

“Sleep-Wake Cycle” Culminating In “Supra-Waking” State

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### **Question::**

How is ‘understanding sleep’ related to “understanding the purpose of life”?

(or)

What are the different psychological explanations that are prevalent around, regarding ‘sleep’?

(or)

Is sleep a by-product of physical brain? What exactly is the “cause of sleep”?

(or)

How are consciousness–soul, consciousness-body related?

(or)

How does evolution help develop “consciousness” along with the “physical form”?

(or)

Is “consciousness” a product of physiological processes?

(or)

How are ‘sleep’ and ‘waking’ related to ‘mind’ & ‘Consciousness’?

(or)

Why should one understand the primary origin of “consciousness” in order to understand “sleep”? From where does “consciousness” originate, in the first place?

(or)

Why should “consciousness” evolve? What is the purpose of its evolution?

(or)

How is “consciousness” related to “God”?

(or)

Why man tries to drown himself in ‘lust’ and ‘anger’?

(or)

Why achieving freedom of consciousness is so difficult & strenuous?

(or)

Is “death” an annihilation of “life”?

(or)

What causes “dreams”? What characteristic of “dreams” help onward journey of “consciousness”?

(or)

Why man aspires to associate himself with like-minded individuals?

(or)

Why surrender to a Perfect Master seems to be difficult?

(or)

How come 'surrendering to a Perfect Master' awakens one up in the supreme state of “super-consciousness”?

(or)

When can one transcend sleep?

(or)

When does “waking consciousness” gets transmuted into SUPRA-WAKING CONSCIOUSNESS?

**Answer:**

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**TO ‘SLEEP’ IS TO SURRENDER TO ONE OF THE PRIMARY FORCES OF LIFE.**

**“Sleep” is an inescapable need.** There can be no substitute for it, although adjustment within certain degrees to its demands is possible, such as— choosing eleven o'clock instead of ten for retiring. Such “adjustments” can be made only within well-defined limits. There can be no tampering with the strict requirements for sleep over any considerable length of time.

**FOR THE AVERAGE MAN, prolonged absentia from sleep inevitably results in ‘bodily disorder’ as well as ‘impairment’ or even ‘derangement of the mind’.**

The “mind” loses its normal alertness and deteriorates markedly in its ability to

concentrate and work out abstruse problems. Further, it loses its ability to cope with the problems presented by everyday life.

“Sleep”, being one of the most significant phenomena in the existence of the individual, must be thoroughly understood if the “purpose of life” itself is to be fully comprehended.

**Any attempt to give an explanation of sleep in purely psychological terms will be incomplete and misleading as well.**

- Many people consider ‘sleep’ to be the inevitable result of the exhaustion of higher nerve centers of the brain.
- Some attribute the “cause of sleep” to the accumulation of “metabolic” and other “deterioration” products in the brain.
- Others regard ‘sleep’ as the product of the inhibition of higher brain centers by nerve impulses generated in specialized sleep centers.
- Still other authorities regard ‘sleep’ as the natural condition of the brain, and they consider “consciousness” to be the result of activating the brain through “external stimuli”. Sleep, in their opinion, is therefore a relapse into the natural state of the brain, which occurs on withdrawal of these “external stimuli”.

**The essence of all these “psychological explanations” is that sleep is a by-product of the physical brain. THIS IS A RADICALLY WRONG CONCLUSION.** A more profound interpretation is required to do justice to the “real status of consciousness” and its relation to “body” and “soul”.

**Throughout evolution, “consciousness” is developed in and through the mind, and expressed through the evolving medium of physical form, but “consciousness” itself resides in the “soul”. The “body” is only the medium through which consciousness expresses itself.**

Through the ages, a “single life impulse” (individual soul) gradually becomes more conscious as it expresses itself through a myriad of “forms”. **The “consciousness” thus developed is the possession of the mind and it does not vanish with the disappearance of the physical vehicle.**

The “physical form” also evolves as “consciousness” unfolds. Bodily forms emerge one after another in continuous and ascending order so that the total consciousness might develop progressively through a fitting progression of form-vehicles. **“Consciousness” is not a coincidental product of physiological processes, but the very reason for the existence of all forms.**

**“Consciousness” is the standard by which the distinctions between the sleep and waking should be understood.**

- In wakefulness, the ‘mind’ becomes conscious and expresses itself through the “body”.
- In sleep, the ‘mind’ relapses into a quiescent state of the ‘soul’ without outer expression.

