, Deptt. of
Siddhant Darshan, Faculty of Ayurveda , IMS,
BHU.**

Research Paper

The Concept of Swapna (Dream) in Ayurveda- A Literary Review

Divya Sahu 1 Rani Singh 2

Declaration

The Declaration of the authors for publication of Research Paper in Asian Journal of Modern and Ayurvedic Medical Science (ISSN 2279-0772) Divya Sahu and Rani Singh, the authors of the research paper entitled The Concept of Swapna (Dream) in Ayurveda- A Literary Review entities described in ayurveda declare that , We take the responsibility of the content and material of our paper as We ourself have written it and also have read the manuscript of our paper carefully. Also, We hereby give our consent to publish our paper in ajmams , This research paper is our original work and no part of it or it's similar version is published or has been sent for publication anywhere else. We authorise the Editorial Board of the Journal to modify and edit the manuscript. We also give our consent to the publisher of ajmams to own the copyright of our research paper.

Received january ,2012;accepted june 15, 2012 ,published july1,2012

ABSTRACT: Ā yurveda is the science which deals all spheres of life, based on its sound fundamental principles. There are many theories and concepts such as Panchamahabhuta, Tridosha, Triguna, Loka-Purusha samya and Swapna, etc. were propounded by our ancient seers of Āyurveda. Among them Swapna is one, which is not in clinical practice today but it has its own significance in the field of medicine. According to modern science also Dreaming is biologically important.

Almost all the great scholars of Ā yurveda like Charaka, Sushruta, Vagbhata, Kashyapa, Bhela, Harita, Sharangdhar and Bhavaprakash has given due consideration to this vary concept right from physiological as well as prognosis point of view. Charak Samhita, which is the first and the foremost treatise of Ā yurveda has given great importance to the Dreams and chapters have been devoted for the same. It is described in detail in the 'Indriyasthan' in context of Arishta lakshan (signs of imminent death), auspiciousness and inauspiciousness.

Dreams are supposed to occur due to the deranged or vitiated state of Doshas (Vata, Pitta, Kapha) which affects the Manas(Mind) and produces dreams accordingly indicating its good or bad effect. Dreams have been mentioned in many diseases like Rajyakshma(tuberculosis), Raktapitta(bleeding disorder), Unmada(insanity), Apasmara(epilepsy), etc. with respect to Purvarupa(prodromal signs), Rupa(symptoms) and Arishta lakshan. So dreams have deep relationship in the causation, manifestation and prognosis of a disease.



Studies have shown that Dreams are not only psychologically important but even physiologically also. Although, some studies have been done by some research scholars on Dream in Āyurveda, even then more efforts are required to explore the possibility of application of this concept in the field of health and diseases.

Introduction

Ayurveda is the science and philosophy of life based on the laws of nature. There are many theories and concepts propounded by our ancient scholars of Ayurveda, such as Samanyavada, Loka-Purusha Samya, Panmahabhuta, Mana, Atma, Kala, Disha, Tridosha, Triguna, Saptadhatu, Svabhavoparamvada, etc. Among these Swapna is one, which is not in clinical practice today but it has its own significance in the field of medicine. All the ancient Ayurvedic scholars have given great importance to this concept right from birth to death in different context. Dreams are related with the state of health and disease and even the prognosis of diseases as mentioned in Ayurvedic classics.

Material and Method- Collection, exposition and interpretation of subject matter from different text of Ayurveda.

Etymologically, the term Swapna is derived from the Sanskrit root 'स्वप् + नक्' (masculine) which means to sleep, fall asleep, to lie down, recline upon, dreaming or dream (Sir.M.M.Williams). The word Swapna has been used in two references in Ayurveda, one in the context of Nidra (sleep) for example in Trayopstambha & "त्रयोपस्तम्भा इति आहारः स्वप्नो ब्रह्मचर्यमिति ।" (Ch.Su.11/35) and the other for dreams. The present work is related to the Swapna as dreams.

