

## From Category 19 section 3: on the states and fourth state

### [19.3.179](#)

Consider the fact that our individual lives are totally suspended during sleep, that the waves of personal consciousness then merge utterly in the ocean. How clearly this shows the Divine to be also the Infinite and Universal, our lack of true spirituality, and our possession at best of its pale reflection! For where else could we go to sleep except in this Infinite and Universal Mind? Yet we know it not! To get rid of such ignorance, to attain transcendental insight into the fourth state of being, is the most wonderful of all the tasks which this philosophy sets before us.

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It is the presence of the physical ego in the wakeful state that paralyses all spiritual awareness therein. It is the absence of the personal and physical ego in the deep sleep state that paralyses all material awareness therein, too. By keeping it out and yet keeping in wakefulness, the transcendental consciousness is able to provide the requisite condition for an unbroken spiritual awareness that is not only superior to the three states but continues its own existence behind theirs.

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Ordinarily we simply cannot grasp this amazing concept of "pure consciousness." All the consciousnesses of ordinary human experience imply a consciousness of some object and an entity to whom this happens.

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There are two kinds of consciousness, one is in ever-passing moments, the other ever-present. The one is in time, the other out of it. The ordinary person knows only the one; the enlightened sage knows both.

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A person never leaves Consciousness. The world comes into it as perception, that is, as idea. Whether anything, object or state, comes into it or not, Consciousness remains as our unchanging home. Whether asleep or awake, wrapped in himself or out in the world, our essential being remains what it is. Our thoughts and sense-impressions, feelings and passions are produced by it or projected from it: they exist in dependence on it and die in it.

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In our view, even deep sleep unconsciousness is a form of this "consciousness" which transcends all the states we ordinarily know--waking, dream, and deep sleep--yet includes them when they merge back into it. Such a "consciousness" is unthinkable, unimaginable, but it is the true objective awareness. It is also the / you are seeking so much. But to reach it, then you have to let go of the I which you know so well.

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The transcendental being is not an unconscious one. The absolute consciousness could not be other than self-conscious in its own impersonal way. Hence the fourth state is not the same as deep sleep.

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We exist for a fragment of time only and therefore relatively. But is there something behind time itself which is absolute, a principle of Foreverness? The Buddhists firmly deny it; the Advaitins just as firmly proclaim it, while philosophy accepts and reconciles both schools.

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Every man is conscious being, even in deep sleep. This then is his real being: this consciousness as it is in itself, not in the limited form it takes in his ego.

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In the waking state we experience the physical world, in the dream state our experience corresponds to the etheric astral world, in the deep sleep state we enter a still higher level of experience which is that of the God whose will is expressed in the other and lower two worlds. This God the Hindus call Ishvara; I have called it World-Mind. Now underlying these three states and therefore the Reality, the consciousness, the real consciousness underneath them, man experiences as enlightenment. The other three are states whereas this is the Reality supporting those three states--waking, dream, and deep sleep. In deep sleep man reaches God, it might be said, but owing to his ignorance he is unaware so he does not benefit by it.

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One of the first things a student of philosophical psychology must learn to understand is that the different states of consciousness are not the same as pure basic essential consciousness-in-itself. The states are like little circles within larger ones. They possess various limits and limitations, belong to lower levels, and are subject to alteration. Basic consciousness transcends all these things, all these conditions, and may therefore be called transcendental consciousness.

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What is called *Turiya* or the "fourth state" in Sanskrit, although it is neither waking, dreaming, nor sleeping, is related however to all three as their background. Therefore, before one falls asleep it comes into play. Before one wakes up in the morning it also comes into play. Or before a dream comes to an end and deep sleep supervenes, it comes into play. This is why either the practice of meditation or the brief practice of spiritual remembrance at any of these three natural pause periods takes the fullest advantage of them. This is also why during the interval between two separate thoughts, it comes into play. Thus, throughout a man's life, he's comfortably being brought back into touch with his divine Self. But because his face is turned the other way and he's looking in the wrong direction, he never takes advantage and becomes aware of that Self.