

Session 69: Online Education in Yoga by Sri Prashant Iyengar. Nidra Vrutti Part 1

Namaste. Welcome to a new session and we have commenced the Nidra Vrutti. As I said during the last session, that nidra vrutti and Sushupti should not be confused. Sushupti is a part of nidra vrutti and it is not the whole of nidra vrutti. So nidra vrutti has a greater radius. And it includes the sushupti, or what we call as sleep, dreamless sleep.

In case of dreamless sleep, we can easily conceive that there can be nothing klisha or aklisha vrutti as such. You can have a good sleep, or disturbed sleep, etc., etc. But then when it is just Sushupti you cannot be getting klishata or aklishata as defined in yoga shastra and yoga darshana, particularly Vyasa, because klisha means that which increases the bondage: Karma vasana, klesha vasana, and bandha. So that is klisha vrutti and the one that works in opposite direction, that it enfeebled, lessens, rarefied the bondage, bondage potential, bondage shackles. And that which attenuated klesha vasana, the karma vasana aspect. Which is having the shackles for all bondage, and the one which takes you towards apavarga or liberation by way of viveka. So, we can't see the locus of such things in sleep as such. The sleep will not create something by which you will get viveka, nitya/anitya viveka, atma/anatma viveka, suchi/asuchi viveka, etc. dharma/adharma viveka. No kind of viveka will really come up in dreamless sleep or we don't see even the bondage potential increasing Karma vasana, klesha vasana, in dreamless sleep. So therefore, considering that this is only sleep then it really doesn't get characterized by klishata and aklishata.

However, it is quite expressed that Patanjali mentions, there is klishata and aklishata in nidra vrutti. So, the point is that it is not just sleep as it is usually construed, because sleep, Sushupti, is also called nidra. They are synonyms and therefore this is a technical word, technical term which I have been repeatedly saying. So now we are going to discuss nidra vrutti. And of course, it will include sushupti as to what is sushupti. It will also include what is really sleep.

But there is no point in just confining the discussion on the nidra vrutti by just discussing the sleep or dreamless sleep. And the very sutra is throbbing with this kind of purport. Because what is the sutra saying? 'Abhava pratyaya alambana vrutti nidra'. 'That which takes the support of cause of absence is nidra'. 'That which takes support of cause of absence is nidra'. Now, this is quite a roundabout kind of definition, as I said, if it is to be just defining sleep or sushupti. However, the sushupti is also the same kind.

What is really sushupti? How sushupti is included? How does it fit in this definition? Because what is really sleep? See here it is the major characteristic is that 'taking the support of the cause of absence'. Now, what is sushupti? sushupti is taking support of cause of absence of *jagrati*. Sleep is taking support of cause of absence of wakefulness.

Because there has to be absence of wakefulness to be getting sleep. You can't say that I got wakefulness as well as sleep, both together. The sleep is of the nature of taking support of the

cause of absence of wakefulness. Unless the support of cause of absence of wakefulness is taken, you can't be getting sleep.

So, you see how these definitions are also circumscribing the sleep. Now, what is the cause of absence of wakefulness? In neurology, it is said that, the mind has to enter a nerve called pericardium in the heart. When the mind enters a nerve called pericardium in the heart, that is, it is taking support of cause of absence of wakefulness. That is why we get sleep. So, when we get to sleep, that means, we have 'taken the support of cause of absence of wakefulness.'

Not having taken support of cause of wakefulness, the cause of wakefulness, we will not be getting sleep. So, we have to take the cause of absence of wakefulness. So, in case of an infant baby, mother pats the child and by patting the child, the child takes support of cause of absence of awake state. And therefore, the baby goes to sleep while mommy is, mother is patting or mother is singing a lullaby and patting the baby. So, see how this definition is also fitting the state of sleep.

So, it is neurology which describes that sleep phenomenon is mind entering a nerve called pericardium in heart. Otherwise, when the mind is out of the pericardium nerve, then it is sensing, feeling, thinking. The kind of activities of a wakefulness state will be going on. And therefore, the definition also fits the state of sleep and therefore it is included.

Now this vrutti, nidra vrutti, by way of sleep, is something which we are all familiar. We have experienced it. We experience it every day. That is why the discussion is more inclined towards describing sleep. Because it is of everyone's experience. And it's quite a stark kind of state of mind where the nidra definition is fitting in, taking support of the cause of absence.

