

SAMPLE CONTENT

SOME **HEALTH**
PROBLEMS
AND THEIR
TREATMENT



Dr. H. V. Sardesai

REFLECTIONS

IT IS BUT natural that 'Constitutional Health' is close to everyone's heart. Everyone constantly strives to remain healthy. However, we do not understand the meaning of a healthy constitution and what needs to be done to maintain a healthy constitution. The concept of good health is vaguely understood. The effect of things done, based on traditional beliefs and out dated information do not auger well. In fact the chances of sustaining an injury due to such actions are more. The medical science is advancing by the day. It is necessary to accept new concepts. Simultaneously, it is important that good and useful things from the past are conserved. Our constitution is intrinsically related with our diet, exercise, peace of mind and philosophy of life. Our daily routine and our lifestyle is very important. Intake of medicines can certainly help in overcoming diseases but one cannot maintain good health only through medicines. This book makes a brief statement on the subject.

H. V. Sardesai





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THE MYSTERY OF SLEEP

ON AN AVERAGE, one third life of a human's is spent in sleep. Sleep is very necessary for our constitutional health. According to some surveys, it has been observed that one in three adults suffer from some sleep related disorder. Many people suffer from insomnia and a compelling need to sleep at odd hours. There are various sleep related ailments known to affect a large number of the population. Basically, sleep and its antecedents are a mystery to mankind. Characters like 'Kumbhakarna' in the Ramayana and Rip Van Winkle are an offshoot of this mystery. Due to advances in medical science today, we are able to gauge the nature of sleep and it has become possible to treat a number of sleep related problems.

Various Stages of Sleep

Sleep is interpreted as a stage of awareness. Sleep, dreams and being awake are the three stages accepted by modern medical science. We believe in the fourth state, **तुर्या (चतुर्थ)** 'Chaturth Charya' (fourth state of awareness), since ancient times, which has now been included in the ambit of modern research. This state is commonly referred to as being in a state of trance or meditation. It is understood that being awake and sleeping are the alternate states of the

human brain. Everybody has had the experience of dreams in sleep. To experience the state of trance and meditation, a specific study is necessary. The experience during this state is the same for everyone, hence it is futile to try and describe the experience in words. Experience is the only criterion. Dreams in sleep are normal, but day dreams, known as hallucinations, could be troublesome. 'Jagruti' (awareness), Sushupti (dormancy), Swapna (dream) and Turya (trance), - all four states are being studied in well-equipped labs.

In our brain stem, there is present, a group of cells known as 'Reticular Formation'. The main task of this reticular formation is to provide energy to awaken all parts of our brain. The action is called 'Reticular Activating System' (RAS). The task of waking up and staying awake is carried out because of RAS. As the work of RAS declines, we begin feeling drowsy, lethargy creeps in and we fall asleep. Drowsiness is triggered by 'Locus Coeruleus'. The RAS and Locus Coeruleus keep working in rotation. The cycle continues constantly causing us to experience awareness (जागृति) and sleep (सुषुप्ति) alternately.

Sleep is not a constant state of the human body and that is the reason why the work of locus coeruleus begins only when we lie down to sleep. The state before actually falling asleep is known as the 'Latent Period'. The duration of this state is between 10 to 30 minutes. Real sleep begins there. This kind of sleep consists of two major states. In one state, the eyeballs rotate, which is called 'Rapid Eye Movement Sleep' or REM sleep. Most of the dreams are experienced during this state. The other state is called Non-Rapid-Eye-Movement Sleep, or Non-REM sleep. The non-REM sleep begins after the latent state, when we move from light sleep into deep sleep.

From the graph derived by an EEG (Electroencephalography), four states of non-REM sleep can be identified : Deep, dreamless sleep is the third state of non-REM sleep and in the fourth state, the entire body is relaxed and rested. After some time in the non-REM phase of sleep, the REM phase of sleep begins. In this state, the brain works as it would when one is awake. The Autonomic Nervous System is activated and dreams are experienced. These real life-like experiences cause an increase in the pulse rate, blood pressure, respiration rate and the organs begin functioning. This effect causes dreams. A man capable of sexual intercourse ejaculates semen, which is a normal state. No harm is caused by such an event. However, there are misconceptions regarding this state of dream – such as the wrong notion that ‘loss of semen can make one weak’. Understanding the truth is the only way to rid oneself of these misconceptions.

REM & Non-REM Sleep

During REM sleep, sometimes a person may awaken terrified after having a terrible dream. They may be trembling with fear, sweating profusely and experience an increased pulse rate. The dream can be remembered by such persons, mostly children, when they are awakened. At times such fear is experienced during non-REM sleep as well. A child wakes up screaming and goes back to sleep, with no memory of the dream at all when awoken. The first is referred to as a ‘Nightmare’ and the other type is ‘Night Terrors’. Both these sleep disorders tend to disappear over the years.

However, when sleep is repeatedly disturbed due to nightmares, it can be treated with Benzodiazepine. Night

terrors do not disturb sleep and therefore do not require treatment.

- So why do we have dreams?

