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## What is Dream Yoga?

Dreams are a continuation in the sleep of the thinking in the awoken state. The awoken state thinking is primarily characterized by words, while the thinking in the dream state primarily is characterized by images. When you fall asleep the thinking in other words dissolves in images. In the Danish poet Ole Sarvig's poem *Daystreams* it is described in this way:

The day's murmurous slim river  
widens out by evening  
and becomes night's deep,  
for miles, obscure lake,  
reflecting the stars.

And deep by the bottom of the lake  
the day's wild stream has  
its way in dreams.

The structure of thinking is lying in the astral plane and the Akashic records; or said in another way: The structure of thinking is lying in time and its images. The thinking, and therefore the dreams, reflects in that way the double movement of time. On some deep level the dreams reflect the outgoing movement of time, which in the dawn of time took its beginning on the background of a great vision of the Universe, the future. The dreams reflect this outgoing movement's negation of the starting point, the Now's unmanifested being, the Source itself: the Good, the True and the Beautiful. And they reflect the negationpower, which shattered the great vision in a multitude of images, which in this way came to work as kind of memories of the vision, now the past. Finally they reflect the backmovement, the longing after the great vision.

So the images in the movement of time are shattered reflections of the great vision of the Universe. They are shadows, dreams, masks, fables, fairy tales, fictions, and they flow in the movement of nature itself – they are, as the Tibetan Buddhism says, relatively valid dreams.

In the scriptless peoples' religions, or in the world of the child, the dreams are episodes under the awoken state. To the poets and to the mystics it is not impossible, that the whole of the awoken state is a dream. As Shakespeare says it in his play *the Tempest*: "We are of the same substance as our dreams; our short life is encircled by a sleep." This is not totally wrong, when you consider, that the images of time flow in the actual movement of the matter (also see my article **The Dream hypothesis and the Brain-in-jar hypothesis**).

The awoken state (which perhaps also just is a dream) is characterized by reality-experience, clarity, precision and stability. The Ego is active, knows its biographical, historical and cultural identity. Abilities and education are stable and cumulative. The world is reasonable stable: things, nature and human beings are recognizable and only change themselves after reasonably predictable patterns. The awoken state, and the responding larger sense of reality, is therefore so much more intense, the space around is so much larger, the clarity so much deeper - than the dream state.

In relation to the awoken state there are therefore, in dreams, great lacks and limitations. Dreams are thinking in images, but the sense of reality lacks. In dreams you often don't know where you are, whom and what you are. You can be all roles, carry all masks, have all ages and be both gender in every imaginable occupation. This creative richness and multiplicity of the dream state meanwhile costs identical clarity and stability.

The Argentine author Jorge Luis Borges quotes the author Paul Groussac - who in the section *Among Dreams* (in *the Intellectual Journey*) - says, that it is astounding, that we each morning wake up sensible and reasonable, after having passed through this territory of shadows, through these dreamlabyrinths.

Borges furthermore claims, that dreams are fictions, fictional productions, which means: productions of the thought. He quotes Addison, who notices, that we in the dream both are the theatre, the spectators, the actors, the topic and the words we hear.

And after all this is correct, when you consider, that dreams are a continuation of the thinking, which structure is lying in time and its images, which are of a linguistic character.

In the awoken state the Ego is active, and therefore the Ego's evaluations also are active. But the double movement of time is reflected in the Ego, because the Ego is created in the consciousness' identification with the thinking, and therefore with the images of time. Therefore you can say, that the awoken state also is a kind of dream. The actual sense of reality, or the awoken state itself, comes from the Now.

Because of the negationpower of time, the images of time only exist in relation to their negations. The most universal images in the movement of time include their polar partners, they are a kind of visionary mandala-structures or yantrafields. The more collective and personal images expel their polar partners. Yet this is in accordance with the images' logic not possible, and the result is contradiction and split.

