



306719 - The superiority of sleeping on one's right side does not contradict what doctors say about the benefits of sleeping on one's left side

the question

What should we do if there is some worldly matter that medical science recommends doing in a particular way at the time when the Sunnah recommends doing it in a different way? For example, we know that sleeping on one's right side is proven to be Sunnah, and some of the scholars have pointed out the benefits of sleeping on one's right side, but some medical research today indicates that there are advantages and benefits in sleeping on one's left side, and they have listed these advantages. I hope that you can advise us about this matter.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Firstly:

It was the practice of the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) to sleep on his right side, placing his right hand under his right cheek, and he (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) taught people to sleep in this manner.

It was narrated that al-Bara' ibn `Aazib (may Allah be pleased with him) said: The Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: "When you go to your bed, do wudu' as for prayer, then lie down on your right side..." The hadith was narrated by al-Bukhari (2239) and Muslim (4884).

Al-Hafiz Ibn Hajar said: He recommended sleeping on one's right side because of some benefits of that, which include: that it makes it easier to wake up quickly, and the heart hangs towards the



right, so it will not become heavier when sleeping. Ibn al-Jawzi said: Physicians have stated that this way of sleeping is healthier for the body. They said that he should start by laying on his right side for a while, then turn over to his left side, because the first position will help the food to go down, and sleeping on one's left side helps with digestion because the liver is close to the stomach. (*Fat-h al-Bari*, 11/1 10).

Secondly:

There are a number of websites which mention the health benefits of sleeping on one's left side, [for example](#)

Sleeping on one's left side is recommended by doctors because it gives better rest and makes sleep more comfortable.

Perhaps the reason why the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) advised sleeping on one's right side – if it is proven that sleeping on one's left side is more comfortable and leads to deeper sleep – is that sleeping on one's right side makes sleep lighter, which will help a person to wake up and attain the benefit of praying at night.

But if someone needs that deep sleep and decides to sleep on his left side, that is permissible and there is no blame on him; the most that can be said is that this is different from what is better and more appropriate.

Ibn al-Qayyim (may Allah have mercy on him) said: There is a subtle reason for sleeping on one's right side, which is that the heart is attached to the left side, so if a man sleeps on his left side, he will sleep deeply, because he will be comfortable, which will make him sleep more deeply.

If he sleeps on his right side, he will not be so comfortable and will not sleep so deeply, because his heart will not be settled in a comfortable position.

Therefore doctors recommend sleeping on one's left side, so as to get a good night's sleep.

But the Lawgiver recommend sleeping on one's right side, so that one will not sleep too deeply



and thus miss praying qiyam al-layl.

Thus sleeping on one's right side is more beneficial spiritually, and sleeping on one's left side is more beneficial physically. And Allah knows best. (*Zad al-Ma`ad*, 1/311).

He also said: The most beneficial sleep is sleeping on one's right side, so that food will settle in the stomach, because the stomach is positioned a little to the left. Then the sleeper may turn onto his left side for a little while, so that he can digest quickly, because the stomach will be leaning on the liver. Then he should turn onto his right side again, so that the food will pass quickly from the stomach. Thus at the beginning and end of sleep he will be on his right side.

Sleeping a lot on one's left side is harmful to the heart, because other organs will be leaning towards it and thus different excretions will pour into it. (*Zad al-Ma`ad*, 4/220).

Shaykh Ibn Baz (may Allah have mercy on him) was asked: Is the Muslim sinning if he sleeps on his left side?

He replied: There is nothing wrong with that, but the best is to start his sleep on his right side, as the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) would start sleeping on his right side, and he (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: "When one of you goes to his bed, let him do wudu' then lie down on his right side." This is what is best, to start sleeping at night on one's right side, in a state of purity. This is what is best, but if someone sleeps on his left side, there is nothing wrong with that. And if he goes to sleep then turns over, there is nothing wrong with that. (*Fatawa Nur `ala ad-Darb*)

Conclusion:

The best is to sleep on one's right side, but there is nothing wrong with sleeping on one's left side, especially if one needs to sleep deeply.

And Allah knows best.