This mystery has haunted mankind for ages. The famous psychologist, Dr. Sigmund Freud, has propounded a theory connecting dreams with various events taking place in one's subconscious mind. It may not be acceptable to everyone in its original form, but the work done by Dr. Freud cannot be underestimated. He has opened new horizons of science by demonstrating that the study of dreams and the workings of the human mind can be carried out scientifically. Today's science believes that impulses travelling from a part of brain called the 'Geniculate Bodies' to 'Optical Lobes' is what causes us to experience dreams. The study of PGO Spikes (Pontine Geniculate Oxipital Spikes) is still being carried out.

During non-REM sleep, physical movement is possible. Some people tend to get up in their sleep, talk and even walk around while still asleep. Such individuals are prone to injury and hence proper care for their safety has to be taken, such as affixing a metal mesh in staircases.

In stage two and three, a child might urinate during deep sleep. This disorder is called 'Eneuresis'. The child and its parents feel ashamed tend to be embarrassed when this occurs. But effective remedies are available for such a problem.

Events Taking Place during Sleep

Even in the case of a healthy person, some events can take place. Snoring is something that is known to everybody. Many people have been disturbed due to the snoring of another person sleeping nearby. By shortening the palatal screen, snoring can be cured. Sometimes, while snoring, breathing may cease. This is known as 'Sleep Apnea'. Some

of the causes are harmful for health and should be treated immediately.

A comparatively innocuous activity during sleep is the gnashing of teeth. As believed by many people, there is no connection between the gnashing of teeth and worms in the intestines. It is just an event that occurs during REM sleep. Similarly, sometimes we are startled during sleep. This is known as 'Nocturnal Myoclonus'. Also, due to sleep paralysis, we may get the feeling that we are unable to move during a half awakened state. This feeling tends to wear off automatically. Due to nocturnal hallucinations, we might hear an alarm go off, or even somebody is calling out to us. These can occur in a perfectly healthy constitution too.

We come across some sleep related diseases in a great number of people. Many people suffer from asthma attacks in the early part of the morning. Asthma attacks in the case of heart patients usually take place during the first phase of the night. Some people suffer epileptic attacks early in the morning, which is known as 'Nocturnal Epilepsy'. In REM sleep, there is a rise in the level of acidity in the stomach, which could lead to a stomach ache. Such persons should drink milk to assuage this pain. It would be proper for such persons to check on the existence of peptic ulcers, if any, in the stomach. It can be verified by an endoscopy. Arthritic people face a lot of trouble while getting up in the morning. Some people suffer from acute pains while making any movement, due to totally relaxed muscles during sleep.

In a disease called 'Filaria', the germs causing the disease can be detected by a blood test performed at midnight. 'Hyper Thyroid State' can be detected from the pulse rate in deep sleep.

Causes of Insomnia

There can be many reasons for insomnia. Physical reasons include consumption of alcohol and/or other medication. Medication with of beta blockers used for reducing blood pressure, medicines from the 'Cortisone' family, medicines used against asthma and an excessive consumption of tea, coffee and chocolates play a big role in causing insomnia. If the gap in the esophagus and stomach muscles is slightly ajar, a person may suffer from heartburn and asthma attacks while lying down to sleep. Cardiac asthma is caused by improper working of the heart muscles. Sleep is disturbed when a person feels compelled to repeatedly visit the toilet many times at night due to diabetes, enlargement of prostate glands and alcoholism. A physical state caused by the pressure developed on the median nerve near the wrist causes a tingling sensation on the palm and also pain.

If the thyroid glands are overworked, it prevents proper sleep. Mental stress, depression and some diseases can also be the cause of insomnia. Sleep is essential for a human being and a peaceful, deep sleep is necessary for a healthy constitution. A nutritious balanced diet and proper exercise, as often mentioned earlier, are an immense help in getting good sleep.

For the sake of a 'Peaceful, Deep Sleep'

For a peaceful sleep, a quiet ambience, comfortable bed and regular timings are necessary. A schedule should be strictly followed. Avoid taking a nap in the afternoons. Familiar surroundings are useful for a good sleep. Consumption of tea, coffee, tobacco and alcohol should be avoided a few hours before sleep. The stomach should not

be too full. Avoid lying down to sleep for at least two and a half hours after meals.

If you are troubled by unsavory thoughts, it can be useful to write these down. It does not help to lie down in bed for hours, waiting on sleep. You can do some light work and return to bed when you do begin to feel sleepy. Taking a warm water bath before sleep is very beneficial.

At least one's hands, feet and face should be cleaned with warm water and properly dried. After dinner and before going to sleep, have a cup of warm milk with a teaspoon of sugar (if you are not diabetic). As far as possible, do not use any medicine for sleep without proper medical advice. Always beware of the harmful side effects of such medicines. Remember, even the very thought that you are unable to sleep is likely to impede the very act of falling asleep immediately.

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SOME **HEALTH** **PROBLEMS** AND THEIR **TREATMENT**

We have heard "Health is Wealth". In fact it is more than the wealth. You may be able to regain lost kingdoms, lost empires and lost wealth. It is not possible to regain lost health. Health has to be acquired in the first place, unlike wealth, it can not be obtained as a gift or donation. You need to be careful and devote time every day. It does not need significant expenditures. It needs attention and proper knowledge as to how to get healthy. The rules are simple. The most important word is regularity. Health has six dimensions and all need to be looked into.



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