

## “BRAHMA MUHURTA AND WELL-BEING: HARMONIZING ANCIENT WISDOM WITH MODERN SCIENCE”

\*<sup>1</sup>Dr. Nikita Pawar, <sup>2</sup>Dr. Kailas Sonmankar, <sup>3</sup>Dr. Vaidehi Kadam, <sup>4</sup>Dr. Snehal Alone

\*<sup>1,3,47</sup>PG Scholar Department of Kriya Sharir RAPMC.

<sup>2</sup>Associate Professor (Department of Kriya Sharir RAPMC).

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### \*Corresponding Author

**Dr. Nikita Pawar**

PG Scholar Department of Kriya  
Sharir RAPMC.



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### ABSTRACT

*Acharya Vagbhata*, in the *Dinacharya Adhyaya* of *Ashtanga Hridayam*, mentions the sutra:

“ब्राह्मे मुहूर्ते उत्तिष्ठेत् स्वस्थो रक्षाथमायुषः”

which translates to: “*A healthy person should wake up during Brahma Muhurta to protect and enhance their lifespan.*”

According to Ayurveda, waking up during *Brahma Muhurta*—roughly 1.5 hours before sunrise—has significant health benefits. This time is considered spiritually charged and highly conducive to mental clarity, peace, and healing. From a modern scientific standpoint, waking up during this early phase helps regulate the circadian rhythm, or the body’s internal clock, which plays a critical role in governing sleep- wake cycles and various metabolic functions. A well-regulated routine supports the circadian rhythm, ensuring restful and restorative sleep. On

the contrary, disruptions to this rhythm—often caused by irregular sleeping habits or unhealthy lifestyles—can lead to numerous health issues, including mood disorders, metabolic imbalances, and chronic diseases. The circadian rhythm is essentially a biological process that follows a 24-hour cycle, influenced by external factors like light and temperature. Maintaining this rhythm is essential for overall well-being. Ayurveda emphasizes the importance of adhering to daily (*Dinacharya*) and seasonal (*Ritucharya*) routines to maintain harmony within the body and mind, which in turn supports longevity. Waking up during *Brahma Muhurta* helps reset and synchronize the biological clock, promoting sustained energy, mental clarity, and overall health throughout the day. This traditional practice,

supported by both ancient wisdom and modern science, is a simple yet powerful way to enhance quality of life.

## INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda is a comprehensive system of healing that promotes overall well-being and has benefited countless individuals by enhancing their quality of life and providing effective remedies for various health conditions.

*Acharya Vagbhat* had stated the starting of *Dinacharya* with waking up at *Brahma Muhurta*. By following the principles outlined in *Dinacharya* (daily regimen) and *Ritucharya* (seasonal regimen), an individual can maintain the balance of *Dosha*, *Dhatu*, and *Mala*—the fundamental elements of the body.<sup>[1]</sup>

This equilibrium is essential for promoting overall health and increasing lifespan. In contrast, modern lifestyles have led to a rise in health issues such as diabetes, high blood pressure, insomnia, anxiety, and depression, which are now common among a large portion of the population.

*Brahma* signifies *Jñānam* (knowledge), and the time period that supports deep study and reflection is referred to as *Brahma Muhurta*.<sup>[2]</sup>

*Brahma Muhurta* refers to the second-last segment of time before sunrise, occurring approximately 1 hour and 36 minutes prior to it. The term *Brahma* signifies "knowledge," and thus, this time is regarded as ideal for acquiring wisdom and engaging in spiritual or intellectual pursuits.

There are differing views on the exact timing of *Brahma Muhurta*. According to traditional time division, a day is split into eight equal parts called *Yaamas*, each lasting three hours. The day and night are divided into three *Yaamas* each, while the remaining two *Yaamas* correspond to the transitional periods of dawn and dusk, known as *Sandhyas*.

As per the scholars *Arunadatta*, *Indu*, and *Hemadri*, when day and night are equal in length, each consists of 15 *Muhurtas*, making each *Muhurta* 48 minutes long.

*Brahma Muhurta*, which falls during the last phase of night, is considered to begin with the 14th *Muhurta*.