Now, to be sleeping we want to have absence of a wakeful state. We can't say that I want to go to sleep and also have a wakeful state. I want to have absence of a wakeful state. Unless I have absence of a wakeful state, I will not be able to sleep. Now, to have absence of a wakeful state—I have to take support of cause of absence of a wakeful state. See the play in logic behind it. Profound logic behind it. Stark logic behind it. If I want to go to sleep, I must take support of absence of a wakeful state. I must have absence of a wakeful state. Now, to have absence of a wakeful state, I must take support of cause of absence of a wakeful state. This is the cause of absence of a wakeful state, where the mind has to enter a particular nadi, then that is taking support of cause of absence of a wakeful state. And when a wakeful state is absent, you are asleep.

But then I've been telling you that there are so many other states of consciousness that are included. If you don't include those states of consciousness, then, the pancha vrutti will not be circumscribing so many mental modulations that we have.

So, let's try to understand how other states are also included here. More fundamentally dream. The dream that we get during our sleep. The dream will only come when you have slept. And it is something that ensues from sleep. Not having slept at all you can't have dream. So, you must

sleep. So therefore, many people say that they don't get sleep at all. They don't get the sleep at all, but if you question them—"Do you get any dream?" "Yes, I had a dream." Now, if you have a dream, that means you had sleep. But it's only that the sleep was not really very thick and therefore you got a dream. So, it is perhaps not a satisfactory sleep but you can't say that you did not sleep, but yet you got a dream. So, it's little rarified kind of sleep where we get a kind of dream and more often the dream is quite disturbing and therefore our sleep is said to be disturbed sleep.

The point is svupnavasta. That means the point is svupnavasta is also included. That means svupna vrutti. In svupnavasta we have a svupna vrutti. We have a mental vrutti in svupna, in dream. So, dream state of consciousness, has a dreamy modulation of mind or dreamy modulation of chitta. So, the dream experience, what is called as the dream experience, is a vrutti. Dream experience is a mental vrutti, dream experience is a chitta vrutti. You can't say there was a dream and no experience.

A dream is always an experience. If it is an experience, it is a mental modulation. It's a mental functioning, it's a mental act, it's a mental modulation. So, even in dream we have this chitta vrutti. The point is that we have a chitta vrutti or mental modulation is there, it's a mental function. It's a mental kind of activity that we have in dream.

Therefore, the dream is also included. Now, in dream, also see how the definition is fitting here. What do we see in dream? We experience. The dream experience is always pertaining to something that is absent. Now, what is actually present for you to be getting dream? The sleep must be present. The sleep must be present. Not having sleep at all present, to any degree, you can't be having dream at night. So, what is present is sleep.

Now therefore, you will see that in dream, although we say you can get any kind of dream, anything is possible in dream, that is not really true. With the help of this sutra, we can have certain deductions here. That the dream being nidra vrutti, must be of the nature of taking the support of cause of absence.

So, what is present in sleep is sleep. Now, in dream, in dream we have some experience and experience is as ditto, identical to experience in a wakeful state. Whatever is our experience seeing in a wakeful state, seeing some objects, seeing some activity, seeing some phenomenon. All that is as if it is a wakeful state. The experience is almost identical to that experience of a wakeful state. The only thing is that the dream is seen inside. The dream is not seen by our charma chaksu, that is, our physical eyes. These physical eyes don't see the dream. If you see elephant in a dream, it is not elephant, it's not a visual object. Because elephant in a dream is not a visual object.

So, it is a light effect and then we see elephant as a light effect inside our mind. And therefore, in dream we don't see actual elephant, physical elephant. But what we see is almost identical or ditto of physical elephant outside. So, there's no difference between dream perception of

elephant and a wakeful state of experience of elephant. They are absolutely identical. There is no difference.

But there is absence of that elephant. There is no elephant. It cannot be having elephant inside you because dreams are always seen inside. Because you are in sleepy, sleeping condition. You are in a state of sleep consciousness. And then in between you get a dream. So you are sleeping and then you'll get a dream.

So you feel basically that you are almost a wakeful and you are getting experience of a wakeful state. But then there is absence of those objects, physically within you. Whatever you see the dream cannot be physically having presence in your mind inside you. So, these are dreaming objects. What are called dreamy objects are mental objects that we see in dream.

So therefore again, the support of absence is taken, elephant is absent you see in dream. What is not present we see in dream.

And therefore, you will never have a dream that you are sleeping a soundless sleep. Because you always have dream as if you are in a wakeful state. You never get a dream that you are in a sleeping state. You always get a dream as if you are in a wakeful state and it's the business activity of a wakeful state.

