

“CONCEPT OF DREAMS (*SWAPNAH*)**IN INDIAN TRADITIONS”****Dr. A.R.V. Murthy, M.D., (Ay) Ph.D.**

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Dream is a state of mind which is dominated by mind and it's projections resulting in experiences of divergent nature, which may or may not have any significance. It's in a twilight zone of sleep and wakefulness that a person experiences dreams and this state has been recognized as one of most thrilling experiences by the mankind since the very remote times.

Key Words: - *SWAPNAH, MANOVAHASROTAMSI 'DAIVA', ADRISHTA*

INTRODUCTION:

Upanishads have dealt in depth this state of the *psyche* with illustrative evidences. *Brihadaranyaka Upanisad* says – “there are no true chariots, no beautiful roads, no colourful scenes, no rivers, and no greeneries. But the *Jivatman* (the inner soul) creates all these beautiful things for his satisfaction and enjoys thoroughly, even though in the real life all these are beyond the realms of imagination”⁽¹⁾.

Dream is a state where sense organs continue to be overcome by *Tamas*, but the mind along with its projections is dominated by *Rajas* and is kept active. *Bhela Samhita* defines dream as a state where the organs of sense get exhausted and keep themselves away from their respective objects, but the mind continues to enjoy its perceptions⁽²⁾. It’s really interesting to note that Sankara, noted propounder of *Advaita* School, has not only subscribed to similar view, but used almost the same “wording”⁽³⁾, so does Vagbhata⁽⁴⁾. Both *Yogavasistha*⁽⁵⁾ and *Vasishta Samhita*⁽⁶⁾ generally concur with this view but go on to describe the dream phenomenon in their own poetic style.

Describing the physiopathology of dream phenomenon Caraka holds that all three *dosas* in their exceedingly aggravated state fill the *Manovahasrotamsi* (‘channels’ for movements and activities of ‘mind’) and cause terrible dreams in ominous situations⁽⁷⁾. Cakrapani clarifies about the usage *Manovahasrotamsi* stating that in the current context, these channels refer to ten vessels attached to heart in as much

as the heart is the seat of mind⁽⁸⁾. Todara in his illustrious work Ayurveda Soukham concurs with Caraka’s concept on the process of dream formation. It is interesting to note that Todara has considered syapa (sleep) as of types-swapna & sushukti. This appears to be a distinct concept from the rest.

Dwidha swpnasushuptibhyam swapo bahyendriyani chet.

Liyate hridi jagranti chittam swapnah taduchayte

Manah chelliyate prane sushuptih syattadaatmanah Todara 3/231

“Syapa (sleep) is of two types viz, *svapna* (light sleep) and *sushupti* (deep sleep). When the external senses get submerged in the heart while the *chitta* (mind) is still awake (active), it is called the state of *svapna*. If the mind gets submerged in the *prana* (elan vital), then it is called the state of *sushupti*.”

Dreams occur neither in the state of deep sleep or awakened state but are experienced only in a state characterized by a meeting point of these two states – *Natiprasuptah*⁽⁹⁾. *Vedanta Darsana* too has made similar observations. Dreams occur generally either just before one falls fast asleep or just before one gets fully awakened from sleep. When the sense organs are not alive to external world, but the mind is, dream results. When mind too isolates itself with *Prana*, sleep results. A state of restlessness characterises the state of dream and this instability in the mental projections is the

one factor which differentiates the dream from sleep. At times the term *swapnah* has often been used to mean sleep. Both Caraka⁽¹⁰⁾ and *Cakrapani*⁽¹¹⁾ have resorted to such usage. In *Ayurveda* terminology the word *Diwaswapnam* is employed to represent day sleep and has nothing to do with day dreaming. *Amarakosa* has dubbed *Swapnam & Nidra* as synonymous- ***samanarthakah nidra sayana swapa swapna sanvesha tandra*** Amarakosa 1/7/36/2/1