This split is also reflected in the Ego, which makes resistance against the Now, and therefore in fact against reality, or the awakeness. The resistance consists of problematizing the Now by comparing with earlier, and hoping, desiring or fearing something else. And in this evaluation-process the Ego identifies ifself with the one pole in a pair of opposites, wherefore the polar partner is expelled. The Ego says yes and no, justifies and condemns, accepts and denies, chooses and expells, either by using the past or the future, or by using opposites: by using time the Ego problematizes the Now by comparing with earlier, and hoping, desiring or fearing something else; by using opposites the Ego polarizes the Now by thinking black and white. Altogether caused by the various split images/assumptions of time, which constitute the Ego's selfunderstanding and outlook on life. Furthermore the Ego develops strategies with the purpose of maintaining this selfunderstanding, or to avoid being confronted with it – the so-called thought distortions (see my book **A Dictionary of Thought distortions**). And all these assumptions and strategies are together constituted by words and sentences, which work in sequences in past and future, and in extremes, or analyses.

In the dream state there meanwhile happens a reduction of the Ego, which therefore no longer can maintain its selfunderstanding. This means that the universal images of time can come more into expression. And it is through these images, which the Source can express itself – they are reflections of the Source so to speak. These images are of a more visionary character, but they are still linguistic interpretations. Unlike the words meanwhile, then each universal image always includes, like a mandala, its opposition. The universal images are in other words a kind of syntheses, which work more in synchronism with the Now than in fragmented sequences in past and future.

In the concrete dreamcontent, which can be personally or collectively, the universal images work in form of symbols. The symbol is a telescoping, a representing quintessence of the informationquantities, which the wholeness in the universal image contains. In this way the symbol-function of the dreams has a development function, which works with the person's development level (the level of realization-work and ethical practice). This means, that dreams seek to put together, to synthesize and join, what the Ego in the awoken state has divided. This development function try to show you the map of your spiritual history, the dreamtracks and

songlines in the artwork of your spiritual life – your progressive karma. But therefore it is also impossible for the Ego in the awoken state to understand the dreams. It can well be, that the Ego finds that the dreams cost identical clarity, but the Ego can logical seen not understand their function. Much dreaminterpretation is therefore completely deceptive.

Furthermore the dream state is connected with the body. When you fall asleep the energy flows away from the head and down into the body – you can feel it when you become sleepy, and the feet becomes warm. And therefore dreams are more characterized by feelings than by thoughts. Feelings are the body's reaction on the thoughts. Feelings arise where the thoughts and the body meet. They are a reflection of the thoughts in the body. The thoughts create a build-up of energy in the body. It is this energy, which is the feeling, and it is in this energy the images of the dreams show themselves. In order to understand a dream you therefore have to try to feel it rather than to think it. And if there is conflict between the thought and the feeling, then the thought is lie and the feeling truth.

The Ego-weakening, and the dreams' connection with the body, furthermore do that the energy-laws of life work much better in the dream state. In other words: dreams balance the energetical swings of the thoughts. And dreams seek to finish unfinished situations. If you follow your dreams you will see, that wherever and whenever the Ego's awakened life - on the background of evaluations using opposites - has slipped out in one extreme, then the dreamprocess seeks to balance this imbalance by insisting on the opposite extreme. If you awake were too gentle, the dreams depict the more stubborn and unfriendly sides in your personality. If you were too negative, the dreams seek to bring the positive aspect into light. And each and every time the Ego in the awoken life reacts to the challenges of the various situations, by using the past, an unfinished situation is left behind. The dreams seek to finish this as good as possible. As you know you can have the same type of dreams again and again – until you begin to examine yourself, and change and restructure your thoughtpatterns, so that you can let go of the situations. This is your compensatory karma.

So firstly the dreams has a development function through their symbolfunction (progressive karma). Secondly the dreams function with reference to bodycal and energetical balancing and regulation of the swings of the thoughts (compensatory karma). This, the self-regulating system of the dreamprocess, is a Sisyphean task though, as long as you in the awoken life don't help.

These two functions correspond to the function of the chakras.

In order to make changes in your dreams, or nightmares, it is necessary, that you in your awoken life support the work of the energy-laws in the dreams. This is a part of what is called Dream yoga.

If you therefore begin to practise being in the Now, and flexible (critical) thinking, you can exempt the dreams from having to contra-balance imbalances and finish unfinished situations, what will give an ever increasing feeling of freedom.

But first after many years of spiritual practice, will the continuous supporting exercises, by themselves, begin to penetrate, first the dream life, and later the deep, dreamless sleep.