And that's how you get dreams. You will never have a dream that you are sleeping in your bedroom on your bed and having a dreamless sleep which the dreamless sleep is something that can be present and that is present in sleep. Actually, you are, you are in sleep and in sleep you get the dream.

So, sleep is actually present. Elephant is not present. The gardens are not present. The roads are not present, the buildings are not present, the people are not present. They're all absent. So, the cause of their absence is you sleep. So, cause of absence of physical persons, physical matters, physical things, their absence is caused by you being in sleep. And we take support of that cause of absence even in dream. So, dream is also nidra vrutti.

So, this is being circumscribed because otherwise somebody can put a question, where is nidra vrutti counted by Patanjali? "Vruttaya panchatayyah klisha aklishata". Why svapna vrutti is not included and it doesn't seem to be included?

So, in order that there is not such flaw Patanjali has embarked upon describing very nidra vrutti as a vrutti, class of vrutti, which would include dreamless sleep as sleep. And the definition will be circumscribing both, the dreamless sleep and the dream as well.

So, the dream is counted here. Then there is another vrutti counted here that is called daydreaming. We all are used to daydreaming. Now, again, if you analyze what is daydreaming, you always analyze what is not around and what is not the condition that you have. So, we always dream of daydreaming of something in the state we are not. It is otherwise not daydreaming.

Suppose I cannot be on the hill and then, I think of being on the hill. Now thinking that you are on the hill while being on the hill is a reality. But daydreaming is always such a thing that while you are on the hilltop, while you have climbed up the hill, and sitting somewhere there on top of the hill, then you will have daydreaming of being at the seashore. You are not at seashore, physically, really, you are on hilltop. But the daydreaming will always be pertaining to something which is not actually present at that time there. A poor man will have a daydreaming of being rich. If the poor man is thinking of being poor, that is not daydreaming. That is a thought of a wakeful state because that is a physical reality that he is poor, but the poor person will be daydreaming of being in a palace, being an emperor, being a very, very, very rich person. So try to understand what is really daydreaming.

The daydreaming is that which is not a present condition there and then with you. You are in some other condition. You are in not that. You're not in that condition. And therefore, you had dreaming. As if I'm very, very strong. As if I'm Hercules. As if I'm handsome and very, very beautiful. This is what the daydreaming is. A weak person will be having such daydreams, that are very strong. I'm Hercules. I'm Mr. Universe. Or a poor person will have daydreaming of being very, very affluent, very, very rich, wealthy person. And while a rich person will sometimes, be, will be feeling his wealthiness, his richness and his status is creating a lot of problem. He envies someone who is a pavement dweller. He envies the pavement dweller, a very relaxed person, having no problem, no status problem. These rich people have this status problem, you know? Managing one's status. And there is a lot of taboo. They cannot be doing so many things. Oh, if I were poor! But they think that rich people will have daydreaming of not being what they are. They will always daydream of what they are not. If they are rich, they will daydream of being very, very, very rich. They may be rich but they will be having daydreaming of being the richest man in the world. What is not a reality with them, they will always dream about that. So, what is not an actuality with them, they will always dream about that; what is actually with them they will never dream about that.

That is why we say it is daydreaming. Now understand the figurative meaning of daydreaming is always like that. What is not with one person that is the subject matter of dream in a wakeful state. So, in daydreaming, it's a wakeful state. But then what is taking support of...what is absent is taken support of. And therefore, cause of absence. A rich man, daydreaming of being a simple being. And a person who is a dignitary, highly celebrated dignitary, thinks of being a common man, ordinary man, which is not the actual reality. He's a very, very influential person, a very rich person, having a lot of dignity, having a lot of status, having, being a celebrity. Now he envies common man, ordinary man moving on the streets. So, he will daydream of being an ordinary man. So, all that's heavy garments of status for a moment he will keep them off. And then enjoy that simple life. Light and simple life. Otherwise, the life of them is very, very heavy. Every time putting on the status overcoat.

So, the poor will have daydream of being rich. A failure, one who is all the time everywhere a complete failure will have daydream of being successful. Unhealthy will have daydreaming of being very, very healthy. Those who are, you know, very weak health, vulnerable to every kind

of problem. So, they have daydream of being healthy, having no diseases at all, no problems at all, no niggings at all. So, this is how, this is based on desire. This is based on a kind of desire that bubbles up. Then it is so strong that they are really not aware of what is around and therefore we say that they are daydreaming.

