



The Role of Sleep Functions in Human Health from the Perspective of the Holy Quran

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ABSTRACT

Background: Sleeping is an unintentional habit of creatures that involve all organisms, including plants, animals and human being. On the other hand, sleeping and dreaming are closely interrelated. It should be considered that, sleeping and dreaming resemble shadows that chasing objects. Sleeping is so important that a division of relationship between human and the God takes place during a dream, the same as what has been inspire to some of the holy prophets in their dream.

Objectives: Although one third of human life is spent in sleep, mysteries of sleeping are not completely cleared yet. People, who did not naturally sleep, are faded and angry persons. On the contrary, those people who enjoy a reasonable amount of sleep are joyful persons and they feel vitality and excessive power within themselves when they are awake. Sleep is a sign of gods' power and it is related to the spirit of human, while the spirit is a world full of secrets itself. Islam expresses wonderful and fascinating notification and instructions about subject of sleeping and dreaming.

Materials and Methods: This study will examine the sleeping issue based on existing books and documentation by pedagogic study method and specially concentrates on review of Quran verses and their comparison upon the above mentioned subject.

Results: sleeping and dreaming in humans are instinctive. For explaining the importance of sleeping, it would be satisfactory to say "if the sleeping can be prevented in a person, it will cause death". Sleeping has an important role in human health. Regulation of sleep or its disorders, will directly affects health or disease of people. During sleeping, the lost body forces are recovered. The remained Toxic and waste substances that are produced during the metabolism, i.e. cellular feed system, are worn out from the body's cells. Then the body cells save recovered energy and ability for our waking time.

Conclusions: time of sleeping and resting, amount of sleeping, states of before sleeping, quality of sleeping and states after sleeping have important role in human health. Sleeping issue is a subject that draws special attention in Islamic medicine and traditional medicine under title "Setta Zarouriah". Here in this study some portion of complex aspect of sleeping is examined.

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► Implication for health policy/practice/research/medical education:

Sleep therapy is one of the most important areas in the medical field. It could be helpful for the treatment of many diseases.

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1. Background

One third of human life is spent in sleeping and all of this part is cut off from human life. But the mysteries of sleeping, is not cleared yet. Undeniable fact is that sleep has an important role in human health. Hence, in some patients, physicians try to normalize sleeping for the treatment. Without a normal sleep time, the mental balance is not possible. People, who did not sleep normally, are angry and upset persons. Unlike, those who have reasonable sleep, are happy and energetic persons when they are awake. Study and intellectual and physical activities after sleeping, will bear more success. Sleeping and dreaming of man is a mandatory. Not only, both of them are out of man's control, but also their evolution is mandatory too. In Sleeping and dreaming, man's willpower has no role. During wake time, there is willpower and desire for perfection. Perfection in the wake up time is very important. Willpower that is one of the many bounties of the Great Lord has granted to man and it has no efficiency in sleeping. Hence, in Quran God has said *"as for the night there is a voluntary deed for you to keep vigil in part it. Perhaps your lord will raise you to a praiseworthy station"* (1). Dreaming is happened in the first two thirds of the night. It would preferable for man to choose the final third, for decision making in order to getting closer to his god, strengthen his willpower and getting free from ignorance sleep.

Sleeping is the mandatory requirement of all organisms, including plants, animals and human. On the other hand, there is a close relationship between sleeping and dreaming. In other words, good sleep belongs to those who have had a good awakening. Deprivation of Sleep in man and animals is not permitted in accordance with Islam instruction and will result in death. Regarding importance of sleeping it would be enough to say if we keep someone away from sleeping, his death will be assured. It should be noted that sleeping and dreaming are like a shadows that always looking to each other. Sleeping is so important that a part of relationship between man and his God convey through a dream. As what has inspired to some of divine prophets in their dream (2).

Islam demonstrates sleeping that people easily pass along it and cut off human lifetime without noise. If some educated people have a deep look at sleeping, they may say *"sleeping is the need of man to relieve fatigue"* while Islam says *"as much as the waking issue is important, sleeping is important too"*. Sleeping issue is so important that in addition to being a part of the evolution and creation and a necessity of life, it causes the brain evolving and it has religious aspects too.

Every living creature needs to sleep and rest. Some experiments conducted on animals, by Al-Jazayeri (3) showed that sleep deprivation for eight or nine days, will cause them to die. This result can be generalized to mankind as well. If the man is being deprived of sleeping for a period of time, surely he will killed.