The important in spiritual practice is the dreamconsciousness' form, not its content.

On the plane of the universal images, and therefore on the Now's plane, the central is the consciousness' form, the consciousness itself and its clarity and openness. Not the consciousness' content. In spiritual practice the spiritual and spiritual active, is the consciousness' direction towards its source (the Now, the Otherness). What the consciousness and the mind and the senses are filled of, is of lesser crucial importance.

The development concerning the Now and the universal images shows itself in the dreams' consciousness in three ways:

1) In the dreams you begin to practise the continuous supporting exercises the same way as in the awoken daily life (about the supporting exercises, see my book **Meditation as an Art of Life – a basic reader**).

2) Dreams, which become lucid and the, to this responding, most suitable practice.

3) The dreams' consciousness becomes astral and the, in relation to this, most suitable practice.

1): That your spiritual practice at all reflects itself in the dream life, is a beneficial sign in your total effort. In the moment of falling asleep you simply begin to train relaxation and Hara practice. Moreover you remember to write the dreams down when you wake up. Later you can experience, that you in a dream suddenly begin to practise.

2): Lucid dreams are dreams, in which you know, that you are dreaming. There are many different causes to, that there can arise lucidity in dreams, for example stress conditions or illogical circumstances, or that you watch yourself in a mirror, or so-called flying dreams. You discover that you can alter in the dream as you like. To use

lucidity to different experiments is therefore an understandable temptation, but basically without spiritual content.

When you know that you are dreaming, while you are dreaming, the dream is called lucid. The word lucid means luminous, and the name is referring to the unusual clarity, which is in such dreams.

The lucid dream is a little more awake, a degree more awake, than an ordinary dream. Such dreams can therefore be said to be a state between dream and awake, however still more akin to dream.

Normally the Dream Self is not distanced from the dream scenario. To know that you are dreaming is due to, that a part of the Dream Consciousness separates you from the immediate identity with the scenario and content of the dream. The phenomenon is analogous with meditation, or neutral observation. In neutral observation there are two functions. The one is the observer, who separates himself from the stream of thoughts. The second is the neutrality that neither says yes or no, considers or comments.

When dreams become lucid, then it is analogous with the activating of the first function: the segregation of a Dream Witness, an instance, which knows that this is a dream. As a rule the mind in this situation then gets caught by the new, creative possibilities, which are lying in the lucidity. You can transform dreams as you want and have fantasy to. You can fly through walls, walk on water and wish yourself to other planets etc., etc.

Dream Yoga is about, that if a dream becomes lucid, you add – from the habit with meditation in the waking practice – the second function, namely the neutrality, that just – in dreams – to observe and not control, intervene or in other way interfere in the dream's own stream. If both factors are active in dreams, there is no functional difference between awake neutral observation and dreaming neutral lucidity.

According to experience there are a couple of dream situations, or elements, which favour the rise of lucidity, for example stress, illogical situations, etc. Furthermore it is possible to train lucidity in dreams; there both exists ancient Tibetan ways, Shamanistic ways and new American ways.

In spiritual practice however, you neither ought to train or worship lucidity. What on the other hand is appropriate is to use lucidity for Hara practice; that is, that you in the lucid dream focus your awareness in Hara, and therewith looks into your self, at the same time as your are observing the dream. In this way the dreaming awareness

changes accent from the dream production, from the content of the dream to the dreaming awareness itself.

The most suitable training in lucid dreams is therefore to begin to practice the continuous supporting exercises. Second best, but however still excellent, is to seek towards light, which brings you closer the lucidity and thereby the Source. Alternatively to seek towards a spiritual teacher, or in lack of a such, to seek towards a person of wisdom, archetypical understood. But best is to begin to practice the supporting exercises.

3): The astral "dream state" can evolve spontaneous, or evolve out of the lucid dream. In an astral "dream state" you know, that you are lying in the bed in this chamber and are sleeping, alternatively dreaming. In the lucid state you know, that you are dreaming, while you are dreaming. But you don't know, that this happens, while you in fact are lying sleeping in your bed. However in the astral state you also know, that you are lying in your bed sleeping. The sleeping body, the bed and the room is included in the astral "dream state". The consciousness is often located outside the body, observing the sleeping body from outside.

