

## Dream theory from the perspective of Islam

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### Abstract:

**Background and Objective:** Sleep as a sign of the God wisdom and power, is the agent of stability and tranquility. Sleep has a spiritual dimension. Sincere dreams are the continuation of prophecy and guidance of the God. This study aimed to explain the dream theory from the perspective of Islam.

**Materials and Methods:** This evolutionary study has focused on these questions: "what is the process of dreaming in Islam? Can people control their dreams"? Islamic evidences were taken from the verses and narrations related to the words "soul, sleep, dream and death", using al-Mu'ayyid, authentic Shi'a commentary books, Bihar al-Anwar, Kofi principles, the Book of Resurrection and life after death. The religious and scientific evidences were analyzed based on the Walker and Event content analysis method. Dream theory was extracted from religious evidence.

**Results:** Based on "revelation epistemology" during sleep, the 'template of a higher universe' travels to the unseen world and divine guidance can be provided. People with spiritual health ((owners of the Sound heart) can control the type of their dream, and solve problems by the guidance of God. In the perspective of Islam, there are three types of dreams: sometimes is divine guidance and glory from God, sometimes is sorrow from the devil, and sometimes are conflicts of daily living or past events.

**Conclusion:** Regarding the spiritual aspect of sleep and its deep impact on physical and mental health, it is essential for medical staff to become familiar with dream theory from the perspective of Islam. They should explain to patients and family members the importance and impact of sleep on the acceleration of tissue repair and the treatment of anxiety and depression. To those who are willing to enjoy the divine guidance through the dream, they can teach the Islamic method of dream control.

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## Introduction:

Belief in the existence of the soul from the unseen world is an accepted fact among the followers of the Abrahamic religions and is the first condition for using the guidance of God (Surah Baqara, 2) [1, 2]. Belief in "Resurrection ", eternal life of the soul and living after death in the unseen world is the principle of monotheistic religions [3, 4]. From the perspective of Islam, the soul gives existence to human and death occurs through the complete separation of the soul from the body [5, 6]. Throughout life, the incomplete separation of the soul from the body occurs in stages like sleep [7]. The Quran considers sleep as a temporary and incomplete separation of the soul from the body [8]. There are many similarities between death and sleep. In both cases, the soul disconnects its belongings from the body [9]. Imam Baqir (AS) said: "Death is the dream that comes to you every night, but its time is long and wake up from it, will be on the Day of Resurrection" [10]. In fact, sleep is a weak face of death, and death is a perfect example of sleep. Sleep is one of the reasons for the independence and authenticity of the soul [11, 12]. Knowledge of the soul and the unseen universe requires a revelation epistemology [13, 14]. What makes scientists unable to express a clear interpretation of sleep is their empirical research method. They want to interpret this issue without accepting the originality and independence of the soul, while sleep before a physical phenomenon, is a spiritual phenomenon and its interpretation is impossible without proper recognition of the soul [15].

From the perspective of the Qur'an cognition, awareness of the environment, judgment,

decision-making, is performed by the soul [16]. The Quran calls the soul as "heart". Shi'as hadiths state the heart, as the commander of the body which is responsible for commanding and forbidding the members, and through that man contemplates and understands [17]. Perception, feeling, movement, consciousness and will, are capabilities that originate from the soul [18]. The connection between the soul and body is by "template of a higher universe" which can separate from the body at dreaming [4].

Islam introduces sleep as a sign of the God's wisdom and power (Rom. 23), with a spiritual dimension (Zomar, 42). Sleep is the agent of stability and tranquility (Forghan, 47), the factor of the consistency of human life, with the renewal power of mental and physical health. The restoration of weary members and eliminating any tiredness and discomfort occurs during sleep (Nabi, 9) [7]. Sleep is a time for the restoration and stability of the body (Surah Nabas) which causes health, longevity, vitality and youth, that is necessary for obtaining the power to continue the life and daily activities [19,20]. These findings of the Qur'an are consistent with scientific findings that state: sleep is a biological rhythm with regular and cyclical nature, easily reversible recurring pattern, combined with relative calm and an increase in the threshold of response to external stimuli [21, 22]. Sleep is a physiological need, that is essential for survival and mental and physical health [23], which reconstructs physical and emotional forces [24]. Quality of life and activities of people during waking hours are largely influenced by the quality of their sleep [25]. As in the past, Hippocrates, with medical interpretation of sleep, recognized diseases, Freud, Adler, Carl Gustavo Jung, in psychology, pay

attention to this matter [26].

Sleep is one of the most remarkable human behaviors [27] whose general function is scientifically unidentified [28]. Due to the lack of spiritual interpretation for sleep and dreaming, the purpose of this study was "Explaining dream theory from the perspective of Islam based on the belief in the existence of the soul"

## Methods

This evolutionary study [29] has focused on this question: "what is the dream process in Islam? Can people control their dreams"? The religious and scientific evidence was analyzed based on the Walker and Event content analysis method to promote and complete the available knowledge by using a systematic, scientific, and justifiable process [30].