**Physiologically, the states of ‘sleeping’ and ‘waking’ may be described as the retarding and accelerating of the higher brain centers, but they are more significantly defined as the submerging and emerging of CONSCIOUSNESS.**

**In order to answer the basic question of– why consciousness should oscillate between the ‘quiescent state of sleep’ and the ‘active state of wakefulness’, one must attack the problem of the “primary origin” of consciousness.**

*Before the beginning of all beginnings, the “infinite ocean of God” was completely self-forgetful. The utter and unrelieved oblivion of the self-forgetful, infinite ocean of God in the beyond-beyond state was broken in order that God should consciously know His own fullness of divinity. **It was for this sole purpose that “consciousness” proceeded to evolve.***

**“Consciousness” itself was latent in the “beyond-beyond state” of God. *Also latent in this same “beyond-beyond state” of God, was the original whim (lahar) to become conscious. It was this “original whim” which brought “latent consciousness” into manifestation (form) for the first time.***

**Slowly and tediously “consciousness” approaches its apex in the “human form”, which is the goal of the evolutionary process, and thereby an**

**“individual mind” gradually differentiates itself from the sea of oblivion.**

*However, the “conscious individual” still does not comprehend the truth of the real self. On the contrary, there is produced in man, a FALSE SENSE of ‘limitation’ and ‘frustration’.*

**The “full consciousness” that is laboriously produced in the evolutionary process and that takes the place of ‘utter forgetfulness’, remains “finite” because– it is replete with ‘countless impressions’ (sanskaras) of fulfilled and unfulfilled “desires” that have been acquired while inhabiting the many finite bodies.**

***Originally, it was the “lahar” that caused ‘consciousness’ to manifest.***

*In everyday life, it is the “impressions” (sanskaras) that cause “latent consciousness” in the sleep-state to manifest itself as “active consciousness” in the “awake-state”.*

Although the “sea of oblivion” has been swept back through the development of consciousness, yet it has been exchanged for a growing nightmare of ever-increasing futility. **“Forgetfulness” has been displaced by “remembrance”, but it is a remembrance charged with limitation, helplessness, and binding desires.**

**The full but finite “human consciousness” struggles to find ‘self-expression’ and ‘self-gratification’, but even these efforts are subject to the “sanskaric compulsions.”** *They prevent man from recapturing the original truth of his being and subject him to increasing ‘limitation’ and ‘helplessness’.* He is like a spider caught in a web of his OWN MAKING.

**As a means of respite, “consciousness” seeks the ‘oblivion of deep sleep’ where it again surrenders itself temporarily to the ‘sea of self-forgetfulness’– the original beyond-beyond state of “God”.**

*In sound sleep, “consciousness” becomes latent for the time being until the burden of “unspent sanskaras” forces it to manifest again in the “awake-state”.*

**In his desperate attempts— during wakefulness— to overcome his feeling of ‘helplessness’ and ‘boredom’, man may attempt to escape from himself through the exciting emotions of “lust” or “anger”.**

*Although drowning oneself in ‘lust’ or ‘anger’ may seem to promise escape, the satisfaction achieved is only temporary. Inevitably a strong counter-sense of remorse or depression is induced that is worse than the original sense of ‘frustration’.*

*On the collective level, ‘wars’ provide the exciting avenue of escape that subsequently reacts to numb the “spirit” of man with an overwhelming sense of burden.*

**‘Nature’ has striven to evolve “consciousness” through long ages of painful struggle. It is a great tragedy that when “consciousness” faces an acute need to free itself of “entanglement”, it should regress instead by resorting to the deadening of sensibility. This expedient is disastrous because it involves a “conscious attempt” to undo the “achievements” of natural evolution.**