The temptation to here, either to become afraid, or experiment with various possibilities (astral projection, clairvoyance, telepathy etc. etc.) is huge. You are suddenly Peter Pan. It is a very forceful state. The creativity and the reality creating ability are much more free than in the lucid dream state. However you are still on the collective history of the astral plane, which work fragmented in sequences in past and future, and there is danger for, either that you remain here, in the fascination and the enthusiasm, whereby your spiritual development stops, or that you directly end up in a spiritual crisis.

In spiritual practice the most appropriate is again to use the astral state to begin to practice the continuous supporting exercises. For example you can centre the astral consciousness in the Hara centre of the sleeping body, or in the heart centre.

If you as a sleeper remember to use such an opening spiritual seen correct, this can give your total development a considerably lift forward.

But in order to do this it is of vital important that you examine the nature of lucid dreams and astral states. Let's therefore look a bit further into it.

Another aspect of lucid dreams is as mentioned the astral state: astral travel or astral projection (out-of-body experiences). In both ordinary and lucid dreams the dreamer, in the vast majority of cases, is not aware that, and where, the body is lying sleeping. The astral state is characterized by, that the consciousness knows that the body is

sleeping and can watch the sleeping body. The consciousness is here located outside the body, floating over the body in a not all too long distance. This consciousness is called the dream body.

Dalai Lama has this to say about awakening our dream body and using it for spiritual progress and development: "There is said to be a relationship between dreaming, on the one hand, and the gross and subdue levels of the body on the other. But it is also said that there is a 'special dream state.' In that state, the special dream body (the astral body) is created from the mind and from vital energy (*prana*) within the body. It looks like the physical body, but is of a finer and transparent substance. Through training it is possible to learn to send the dream body out of the body; it then works completely as an extension of the physical body, because the senses and the consciousness of the body seems to follow".

This special dream body is in other words able to dissociate entirely from the gross physical body and travel elsewhere, and experience the astral worlds of the collective time.

One way of developing this special dream body is first of all to recognize a dream as a dream when it occurs. Then you find that the dream is malleable, and you make efforts to gain control over it. Gradually you become very skilled in this, increasing your ability to control the contents of the dream so that it accords to your own spiritual practice. Eventually it is possible to dissociate your dream body from your gross physical body. In contrast, in the normal dream state, dreaming occurs within the body. But as a result of specific training, the dream body can go elsewhere.

Even though it has only come to the attention of the general public in the last few decades, lucid dreaming is not a modern discovery. In the 8<sup>th</sup> century, Tibetan Buddhists and Bonpo were practicing a form of Dream Yoga held to maintain full waking consciousness while in the dream state. This system is extensively discussed and explained in the book *Dream Yoga and the Practice of Natural Light*, by Chogyal Namkhai Norbu, an eminent Tibetan Lama, and his student Michael Katz, a psychologist and lucid dream trainer. One of the important messages of the book is the distinction between the Dzogchen meditation of *Awareness* and *Dream Yoga*. The Dzogchen *Awareness* has also been referred to by the terms *Rigpa Awareness*, *Contemplation*, and *Presence*. Awareness during the sleep and dream states is associated with the Dzogchen *practice of natural light*. This practice only achieves lucid dream as a secondary effect – in contrast to Dream Yoga, which aims primarily at lucid dreaming. According to Buddhist teachers, the experience of lucidity helps us understand the unreality of the phenomena, which would otherwise be overwhelming during dream or the death state.

An early recorded lucid dreamer was the philosopher and physician Sir Thomas Browne (1605-1682). Browne was fascinated by the world of dreams and described his own ability to lucid dream in his *Religio Medici*: "...yet in one dream I can compose a whole comedy, behold the action, apprehend the jests and laugh my self awake at the conceits thereof". Similarly, Samuel Pepys in his diary entry for 15 August 1665 records a dream "that I had my Lady Castlemayne in my arms and was admitted to use all the dalliance I desired with her, and then dreamt that his could not be awake, but that it was only a dream". Marquis d'Hervey de Saint-Denys argued that it is possible for anyone to learn to dream consciously. In 1867, he published his book *Les Rêves et les moyens de les diriger; observations pratiques* ("Dreams and How to Guide them; Practical Observations"), in which he documented more than twenty years of his own research into dreams.