All creatures dies to the same cause that they live. By the same cause which they are active, they should rest. The more, their activities have a complex composition; their rest could have a complex composition as well. Here it should be noted that Sleeping and napping, is essential for the obstruction of losses and human transcending in this world. Moreover, the death is necessary for mankind perfection in the eternal world too.

The sleeping is a corrective and equalizing factor which is important for temperatures adjustment in the body and for creating and saving energy. Sleep deprivation, will lead to confusion, delusions and hallucinations.

2. Objectives

Although one third of human life is spent in sleeping, but still mysteries of sleeping is not totally clear for us. To obtaining Secrets of the sleeping and dreaming, is the fundamental objective of this essay. Besides, sleep-therapy is taken into account as one of the most important concerns.

3. Materials and Methods

In this study we have selected library study method based on existing documents and data related to sleeping issue and specially concentrates on Quran verses and their comparison regarding mentioned subject. The more a man thinks of sleeping and dreaming issues and extend his knowledge, he recognizes the less he knows about it. As a result, wonder and amaze will surround him and questions rise. What is dreaming? How it is formed? What kind of nature and character it has?

Why we go to sleep? Why sleep is compulsory for men? Why dreaming is not deliberate in man? What factor causes that a portion of human brain become inactive at that specific moment, eyelids fall over eyes, and then the whole body members rest in silence and inaction? Why Quran generally gives emphasis to sleeping rather than awakening?

Whether or not Islam has instructions about how to sleep and waking? How to select a mattress, where to sleeping, how much sleep, How to terminate sleeping? What are the different among terms *"Naowme"*, *"Na-AAs"*, *"Roya"*, *"Sa-Ne"* and *"Roqhood"*? What are Islam's instructions about how waking up from sleep? Is there any relation between sudden getting up from bed and heart attack risks? Why Islam recommends that *"after waking up from sleep, lie for a little time with eyes open, and then go to Sujadeh stance, and next stand up"*? Why Islam in some situation says on, to awaken someone from sleeping is not permitted, except for the obligatory, and in the other cases says to believers so: *"And some part of the night awake for it, a largess for thee. It may be that thy Lord will raise thee to a praised estate"* (1)?

How companions of the cave felt asleep as soon as they entered in the cave? (4). What is the relationship of be-

tween their entrance to the cave, their sleep and sunlight which Quran says so? (4). What is the relation between sunrise and sunset and companions' turn from left to the right side (5)? Why Quran uses the word "Roqhood" instead of sleeping? (5). If the plants and animals go to sleep like human? How it possible that Kahf companions fallen asleep over 300 years in the cave? Why the lord says we sealed up their hearing in the cave"? If sleeping is sealed up on ear or eye? What is the relationship between deep sleep and ear?

Is there any relationship between waking up in the morning with a headache, convulsions, bruises, fatigue and deep sleep at night with less tossing and turning to the left or right? How much to sleep? What is the difference Insomnia and Hypersomnia? What should we do after waking from sleep in order to be energetic and vigorous and feel no despair or dizziness? Why some people have difficulty with sleeping? What is Solution of sleep disorders?

Why babies sleep more? Why people cannot sleep while they have a messy mind? Why cold fever, cause to awakening? Why a sit person in a specific temperature may feel comfort, while in the same place and same temperature he feels cold in laying condition? What are Sleep effects on body systems and human psyche? These questions and many other important and complex questions are among the issues that each one requires deep research and studies. This study is looking for the answer of question that what is the role and function of sleeping on human health from the perspective of the Holy Quran.

3.1. The Truth of Sleeping

What makes a man to go to sleep? What is the truth and nature of Sleeping? Regarding truth of Sleeping, it has a variety of perspectives:

1. Some believe that sleeping is the consequent of a great portion of blood transfer from the brain to other parts of the body. In other words, they consider sleeping as physical fact (6).

2. Some other say that too much physical activity, will causes the accumulation of specific toxic substances in the body and this event affects the nervous system so that the sleeping prevail human.

Sleeping condition continues until the toxins being fragmented and be absorbed into the body. Therefore, they bring chemical cause for sleeping (6).

3. A group of people believe that truth of Sleeping must find in neurologic system. They say special active neurologic system which located in human brain is the source of human movement and activities of body members. As it works continually it became tired and gradually inactivated.

It seems that these viewpoints could not bring a complete theory about the nature of Sleeping, although they can not be denied briefly.

