

Ayurvedic Perspective of Nidra and its Influence on Dhi, Dhruti, and Smruti

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Abstract: *Nidrā (sleep) is regarded in Ayurveda as one of the Trayopastambha (three pillars of life), essential for maintaining the integrity of both body (Śarīra) and mind (Manas). Sound sleep nourishes the mind, stabilizes emotional functioning, and restores neurocognitive processes essential for Dhī (intellect/cognitive processing), Dhṛti (emotional regulation and self-restraint), and Smṛti (memory and recollection). According to classical Ayurvedic texts, Nidrā arises when the mind and senses withdraw from external stimuli, allowing the body to enter a state of repair and rejuvenation. The Caraka Saṃhitā describes sleep as a natural mechanism for replenishing vital energies, enhancing strength, complexion, immunity, and cognitive clarity¹.*

Ayurvedic theory correlates sleep with the functions of Kapha—especially Tarpaka Kapha—which nourishes the brain, enhances mental stability, and supports the consolidation of mental impressions. Disturbance in Nidrā leads to impairment of mental faculties, irritability, poor decision-making, memory deficits, and emotional instability, all reflecting defective Dhī, Dhṛti, and Smṛti. The modern neuroscientific understanding of sleep as a period of synaptic homeostasis, memory consolidation, emotional regulation, and glymphatic clearance complements classical descriptions, offering an integrated model of brain restoration.

This article presents a comprehensive Ayurvedic and modern scientific exploration of Nidrā, its physiology, types, and impact on higher mental functions. It further examines therapeutic strategies to improve cognitive faculties through the regulation of sleep. The alignment of classical Ayurvedic doctrine with contemporary neuroscience provides a holistic framework of understanding mental health rooted in physiological balance.

Keywords: Nidra, Dhī, Dhṛti, Smṛti, Ayurveda, sleep physiology, Tarpaka Kapha, Manovaha Srotas, cognition, memory consolidation