An interesting modern computer-analogy to lucid dreaming and astral projection is *Second Life*, an online virtual world, where the users, called Residents, can interact with each other through avatars (the dream body in astral projection). Residents can explore the world (known as the grid), meet other residents, socialize, participate in individual and group activities, and create and trade virtual property and services with one another.

Like lucid dreaming the users of *Second Life* are of course aware, that they are in a virtual (unreal) world, but they differ in how absorbed, fascinated, they become over the possibilities in this world. The Danish documentary *My Avatar and Me*, is a creative documentary-fiction film, and a film that might expand your sense of reality. It is the story about a man who enters the virtual world *Second Life* to pursue his personal dreams and ambitions. His journey into cyberspace becomes a magic learning experience, which gradually opens the gates to a much larger reality (read more about *Second Life* and the documentary in my article **Me and my Avatar**).

As mentioned, lucid dreaming is a learnable skill, though achieving lucid dreams on a regular basis can be difficult. In the following I will mention three techniques, that are consistent with spiritual practice:

- 1) Dream recall
- 2) Wake-initiated lucid dreams (WILD)
- 3) Reality testing

#### *1) Dream recall*

Dream recall is the ability to remember dreams. Good dream recall is often described as the first step towards lucid dreaming. Better recall increases awareness of dreams in general; with limited dream recall, any lucid dreams has can be forgotten entirely.

To improve dream recall, some people keep a dream journal, writing down or recording dreams. The writing down shall happen in the same moment you wake up.

### 2) *Wake-initiated lucid dreams (WILD)*

Wake-initiated lucid dreams occur when the sleeper enters REM sleep with unbroken self-awareness directly from the waking state. There are many techniques aimed at entering a WILD. The key to these techniques is recognizing the hypnagogic stage, which is in between being awake and being asleep. If a person is successful in staying aware during this stage, that person will eventually enter dream while lucid. Meditation, or training of awareness will improve this ability by itself.

### 3) *Reality testing*

Reality testing (or reality checking) is a common method used by people to determine whether or not they are dreaming. It involves performing an action and observing if the results are consistent with results expected when awake. By practicing these tests during awake life, one may eventually decide to perform such a test while dreaming, which may fail and let the dreamer realize they are dreaming.

As a part of this training is critical thinking (spotting thought distortions, created by dualistic unbalance). In my book **A Dictionary of Thought distortions**, I have made a list over such thought distortions. When you are dreaming, such thought distortions dissolve in images, which can show as extremely complicated visionary scenes of unreality, that are almost impossible to understand. The important thing is, that you in the awake state investigate such thought distortions, and don't identify with them, whereby you avoid being controlled by them. When you identify yourself with thought distortions, you believe in them; you believe, that they are expressions of valid facts, and thereby they control you. Therefore you should confront yourself with the fact, that the thought distortions not are expressions of valid facts, that they diminish your quality of life and hinders you in using your abilities and potentials. A good exercise in that connection is reality testing.

So, these not quite ordinary states in dreams, are caused either by goaloriented conscious training, or for example by near-death experiences, threatening psychosis, shock, high fever or similar dramatic circumstances. In rare cases they can occur undramatically and spontaneous.

The primary importance of lucid dreaming to the practice of Dream Yoga has four stages:

- 1) In order to make the time we spend dreaming more meaningful, we must first recognize that we are dreaming. That is the initial exercise.
- 2) The next step is called transforming the dream.
- 3) The third is known as multiplying.
- 4) The fourth practice is to unify the dream with the clear light.

Recognizing, transforming, multiplying and unifying the dream with the luminosity of the true nature: these four outline the essential applications of Dream Yoga.

