

# What are the Principles of Vidur Niti?

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The best description of the causes and treatment of insomnia comes from Vidura Niti a dialogue between Vidura and Dhritarashtra.

In the text, King Dhritarashtra said: *“O Vidura, Sanjaya has come back. He has gone away after rebuking me. Tomorrow he will deliver, in the midst of the court, Ajatashtru’s message. I have not been able today to ascertain what the message is of the Kuru hero. Therefore, my body is burning, and that has produced sleeplessness. Tell us what may be good for a person that is sleepless and burning.”*

“My body is burning, and that has produced sleeplessness” is a typical description of anxiety and related sleeplessness, true even today.

Vidura said: *“Sleeplessness overtakes thief, a lustful person, him that has lost all his wealth, him that has failed to achieve success, and him also that is weak and has been attacked by a strong person.”*

He therefore described five basic reasons for insomnia and even in today’s science they are true. No new cause has been added in this list of stress-induced insomnia.

The situations are:

- A thief
- A lustful person
- A person who has lost all his wealth
- A person who has failed to achieve success
- A person who is weak and has been attacked by a strong person.

Ayurveda describes sleep disorders as an aggravation of *Vata* and *Pitta dosha*. The number one cause of the same is mental tension; suppressed feelings and acute bitterness. The above five situations again hold true to this effect.

Apart in Allopathy other causes of insomnia mentioned are constipation; dyspepsia; excessive intake of tea, coffee and alcohol and environmental factors - excessive

cold, heat or change of environment. They are in most of the situations the effect and not the cause of insomnia.

The treatment of insomnia involves either suppressing the emotions with drugs or root level eradication of stress with proper counseling. Bhagavad Gita, Chanakya Niti and Vidur Niti are high level counseling books of ancient era and provide texts and sutras even true today.

Bhagavad Gita was a counseling when Arjuna went in an acute anxiety state and was not being able to decide whether or not he should fight with his near ones. He said: *my legs are trembling, my bows are leaving me, by body is shaking, what should I do”*. The principles of Gita today are incorporated as the principles of any counseling.

Chanakya gave principles of how to manage conflicts and win over others. One of his main teachings was that money earned by unfair means can only last for 8 years.

Another answer to insomnia is learning meditation as described in Patanjali Yoga Sutra or Yoga Vashistha. It is based on the principle of concentrating on the present, which shifts the inner environment from sympathetic to parasympathetic mode. Twenty minutes of meditation morning and evening provides the same biochemical benefit as gathered from 7 hours of deep sleep.

Here are some other sutras of Vidura Niti:

- Do not inhabit a country where you are not respected, cannot earn your livelihood, have no friends or cannot acquire knowledge. (1.8)
- Do not reveal what you have thought upon doing, but by wise counsel keep it secret, being determined to carry it into execution. (2.7)
- Consider again and again the following: the right time, the right friends, the right place, the right means of income, the right ways of spending and from whom you derive your power. (4.18)
- A wise man should not reveal his loss of wealth, the vexation of his mind, the misconduct of his own wife, base words spoken by others and disgrace that has befallen him. (7.1)

*(Disclaimer: The views expressed in this write up are my own)*