**None of man's waking attempts to overcome his feeling of intolerable weariness is wholly acceptable to the ‘soul’. All are dissatisfying in the long run. Hence man seeks ‘rest’ and ‘refreshment’ by withdrawing temporarily into the oblivion of “deep sleep”. This PSYCHOLOGICAL NECESSITY for sleep cannot be avoided. Just as the “physical body” requires alternating periods of ‘activity’ and ‘rest’, so the “mind” also needs such periods.**

**“Sleep” is the means by which the ‘mind’ withdraws temporarily from the pressure exerted by its age-old load of ‘impressions’ and ‘desires’. Through sleep, the “mind” refreshes itself temporarily for further participation in the game of “BECOMING SELF-CONSCIOUS”.**

*If the ‘self’ were completely aware of its true God-nature during “waking consciousness”, it would find no need to withdraw into the ‘self-forgetfulness’ of sleep. Its ‘spontaneous joy’ would be an eternal well-spring of “divine refreshment”.*

When man seeks freedom from the ennui of the waking-state by losing 'consciousness' in the sleep-state, no slightest destruction of 'consciousness' occurs.

**“Deep sleep” is an inward withdrawal of consciousness into a condition of temporary oblivion.** *In this state, the “mind” is completely quiescent. It does not experience the helplessness of finite self-consciousness nor is it aware of the true self as the illimitable truth. Both “the finite illusory world” and “the real infinite state” are forgotten, as ‘consciousness’ sinks into the sea of oblivion. In “deep-sleep”, ‘consciousness’ exists merely as a latent possibility which must again be aroused to “activity”.*

‘Sleep’ stands in the same relationship to ‘consciousness’, as ‘death’ does to ‘life’. **Death is not the annihilation of life, but its transference to another state of “being”.** *In the same way, “sleep” is not the annihilation of “consciousness”, but its withdrawal into a state of abeyance. Whether latent as ‘unconsciousness’ or manifested as ‘consciousness’– “consciousness” is always there.*

The matter may be summarized as follows::

- **After going to ‘sleep’, when man ordinarily enters the ordinary ‘dream-state’:**
  - a) he has no consciousness of the body;
  - b) the ‘link’ with the ‘physical body’ remains intact;
  - c) ‘pain’ and ‘pleasure’ are experienced for a short period;
  - d) the man wakes up in the SAME ‘PHYSICAL BODY’.
- **After “physical death”, man also enters a “dream-state”, and ::**
  - a) he has no consciousness of the body;
  - b) the “link” with that particularly “physical body” is snapped for good;
  - c) because the ‘link’ with the “gross” no longer exists, he experiences ‘pain’ or ‘pleasure’ (the states of ‘hell’ or ‘heaven’) far more intensely, whether for long or short period;
  - d) he wakes up in the ‘gross’ in another “physical body”.

The passage from “sleep” to “wakefulness” consists in the passage from

- a) “unconsciousness”  
to
- b) “subconsciousness” and finally  
to
- c) “full consciousness”.

➤ **Normally, for the “ordinary man”, these consist of**

- a) sound sleep = unconsciousness
- b) dreams = subconsciousness of “duality”
- c) roused from 'sleep' = full consciousness of duality.

**When a man almost loses consciousness, as in high fever, he is “subconscious” as in the “dream-state”. But, if he is rendered unconscious through “drugs” such as chloroform, he is unconscious as in the ‘sound sleep state.’**

***“Unconsciousness” always involves temporary return to the original, beyond-beyond state of God regardless of the “cause”—whether it be sound sleep, drugs or a physical accident.***

➤ **For those on the “Path”, the three states are ::**

- a) beyond-beyond state of God = unconsciousness
- b) 'experiences' on the Path = real subconsciousness of duality.
- c) roused from all illusion of 'duality' = real full consciousness of God or Self.

