

# Swapna-Vigyan: Unveiling Arishta Lakshans Through Dreams in Ayurveda

**Dr. Chitranjan Sharma<sup>1</sup>, Dr. Vijay Bhagat<sup>2</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>. Final year PG Scholar, Department of Samhita and Siddhant,  
Parul Institute of Ayurved, Parul University,  
Limda, Vadodara, Gujarat 3917602.

<sup>2</sup>. Professor, Department of Samhita and Siddhant,  
Parul Institute of Ayurved, Parul University,  
Limda, Vadodara, Gujarat 391760,

**Abstract:** - Dreams, known as *Swapna*, have been integral to *Ayurveda*, a traditional Indian system of medicine, since its inception. The ancient text, *Charaka Samhita* which is one of the *Brihatrayee*, spaciouly examines the significance of dreams in the *Indriya Sthana*. This *Indriya Sthana* discusses the diagnostic and prognostic value of many aspects including dreams, suggesting that they can offer insights into a person's health and future well-being. The article focuses on a specific aspect of this ancient wisdom: *Swapna*-related *Arishta Lakshana*. These are considered inauspicious dream signs that indicate potential dangers to an individual's health and longevity. According to *Ayurveda*, such dreams are not simply figments of the imagination but are believed to reflect underlying physical or mental conditions that could manifest as serious health issues. By interpreting these Inauspicious dream signs, Ayurvedic practitioners can predict and potentially avoid health crises. This article sheds light on how these ancient interpretations of dreams could play a role in contemporary Ayurvedic practice, emphasizing the timeless relevance of traditional knowledge in understanding and managing health risks.

**Keywords:** Charaka Samhita, Brihatrayee, Indriya Sthana, Swapna, Arishta Lakshana.

## 1. Introduction

*Ayurveda*, the ancient Indian medical system, emphasizes a holistic approach to health and well-being. It recognizes the mind-body connection and acknowledges the significance of dreams (*Swapna*) in understanding a patient's health state. The *Pannaroopiyam Indriyam Adhyaya* of *Charaka Samhita Indriya Sthana*, dedicates significant space to deciphering *Swapna* for diagnostic and prognostic purposes<sup>1</sup>.

## 2. Swapna and its Classification<sup>2</sup>

Acharya Charaka categorizes dreams into seven types:

- *Drishta, Shruta, Anubhuta*: Dreams based on waking experiences (seeing, hearing, experiencing)
- *Prarthita, Kalpita*: Dreams fuelled by desires or imagination
- *Bhavika, Doshaja*: Dreams reflecting future events or imbalances in *Dosha*.

## 3. Significance of Swapna-Related Arishta Lakshana

The concept of *Arishta Lakshana* refers to inauspicious signs that predict potential health complications. *Swapna*-related *Arishta Lakshana* hold particular importance in the absence of clear-cut physical symptoms. By analysing the content and quality of dreams, an Ayurvedic practitioner can gain valuable insights into the patient's internal state and potential health threats.

## 4. Characteristics of Swapna-Related Arishta Lakshana

These inauspicious dream signs often involve:

- Falling from heights: Symbolizing a decline in health or loss of vitality.
- Darkness, Enclosed Spaces: Indicating feelings of suffocation or impending danger.
- Loss of Teeth: Suggesting a weakening of the body's foundation.
- Engaging in Unfavourable Activities: Reflecting internal imbalances or anxieties.

We shall now explain some other premonitory symptoms of the most fatal type which follow the various diseases and are in turn followed by death.

□ If a patient of consumption indulging in sex suffers from diminution of strength and aggravation of *Pratishyay* he is sure to die<sup>3</sup>.

□ If a person travels towards the south riding dog, camel or donkey in dream, he gets afflicted with *Rajyakshma* leading to his death<sup>4</sup>.

□ If a person drinks *Madya* (Alcohol) in the company of *Preta* (ghosts) or gets dragged by dogs in dream, he gets afflicted with serious type of fever leading to his death. Such of the diseases as follow the premonitory symptoms described above must result in death. Riding dog, camel, pig and donkey in a dream which described in *Shosha Nidana Adhyaya* as premonitory symptoms of *Rajyakshma*. The same dream is regarded as premonitory symptom of death if the travel is towards the south<sup>5</sup>.

□ If the sky appears to be red like a cloth dyed with lac from a distance nearby, the patient's death is certain due to *Raktapitta*<sup>6</sup>.

□ If a person in a dream wearing red garlands and apparel with his entire body looking red, laughs frequently and is dragged by a woman the patient's death is certain due to *Raktapitta*<sup>7</sup>.

□ If in a dream, one has the growth of spiky creeper in his chest, he falls a victim to *Asadhya* (fatal) type of *Gulma*<sup>8</sup>.