It is suggested that a healthy person should wake up during this period—roughly 96 minutes (or about 1.5 hours) before sunrise. However, this practice is not advised for those who are unwell. *Brahma Muhurta* thus represents the latter portion of the fourth *Yaama* of the night and is considered a highly beneficial time for mental clarity and spiritual practices.

Although the term *Brahma Muhurta* is not explicitly mentioned in the *Charaka Samhita*, its significance is implied. In the context of the *Matrashitiya Adhyaya*, it is emphasized that a scholar should rise early in the morning. *Charaka* refers to this time as *Upavyusha*, meaning the period when a portion of the night still remains.

This period aligns with what is traditionally understood as *Brahma Muhurta*.<sup>[3]</sup>

As stated in the *Ashtanga Sangraha*, one should ensure that the food consumed the previous night has been properly digested before rising in the morning.<sup>[4]</sup>

As per Swami Shivananda Ji, *Brahma Muhurta* is the early morning period that spans from 3:30 a.m. to 5:30 a.m.<sup>[5]</sup>

*In Hindu tradition, it is believed that the final portion of the night—roughly the last three hours before sunrise—is considered Brahma Muhurta. During this sacred time, it is recommended that one should rise and not remain asleep, as it is regarded as the most favorable period for spiritual activities and mental clarity.*<sup>[6]</sup>

An individual who wishes to maintain good health and safeguard their well-being should rise during **Brahma Muhurta**, as doing so is believed to help prevent illness (*Vyadhis*) and misfortune or poverty (*Alakshmi*). However, those who are unwell are advised to rest adequately during this time to help maintain the balance of bodily elements (*Dhatu Samyata*). The **Atharvaveda** states that waking up early in the morning contributes to a disease-free life. Similarly, the **Bhagavad Gita** teaches that a person who follows a balanced routine—eating (*Ahara*), living (*Vihara*), sleeping, and waking in harmony—can overcome all forms of suffering.<sup>[7]</sup>

### *Scientific explanation of brahma muhurta*

**1. Biological circadian rhythm:** The word "**circadian**" is derived from Latin roots: "**circa**" meaning "approximately" and "**diem**" meaning "day." Circadian rhythms are internal biological processes that follow a cycle of about 24 hours, playing a key role in regulating

functions such as the sleep–wake cycle. These rhythms originate within the organism itself (endogenous) but are also influenced by external environmental cues.<sup>[8]</sup>

*Circadian rhythms are present in all living organisms. For instance, in plants, these rhythms help flowers open and close at optimal times, possibly reducing exposure to threats like predators.* In humans, circadian rhythms play a vital role in synchronizing both mental and physical functions across the body. The digestive system, for example, generates specific proteins in anticipation of regular meal times, while the endocrine system adjusts hormone levels to align with typical patterns of energy use.<sup>[9]</sup>

**2. Human Biological Clock:** The brain's internal clock, which governs circadian rhythms, is located in a region known as the **suprachiasmatic nucleus (SCN)** within the **hypothalamus**. This master clock uses special clock genes to send timed signals that regulate bodily functions throughout the day.

Because the SCN is highly responsive to light, light becomes a key external factor in influencing these signals. The **retina** contains unique **photosensitive ganglion cells** that have a direct connection to the SCN. These cells help synchronize the SCN with the external light–dark cycle, a process known as **entrainment**.

The SCN also receives visual input through **rods and cones**, the eye's traditional photoreceptors used for vision. It interprets light signals from the retina to distinguish between day and night and relays this information to the **pineal gland**. In response, the pineal gland adjusts the production of **melatonin**—a hormone that increases at night and decreases during the day—informing the body of the duration of nighttime.<sup>[9]</sup>

**3. Hormonal functions:** In the early morning, **nascent oxygen** becomes available and readily binds with **hemoglobin** to form **oxyhemoglobin**, which is efficiently transported to nourish various tissues throughout the body. Additionally, the release of the hormone **serotonin** during this time helps promote alertness and wakefulness.