Tibetan Dream Yoga is also described by Evans-Wentz in his book *Tibetan Yoga and Secret Doctrines* as one of the six subtypes of yoga elaborated by the Tibetan guru Marpa and passed down by his disciple Milarepa. The author here describes six stages of Dream Yoga:

- 1) In the first stage, the dreamer is told to become lucid in the dream.
- 2) In the second stage, the dreamer is instructed to overcome all fear of the contents of the dreams so there is the realization that nothing in the dream can cause harm. For instance, the lucid dreamer should put out fire with his hands and realize fire cannot burn him in the dream.
- 3) Next the dreamer should contemplate how all phenomena both in the dream and in waking life are similar because they change, and that life is illusory in both states because of this constant change. Both the objects in the dream and objects in the world in the Buddhist worldview are therefore empty and have no substantial nature. This is the stage of contemplating the dream as maya (illusory), and equating this sense of maya with everyday experience in the external world.
- 4) Next, the dreamer should realize that he or she has control of the dream by changing big objects into small ones, heavy objects into light ones, and many objects into one object.
- 5) After gaining control over objects and their transformations, in the fifth stage, the dreamer should realize that the dreamer's dream body is as insubstantial as the other objects in the dream. The dreamer should realize that he or she is not the dream body. The dreamer who has gained complete control over dream objects could, for instance, alter the body's shape or make the dream body disappear all together.
- 6) Finally, in the sixth stage, the image of deities (Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, or Dakinis) should be visualized in the lucid dream state. These figures are frequently seen in

Tibetan religious art (thangas) and used in meditation. A Western parallel is the use of Christian icons. They are said to be linked to or resonate with the clear light of the void. They can therefore serve as symbolic doorways to this mystical state of being (the Void or clear light). The dreamer is instructed to concentrate on these symbolic images without distraction or thinking about other things so that the revelatory side of these symbols will become manifest.

In my book **Dream Yoga** I have in the article *The Value of Religion and Supporting Exercises* described how the instinctive survival strategi (the Ego) appears as a resistance, an invincible inertia: original sin, negative karma.

Our suffering, our painbody is according to the wisdomtraditions, through the inner evaluating ego, which the painbody is constructed around, connected with the more dangerous depths of the astral plane's collective history, which also are a kind of dark, ancient inertia, which opposes any change of the ego.

That is also the reason why you, through therapy, can't heal Man from the ground. In order to heal Man from the ground you need to go into a spiritual practice. It is only within the religions and their spiritual traditions they have knowledge and names for the more dark sides of the astral plane's collective history. The West has very precisely called this factor the original sin. The East has called it negative karma. The concepts indicate, that the inertia projects beyond the personal history (growing up conditions, traumatic bindings, painful experiences etc.) and far down into the collective inherit-backgrounds of history (genes, environment, society-ideals, the archetypes and the primordial images of the dreams, fantasies, fairy-tales, myths, and finally: instincts inherited from the animals). It is a factor, which lies in the evolution itself, in the genes, in the collective subconscious, in the collectice history.

When therefore therapy requires a change, then the instinctive survival-preparedness in us reacts and protests. Man has survived on willfulness and a consciousness-structure, which mental and psychic sign is Egocentredness. The bigger Ego, the bigger survival chance.

Seen from a spiritual perspective, this instinctive survival strategi (the Ego) appears as a resistance, an invincible inertia: original sin, negative karma. You can't, by therapeutic strategies, free the consciousness for its attachment to this inertia. You can therefore not dissolve or dilute or convert the original sin through therapy. Only the intervention of the Source (God, Christ, the enlightened consciousness) can basically help Man with a transcendence of the negative karma of the original sin. But in order to, that a human being should be able to receive this help from the Source (gift of grace), then this requires an eminently precise and profound preparation. And as part of this preparation serve the true spiritual practice within the religions.

I have in my book **A Portrait of a Lifeartist** set up six steps in such a spiritual practice:

- 1) The separation of the observer and the observed
- 2) Religion and supporting exercises
- 3) Passive listening presence
- 4) Discrimination
- 5) Creative emptiness
- 6) The wholeness of the observer and the observed

The first step, the separation of the observer and the observed, is the step where you are completely ignorant and are suffering. The next step is religion and supporting exercises. Religion and supporting exercises are a valuable early stage in a spiritual practice.

Religion has to do with the pious attitude and way of thinking, which stands for the observance of religious virtues, duties and rituals. In this way you can bring a unity and direction into the mind, an order and tranquillity in the thinking, a consistency between thought and conduct of life, an awareness of your relationship with persons, things and ideas, which no therapy is able to. In a spiritual practice it serves as a frame of reference. As described in the above-mentioned stage 6, such a frame of reference is linked to or is resonating with the clear light of the void. It can therefore serve as a symbolic doorway to this mystical state of being (the Void or clear light).