□ If even the slightest injury gives rise to excessive wound in the body and the wound do not heals the patient will die by *Kushtha*. If in a dream, a person naked, anointed with *ghee*, offering *Ahuti* (Oblations) to the fire without flame, has growth of lotus flower in his chest, he dies of *Kushtha*<sup>9</sup>.

□ If flies are attracted towards an individual even after he has taken bath and used *Lepa* (unguentum), he falls a victim to *Prameha* which is bound to be *Asadhya* for him<sup>10</sup>.

□ If one drinks various types of *Sneha* substance in accompaniment with the *Chandal* in his dreams, he also falls a victim to *Prameha* which is bound to be *Asadhya* to him<sup>11</sup>.

Premonitory symptoms of psychic diseases<sup>12</sup>:

□ Mental wandering, exertion, bewilderment, illusion in inopportune situations, indifference and loss of strength are indicative of imminent death preceded by *Unmada* (Insanity).

□ One who has aversion to food, whose mind is lost, who suffers from *Udarda* or urticaria (*Urdhvaavata* or the condition caused by the upward movement of *Vata*), is sure to die soon due to a strong attack of *Unmada*.

□ Extreme irritation, frightfulness, continued smile on his face after its onset, excess of fainting and thirst are indicative of imminent death due to *Unmada*.

□ If one gets drowned in water while dancing with the demons in his dream, he succumbs to an acute attack of *Unmada*.

□ If one, in his wakeful state sees darkness where there is no darkness and listens to all types of sound even though there are no such sounds, he succumbs to *Apasmara* (Epilepsy).

□ If a patient while dancing in an intoxicated state is caught by a *Preta* with his face downwards, he is sure to succumb to an attack of *Apasmara*.

□ If jaw bone (lower), *Manya* (the region of Carotid artery) and the two eyes become stiff while awake, he is sure to succumb to *Bahirayama* (a condition characterized by opisthotonos of the body).

□ If one takes *Shashkuli* (a large round cake prepared of ground rice, sugar and sesamum, and cooked in oil.) and *Aapupa* (cake of flour.) in dream and vomits similar substance while awake cannot live long.

Dreams indicative of imminent death<sup>13</sup>:

The following are the other dreams of the most dangerous type which indicate either the death of the patient or affliction of individuals with serious types of diseases.

1. Growth of bamboo, shrubs, creepers etc., in the head and disappearance of flying bird therein;
2. Circumvention by vultures, owls, dogs, crows etc., and *Rakshas*, *Preta*, *Pishacha*, women, *Chandala*;
3. Involvement in the heaps of bamboos, *Vetra* (*Salix caprea* Linn.), creeper, snare, grass and thorns,
4. falling down while walking;
5. Lying down on the ground with dust as pillow, on ant-hill or ashes or cemetery or ditch;
6. Drowning in dirty water, mud or the well covered with darkness or being carried away by the stream flowing rapidly,
7. Intake of fatty substance, anointment, emesis, purgation, receipt of gold, quarrel, arrest and defeat;
8. Losing both the shoes, peeling of the skin out of feet, exhilaration and insult by angry forefathers;
9. Fall or extinction of teeth, moon, sun, stars, the gods, lamp and eyes or cracking of a hill;
10. Entrance into a forest full of red flowers, the earth, the place of sinful acts, funeral pyre or a cave dense with darkness;
11. Movement by an individual wearing red garlands, laughing loudly and naked, towards the south through frightful forests on a chariot yoked by a monkey,
12. To have the vision of persons wearing ochre coloured cloth, of terrific appearance, naked, with a stick in hand, black and with red eyes;
13. To have vision of a sinful women of black colour devoid of conduct with long hair, nails and breasts, with garlands and apparel devoid of colour.

These are the dangerous types of dream which indicate the death of patients. If an individual not afflicted with any disease sees such dreams, he is also likely to succumb to diseases. Instances of such persons surviving after such dream are very rare.

## 5. Utilizing *Swapna-Vigyana* in Clinical Practice

Deciphering *Swapna*-related *Arishta Lakshans* requires careful consideration of the patient's emotional state, physical health, and context. A skilled practitioner can utilize this knowledge to:

- Identify Underlying Imbalances: Dreams can reveal underlying *Doshic* imbalances that may not manifest in physical symptoms yet.
- Refine Prognosis: Understanding the dream content can help refine the prognosis of existing health conditions.
- Guide Treatment Strategies: By recognizing anxieties reflected in dreams, the practitioner can tailor treatment plans to address both physical and mental aspects of health.

## 6. Conclusion

The study of *Swapna*-related *Arishta Lakshana* offers a unique and valuable tool in *Ayurvedic* diagnosis and prognosis. It underscores the interconnectedness of mind and body and provides valuable insights into a patient's

health beyond the realm of physical symptoms. While modern medicine relies on objective diagnostic tools, *Swapna-Vigyana*, when employed judiciously, can complement clinical practice in a holistic approach to patient care.

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