Classification of Swapna

“दृष्टं श्रुतानुभूतं च प्रार्थितं कल्पितं तथा ।

भाविकं दोषजं चैव स्वप्नं सप्तविधं
विदुः ।।” -(Ch.In.5/43)

Charaka have stated seven types of Swapna such as:

1. दृष्ट (Drishta): “दृष्टमिति चक्षुषां ।” (चक्रपाणिदत्त)

-visual experiences of an individual in his/or her dreams

2. श्रुत (Shrita): “यश्च शब्दमात्रेण वस्तुजातं श्रोत्रेन्द्रियेण गृह्यते तदानीं सुप्तावस्थायां तादृक् संवितीरूप तया अनुभूयते ।” --- (Arundutta on A.H.Sa.6/61)

- Auditory experience means hearing of different sounds and words (self created)

3. अनुभूत (Anubhuta): अनुभूतन्तु शेषेन्द्रियज्ञातम् । (चक्रपाणिदत्त)

- Experience of false pleasures and pains in dreams.

4. प्रार्थित (Prarthita): प्रार्थितं यान्चाविषयकृतम् । (चक्रपाणिदत्त)

- Fulfillment of strong desires in the dreams

5. कल्पित (Kalpita): कल्पितमिति मनसा भावितम् । (चक्रपाणिदत्त)

- Imaginary or self created dreams



6. भाविक (Bhavika): भाविकमिति
भाविशुभाशुभफलसूचकम्। (चक्रपाणिदत्त
)

-Dreams related to the future

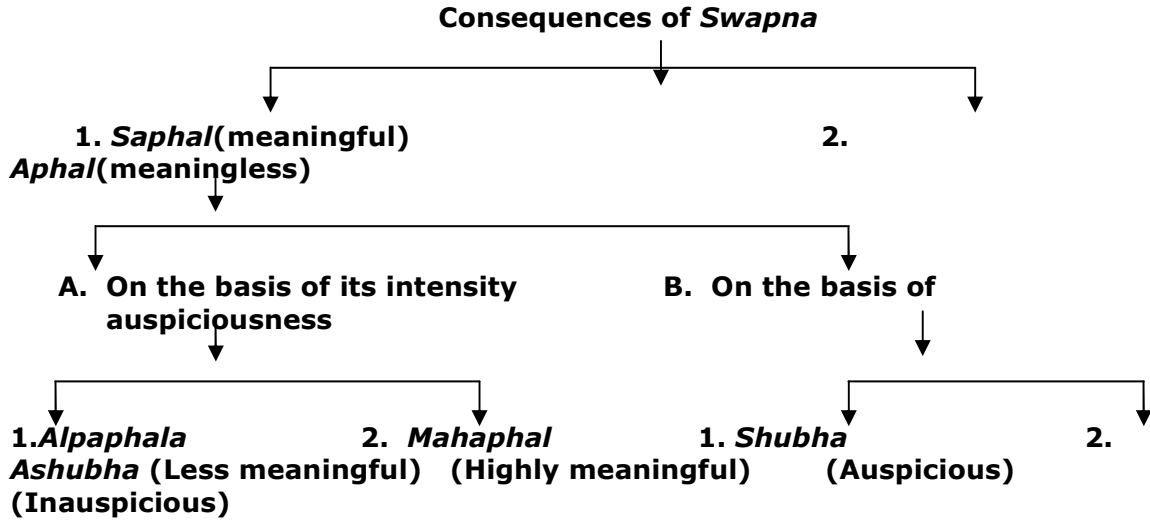
7. दोषज (Doshaja): दोषजमिति
उल्लणवातादिदोषजन्यम्। (चक्रपाणिदत्त
)

- Due to involvement of vitiated
Doshas. Similar view has been

mentioned in Ashtang Sangraha and
Ashtang Hridaya. (A.S.Sa.12/12,
A.H.Sa6/61)

Classification of Swapna along with their

Consequences: The results of
dreams have been depicted as
Saphal (meaningful) and Aphil
(meaningless). It has been classified
on the basis of time and duration
which can be shown
diagrammatically as:



1. **Saphal
Swapna(meaningful
dreams)**
These dreams impart some
meaning having definite
result. *Doshika* and *Bhavita*
type of Swapna (dreams) as
mentioned by Charaka, are
considered as Saphala
Swapna(meaningful dream)
by Chakrapani Dutt
“परिशेष्याद्भाविकं दोषजन्यं च
सफलम्।” (Chakrapanidutta
on Ch.in.5/44)