Prasastapada a noted commentator of *Vaisesika* school discusses three types of dreams based on causes for the manifestation of dreams- Psychic impressions (*Samskarah*), disequilibrium of the bodily humors (*Dhatudosapradosha*) and the “unseen” (*Adrishta*)⁽¹²⁾. *Ayurveda* texts too have made similar observations. *Susruta* holds that the corporeal self (*Bhutatma*), in association with the *psyche* dominated with activity (*rajas*) experiences divergent dreams in accordance with the psychic impressions carried from the past life (*purvadehanubhutamstu*)⁽¹³⁾. Interestingly *Bhela* admits that during the dream state the dreaming individual can establish a verbal conference with his ancestors (*pitru*) divine beings (*deva*) and other human beings (*manushya*)⁽¹⁴⁾. *Ayurveda* implicates *Tridosha* in the very manifestation of morbid dreams⁽¹⁵⁾. However the term “*Adrishta*” in relation to dreams does not seem to have made way in *Ayurveda* literature. However “*Daiva*” is an accepted entity in

Ayurveda and it is used to mean psychic impressions (*Karma*) Divine beings (*Deva*) and unseen (*Adrishta*).

Ayurveda has advocated three categories of approaches to treatment

1. *Daivavyapasraya* 2. *Sattvavajaya* and 3. *Yuktivyapasraya*⁵.

Daivavyapasraya represents empirical application of magicoreligious practices, derived basically from *Atharvan* literature. *Daiva* refers to acts of past life and the diseases linked with such acts are treated under this category.

The word ‘*Daiva*’ refers to three different but related entities.

- 1) ***devah suraah surayonayascha*** (Dalhana on susruta sutra 11/54) Divine or celestial personalities, derived from the root ‘*Di*’ to shine.
- 2) ***Daivamadrushtam*** (Cakrapani on Charaka Sutra 11/54) destiny, fate or fortune, that which is not seen or known
- 3) ***nirdidishtam daiva sabdena karma yadpourvadaihi kam***⁸ – (Charaka Sharira 1/116) the acts of past life, and their dispositions. This meaning is particularly important because this has a relevance to the concept of rebirth to which *Ayurveda* subscribes.

‘*Daiva*’ thus relates to all that, which is acquired before birth by the descent (inheritance) in the long course of evolution. The hereditary tendencies that are due to familial inheritance, class or caste in which one is born (*Jati*), lineage (*kula*) such

as professional, geographical descent (*desa*) and the age (*kala/ yuga*) in which one is born (descent), all of them have their own influence in developing good or bad qualities possessed by an individual. Thus *Daiva* refers to divine, destiny and deeds of past, all of which are unseen, because of which the individual has to enjoy or suffer with this embodiment.

Seven types of dreams have been identified by Caraka⁽¹⁶⁾ - *Drishta* (seen) *sruta*(heard) *Anubhuta* (experienced) *Prarthita* (desired) *Kalpita* (Imagined) *Bhavika* (predictive) and *Dosaja* (humoral).

Seen, heard and experienced are mere repetitions of the forms of the things apprehended visually, by audition or by other means, during the waking states. Desired dreams are of the nature of fulfillment of wishes concerning things seen, sounds heard and any other experience through other perceptive faculty. Prasastapada holds that an individual by the force of *kama* (passion) or *krodha*(anger) wishes to fulfil the desires, experienced in the dream state. Imagined are neither reproductions of experiences of the waking state or the desired, but are spontaneous and exaggerated creations of mind. Predictives are the dreams, which predict or forebode the events that may manifest in future. Sankara has used “*sucaka*” to denote this type of dream. Kusumanjali, a treatise in Sanskrit composed around 10 th century AD , too holds that some dreams may turn out to be true events

in future. *Dosaja* dreams basically have their source in deranged *Dosas*. Sankara in another context, regards sleep a phantom experience.

Caraka holds that of the first five of the seven types of dreams (cited above), , those dreams that are experienced during the day time, those that are either too short or too long are not meaningful (*aphala*) as far as the physician is concerned in as much as they do not have prodromal value. Dreams experienced in the first part of the night are less meaningful. Dreams experienced in the last part of night, if are not followed by sleep are highly meaningful ⁽¹⁷⁾. Inauspicious dream followed by auspicious one has auspicious value ⁽¹⁸⁾. Predictive dream may have auspicious or inauspicious results and *dosaja* leads to disease ⁽¹⁹⁾. Pancatantra a popular work on short stories, holds the dreams experienced by the diseased, grieved, depressed, and passionate and by an alcoholic has no workable value ⁽²⁰⁾.

