

# Soar Beyond Waking, Dream and Deep Sleep

Part Two  
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## Turiya—The Transcendental

**T**HE VERY FACT that you feel you experience nothing in deep sleep—yet you know you still exist—shows that there is something other than your ego that exists in deep sleep. That something, which witnesses deep sleep, also witnesses waking and dream in an unaffected manner. The cycles of waking, dream and deep sleep come again and again, but the deeper you, your substratum, remains unaffected. That substratum is the Self. In deep sleep you come closer to the Self, but you do not realize the Self, because there is an obstructing veil, known as ignorance or *avidya*. Since that veil is not broken in sleep, you wake up in the same personality. Therefore, the goal before the individual is to break the veil of ignorance, understand the illusion behind the three states, and go beyond them into the fourth state—*Turiya*—the transcendental state of Enlightenment.

That Yogic movement towards *Turiya* is viewed as a positive counterpart to the normal states of consciousness. As the soul experiences waking, dream and deep sleep, it passes through the physical, astral and causal planes of existence. But these experiences are negative in nature; that is, they do not lead to *Turiya*. However, as one progresses in the practice of Yoga, the soul passes through the same planes in a positive way, through one-pointedness (mental concentration), lower *samadhi* and higher *samadhi*.

In dream, the astral or subtle body, consisting of mind, senses, and the vital forces, is more predominant. Intellect and ego are also there in the astral body, but their operations are dim. The positive counterpart of dream is lower *samadhi*. That is, in dream you come into the astral plane, but in a negative way—due to increasing tiredness and inertia. When you practice Yoga or meditation or an advanced mystical movement, you enter

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into the astral plane in a positive way. So lower *samadhi* is the positive counterpart of dream. Then as you advance further, you enter into the causal plane through higher *samadhi*, through super-consciousness, which is the positive counterpart of deep sleep.

In order to truly experience what happens in deep sleep, you have to enter into higher *samadhi*, which is a superconsciousness that lets you experience what ego cannot. Only when you are enlightened through higher *samadhi* will you know the full joy of profound sleep. Only at this stage will you transcend the three states of waking, dream and deep sleep and enter into the fourth state, *Turiya*.

### Mastery over the Three States

THE RELATIVE experiences of waking, dream and deep sleep can be improved by some practical knowledge and insight. In order to be more fully awake in daily life, you have to have *satsanga*, good association. You also have to discipline your mind and senses so that you are more alert to the practical realities of a world in which things are enveloped by illusion. If you are truly awake, you will have increasing aspiration for Self-realization.

There is also an art to promoting better dreams. Although good dreams are not the goal in life, it is better to have good dreams than bad ones. In order to have better dreams, you have to create a better psychological environment. If you are not following a healthy pattern in your daily life—if you are sleeping too much, staying awake too much, eating too much before going to sleep, indulging in negative influences prior to sleep such as watching murderous movies and so forth—naturally your dreams will be of a negative and disturbed nature. So, the quality of dream can be improved upon and even controlled if you create harmony in your daily life.

Sleeping soundly is also a great art that an aspirant must learn. If you harmonize your daily life in such a manner that your mind and physical body are given the correct balance of activity, when you are truly tired you will enter quickly into deep sleep. If, on the other hand, your mind is active and your physical body is tired, sleep will be restless because mind will continue to operate through dreams. Mind and body must both be given proper activity in your daily life and there should be a healthy balance between the activity levels of the two.

Of course, in order to promote a peaceful sleep, your diet must be light, and you should have a spiritual environment. You must further understand that a few hours of qualitative sleep are much better than long hours of interrupted sleep. Qualitative sleep refreshes your nervous system and revitalizes your mind, making it more receptive and aware. Therefore, develop the habit of keeping a proper schedule of sleeping and waking.

There were great men who had perfect control over their sleep. It is said that Napoleon was able to sleep anywhere, even in a battlefield. In the Puranic times, Arjuna was a master of sleep. People who have this *siddhi* are called *Gudakesha*, and Arjuna was that type of personality; he could sleep anytime by mere will.

