

Out of the Body

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Melissa: James, I wrote to you before and you replied with the *satsang Stupid Chi Master*. Your advice was to just ignore any of the psycho-spiritual experiences I have and they would probably diminish over time. I took your advice and it worked.

I am now in the process of making my life line up with the scriptures. In doing so, I realized my *jiva* has what I like to call “family *tamas*”: a lazy-good-for-nothing *vasana*. Nothing too big or dramatic. But because of this there are hip problems in my family, I believe due to too much sitting and inactivity.

To make a long story short, I started doing some *yoga* postures and exercise, which help a great deal, very few postures and badly at that because of shortened hip muscles. And this has helped greatly with my quality of life both mentally and physically, and I sleep better than I have in years.

Since I started *yoga* postures, the strange experiences have returned, but what I experience does not line up with what I’ve heard you say in the ShiningWorld videos.

It happens when I get into bed and try to sleep. When I begin to drift asleep, I feel energy in my butt and then I feel like I shoot out of my butt somehow. Then I am no longer “in” my body, I am bodiless, but I can still think and there is fear of being out of my body, so I will try to get back in. I feel out of control, intense fear.

It happened last night again; this time I heard myself snoring for quite a long time and I witnessed myself having a dream, only sort of distant-like; this part didn’t scare me.

But somehow this intense fear came up, and I was aware of thinking that I had to get back into my body, so somehow I did that, woke up and rolled over in bed. And then it happened again and again and again. I would wake up with fear, then try to go back to sleep and instead go right back into that state.

I’m not sure how to look at these experiences or what to do (if anything can be done) to just lose the fear of it. The experiences are not that “bad”; it’s the intense fear I have of them while they are happening.

I believe you teach that when one is sleeping the waking state *jiva* is gone – this did not appear to be true for me. The dreamer was dreaming, but there was still a thinker, who was not the dreamer, and awareness of both the thinker and the dreamer. It seemed simultaneous: awareness, thinker and dreamer. The thinker was the one who was scared. Is this thinker the waking state *jiva*? Who is this thinker and why is she so afraid?

Please tell me how I should view these experiences, according to the scriptures.

~ *Om* and *prem*, Melissa

James: Dear Melissa, a very interesting experience. Yes, when you are sleeping the waking

state *jiva* is gone, but you were not sleeping or dreaming or waking. You were the self observing the sleeper, dreamer and waker. The fear is the waker's fear of the loss of its identity, its association with the body. The experience means that you are the self, the knower of the dreamer and the thinker, the waking state *jiva*. You are the *sakshi*, the non-experiencing witness of these subtle components of yourself. It is a very fortunate experience. You are always "out" of the body, meaning you are the awareness of the body, even when it feels like you are in it. Your Vedantic inquiry caused *Isvara* to produce this experience to make the knowledge "experiential." There is nothing to worry about. The fear is natural. You will probably notice an increase in dispassion in the waking state *jiva* as time passes.

~ Much love, James