The supporting exercises are the beginning of the spiritual practice, where you begin to activate the higher functions of the mind. In order to discover and break the identification with the samsarical producer of the mind, the subject must discover the hidden source in the awareness or in the innermost of consciousness. It happens by neutralizing the Ego's, or the thinking's, functions. This happens through meditation. (the supporting exercises are described in my book **Meditation as an Art of Life – a basic reader**)

So, when you in this way do your part of the work, then you will discover that the enlightened consciousness (God, Christ, Buddha), already have cleansed the negative karma and taken on, and forgiven, the original sin. All enlightened teachers of this Earth (Rumi, Krishna, Francis of Assisi, Rabia, Meera, Yeshe Tsogyel, Teresa of Avila) are doing the same: they take on the original sin and are purifying it for us.

The two main reasons why religion and supporting exercises is a necessity is partly, that the ongoing self-confirmation of the ego and its negative automatic thoughts, is replaced by a spiritual remembrance, partly that the collective inertia is purified

and prepared, so that the Ego is made transparent along with that original sin and negative karma are transformed and transfigured in the contact with the Source (God, Christ, the enlightened consciousness, the saints etc.) These two processes mutually fertilize each other, and will with time also happen in dreams (also see my article **The Value of having a Religion in a Spiritual Practice**).

If we practice religion and supporting exercises regularly and faithfully we will begin to dream about doing them, as the above-mentioned stage 6 reinforces.

According to contemporary Dzogchen teachers Namkhai Norbu, Lopön Tenzin Namdak and Tenzin Wangyal, the perceived reality and the phenomenal world are considered to be ultimately “unreal” – an “illusion” (refer Mahamaya): a dream, a phantasmagoria, a thought-form. All appearances and phenomena are a dream or thought-form, inter- and intra- reflecting and refracting jewels and mirrors of possibility and potentiality, “arising in relationships” or “dependent co-arising”.

It is held by these lineages and due to the realizations of the spiritual practice, that the dream of life and regular nightly dreams are not dissimilar, and that in their quintessential nature are non-dual.

The non-essential difference between the general dreaming state and the general waking experience is that the latter is generally more concrete and linked with attachments, samskara and skandha; whereas, standard non-lucid dreaming is ephemeral and transient, and generally reinforced as baseless and empty.

In Dream Yoga, living may become the dream, and the dream may become the living. Progressing the spiritual practice may be metaphorically likened to living the scientific hypothesis of a resolved superposition. The resolved superposition being a mindstream conflation of Dharmakaya with Shunyata and Indra’s Net.

The entwined Mantrayana lineages of Nyingmapa, Bonpo, Ngagpa and Mahasiddha are saturated with trance and dream transmissions of teachings, doctrine, etc., etc., that transcend constructs of time, place and space, these are often called “whispered traditions” and terma. Refer lucid living.

Also according to this teaching, there is a correspondence between the states of sleep and dream and our experiences when we die. After experiences of intermediate state of bardo an individual comes out of it, a new karmic illusion is created and another existence begins. Taking stock of store consciousness (the Akashic Records) is the spontaneous perpetuant and fuel of the transmigration process.

So, the primary aim and foundation of dream practice is to realize during a dream that one is dreaming. Once lucidity has been established the applications are limitless. One can then dream with lucidity/astrality, and do all sorts of things, such as: spiritual practice; receive initiations, empowerments and transmissions; go to different places, planes, heavens and hells, other planets, both physical and astral planets; dialogue with sentient beings, creatures and people such as guru; fly; shapeshift, etc.

In the astral state the creativity of the consciousness is, as mentioned, set even more free than in the lucid dream state. Controlled astral states give, among other things, access to clairvoyance, telepathy and astral travel (astral projection). This has to do with, that time and its images still work fragmented in sequences in past and future, though on a much more fascinating collective/astral level.