**‘Mind’ seeks the abeyance of its consciousness in deep sleep, but it cannot continue indefinitely to accept this self-refutation. This “negative achievement” is not an adequate substitute for the final purpose for which “consciousness” came into existence, i.e., for the “soul” to become fully conscious of itself as the “infinite truth”.**

***Though, man attempts through ‘sleep’ to escape the burden that “consciousness” imposes upon him, he is involuntarily drawn back to his ‘waking-state’ by the “impressions” gathered in the achieving of the very “consciousness” from which he sought escape. The ‘old bonds of desires’ both FULFILLED and UNFULFILLED bind him to the ‘world of illusion’ and propel him again into the maelstrom of “finite life”.***

Although it is only temporary, “sleep” does give **PSYCHOLOGICAL REINVIGORATION** to the 'mind'. If there were not some kind of restoration of 'psychic vitality' during 'sleep', there would be no particular benefit to this oblivion.

**In spite of the apparent respite, ‘consciousness’ would remain exactly as it had been at the time of its withdrawal into “sleep, and no special gain would be achieved.** It would be merely a “fruitless interval” in a long chain of automatic response to environment.

**“Sleep” does confer POSITIVE BENEFIT.**

**Due to the fact that the separate “I- consciousness” is in complete abeyance during “deep sleep”— the individual soul is in actual union with the “infinite Self”.**

*When the “sleep” is dreamless, the “individual soul” is resting in the undisturbed tranquility of the most-original beyond-beyond state of God.*

*But, inasmuch as “sleep” is a submergence of consciousness into oblivion, it does not bestow upon the “soul” the **conscious realization** of the truth that the “soul” will eventually experience, when “consciousness” is freed of all “impressions”, good as well as bad'.*

**Even, this UNCONSCIOUS CONTACT with ‘infinity’– the abode of all ‘bliss’ and ‘power’– gives to the 'mind' a new tone and vigor.** When ‘consciousness’ returns to waking functioning, it manifests a “renewed faith” that at some time, in some manner– a “final solution” to life's complexities will be found.

Although, the most important work of consciousness is always done during the waking-state, “dreams” also play their part in helping ‘consciousness’ through the maze of problems which beset it.

**As a rule, “consciousness” passes through the “dream-state” during the transition from waking-to-sleep and while returning from sleep-to-waking.**

The ‘dream-state’ serves as a bridge between ‘sleep’ and ‘waking’, but it is not an inevitable phase. *The “mind” may swing between ‘quiescence’ and ‘waking’ without subconsciously passing through the “dream-phase”.*

In the dream-state, 'consciousness' is not completely dormant as in 'sleep', nor is fully active as in 'waking'. The "dream-state" is midway between these two phases, and it marks a transition from 'latent consciousness' to 'active consciousness'.

**The unique virtue of "ordinary dream-state" is that– "experiences" in it are relatively free from the act of "willing" as well as from the rigid "social demands" which prevail in conscious life.**

Despite the seeming lawlessness of the dream-state, it is nevertheless subject to the accumulated 'mental' and 'emotional' impressions (sanskaras) which function as inexorably in the 'dream-state' as in the 'waking'.

*Many 'inclinations' and 'desires' which cannot find fulfillment in waking life, seek and find gratification in the self-created subjective world of "dreams".*

*Likewise, many "fears" and "conflicts" buried in the 'subconscious mind' inflict upon the dreamer a diversity of suffering, which the "conscious mind" would seek to avoid.*

Thus, "dreamland" also invites the experiencing of the opposites.

The unique characteristic of "dream-experiences" is that they afford an opportunity to work out a number of the 'sanskritic impressions' without creating any new "physical bondage".

*Many 'dreams' have the same force and directive value that inhere in 'experiences of the waking-state', but these latter are always accompanied by the simultaneous creation of new 'emotional' and 'mental' impressions (sanskaras) that prove to be just as "binding" as the "age-old impressions" that limit man's consciousness. **"Dream experiences", however, result in no such creation of further "bindings".***

Another interesting aspect of "ordinary dream" is that– regardless of what the 'dream' entails, it has no direct effect upon any 'mind' other than the dreamer.

***This is quite contrary to "experiences" in the 'conscious waking-state'. These***

invariably 'involve' and 'affect' many other souls as well, thus complicating many "life patterns".