So very strong desire, very strong expectation is the cause of daydreaming. If that is not so strong then you will not see someone in daydreaming. It should be very, very strong desire. Very, very strong expectation. And then the daydreaming happens. So again, the support of what is not actually there. Therefore, in a way taking support of the cause of what is absent with them. Success is absent. Daydreaming of success. Wealthiness, richness is absent, taking support of being wealthy. And to be wealthy, that means you are taking support of the cause of that. Cause of wealthiness, cause of success, we take support of the cause of success in daydreaming. We take support of the cause of wealthiness in daydreaming. So, the daydreaming is also circumscribed. And that is one of the, quite a prominent vrutti to particular mind set. Some people have this major occupation in a wakeful state dreaming. So that is also circumscribed.

Then there are some more vruttis that are circumscribed by this nidra vrutti. It is murchha beshudhavasta or besavadaprana. What is this? murchha, fainting, somebody fainting, somebody, a blow with a stick on the head and the person is unconscious, giddy, a person faint. Now, the cause of absence of consciousness is that there is a blow on the head. And therefore, that's also included. The cause of a wakefulness, the cause of being aware, cause of being conscious, the absence of it. The absence of being conscious, absence of being in an a-wakeful state with awareness. The cause of absence is some such thing. Concussion, somebody striking on the head or some kind of epilepsy attack kind of thing. Unconsciousness coming due to some factors.

So, even to become unconscious or if somebody is anaesthetised. What is anaesthetised? You want the person not to be a wakeful state or conscious state. And you make the person unconscious. And therefore, support of not being a wakeful is making the person unconscious. And support of some drug is taken for the person to become unconscious. So even unconsciousness or what is called as '*murchha*'. Somebody fainting etc. Or even if somebody is not really sufficiently alert. Lacking in basic alerticity. So basic alerticity means the mind is somewhere and therefore it is not where it should be present. And therefore, one is not really alert. What is lack of alertness? That is not aware of being the state that one is in. The region, the place, the time, that one is in. And therefore, advertence is lost. Advertence in time, space situation, scenario is lost. And that is called lack of alerticity.

If you are alert of all that. That, where am I? What is this time? What is the condition in which I am? What is the condition around me? That is alerticity. You are alert about all those things. When you are not alert that means the mind has taken support of that which causes absence of alerticity. Mind can go somewhere. Mind in some worry, thought or whatever. So there, the support of again, absence of alerticity is taken. Unless you take absence of the support of absence of alerticity, you cannot be not alert. So, to be not alert, you will have to take support of the cause which creates absence of alerticity. Mind engaged, mind engrossed, mind somewhere. So, even

that is nidra vrutti. Lacking alerticity. Not having minimum alerticity. So, understand all these are included in this nidra vrutti.

So, therefore there is no point in merely taking this sutra Sushupti Paraka. That is only as describing Sushupti or what we call sleep. However, sleep is such a state. And in sleep you can really understand, as I said, we take support of absence of a wakefulness. That's why we want some darkness in a room. We don't want sounds in the room. We do not want any noise. We want that quiet condition, dark condition. So, these are the things that help us take support of cause of wakefulness. And then what actually happens, as I said, the mind enters a nerve called pericardium and that is how the sleep is actualized.

So, in darshanic process, the definition is analyzed with the help of what is called as maxim of concomitance and exclusion. Now, this state of you and me cannot be called as state of sleep. So the definition part which says taking support of cause of absence is not there. So it is excluded. So, this is how the definitions are tested in darshanic process. There is called the law, or maxim of concomitance and exclusion. So that will really tell us about how far, what is the radius of this nidra vrutti. So, this is nidra vrutti where what is included is dreamless sleep. The dream, the daydreaming, and unconscious state, or state of lack of alerticity. So, all these things are really included.

Now, as were also considering the dream experience. The dream experience of snake or elephant is not illusion. Because in illusion we are imposing. We impose one thing on another thing. There is object of imposition and there is object imposed. While in dream that is not the case. Because even we come out of the dreamy experience, we don't say, "Oh! It was not an elephant." You say it was a dream. In disillusionment what will you do? You will say, "Oh! That is not snake, that's a rope." This is how it is invalidated. That, "No, no, no, that is not snake, but this is rope." But how is that dream experience invalidated? "Oh, it was a dream." In the dream if we had experienced elephant, you don't say, "Oh! it was not elephant." Elephant was not imposed in dream experience. But it was experienced. Elephant was experienced in dream experience. And therefore, the dream should not be mistaken to viparyaya. Because it doesn't fit in the definition of viparyaya. It doesn't get included in the definition of viparyaya. And therefore, on awakening we say, "Oh! I was in dream." "Oh, this was a dream."