### *Inclusion Criteria for Selecting Evidences and Articles Included:*

Persian or English articles that focus on dream theory available in internal and external information databases (Request Pub Med, Google Scholar, Elsevier, SID, Cochrane, Magi ran).

Articles have to be written in 2005-2018 with the key words: dreaming, dream theory, sleep.

Essay based on evidence-based pyramid in order of priority from the systematic review studies, meta-analysis, clinical trial tests, cohort, case study, case report, laboratory studies, as well as opinions of specialists and experts [31].

- a. According to the Inclusion criteria and "targeted sampling", out of 29 full paper 12 papers were selected that formed the sample size of the study.
- b. Verses interpretations have been collected from the authentic reference books.
- c. Islamic evidences were taken from the verses and narrations related to the word "soul, sleep and death", using al-Mu'ayyim, authentic Shi'a commentary books, related reliable hadiths from Bihar al-Anwar, Kofi principles, the Book of Resurrection and life after death.
- d. Articles that did not have entry criteria were not included in the study from the beginning, so there were no exclusion criteria in this study.

## Findings

Islamic sleeping rites to see "Sincere Dream" are:

- a. Cleansing of body from contaminations and washing hands and face[32]
- b. Ablution: Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) says: "Those who sleep with auspiciousness, they are worshiping like fasting people." [32]
- c. Go to the restroom [33]
- d. Brushing [34]
- e. Self-evaluation. Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) (as) says: " Is not from our Shiites, who does not "self-assess" each night" [35]
- f. Prayer before sleep: The Prophet (peace be upon him): In your name, O Lord, I die and I will be alive. O Lord, if you keep my soul in my sleep, then put it on your mercy and blessing, and if you turn it back, protect it with the spirits of your righteous servants[36]
- g. Sleeping on the back or to the right of the body: [37]

Sheikh Koufami in the book "Misbah" and MohaddesFeyz in the book "Summaries of Notes" said:

Anyone who wants to dream one of the prophets and imams or one of the people, or his parents,

Performed this at seven nights:

- a. read the surahs of Shams, Laila, Qadar, Kafiron, Tohid, Nasa and Falak
- b. recite Surah al-Touhid one hundred times
- c. Send Salavat a hundred times

Then say: O God, you are a living being that is not described, and faith is revealed to you, things start from you, and return to you. So whoever came to you, you were his refuge. I ask you for the truth that there is no God except you, And I ask you to be right "Bismillah Al-Rahman al-Rahim", And to the Prophet Muhammad and his household (Peace be upon him and his family), show me whom I want, in which he is in it [38].

In the book "Summary of Notes", MohaddesFeyz said:

1. Whenever it makes you sad: With a clean body, inclean bed, while a woman is not with you, say

- seven times: Surah al-Shams and Seven times: Surah al-Lail. Say: O God, leave me out of this sadness.
2. So a person will come to your sleep on that night, or on the third night, or on the fifth, or on the seventh night, and will tell you the way out of that grief [39].
  3. Pray for awakening: The Prophet (peace be upon him) thanked God for living after my death, and everyone is gathered to God [40].

### Discussion:

For better understanding of Islam's view of night-time worship and dream theory, we must carefully study the sleep cycle. Typically, the adult sleep cycle is ninety minutes. In a person's sleep, there are usually four to six ninety minute cycles, each cycle comprising four steps (Non REM) with a REM stage.

The first stage of sleep is the shortest and lightest stage. The person wakes up easily and may not be aware of being asleep and may have involuntary shuffling in his body. The second stage is light sleep with more relaxation, in the third stage of sleep (deep sleep), it is difficult to awaken a person. In the fourth stage (very deep sleep), the person is completely relaxed and immobile. At this stage, energy is stored and the secretion of the regulating hormones increases and tissues recover. Depriving of this stages causes general weakness, disruption of tissue repair. By completing Non-REM, the person gradually enters stage 3 and 2 and REM stage that dream happens in it. Dream has special role in mental health. Depriving of dreaming causes depression and irritability. After ninety minutes, a cycle ends and the next cycle begins. In the morning, the REM sleep increases and sometimes it lasts sixty minutes [21]. These scientific findings coincide with the viewpoint of Islam for the effects of sleep .Because Islam emphasizes the impact of sleep on physical and mental health and believes that "sincere dreams" happen before sunrise.

There is similarity between the concept of the soul in religion and unconscious in psychology. The "unconscious" in Qur'an discussions is part of a person's personality, which includes perceptions, motives, desires, cognition, and even behaviors that are deep in

the soul (heart), but do not clearly address them. The various verbal and non-verbal evidence indicates the presence of this affair [41]. There are many verses in the Qur'an in this regard, including Taha, 7: "God knows the secrets and more secretive than secrets. Imam Sadiq (as) says: the secret is something the person hides in his heart, but more secret than the secret is: what is in his heart, but he have forgotten it [10]. This hadith may indicate that: what a person learns is deposited into his/her soul as a memory tank, but sometimes the connection of man with a corner of the reservoir is cut off and gives him a state of oblivion, so by means of a reminder, he sees it completely familiar [42].