Also learn how to be awake and not to fall asleep when you don't want to fall asleep. There are people who fall sleep, for example, when there is a wonderful *satsanga* going on. At that time you should be able to control your sleep.

Learn to relax your body and mind. Develop the sense of absolute self-surrender to God and let nature sweep over your personality. Goddess in the form of sleep will unfold you in a peaceful experience.

These are some practical points that will help an aspirant to attain a certain degree of mastery over the sleep, dream and waking states. Remember, however, that one masters these states in order to go beyond them.

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## The Story of Gadhi

**A**S WAS explained earlier, waking and dream are relative realities. A story is told in Yoga Vasistha to further explain this point. Once there was a *brahmin* known as Gadhi, who was a practitioner of meditation and various spiritual disciplines. He lived alone by a lake in a forest. One day he entered the lake while practicing a certain ritual, and the moment he submerged himself in the water, he passed into a strange, dream-like experience. He saw himself somewhere in a household, with a wife, children and relatives. Then he saw himself dying, and everybody was surrounding him, weeping.

Then he saw himself passing on from that embodiment and being born in a forest into the family of outcasts, called *chandalas*. There he was given the name Katanja (meaning “thorny bush”), and he saw himself grow up, become a young man, marry, and have children. His life was a wild life, one of hunting and killing deer, monkeys and bears—the typical life of a *chandala*. Passing his time in this way, Katanja grew to be middle aged.

Then there was a great famine that befell that forest. Most of his relatives, including his wife and children, died. In despair, he left that forest and started wandering aimlessly. On the

first road he took approaching a city, he noticed an elephant coming towards him. The elephant was carrying a garland on his trunk and placed it around Gadhi’s neck.

It was the custom of that country that when the king died, another king was chosen with the help of an elephant. The elephant was given a garland, and whomever the elephant garlanded became king. Thus, this *chandala*, Katanja, became the king of Kira country. He was given a new name, Gawala, and he ruled that kingdom for seven years.

Then, one day, he suddenly thought of his life as a *chandala*, wandering through the forests. A little homesick, he put on his old wild clothes and started walking in the royal garden. It so happened that at the same time a group of *chandalas* who had been his old associates passed by. Recognizing him, they all started shouting, “Oh Katanja, what are you doing here? Are you in the service of the king? Are you a gardener?”

When he realized that he had been recognized as a *chandala*, he rushed back to his palace. But it was too late, for the queens had heard the commotion in the gardens. And in those days any dealing with a *chandala* was considered a hideous sin. So the whole country began to grieve about having a *chandala* as their king, and many of them performed strange actions of expiation for that type of sin. Some of them even threw themselves into fire.

Seeing all this, the king became disgusted and jumped into fire himself. Just at that moment when he entered the fire, Gadhi came up from the water. Realizing that all he had experienced was like a dream, Gadhi began to reflect within himself, “How could all this have happened to me? Was all this unreal?”

Some time passed and one day a traveler came to Gadhi’s hermitage in the forest. In the course of conversation, the traveler told Gadhi that he had just come

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the true identity,  
is beyond waking,  
dream, and deep sleep.  
And that Self is  
always there in  
your heart.**



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from a country called Kira that had been ruled by a *chandala* king for seven years—but the people had not known he was a *chandala*. Then when the king was recognized as a *chandala*, all the people rejected him and, out of frustration, he committed suicide by throwing himself into fire.

Hearing this, Gadhi became very interested. Until now, he had thought his dream-like experience to be totally unreal; but now he realized that there was some strange truth to it. So he returned to that forest where he had lived as a *chandala* and saw everything that he had experienced in detail. He recognized the people there. He saw the hut he had lived in, and even the bones he had chewed upon. Then he went to Kira country, and he saw the place in which he had ruled, and he recognized the many details of his life there.