***The activity of consciousness in the "waking-state" creates a bondage of karmic 'liabilities' and 'assets' from which 'dream experiences' are exempt.***

The "dream world" is a type of psychic experimental laboratory, insulated from the demands of physical life, and thus possessing some advantage over the "waking-state". ***But because it does not give play to the directive faculty of the "will" and isolates the 'individual soul' from other souls, it also suffers severe handicaps from which the 'waking life' is free.***

**In spite of the periodic RELEASE and REFRESHMENT that 'deep-sleep' supplies, the 'mind' continues to be dissatisfied.** Driven by need to escape from the burden that "finite consciousness" imposes upon him, man associates himself with "like-minded" individuals. By merging himself in a group that has similar problems, he hopes to fortify himself against his growing sense of dissatisfaction.

**But his 'hope' is ill-founded. He finds no more redemption by identifying himself with the "false-we" than by identifying with the "false-I".** The increased strength of the group is nullified by increased expectations. Instead of finding his 'powerlessness' mitigated, the individual finds that it is merely shared by many others. *His 'sense of helplessness' is accentuated through participation in the "group consciousness", for he shares their collective feeling of "helplessness" as well as his own.*

**Although occasionally, a means may be found to eliminate some "one worry" in life, the final solution to recurring problems remains to be found.** Suppose, for example, that a man is extremely miserable because others in his office seem to be given better treatment than he. Then suppose that he is suddenly relieved of all his worries by indulging in himself a studied indifference to his surroundings.

This may give him a "temporary feeling" of release from his problems, but since his troubles are really caused by lack of understanding of 'himself' and 'environment', his

**cultivated indifference** really leaves the situation completely unchanged. Sooner or later, when his **forced indifference** cracks and he again becomes emotionally involved, his “old worries” return to disturb him as before. *His **attitude of detachment** fails to effect a permanent change in his “consciousness” because it is not based upon the truth that– there is but one “infinite Self” which is the Self of all.*

To know oneself honestly and understand one's environment requires a radical change in outlook.

***Mechanical coercion of the “mind” into a temporary attitude is not sufficient, for the “mind” has a tendency to revert to its age-old inclinations (habit patterns; sanskaric patterns) and free itself from any position into which it may have been forced.***

***Unless the “mind” achieves intelligent discrimination based on “lasting values”, it is inevitably harassed by its self-created worries.***

***Again and again, man must seek the “oblivion of sleep” as a necessary respite from participation in things of “little satisfaction”.***

Man clings to the palliative experiences of the gross world even though they augment the very worries, sufferings and defeats from which “consciousness” desires to escape. *Only in the extremity of ‘despair’ does ‘consciousness’ gather sufficient momentum to try to break through the constricting web of “ego-life” and into the life of lasting freedom.*

When man realizes at last that his “helplessness” is the product of his countless cravings, he tries to find peace by renouncing those “cravings” and accepting life in a spirit of “resignation to the divine will”. *Until that moment of supreme “self-determination” occurs, however, he finds himself persistently haunted by an overpowering “desire” to perpetuate his self-created “ego-life”.*

***Although, he tries desperately to break through the self-centered “isolation” that this life fosters, it is only when he surrenders to a perfect master that– he is initiated sooner or later into the path of redemptive love.***

**Surrender to the “will of the Master” is in itself very difficult, but it becomes more so under the gaze of friendly onlookers. To them the “actions” of the spiritual aspirant often seem incomprehensible, as if he were sacrificing his most precious possession– his “free will”.**

**Often it seems to the onlooker that the Master aims only to increase his own prestige by directing the ‘actions’ of those who surround Him. This falls far short of understanding the work of the master.**

*Just as it is necessary for “solder to be fluxed in a salt” before it can join the two metal parts together, it is necessary for the ‘soul of the seeker’ to be bathed through self-surrenderance in the light that the Master affords.*

***The Master gains nothing; it is not His purpose to gain. Certainly his “ego” cannot be exalted, for if he is a Perfect Master, he has already lost it.***

**When a man determines to find ‘peace’ and ‘fulfillment’ through the renunciation of ‘cravings of the ego-life’, he finds that his ‘new decision’ is challenged more by the deep-rooted compulsions of his own mind than by any obstructive factors in external environment. Although, he now longs to “love” the Master whole-heartedly as the “divine-beloved” and tries to surrender completely to him, he is far from being master of his own mind. He cannot even surrender the things he regards as his own, despite his sincere decision.**