Acharya Kashyap has also
given meaningful or fruitful
dreams such as

- *Adrishta* (The unseen
Subjects)
- *Ashrita* (Unheard)
- *Anukta* (Untold)

- *Akalpitam*
(Unimagined)
- *Abhashitam*(
Unuttered)
- *Karyamatram* (dreams
without any reason)
(Ka. I. 25, 26)

Again the Saphal Swapna
can be divided on the
basis of their intensity of
results and auspiciousness
such as -

A. Swapna on the basis of intensity

I. **Alpaphala (Less meaningful):**

The dream seen in
early hours of night.
(Ch.In.5/45).

Similar view has been
given in Ashtang



Sangraha and Hridaya. (A.S.Sa.12/13 & A.H.Sa.6/62)

- II. **Mahaphal (Highly meaningful):** Dreams which portends result immediately (Sadya). If one does not get sleep in night after seeing dreams. (Ch.In.5/45) Along with this, the dreams seen in the early morning, not negated by unhelpful words or awakened by harsh words also comes under this category as said in Ashtang Sangraha and Hridaya. (A.S.Sa 12/15 & A.H.Sa 6/63)

B. Swapna on the basis of its auspiciousness

- I. **Shubha Swapna (Auspicious dreams):** The Acharyas have elaborated a list of Swapna which are considered as Su-Swapna. According to Sharangdhara, the dreams which are seen by a sick person portends relief from disease and if seen by a healthy person, portends health is known as shubha swapna (Sa.S.Pu.3/39). For example, dialogue with the gods and forefathers in their pleasing mood, Vision of white garments, Vision of clean lake, dreams of swimming in the water, improvement

of health and end of suffering, etc. are shubha swapna (Ch.In.12/82-86, Su.Su.29/75-81, A.S.Sa.12/22-27-29, A.H.Sa.6/65-70, Sha.S.Pu.3/36-41). If one experiences an inauspicious dream but thereafter auspicious one, this is indicator of an auspicious result. (Ch.In.5/46, As.H.Sh.6/64).

- II. **Ashubha Swapna (Inauspicious dreams):** Acharyas have described some Swapna as bad omens. They are seen by both healthy and diseased. In the healthy they announce the arrival of an illness and in a diseased they herald death (Sa.S.Pu.3/30). For example, appearance of bamboo, shrubs, creeper, etc. over head, defeated by vultures, owls, dogs, crows, getting arrested or defeated, falling or destruction of the stars, god, lamp and eyes etc. (Ch.In.5/28-40, Su.Su.29/55-66, A.S.Sa.12/19,28, A.H.Sa.6/46-58, Sha.Sa.Pu.3/29-33)

2. Aphala Swapna (meaningless or result less dreams)

Under this category following are considered according to Charaka

- The first five types of dreams i.e. Drishta,



- Srita, Anubhuta, Prarthita and Kalpita.
- Dreams seen during day time(during day sleep)
 - Too long dreams
 - Too short dreams (Ch.In.5/44)

According to Acharya Kashyapa, Ashtanga Sangraha and Hridaya accepted all above along with some more dreams.

According to Sushruta

- Dreams which are seen during day time(similar to Charaka)
- Those which are forgotten or destroyed by the next dreams
- Dreams seen under prevailing tension (Su.Su.29/67)

According to Ashtanga Sangraha and Hridaya

- Those which are forgotten
- Dreams which are according to one's constitution
- Dreams seen when person is not fully asleep(Ashtanga Sangraha) (A.S.12/12 and A.H.6/162)

Acharya Kashyapa has mentioned Bhavita and Doshaja as meaningless dreams, although Charaka has stated them under the category of meaningful dreams. Kashyapa has mentioned Doshaja types of dreams in Nidansthan (section of pathology) but today the Nidansthan of Kashyap Samhita is not available. (Ka.S.In/23, 24)

Duration of result of Swapna: Acharya Harita has given the duration of the result after seeing a dream:-

Time of Seeing Swapna	Duration of Result
First part of night	One year
Second part of night	Six month
Third part of night	Three month
Fourth part of night or early morning	Ten days
During day time/ Rainy season	Six month

(Ha.S. 2/2/3, 4)

This kind of view is also given in the Bramhavaivarta Purana (Brah.Va.Pu.Utt.77/5,6,7)

Relation of Swapna with Prakriti (constitution)

Swapna and Prakriti both are the natural phenomenon.