4. Quran expresses the most Accurate interpretation

about sleeping and considers sleeping as a spiritual phenomenon beyond its bodily and physical aspects. The lord says "Sleeping is a kind of temporary death occurring by detaching the soul from the body" (7). During sleeping beam of spirit is removed from the body by command of Allah and nothing will radiated to the body but a dim beam. Consciousness system and awareness becomes inactive and the body remains motionless. However some part of the activities that are necessary for his survival will continue such as heart beat, blood circulatory, breath respiratory and nutrition.

So, man is a combination of soul and body. The spirit is an essence that reflects the real basis of human personality. Human immortality is on account of spirit immortality and its relationship to the body, causes dynamism of the body. Spirit is something superior to matter. Almighty Allah, in time of death, captures the souls from the bodies. Then he will pass the Spirit to the world that spirit belongs to. At Death time this supernatural reality will be reimbursed and delivered again to its creator and it will transfer to the world of spirits.

3.2. Two Materialism Views about the Dreaming

(A) Bodily perspective:

1. Dreaming May be a direct result of human daily works. What has happened to man during the past day, is visualized in front of him during sleeping.

2. A series of unfulfilled wishes cause his dreaming. For example Thirsty person dreams of water. Person, who is waiting for someone abroad, sees him coming in a dream. As we have heard in the proverb "The cat dreams of mice" (8).

3. Fear of something or someone may cause seeing it in dream. For example if fear of a thief, is caused seeing thief in dream.

4. Some believe that, dreaming contribute to satisfying suppressed or censored desires that always comes to consciousness by some changing and alteration in order to deceive Ego. Thus the dreaming is always refer to the past and do not deal with the future. According to psychology definitions, "Id", Term means man within, in human mind has two parts (9):

"Conscious division": It refers to daily thoughts and it is related to intentional information of human. "Unconscious division ": It is hidden in human id in form of potential desire that is not satisfied. During sleep time conscious system stops working and many of desires that are not satisfied for any reason, and have remained in unconscious division, comes to consciousness because of overabundance of imagination. Sometimes they are reflected without any changes. For example a person who sees his or her deceased beloved in dreaming. Sometimes these desires change and dreaming requires interpretation. The psychologist Group believes that the dream is always related to the past and it does not report about the future. They say, dreaming is a good tool for analysis conscious

part of ego of man. Hence, in many case they use dreaming of patients for the treatment of mental disease that is related to the discovery of the unconscious ego (10).

5. Many nutrition scientists consider a relationship between sleeping and dreaming and body's nutritional needs. For example if a person sees in his dream that his mouth is bleeding, his body may experience lack of Vitamin C and if a person sees in his dream that his hairs has became with, his body may experience lack of Vitamin B.

B: view of some philosophers:

Some philosophers, give another interpretation about dreaming .the have divided dreaming into several types:

1. Dream about the past event of life, desires and wishes that comprises an important part of human dreams.

2. Disturb and meaningless dreaming which is effect of activity of illusion and fantasy.

3. Dreams about the future and report the future (11).

It seems that, human knowledge still could not understand and discover the truth and essence of dreaming.

4. Results

Sleep phenomenon is an important phenomenon in creation system and an indication to wise organization of the great Lord. All living creatures need to rest in order to renew energy and to acquire readiness to continue working. The rest goes to the people unintentionally and even force greedy and ambitious people to sleep as well.

Sleeping is a bounty contributed from the great Lord which relaxes body and soul. As sleeping mode approaches, an interrupt occurs in the body work, relaxation and energy is gathered and man acquires a new vitality and force. If there was no sleeping, the mind and the body would worn and faded very quickly. He would seem very old and torn. Suitable and calm sleeping is the secret of joy, health and long life and strength.

Imam Reza, peace be upon him, said: *"Sleeping is king and Sultan of brain. It brings steadiness and force to the body"*. Also Imam Sadegh has pointed to the role of sleeping in the comfort and health of the body, and he said *"sleep grants comfort for the body and ease of speaking, it is a source of peace and silence for spirit and it creates comfort in mind"*.

Sleep and wakefulness of the body is neither idealness nor scarceness. But the sleeping of spirit is scarceness. Hence, innocent and divine prophet and Imams are witness to the deeds of nation until the resurrection day, even though they were in the sleeping of the body. In Islam history we have imam Ali, peace be upon him, who he does not even feel hit of arrow on his foot while he was praying, or in other tale he did not stop his praying even in fire and when he was asked "what did you do when a part of your house was burning", he says "I was turning off the fire of the hell". Such person would not surrender to sleep until his spirit goes to sleep. For the same reason the, Our Great prophet, peace be upon him, said "sleeping may dominate my eyes, but it will not able to capture

my heart (12). In the following among different verses in Quran, a few verses are mentioned as samples.