Not knowing how to interpret all this, Gadhi meditated on Lord Vishnu, who appeared and told him, “You are wandering in *Maya* (Illusion). This dream that you had was merely a reflection of the experiences that belonged to a certain other soul. Your mind has the capacity to reflect others’ problems, because your mind is linked to Cosmic Mind.”

Therefore, supernormal dreams can occur in the human mind. Within a short time you can reflect experiences that have gone on for years in some other personality. But this is only a partial explanation of the illusory realities in waking and dream. The higher explanation is that dream and waking are both relative, and that both are illusory in nature.

### **Beyond the Illusion of Ignorance**

Something that appears so real to you today will not be so real as time passes by. Think of many incarnations back, or just one incarnation back. Imagine

how things were for you. You were in a totally different set of realities. Those realities don’t exist anymore. And even during this life, the many experiences of your childhood days have become like dream. Experiences in life, therefore, are not realities. Absolute Reality is the Self alone. All human experiences are merely elaborations of karma. Your desires and your karmic process go on elaborating your experiences, which are all enveloped in *avidya* (ignorance).

Vedanta further says that when you sleep, you experience *avidya* in its real form. Even in waking and dream states the same ignorance continues to be experienced, but in its modified form.

On waking from a deep sleep, you say, “I slept soundly, I knew nothing.” That “nothing” that you experienced in your deep sleep is the experience of *avidya* (ignorance). It is the very same ignorance that modifies itself into the objects of dream and waking states.

You think that you are experiencing the objects and, therefore, you know them; but you really do not know them. There is not a single object about which you can say, “I know this fully.” You know something about your table and chairs, but in addition, there is an “unknown” element that you do not know. This “unknown” is a common denominator in all your experiences of the world.



**The cycles of waking,  
dream and deep sleep  
come again and again,  
but the deeper you,  
your substratum,  
remains forever  
unaffected.**

This is *avidya* or ignorance, which has modified itself into the experiences of the waking as well as dream states.

Therefore, ignorance dominates all your experiences in waking, dream, and deep sleep. Through the Yogic process, however, you tear the veil of ignorance and realize, “I am not confined to waking, dream or deep sleep. I am the transcendental Self.” As the Self you become the underlying reality behind all. That is the implication of “*Tat Twam Asi*”—“Thou Art That,” the great teaching of the Upanishads. That innermost Self in human beings, the real Self, the true identity, is beyond waking, dream, and deep sleep. And that Self is always there in your heart. You can realize that Self and become free of waking, dream, deep sleep, death, after-death experiences and repeated embodiments.

These are some simple insights into the three states of consciousness. In Indian philosophy, these three form the basic points of study and reflection. They are experienced by everyone, and, therefore, it is easy to direct your attention to them. In analyzing them, you discover there is a deeper part within you that remains untouched by all the states. That deeper part sees dream and is untouched by it. It goes into the waking state and is not touched by it. It comes back to dream and goes into sleep. The

deeper part remains always the same—eternal. That deeper part is *Brahman*, the Self—and you are that *Brahman*!

May you have good waking hours, positive dreams, and sound sleep, and may you speedily attain that sleepless sleep of Self-realization!



## FROM SWAMIJI'S KITCHEN

### Delicious Chai Tea

- 2 cups milk, whole or reduced fat
- 1 teaspoon freshly crushed cardamom, with or without pods
- 2 whole cloves
- 2 generous “shakes” of Pumpkin Pie Spice
- 2 teaspoons of loose black tea

Heat milk just to boiling, watching carefully to avoid boil-over.

Remove from heat and add all spices, stirring well.

Cover and simmer on low heat for 15-20 minutes or until flavors are nicely blended, and then add loose tea.

After 10 minutes, strain into cups or into a carafe, and add brown sugar or any other sweetener if desired.

Vary the quantities of spices and loose tea according to taste. Also try adding star anise in the mixture for variety.

Serves two happy tea drinkers!