Both *Susruta* and *Vagbhata* describe the types of dreams seen by the individuals by the very nature of their psychosomatic constitution (*Prakritih*). The one with *vata* constitution experiences flying in the space and climbing mountains and tall trees ^{(21), (22)}. The one dominated by *pittam* visualises the trees like *Butea frondosa* (*Palasa*) *Datura metal* (*Kanaka*), and also sees fire, lightening and other electrical manifestations ^(23, 24). The individuals of *kaphaja* types see lotus flowers (*kamala*), swans (*hamsa*) and beautiful lakes and rivers^(25,26).

Caraka and Cakradatta also discuss and describe the dreams as prominent symptoms of disease and death. A variety of dreams are listed which suggest the further manifestation of diseases like insanity and those which are indicative of imminent death. In addition the nature of the dreams appearing in specific disease groups are also mentioned (Caraka samhita Indriya sthana, chap 5, and Astanga Sangraha/Hridaya sarira sthana chap.6).

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रथान्त्रथयोगान्पथः सृजते । न तत्राऽऽनन्दा मुदः प्रमुदो
भवन्त्यथाऽऽनन्दान्मुदः प्रमुदः सृजते । न तत्र
वेशान्ताः पुष्करिण्यः स्रवन्त्यो भवन्त्यथ
वेशान्तान्पुष्करिणीः स्रवन्तीः सृजते स हि कर्ता ॥ १०
॥Br. Up. 4/3 – 10)
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तमसा हि समाक्रान्ते सत्त्वे दिवससंक्षयात्॥
इन्द्रियाण्यस्य कर्मभ्यः क्रमात्प्रविरमन्त्यथ।
भुक्तेऽन्ने पच्यमाने च श्लेष्मणा हृद्गतेन तु॥
विवृद्धेन निरुद्धेषु चक्षुःश्रोत्रवहेषु च।
कर्मक्रियासूर्यपादैश्छेदिता प्राणिनो दिवा॥
शारीरमानसैश्चैव तैस्तैरुक्तैरुपाहृता।
एवंक्रियान्नसंज्ञानि तन्द्रा विशति तामसी॥
एवं सर्वेषु भूतेषु निद्रा नामोपजायते।
चिन्ताशोकश्रमहरी ब्रह्मणा विहिता पुरा॥
स्वपतस्तस्य देहेऽस्मिन् प्राणापानौ सहोष्मकौ।
जागृतः जीवसंयुक्तस्तेनासौ न विनश्यति॥
इन्द्रियाणामुपरमे मनस्सूपरतं यदा।
सेवते गोचरं तेषां विद्धि तं स्वप्ननामकम्॥ भेस६ .२३.२-
२३.७ Bhe. Ci. 23/2-7

3. इन्द्रियनामुपरमे मनोनुऽपरतं यदि
4. सेवते विषयानेव तद्हिदयात्स्वप्नदर्शनम् Shankara
bhagavatpadar
5. सर्वेन्द्रियप्युरतौ मनोनुऽपरतं सदा
6. विषयेभ्यस्तदास्वप्नं नानारूपं प्रपश्यति As. San . Su
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8. भुङ्क्ते च बाह्यकारणेस्तु जागृद्दशाभवेत्
स्वप्नोऽपि बाह्यशून्यस्य भोक्तुभुक्तिः प्रकीर्तिता
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स्रोतसां दारुणान् स्वप्नान् काले पश्यति दारुणे॥४१॥ Ca. In.
5/41