4.1. Sleep Reliefs

the great Lord has said "and we made your sleep a rest" (13). Elsewhere he said: *"and of his signs is that you sleep at night and day, and seek his bounty. Surely, there are signs here, for those who hear"* (14).

"Sabaa't" is a term from stem of the "Sabbath" and it means "cutting off" and used for breaking off work in order the rest (15) To apply term "sabaa't" for sleeping is a delicate point out to cite that a remarkable part of physical and spiritual activities are being inactive during sleeping (16).

This temporary break will provide opportunity for tired members to rest and to restore themselves. Also it will let the mind and body to renew human vitality and relieve any discomfort and fatigue and make the man ready to start over his activity(16). A very important note here is that during sleeping and stoppage of a great portion of mental activity, some of body cells, called the protector cells, are awake. The so called protector cells will not forget self recommendation of brain before sleeping and will perform them in the time of awaking. They wake the brain up when necessary.

As you have seen tired mother, sleeping near her breastfeeding baby in the night, unconsciously uses these protecting cells which are the transitory between spirit and body. She recommends these cells to wake her up from a deep sleep with the slightest movement or noise of her baby. Indeed the mother will wake up only by very small movement of her baby while shy may not wake up even by big noises like the sound of thunder. This important task is belonged to the protecting cells (17).

In other words, if a person decides to wake up in the early morning or even midnight for an important affair such as travel and he dictate this matter to himself; regularly he will wake up on time. While out of these emergency cases, he may fall asleep. It could be make out that sleeping is related to the spirit world and spirit is full of secret itself.

4.2. Associated of Night and Sleeping

"And of his signs is that you sleep at night and day, and seek his bounty. Surely, there are signs here, for those who hear" (14).

The main program of sleeping is related to the night. Because of silence consequences from darkness, the night has special priority in this case. But sometimes, which is forced by circumstances in life, it is made necessary to traveling at the night and rest in the day. Man's body and soul demand sleeping, this demand is crucial so that the man cannot tolerate sleeplessness to excess 3 or 4 days. And we made the night a mantle (18, 19). he it is who has made the night for your rest and the day to see. Surely, in this there are signs for people who listen (20, 21) permit-

ted to you, on the night of the fast, is the approach to your wives; they are raiment for you, as you are raiment for them (22, 23). Woman who has not chosen husband or a man who have not chosen a wife, are similar to the person who is have not slept at the night. And among effects of person who has not slept at night, is lack of peace and relaxation.

Night, is the time that man's energy stores. In the day, man is consumes energy and gets empty from it. But, the day is the stage of gaining and harvesting (24). Night is as necessary as clothing and shield. Night just like clothing prevents disused radiation of temperature of the body and retains an armor-like coating of temperature around the body and does not allow the coldness to be closed. The night also would not let the body to consume energy and would not let annoying objects to be approached.

And of his signs is that he created for you wives from among yourselves that you might reside with them, and has put kindness and mercy between you. Surely, there are signs in this for those who think (22, 23). And of his signs is that you sleep at night and day, and seek his bounty. Surely, there are signs in this for those who hear (14). therefore sleeping is not clothing during the day while in the day, man searches for bounty of God. But sleep at night, is both clothing and resting under suitable condition. Clothing for a man is his wife and the wife clothing is her husband. And the clothing shields them from individual and social disorders like adultery, nervousness and desperation.

If someone is exposed to the light radiation at night, the secretion of melatonin would decrease in the body, and his sleeping would not be quiet too (9). Hence, It is worthy for the nursery school and hospices to pacify their children in the dark of night. *"Have they not seen how we have made the night for them to rest in and the day to see? Surely, there are signs in this for the nation who believe"* (25).

4.3. The Relationship between Sleep and Death

What relationship exists between sleep and death? Why in many cases, death occurs at night or during sleep? Why the great God has says that we capture the souls while you are asleep? Why the average mortality amount due to heart attacks, shortness of breath, brain stroke is higher during sleeping rather than awaking? Yet, with all the progresses of human knowledge, the truth and the nature of sleeping, and dreaming is not clear.