Definition of Prakriti-

“शुक्रशोणितसंयोगे यो भवेद्दोषोत्कटः।

Vata Prakriti

प्रकृतिर्जायते तेन तस्या मे लक्षणं शृणु ॥”
(Su.Sa.4/6)

Means the *Dosha* which is predominant at the time of union of *Shukra* (sperm) and *Shonita* (ovum), the *prakriti* is determined according to that. The dream contents denoting the Prakriti of an individual are given in almost all the Ayurvedic classics except Charaka Samhita. For example:



Sr .n o	Dreams content	S. S.	A.S .	A. H.	SA. S	B. P	Bhel a
1	moving or flying or wandering in the sky	+	+	+	+	+	+
2	Dwelling on trees	-	-	+	-	-	-
3	Travelling on the mountains(peaks-A.S.)	-	+	+	-	-	-
4	Travelling the dried, uneven and irregular rivers	-	+		-	-	-
5	Rides on camel	-	-	-	-	-	+

Ref-A.S.Sa.8/11, A.H.Sa.3/88,Sa.Pu.6/64, B.P.Pu.4/54, Bhela.Vi.4/18

Prakriti parikshana (examination) is very important for maintaining the wellbeing and Bala parikshan (examination of strength), Ayu parikshan (examination of life span) and diagnosis of the disease, treatment and even the prognosis of disease also.

Manas prakriti(Psychic temperament) and Swapna: Sushruta has mentioned three types of Tamas kaya, a type of psychic temperament. They are *Pashav kaya*(animals psyche), *Matsya kaya*(fishes's psyche), *Vanaspatya kaya*(plant's psyche). Among these the person of *Pashav kaya* (animals psyche), dreams everyday as indulging in copulation.

“.....दुर्मेधस्त्वं मन्दता च स्वप्ने मैथुननित्यता।विज्ञेयाः पाशवा गुणाः।।”
(Su.Sa. 4/93)

Relation of Swapna with diseases: There are many diseases where dreams are seen at various stages like Purvarupa, Rupa and Arishta lakshana.

Swapna in Purvarupa (prodromal signs): The prodromal sign is very helpful in the diagnosis, treatment and prognosis of a disease and dreams are also seen at this stage in different disease like *raktapitta*, *rajyakshma*, *shosha*, *unmade* and *apasmara*. For example, in

Raktapitta(bleeding disorder), the dreams, seeing the shining objects of red, blue, yellow or blue black colour frequently.(Ch.Ni.2/6, A.H.Ni3/7).

Swapna in Rupa (signs): Similarly the dreams seen at this stage of diseases are also very important such as in *madatyaya* and *garvisha* etc. For example seeing terrifying and inauspicious objects is an indicator of *madatyaya* (alcoholic intoxication) (Ch.Chi.24/106, A.S.Ni.6/19)

Dreams indicating Arishta lakshana (signs of definite death): There are dreams in different disease which indicate definite death of patient like *raktapitta*, *rajyakshma*, *gulma*, *unmada*, etc. for example travelling towards south while riding dog, camel, ass and donkey in a *Swapna* indicates death of a patient suffering from *Rajyakshma* (*tuberculosis*). (Ch.In.5/8, 9, A.H.Sa.6/42, A.S.Sa.12/18). Similarly friendship with monkeys in a dream is an indicator of death of a patient suffering from *Shosha* (consumption) (Su.Su.29/68).