**Melatonin**, often referred to as the "sleep hormone," plays a key role in helping individuals fall asleep. Its levels in the bloodstream naturally rise and fall in alignment with the day–night cycle. The **pineal gland**, which acts like a biological clock, is responsible for producing melatonin and contributes to regulating **circadian rhythms**, which follow a roughly 24-hour pattern. Melatonin production significantly increases during the night, while during the

daytime, its levels remain minimal or nearly undetectable.

**Cortisol**, a steroid hormone responsible for regulating various bodily functions such as metabolism and immune response, reaches its peak levels in the **early morning hours**.

However, in the pursuit of our passions or due to modern lifestyle demands, we often fall into irregular routines—especially when it comes to sleep. Disrupted sleep patterns can throw off the **body's internal clock**, leading to health issues such as **insomnia, obesity, and diabetes**.

Maintaining a **consistent daily schedule** supports not only the body's natural rhythms but also promotes mental well-being. When the mind becomes accustomed to a regular routine, it transitions more smoothly between tasks, enhancing focus and overall productivity.

## DISCUSSION

In Ayurveda, the *hṛdaya* (heart) is likened to an inverted lotus (*Pundarika*)—a bloom that opens with sunlight and closes at dusk. Just like the lotus responds to daylight, the heart expands and contracts in tune with wakefulness and rest.<sup>[10]</sup>

According to Ayurveda, the **pineal gland**—a tiny, pinecone-shaped structure deep in the brain—functions in harmony with sunlight,<sup>[11]</sup> much like **Satva** and **Tama Guna**, the lightness and darkness qualities described in Ayurvedic tradition. In Ayurveda, **Satva Guna** symbolizes clarity, positivity, and equanimity, while **Tama Guna** reflects dullness, negativity, anxiety, and depression.

Modern physiology shows that the pineal gland converts **serotonin** (a mood- uplifting neurotransmitter linked to Satva qualities) into **melatonin** (a sleep- promoting hormone associated with Tama attributes) depending on light and darkness. During the daytime, sunlight stimulates the production of **serotonin**, lifting your mood, sharpening focus, and encouraging positivity—echoing the Ayurvedic ideal of **Satva Guna**. As night arrives, the body shifts to produce **melatonin**, which supports sleep and relaxation. But when melatonin is over- secreted or misaligned, it can lead to tiredness, low spirits, and emotional sluggishness—echoing the darker qualities of **Tama Guna**.<sup>[12]</sup>

Modern pressures—like stress, changing eating habits, and long office hours— often push us toward late nights and late mornings. This disrupts the natural release patterns of **serotonin** and **melatonin**, which are critical for mood and sleep. When these hormones are imbalanced,

it can lead to **depression, insomnia, fatigue, low mood, and loneliness**—symptoms commonly linked to mental disorders (manas roga) in Ayurveda. So avoid those Manas Roga, we should have to accept and follow the daily (Dinacharya), seasonal (Ritucharya), and ethical conduct (Sadvritta) which are described in Ayurveda.

## CONCLUSION

Ayurveda emphasizes proactive, wellness-focused routines—like Dinacharya, Ritucharya, and Sadvritta—designed to prevent imbalance rather than treating illness. Among these, Brahmā Muhurta offers an extraordinary boost in clarity and heightened awareness, making it an ideal window for tackling important projects or life decisions. One's daily habits exert a direct or subtle influence on *dhātu-samya- vāsta* (the balanced state of tissue equilibrium). When our lifestyle is attuned to our internal clock, this rhythm supports lifelong well-being. Brahmā Muhurta is a pivotal interval that aligns our circadian rhythm, helping preserve the daily harmony of physiological cycles. Rising during this serene pre-dawn period supports the body's physical, mental, and spiritual functions. The peaceful atmosphere at that hour has a calming and enlivening effect, nurturing both mind and body. Waking up early helps recharge the body's core systems—especially hormones and the nervous system—so everything runs smoothly throughout the day. To make this a habit, don't jump straight to waking up at Brahmā Muhurta. Instead, gradually shift your wake-up time earlier each day. Over time, this helps you naturally settle into rising during that peaceful pre-dawn window.

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