We do not invalidate the object and experience of dream by the knowledge of physical state, or a wakeful state experience. So, the dreams, if they are invalidated, they are invalidated differently. Then the invalidation of viparyaya, illusion. And therefore, the dream should not be considered as viparyaya kind of thing. It is not viparyaya. Because the process of viparyaya is like pratyaksha. And another pratyaksha invalidates it. But that is not the process of nidra vrutti. Although the nidra vrutti experience is almost identical, ditto identical to a wakeful state but that is not how it is invalidated. Actually, it is not invalidated. It is considered as dream state we know, "Oh, it was a dream." So, daydreaming is also one who, when someone comes out of daydreaming by any reason, by any account, the person realizes that it was daydreaming, "I was in a daydream."

So, therefore understand this nidra vrutti. It is circumscribing so many vruttis which are quite fascinating in definition. See the depth of yoga psychology? A marvel, that depth of yoga psychology. That it is including so many vruttis. Even unconscious state. Otherwise in unconscious state, you are neither having pratyaksha, nor having illusion, nor having vikalpa. Then what it is? Not even a memory, not even smriti. Then where is it counted? It is counted here.

Ok, now, one more interesting thing about sleep, let me tell you, the dreamless sleep. In dreamless sleep, even if you think there is no dream experience at all and there was no mental modulation, etc. And therefore, many of them had this doubt, question, "Is dreamless sleep not yoga because there is no chitta vrutti." Ah, or, they want someone to show that there is a chitta vrutti in state of dream, a state of dreamless sleep. See, in dreamless sleep which we all have every day, understand how it is when we come out of our sleep and the sleep is over. Ah, it is not like something like computer crash. If your computer has crashed, what does it mean? So, the data is all gone. And therefore, you say my computer crashed. But sleep is not such a state. Your memory, etc. is not totally effaced. You can commence that day from where you ended on previous day. You don't forget your identity. You don't forget your status. You don't forget your needs, the desires of previous day. It's not that previous day desires are obliterated and now new body of desires is going to come up. So, you, after awakening say, "I left that work half, let me complete that work." So, it's not like computer crashing. That means that it is all the pre-dormancy experiences are still maintained. And then you can have that data available.

So, dreamless sleep or having a good sleep or even a very inert and thick sleep, there is no brain crash. Like computer crash. So, those vruttis are very much there. So even a dreamless sleep is, there is some experience of sleep-in sleep. It's not at all that our experiences are totally blanked out. That is why on awakening we say, "I slept well." That means, that which had to sleep in you got the sleep. The body must have rest. Mind must have rest. Senses must have rest. They must sleep. So, when they get that rest, then we say, "I had a very good sleep."

So, you get that experience that, "I slept well!" You don't come out of sleep and say, "Oh! Where am I?" Like it happens in unconscious state. A person coming out of the unconscious state to conscious state, he loses some memories, short term losses there and he says, "Oh! Where am I?" "Why am I here?" "How did I come here?" That doesn't happen in dreamless sleep.

So, what is really sleeping in sleep? Tell me. There are so many things that are working even in dreamless sleep. Your heart is working. Your brain is working. Your autonomous system is working. The lungs and heart and organs, liver, stomach, colon, bladder, systemic system, all organs are working. And yet you say, "I rested well." That means you are pointing out at just fragment of your embodiment and you say, "I slept well." Your liver, kidney, bladder were in process. They were processing. Colon, liver, kidneys etc., they were processing. You were breathing. The lungs were working. Heart was working. So, where we wanted kind of rest, and if 'that' rested, we say, "I had a very good rest." Actually, you don't really rest. You don't all become dead for your state of sleep. So, there are functions going on. Something is monitoring your heart and lungs within you and seeing that it is operating. It is conducting the autonomous system. So therefore, there is some vrutti and even when we come out of the sleep, that shows that we have

experienced rest in that sleep. We experienced a dreamless condition in the sleep. So, there is someone who is experiencing it. And therefore, even dreamless sleep is a vrutti.

So, anyway, we embarked upon a very fascinating vrutti, chitta vrutti here. So, let's be considering it. But, the remainder for next time.

Namaskar all of you.