Swapna related to pregnancy: There are various dreams which indicate different aspects of pregnancy such as:



1. Dreaming about male or masculine objects during pregnancy indicates sex of the male child and dreaming about female or feminine objects indicates sex of the female child. (Ch.Sa.2/24, Su.Sa.3/32, A.Sa.2/36, A.H.Sa.1/70, B.P.3/47)
2. Acharya Kashyapa has described dreams indicating death of the pregnant lady that if a woman who rides a donkey, hog, buffalo, dog or camel during dreams she dies along with the fetus (Ka.khila.10/175, 176) and the woman who smiles during sleep or dreams of riding towards cremation ground that pregnant woman will suffer from obstructed labour and dies with fetus (Ka.khila.10/174).

Swapna related with Balgraha: Acharya Kasyapa has described particular dreams in relation to specific Graha affliction. These dreams have both diagnostic as well prognostic values. They may also imply the ineluctable death after being afflicted by that particular *Graha*. These dreams are either seen by the mother, *Dhatri* (the wet nurse) or by the child. For example in *Revati Graha affliction*, the mother or child dreams of drowning of child in sea or water reservoir. (Ka.In.11)

Methods for Pacification of Ashubha Swapna/duha swapna (bad dreams):

Although no specific drug therapies have been advised by Acharyas, like in the diseases but some methods have been mentioned for Ashubha Swapna in different context.

Samshodhan Chikitsa (purification therapy): Samshodhan Chikitsa is indicated in Charaka Samhita for a person

observing inauspicious dreams as it pacifies the vitiated doshas and establishes the state of equilibrium. (Ch.Su.16/15).

“तन्द्राक्लैव्यमबुद्धित्वमशस्तस्वप्नदर्शनम्.....
।” (च.सू.16/15)

Samshamana Chikitsa (pacification therapy)—there are two type of therapies mentioned in classics.

1. Dravyabhuta

chikitsa (Drug therapy): Drug like *Mritsanjivan Agad* have been prescribed for the treatment of *Duhswapna*, mentioned in context of *Visha Chikitsa* (treatment of poisoning) . (Ch.Chi. 23/59).

- Using tooth cleaning stick of *Jaati* (jasminum officinale-oleaceae family), *Tagar* (valeriana wallichii-valerianaceae family) and *Madaar* (calotropis gigantia-asclepiadaceae family) for brushing is mentioned in Bhavprakash.

“जाती तगर मन्दारैः दुःस्वप्नं च विनश्यति ।”..(B.P.Pur.5/34)

- Use of gem studded ornaments:

“गह्वदृष्टिहरं पुष्टिकरं
दुःस्वप्ननाशनम् ।
रत्नाभरणधारणम् ।।”
(B.P.Pur.5/100)

2. Adravyabhuta Chikitsa (nonpharmacological)

- In Sushruta Samhita, methods like getting up early in the morning and offering Masha (black gram), Tila (sesamum), Iron and Gold



to the Brahmanas, chanting of auspicious hymns such as Tripada Gayathri, reciting Vedas. If the dream is seen during the first Yama of night then one should sleep thinking of auspicious events (su.su.29/71-74). Similarly in Ashtang Sangraha, it is advised that after getting up one should take the bath and offer red Mustard or Sesamum seeds smeared with Ghrita to the fire in the name of Savithri (As.S.Sh.12/30). In Ashtang Hridaya it is mentioned that bad dreams become less effective by indulging in charity, sacrifice or incantations, etc. (As.H.Sh.6/64) Other Acharyas have given more or less similar view in this regard.

Discussion: After going through the entire literature of Ayurveda related to *Swapna* indicates that in ancient time this concept was quite prevalent in clinical practice. It is related to all sphere of life whether illness or wellbeing. Various aspects like *prakriti parikshan, balgraha, poorvaroopa, roopa and arishta* of a disease were assessed by this approach in all discipline of medicine. The importance of *Swapna* in maternal and child health care is also described in detail. *Swapna* related with sex of progeny may be important for further study to testify our texts. As far as the result is concerned, dreams seen in early morning are considered highly meaningful. Why is it so? It is observation based. This can be understood by Mahayan Sutra Sangraha stating predominance of *Satva* in fourth *prahar*(Part) of night.