But in spiritual practice it is of vital importance, that you begin to practice Hara (or other supporting religious/spiritual exercises as in the above-mentioned stage 6), if there should occur an astral state. This consists quite simple in stopping the fascination of the anti-spiritual (ego-based) experiences and their temptations, and instead focus the awareness in Hara, and therewith lead the awareness into your self. This will lead the consciousness towards the more universal images of time, which work in synchronism with the Now.

If you remain in, or explore the astral worlds of the collective time, which the astral state gives access to, then you in other words distract your awareness in past or future. This can cost awakeness and life energy, if you not are under guidance of an enlightened master, and can in addition cause Ego-inflation and other spiritual crises (see my article **Spiritual Crises as the cause of paranormal phenomena**).

It is in other words very important that you do not move accent from awake day to dreams and sleep, do not use drugs or one-sided development techniques, which promise you great experiences concerning either lucidity or astrality.

You have to have patience. Even for people with a regular and well-ordered practice (2-3 hours every day) there can pass weeks, months or years between the reflections into the processes of dreams and sleep. However if practice is appropriate, the spiritual consciousness will with time automatically penetrate the nightlife's vegetative forms of consciousness.

The spiritual process (meditation in the awoken hours and Dream Yoga during sleep) is both a slow process of awakening. The consciousness about the universal images of time, which work in synchronism with the Now, penetrates little by little everyday life. You gather time around you in transparent presence. Investments in the past and

the future of the material world, whether it is the personal or collective time, becomes undramatized and uninteresting in relation to the Now's open intensity.

In this way the grab, which the material world's past and future has in your mind, is automatically reduced. The past and the future are no longer maintained by that energy, which from the challenges of the situations, becomes canalized into the specific reaction-pattern of the past and the future. This gives a constant increasing sense of freedom, of an unconditional state. The past and the future of the material world loose their attraction. The energy flows back to the Now. The Now becomes the important; your awareness is being filled by the clarity of the presence. The magnet of attraction, which the ego, and all demonical powers, are controlled by - (the ego's identity with the material world: instincts, sexuality, emotions, desire, collective ideals, ownership, power) - loses its attraction.

During the daytime everything appears in a new light, and you will discover new life possibilities. During the night you'll progressively experience dreamless sleep.

Dreams are, as Borges says, a work of fiction we can improve. In dreams we not only need to be in hell, we can also be in heaven. We can accompany Dante on his ascent through the Purgatory towards Paradise.

Finally I will therefore mention the actual sleep state. Each time you fall asleep, you in fact move through the three aspects of meditation, namely relaxfullness, awareness and heartfullness – until you finally arrive in the Source, the Good, the True and the Beautiful. The great spiritual masters have been aware of this since the dawn of time. Already in the Upanishads you can find it described in the principle: the enlightened state is akin to deep, dreamless sleep.

Furthermore it is claimed, that you go through the same planes in the moment of death. Dreams are reflections, not only of your personal thoughts, but also of past lives, of both compensatory and progressive karma, and finally the states you experience after death. So, Dream Yoga is also about developing states of meditation in the death process, as well as lucidity and astrality in the death process.

The first condition, in order to fall asleep, is that you can relax in the body and in the mind. The relaxation process creates a neutrality in your attitude to all the various expressions of tension (the awareness). This again brings about a melting, a letting go, a devotion (the heartfullness). In this letting go the fall into the Source happens. Unlike meditation meanwhile, then this fall implies that the awakeness is lost, and that the sleep happens. Some times people experience this opening inwards as a shivering fall, which you with a jump again wake up from.

But the actual fact that you in the deep dreamless sleep are in the Source, is the reason why the sleep is so healing. It is actually a satisfactory and happy state. It is the same state, an enlightened person is in, for example Jesus or Buddha. The sleeper doesn't know it under the sleep. That is the whole of the difference. And after all it is quite fascinating to think about, that you at least one time a day are in the Source to everything.

In this way the dream yogi can have a very strong experience and with this comes understanding of the dream-like nature of daily life. This is very relevant of diminishing attachments, because they are based on strong beliefs that life's perceptions and objects are real and as a consequence, important.

When one realises and embodies the doctrine of Dream Yoga, complete realization is imminent and elementary. Namkhai Norbu gives advice, that the realization that life is only a big dream can help us finally liberate ourselves from the chains of emotions, attachments, and ego and then we have the possibility of ultimately becoming enlightened.

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