**Like Janus, the aspirant has two faces– one looking longingly at ‘truth’, the other at ‘ignorance’.**

*On the one hand, the aspirant yearns for the saving grace of the Master and to be completely lost in the “unbounded truth” that he senses in the Master. On the other hand, his false, separative ego tries to perpetuate its existence by all available means.*

*But with the first surrender to the Master, the death knell of the “ego-life” is sounded, and though it continues to struggle for survival, its days of dominance are numbered.*

If a person is caught in a quagmire, he instinctively tries every means to get out of it, but the very effort he makes thrusts him deeper into it. The more he struggles, the further in he sinks. Help must come to him then from someone who stands on firm ground, and who can only be of help when the struggling man has ceased to struggle long enough to look about for aid.

**There is a certain similarity between this situation and the case of the individual who has surrendered his life to the Master.**

*The 'false, separative ego' tries its utmost to postpone its own dissolution by resisting the 'divine love' of the Master. **It struggles in the quagmire of "existence", but each act of 'ego-affirmation' invites a 'reaction' of deeper surrender to the 'beloved's will'.***

***This in turn brings with it the clearer realization of the Master as being none other than the irresistible truth, that is 'the Self of all selves', and the ONE REALITY in the apparent multiplicity of "individual souls".***

**Truth-realization is born of such complete surrender to the engulfing love of God of which the Master is the 'physical symbol' and the 'channel'.**

*The "finite self" has now not only recognized itself as 'hopelessly limited', but also as 'utterly false'. It ceases to make any claims or to protest in its own right, offering itself instead to the infinite truth. **This offering of "purified will" redounds to its own advantage.***

**When "finite consciousness" of the mind in its stark awareness of 'futility' and 'falseness' capitulates wholly to the "infinite truth", the 'soul' becomes consciously one with that truth in self-realization. *Only then can 'consciousness' be said really to have arrived at its "final destination".***

*Originally absorbed in the infinite, 'consciousness' is now absorbed by the 'infinite', now consciously experiencing its own unlimited power, knowledge, bliss and scope.*

*In being absorbed by the 'infinite'– 'consciousness' is completely freed of one and all 'illusions' and can be called "super-consciousness", in which state its former 'unlimited helplessness' is transmuted into 'unlimited power'.*

**The aim of life, and the real goal of all creation, is to achieve true Self-consciousness.**

*When the "mind of man" is transformed into "super-consciousness of the soul", it inherits the treasure of "omnipotence" and there is no recurrence of that sense of "helplessness" that had haunted his 'dreaming' and 'waking' states.*

*No longer is there need for 'consciousness' to be submerged into the 'oblivion of sleep' in order to achieve 'unconscious union of the self' with the 'universal Self'. The 'conscious union' that the 'individual self' has now established with the 'universal Self' is an unfading attachment that persists forever.*

**In the unlimited abundance of 'super-consciousness', the freed soul experiences no 'curtailment' or 'cessation'.**

*In super-consciousness, the "soul" experiences itself as all-mighty, its 'bliss' is unbounded and its continuous awareness of itself as the "infinite truth" admits no slightest interruption by the "self-forgetfulness" of the ordinary- sleep, dream or wake state.*

*Ordinary "waking consciousness" of the mind is not only incapable of realizing the "true self", but is deluded to accept the false, limited self and false multiplicity of the phenomenal world as real. It is therefore, a form of "ignorance".*

**"Super-consciousness" may be termed "supra-waking", because**

- this state has transcended all normal limitations and has become truly whole in the sense that it retains no element of illusion.
- *It is the opposite of 'ordinary sleep', for 'oblivion of the truth' is complete in ordinary sleep, while 'awareness of truth' is complete in super-consciousness.*

**When “waking consciousness” invades and consciously illumines the depths of forgetfulness, ignorance and illusion, it becomes transmuted into “supra-waking consciousness”!**

– Meher Baba

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