“ब्राह्मे मूर्हूर्त उत्तिष्ठेत् स्वस्थो रक्षार्थमायुषः।” (A. H. Su.2/1)

Similarly auspicious and inauspicious dreams may also help a physician regarding the prognosis of a disease so that one can take decision accordingly. In context of *Dashvidha Pariksha*, Charaka has mentioned that state of health can be ascertained by the absence of bad dreams. ‘वैकारिकाणां च स्वप्नानामदर्शनम्।’ (च.वि. 8/89)

If Ayurvedic practitioner will give some attention to this approach, hope it will give some benefit in maintaining the health and curing of disease. Charaka has stated the importance of knowledge of *Swapna* for a physician regarding prodromal signs and dreams so that he will not treat the incurable cases for the sake of his prestige.

‘पूर्वरूपाण्यथ स्वप्नान् य इमान् वेत्ति दारुणान्।

न स मोहादसाध्येषु कर्माण्यारभते भिषक्।।’ (च.इ.5/47)

Summary and conclusion- In the ancient time when no sophisticated tools and technologies were available, the concept of *Swapna* was very popular in clinical practice for the diagnosis and prognosis of diseases as well as for the maintenance of health. Acharya’s had keen and practical observation regarding dreams which do exist in the present time. It requires attention for exploration, interpretation and application, sincerely with patience and devotion.

References

1. Apte Vaman Shivram, Sanskrit Hindi Kosha, Motilal Banarsidas, Varanasi, 1987
2. Bhisagacarya Satyapala, Kasyapa Samhita, revised by Vatsya, Hindi translation, Chaukhamba Sanskrita



- Sansthana, Varanasi, 10th edition, 2005
3. Dwivedi.B.K, Goswami.P.K, Charaka Samhita with Ayurveda Dipika commentary by Cakrapanidatta, Chowkhamba Krishnadas Academy, Varanasi, 2nd edition, 2006.
 4. Kaviraj Kunjalal Bhishagratna, Sushruta Samhita with English translation vol 1, sutrasthan, chaukhamba Sanskrit Series , Varanasi, Second Edition , 1963
 5. Kushwaha Harish Chandra, Charaka Samhita with Ayurveda Dipika Hindi translation, Chaukhamba Orientalia, 1ST edition, 2005.
 6. Murthy. K.R. Srikantha, Sushruta samhita with English translation, vol 1, sutrasthan, chaukhamba orientalia, Varanasi, second edition.
 7. Murthy K.R. Srikantha, Bhavprakash vol I, English translation, krishnadas Academy, Varanasi.
 8. Pt. Hari Sadashiva Shastri Paradkara, Aṣṭāṅga Hṛdaya of Vāgbhatta with the Commentaries Sarvāṅgasūndarā of Arundutta and Āyurvedarasāyaṇa of Hemādri, Chaukhamba Surbharati Prakashan, Varanasi, 2011.
 9. Sharma R.K. & Dash Bhagwan, Charaka samhita with English translation, Chaukhamba Sanskrit series office, Varanasi, reprint 2010.
 10. Sastri Pt. Kashinath and Chaturvedi Gorakhnath, Charaka Samhita with Vidyotini commentary (part1 and 2), Chowkhamba Bharati Academy, 1st edition, 2002.
 11. Sastri Ramavalamba, Harita Samhita text with Asha Hindi commentary, Prachya Prakashan, Varanasi, 1st edition, 1985.
 12. Tarini Zha, Bramhavaivarta Purana (Śrī Krishna janma khanda, uttarardha), Hindi Sahitya Sammelan, Allahabad.
 13. Tiwari P.V., Kasyapa Samhita with English translation, Chaukhamb Vishwabharati, 1st edition, 2008
 14. Tripathi Bramhananda, Sharangdhara Samhita with Anjana Nidana of Agnivesha and Dipika commentary, Chaukhamba Surbharati Prakashan, 2nd edition, 2001.
 15. Vaidya Yadavji Trikamji, Suśruta Saṁhitā with Nībandhasangraha Commentary of Śrī Ḍalhaṇācharya, Chaukhamba Surbharati Prakashan, Varanasi, 2010
 16. Williams.M.M., A Sanskrit English Dictionary, Bharatiya Granth Niketan, New Delhi, 2010



