

[Understanding the World Of Sleep and Dreams](#)

Category : [March 1999](#)

Published by Anonymous on Mar. 01, 1999

PUBLISHER'S DESK

Understanding the World Of Sleep and Dreams

We have a 24-hour continuity of consciousness, from the so-called waking state into the ethereal realm of dreams

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

Dreams and the state of sleep have been a mystery and a puzzle to people of all ages throughout time. It's no wonder, since the average person is "asleep" about one third of his life.

But the mind never sleeps--only the physical body experiences this indulgence--and the physical brain perceives and records what passes through the mind, but the astral brain perceives and records...oh-so-much more! Therefore, keeping this in mind, there is a continuity of consciousness twenty-four hours a day, but not all of it is perceived or recorded by the physical brain, either through the day or through the night. This is why it is difficult to remember one's dreams, just as it is difficult to recall the details of one's life and experience, even as short a time as forty-eight hours ago.

In the inner worlds, there is a life not unlike this one, but far more complete, intricate, logical, and much more advanced.

Within that world, the astral plane, there are great schools where students gather to learn of a more productive future they can participate in creating when they incarnate. Here they mix and mingle with other souls whose physical bodies are sleeping and whom they will work and cooperate with during their next cycle of birth. The value of sleep for the person on the path is to gain the ability to bypass the lower dream state and soar deeper within to these inner-plane schools. This is done by the repetition of mantras, japa yoga, just before sleep, after relaxing the body through hatha yoga and diaphragmatic breathing.

When japa is well performed and the sincere desire is maintained to transcend the forces of the physical body and enter into the astral schools of learning, the aspirant would have dreamless nights. A deep sleep would prevail. There may be a few seconds of dreaming just before awakening, to which one should not pay any attention, as the astral body quickly reenters the physical.

Sleep is a cleanser for the subconscious mind. By the use of willpower this can be done slowly or quickly. When you sleep, you are cleaning out the subconscious mind and educating it to face the experiences that you must go through as you evolve. This is done automatically, but you can help it by the use of your will.

It is apparent that we dream things that we could not have possibly thought up. Such dreams are a conglomeration of seemingly unrelated happenings that pass through the mind. The unrelated happenings do, however, re-impress the

sub-subconscious state, and if remembered, they will in turn impress the subconscious state, and similar happenings will be manifested in our everyday life. To change these impressions, simply tell your subconscious, when you are in the process of remembering a dream, to work out the remaining particles of that experience during sleep rather than recreating it on the physical plane.

A beginner on the path, or even one in the intermediate phase, should endeavor to forget dreams and strengthen the fibers of the mind and psyche through daily sadhana--consistent spiritual disciplines. We especially want to forget bad dreams as quickly as possible, lest by remembering them we impress them in the subconscious and make them manifest in daily life.

Bad nightmares are not natural to the sleeper's mind. Often they are produced by outside influences, such as the neighbors in the next apartment. A child may be tormented by nightmares and wake up screaming, and the solution might be to have it sleep in another room, away from the next-door apartment where the husband and wife are battling, entertaining hateful thoughts. These kinds of quarrels permeate the inner atmosphere one hundred yards around, as far as the loudest voice could be heard if there were no walls.

When people begin to meditate and are on the spiritual path--and this means that they do accomplish making a difference in their behavior, their beliefs, attitudes and daily actions--their dream life will reflect these results as well. For them, the dream karmas can be worked out. Karma is often qualified as a force that is sent out from us and returns to us,

generally through other people. We do experience in the inner worlds, while the physical body is asleep, forces going out from our thoughts, feelings and what we say and think, and these obviously are dream karmas, real karmas that will eventually manifest on the physical plane unless reexperienced and dissolved within the dream world.

Sleep and death are brothers, with the exception that in sleep the silver cord is not broken, which is the psychic umbilical cord between the astral body and its physical duplicate, or of the physical body and its astral duplicate. Therefore, when one begins the regular practice of sadhana, meditation, mantras, correcting behavioral patterns in daily life, the astral body is able to disconnect from the physical body and an astral reality is experienced, which is not a dream in the sense that dreams are usually denoted to be.

When you wake up during the night, discipline should be applied lest you just roll over in a semi-conscious state and return to the dream world, going back into a subconscious or lower astral area--which might be negative, might be positive--you don't know. To avoid this, you should become fully awake. Sit up and listen for a minute or two to the high eeee sound or go into the light within your head if you are able. Then, if you wish, consciously lay down and go back to sleep, just like you did when you went to bed in the first place. If you then have difficulty returning to sleep, you can assume you have had sufficient rest for your physical body.

Some dreams come from the person's emotional nature, some from subconscious fears, and some from just playing back

experiences in daily life. But certain dreams are brought by the Gods. Dreams from the Gods come to very religious people who live a disciplined life of sadhana, rising at four in the morning, and living Hindu Dharma to the best of their ability. They have attracted the attention of the Gods because they have penetrated the realms of the Gods. If they let down, then they would not have those kinds of visitations any longer. And there are prophetic dreams, which come from the superconscious mind, beyond the subconscious. It is a state of mind that sees into the future and into the past simultaneously, is able to read the akashic records. The most prophetic dreams come in the early hours just before sunrise. The more subconscious-cleansing type dreams come before that time.

If we postulate that dreams have reality, we must then acknowledge that what we remember of them is our uninhibited states of consciousness, experience, unencumbered by society, local and national customs or inhibitions planted into the mind by parents at a young age. Knowing this will let us see who we really are, underneath the facade, encumbered by society, suppressed by beliefs and attitudes of the waking state. We are free in our dreams. No one is looking at us. Society, family and friends are not judging us.

The key here for the seeker is not to carry the dream into daily life and then start to do what he did in the dream in the physical world. This would only make more karmas and compound the situation, stop the sadhanas and open a door for perhaps endless other karmas or a complete life change, change of personality. The remedy is to perform certain

sadhanas, tapas, penance, self-inquiry, even a penance for having the dream, while remembering the high standards of virtue and good conduct that should have been maintained during that sleep cycle. This explains the Hindu point of view that one should not steal even during dreams, commit adultery, harm anyone or act against dharma, the yamas and niyamas, in any way.

An Invitation to Readers: I have another kind of dream, which I have had for a long time. Back in the 1960s I established the first Hindu mission in Alaska, intending to go there and bring the wisdom of our spiritual heritage to that lovely, cold land. But Siva had other plans. On the night before my flight to Anchorage, a giant earthquake hit the region, and our missionaries advised that I not come just then, since there were so many rescue efforts underway. So, we never went. But I never forgot. Now, in the 50th year of my spiritual mission begun in 1949, we are going to complete that dream and finally go to Alaska. And we want you to join us. It is being fulfilled by leaving on June 18 from Vancouver and voyaging to Anchorage on a Norwegian cruise ship, among the icebergs, watching whales and polar bears. There we will bless a large stone icon of Lord Ganesha given by us to His Anchorage devotees. We will be seven days on board with daily classes and discussion groups. What an adventure. All you have to do is let us know you want to come along. Contact: Search Beyond Adventures, phone: 612-374-4845, e-mail: search99@mail.idt.net