From Jung's point of view, dream is a mental network that comes from the whole soul. In his opinion, some of the dreams go beyond the individual and their origins must be sought in human history. On the other hand, Jung refers to the role of reforming dreams in the life of people, and believes that we must more and more consider our dreams because dreams can be considered as a creative and natural description of the unconscious [43]. Freud consider dreams as:-A direct result of daily activities and concerns and what happened to humans in the past days - A series of unrealized hopes - Fear of something [44]. But Muslim philosophers describe different types of dreams: - The dreams of the past life and desires that form an important part of human dreams- Distracting and inaudible sleep, which is a man's illusion (though it may have mental reasons) - The dreams that are related to the future and testify of it [45]. The Prophet of Islam (peace be upon him) says: "Dream are three fold, sometimes is divine guidance and glory from God, sometimes is sorrow from the devil, and sometimes are conflicts of daily living or past events [46,47]. Thus Islamic scholars, divide the dream into two types according to the contents of the dream: 1-False dream without interpretation which are caused by various factors such as overeating, sickness, and so on.2-interpreted dreams include: - A dream that has no meaning other than dream- A dream that is interpreted and called an honest dream. In this kind of dreams, one can discover something directly or after interpretation about future. In the traditions, the honest dreams are the result of the meeting of the soul with the

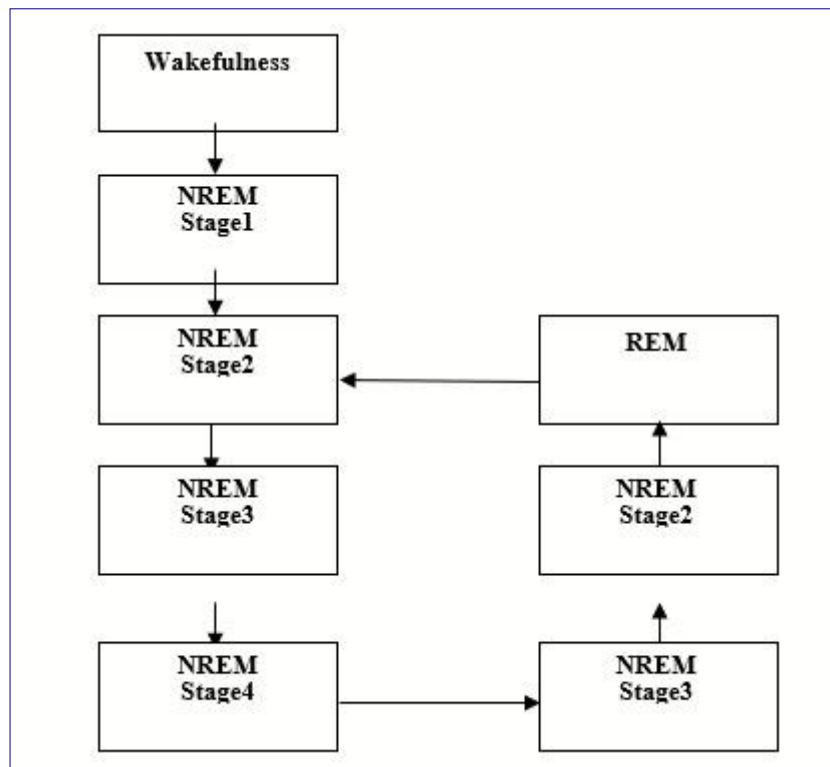


Figure 1: Sleep Cycle Chart

angels [48].

In terms of monotheistic religions, sleep is part of the evolutionary path of man to God; at bedtime, the believer's soul rises and avails of God's blessings and mercy. Self-care and self-calculation in the owners of Sound heart (with spiritual health) creates honest dreams as a divine inspiration from God's guidance. These dreams destroy their fears and misery and create a sense of security [20]. After an honest dream, the person wakes up quickly and recalls the entire contents of his dream [49]. Mulla Sadra believes that under conditions, sleep is a form of revelation that is a sign of the "unseen world". The higher degree of perception of the soul cause the greater degree of solidity and sentimentality of dream. Anyone who benefits from wisdom will benefit from the unseen world [50]. This is not consistent with perspective of Freud.

According to Freud, dream is a truth in the unconscious of a person, a way of expressing desires. Knowledge or memories are revealed in a dream that the awake mind is unaware of knowing them. The dream is not the revelation of the unseen world, but the

revelation of the unconscious of man [51].

#### Conclusion:

Regarding the spiritual aspect of sleep and its deep impact on physical and mental health, it is essential for medical staff to become familiar with dream theory from the perspective of Islam. They should explain to patients and family members the importance and impact of sleep on the acceleration of tissue repair and the treatment of anxiety and depression. To those who are willing to enjoy the divine guidance through the dream, they can teach the Islamic method of dream control.

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#### Conflicts of Interest:

There is no conflict of interest.

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