"It is he who makes you to die by night, knowing what you have gained by day, and then resurrects you so that an ordained term is realized. To him you shall return, and he will tell you of what you have been doing" (26). In this Verse sleeping implies redeliver of the spirit. And the word *"Tavaffa"* means to redeliver. Death is complete stoppage of the human brain and absolute detach of spirit and body, while in sleeping, just a portion of the brain is temporary stopped and link between the body and spirit is weakened. Therefore sleep is a small sample of death (11).

"Allah takes away souls at the time of their death (the tem-

porary death of sleep), and those who do not die during their sleep he withholds that upon which he has decreed death, but turns lose the other till a stated term. Surely, there are signs in this for a nation who contemplate" (7).

It should be considered why the most of the deaths due to heart strokes, asthma and brain stroke happens at sleeping rather than wake time. A group of disease symptoms develops during sleeping. Disorder and libration in heart beat rate, always occurs in sleep. In many people, the respiratory tract is blocked and their breathing is interrupted for a short period of time.

"It is he who makes you to die by night, knowing what you have gained by day, and then resurrects you so that an ordained term is realized. To him you shall return, and he will tell you of what you have been doing" (26).

Everyone's right is reimbursed at night, in order to do virtuous deeds at day. Right is always granted to everything done rightly. The overall of what the body gets in sleeping, excess of what the body wastes. Sleep, could be called small death. The word *"Jarahtom"* in abovementioned Verse means to achieve and to gain. And the person, who dies, comes to perfection and he is not lost (27).

Sleeping is somehow an uncompleted separation of soul and body. According to the commandment of God, during sleeping, the beam of spirit is removed from the body and just a little dim light of soul is radiated to the body. The system of understanding and intelligence discontinue working. Man's body stops moving and sensing, although some of the activities that are necessary for his survival, such as heart beat, blood circulatory, respiratory and metabolism activities continue.

So human is a combination of Spirit and body. Spirit is the essential criterion that makes real character of him. Human immortality is because of immortality of his soul and its relationship to the body brings life for the body. Spirit horizon is above the horizon of the matter. But what is the truth of spirit? The story is surprisingly complex. Spirit is the product of nature's evolution.

In the time of death, the great lord breaks the relation of spirit and the body. The spirit will transit from its worldly ambiance. In fact by the death, the supreme truth that is beyond the matter, is summoned and is redelivered to the world of spirits (6).

4. 4. Waking up from Sleep in the Last Third of the Night

Why Islam, in some place, says to awaken someone from sleeping is not permitted, except in cases of necessity. But on the other hand says: *"For the night there is a voluntary deed for you to keep vigil in part it. Perhaps your lord will raise you to a praiseworthy station"* (1). Here in this verse waking at the last third of the night is recommended. As we know, spontaneous and unintentional evolution in the human brain is happened during the first two-thirds. But this unintentional evolution, reaches its peak as the last third of the night approaches and it could become optional and individual. Afterward the man could spend the rest of the

night by his own will (10).

Scientists have found out that the person, who exposes himself to the sunlight during the day, will have a good mental and temperament and he will do his mental activity confidently. A group of researchers conducted an investigation. They exposed fifteen men and women by the age twenty to thirty to an intense light for four hours at the first day. And in the second day in the same period, they were exposed to a weak light. Then, in order to test their mental abilities in both cases, a mathematic examination has been taken. They have found that the first day group, i.e. the group that has been exposed to intense light, had better calculations and fewer mistakes in comparison to the other group (10).

As far as the light of day is beneficial for man, the light exposure will be harmful to him during the night and conversely darkness if beneficial at night. Scientists have found that if a person is exposed to light at night, secretion of melatonin decreases in his body and he will not have a comfortable sleeping. On the other hand if someone sleeps in a dark room, secretion of melatonin increases in the body.

5. Discussions

1. Sleeping and Dreaming are among very complex fact that are not completely diccovered so far.

2. Deep sleep in which the brain goes to sleep too, is essential for humans. During sleeping, many of annoying or unnecessary thoughts are cleared from the human mind.

3. Islam, as the most complete program from exclusive life creator and manager of the whole system of universe, has mentioned many accurate instructions about before and after sleeping. To observe these instructions, is very influencing on mans' brain evolution and health of the body and mind.

4. The ears are somehow, more important than the eyes. Ears are effective in deep sleep of the man. If the communication between human stillness and deep sleep and the ears area are discovered, it could be helpful for the treatment of many physical and mental diseases, like sleep disorders and nervous tensions

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