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विषयेभ्यो निवर्तन्ते तदा स्वपिति मानवः॥३५॥ Ca. su. 21/35
11. सम्प्रति प्रस्तावागतं स्थौल्यकार्श्यचिकित्साप्रधानभूतं स्वप्नं निद्रारूपं सर्वतो निरूपयति यदा त्वित्यादि। मनसीति अन्तःकरणे; किंवा मनोयुक्त आत्मा मन इत्युच्यते, तस्मिन् कलान्त इति निष्क्रिये। कर्मात्मान इति इन्द्रियाणि। कलमान्विताः क्रियारहिताः। विषयेभ्यः रूपादिभ्यः। मनसोऽप्रवृत्त्येन्द्रियाण्यपि न प्रवर्तन्ते इति भावः। तदा स्वपितीति स्वप्नगुणयुक्तो भवति; स्वप्नश्च निरिन्द्रियप्रदेशे मनोवस्थानम्। किंवा कर्मात्मान इति संसार्यात्मानः। मनसि कलान्ते आत्मानः कलान्ता भवन्ति, मनोधीनप्रवृत्तित्वादात्मनां; ततश्च मनोनिवृत्त्या आत्मानोऽपि न विषयान् गृह्णन्ति, इन्द्रियाणि चात्मानोऽप्रवृत्त्यैव न प्रवर्तन्ते॥३५॥
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 14. रजोयुक्तेन मनसा गृह्णात्यथोज् शुभाशुभान् ||३६||
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15.
 16. पितृदेवमनुष्येषु संभाषणमुपैति च।
 परं च लभते स्वप्नभेदस्स हि न वात्मनः॥ भेस६.२३.८
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 भाविकं दोषजं चैव स्वप्नं सप्तविधं विदुः||४३|| Ca. In.
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20. तत्र पञ्चविधं पूर्वमफलं भिषगादिशेत।
 दिवास्वप्नमतिह्रस्वमतिदीर्घं च बुद्धिमान्||४४||
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23. पूर्वं दृष्टादिकल्पितान्तं पञ्चविधस्वप्नमफलम्।
 अफलस्वप्नान्तरमाह- दिवास्वप्नमित्यादि। दिवादृष्टं सर्वं
 स्वप्नं, तथा रात्रिदृष्टमपि अतिदीर्घमतिह्रस्वं च स्वप्नमफलं
 विद्यात्, फलशून्यत्वादिति। पारिशेष्याद्भाविकं दोषजन्यं च
 सफलम्। तत्र भाविकं शुभाशुभरूपतया शुभाशुभफलप्रदं, यत्तु
 दोषजन्यं तद्दोषप्रकोपजन्यव्याधिरूपफलसूचकतया सफलम्।
 अत्र चाध्याये येषामेव स्वप्नरूपविशिष्टरिष्टसम्भवस्त
 एवोक्ताः; तेन ग्रहण्यादीनां किमिति स्वप्नारिष्टानि,
 नोक्तानीति न वाच्यं; तत्र विशिष्टरिष्टासम्भवादेवानभिधानं
 ज्ञेयम्। ‘दृष्टः प्रथमयामे यः’ इत्यादिग्रन्थं केचिदत्र पठन्ति।
 स व्यक्तार्थ एव||४४-४७||
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 व्याधितेन सशोकेन चिन्ताग्रस्तेन जन्तुना

24. कामर्तेना अथ मत्तेन् दृष्टः स्वप्नोनिरर्थकः
Panchatantra apar ½
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26. द्रुतगतिरटनोऽनवस्थितात्मा वियति [३] च गच्छति
सम्भ्रमेण सुप्तः ॥६५॥
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द्रुतगतिरटनोऽनवस्थितात्मा वियति [३] च गच्छति सम्भ्रमेण
सुप्तः ॥६५॥
अव्यवस्थितमतिश्चलदृष्टिर्मन्दरत्नधनसञ्चयमित्रः
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दुर्निवारवीर्यः । सुप्तः सन् कनकपलाशकर्णिकारान्
सम्पश्येदपि च हुताशविद्युदुल्काः ॥६९ Su.Sa. 4/69॥
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पश्येत्कर्णिकारन्पलाशान्दिग्दाहोल्काविद्युदर्कानलांश्च As.
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31. शुक्लाक्षः स्थिरकुटिलालिनीलकेशो लक्ष्मीवान्
जलदमृदङ्गसिंहघोषः । सुप्तः सन् सकमलहंसचक्रवाकान्
सम्पश्येदपि च जलाशयान् मनोज्ञान् ॥७३॥ Su. Sa. 4/73
32. शुक्लाक्षः स्थिरकुटिलालिनीलकेशो लक्ष्मीवान्
जलदमृदङ्गसिंहघोषः । सुप्तः सन्
33. सकमलहंसचक्रवाकान् सम्पश्येदपि च जलाशयान् मनोज्ञान्
॥७३॥ As. Hr. Sa. 3/102