

Waking, Dream and the *Gun*s

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Ute: Dear James, in a few days the seminar in Bad Meinberg is starting and I'm very much looking forward to it! I hope you had a good time and a healthy body in Europe so far!

Since two weeks there is a question that continuously triggers my reflection and that I want to submit to the Vedanta knowledge:

In *mithya* (duality) there are three states: the waking state, the dream state and the deep sleep state.

Can we say that these three states stand at the same level of apparent reality, meaning that in the apparent reality they are all three as "real" as the others?

James: Yes. They are all equally unreal. The teaching negates all three and shows that the only invariable factor in all states is you, existence/consciousness.

Ute: If that is true, does that mean that:

1. Although the unenlightened *jiva* experiences the waking state as "real" and the dream state as "unreal" (although worth interpreting), actually the ideas and action of the waking *jiva*, and the dreams of the dreaming *jiva* are at the same level of apparent reality; they both hold the same level of ignorance; they have exactly the same differentiation to *satya*.

James: Yes.

Ute: 2. It makes no difference to *Isvara* whether or what a *jiva* does, thinks or dreams something.

James: Correct. *Isvara* is a principle, like gravity. Gravity doesn't care if an object is small or huge.

Ute: 3. Doing *karma yoga* will clean up ignorance and unfold the qualifications for the assimilation of Vedanta; these *sattvic* qualities should not only have an impact on the waking state, but also on the dream state and on the quality of the deep sleep (that last one is still a source of pain in the Ute *jiva*!)

James: *Karma yoga* won't clean up ignorance. It is a kind of necessary ignorance or, you might say, a useful kind of relative knowledge. Only knowledge cleans ignorance. *Karma yoga* is therapy. It cleans up emotional stuff so that *jnana yoga* can remove the ignorance.

The more *sattvic* the mind becomes the more disturbing dreams arise because *sattva* purifies the filter between the conscious and the unconscious mind so there is very little repression. If you process the dreams in light of Vedanta, their content will become more *sattvic* over time. If the mind is *sattvic* and there is still a lot of *rajas*, sleep will be a source of pain.

Ute: 4. It makes no sense anymore to wake up from a nightmare and say, "It's lucky this was only a dream!," because the waking state is as much unreal as the dream is!

James: Yes, indeed. If the mind is very *sattvic* you will be aware that the dream is a dream in the dream. *Moksa* is knowing that the waking state is a dream.

Ute: 5. Since existence is *sat-chit-ananda*, this knowledge and bliss are always present in the three states; only the experience of existence, knowledge and bliss are different in the three states.

James: Yes. Experience is caused by the *upadhis*, the three states.

Ute: Where I get stuck: When a *jiva* does, thinks or dreams something, does it add equally to the *vasana* load of the subtle body?

James: It depends on the nature of the thought and the degree of attachment to it. You have many thoughts every day that are not important to you. They don't create *vasanas*. Only thoughts that you deliberately think and thoughts with which you consciously identify create *vasanas*.

Ute: If a *jiva* leads a seemingly *sattvic karma-yoga* life, but in his dreams commits or experiences crimes, violence or cheating, how will that impact the *vasanas*?

James: Those events are *vasanas* expressing in the dream state. They are the result of repression, unacknowledged and unconverted *rajas* and *tamas*. The dreams will continue until the issues they bring to your attention are addressed.

Ute: And what would the difference be with a *jiva* who commits violence in a waking state, but dreams peacefully?

James: Expressing violence in the waking state works it out temporarily, perhaps, so there is no need for *Isvara* to call the *jiva's* attention to it in the dream. But usually violent people also have some violent dreams. People are always a mixture of the *gunas*, so to the degree that a *guna* predominates, to that degree the *guna* will manifest in the dream state.

Ute: It seems to me that the second case has a bigger ignorance problem than the first one, and

has therefore a heavier *vasana* load. It seems that *rajas* and *tamas* are influencing the impact on the *vasana* load too.

James: Yes, from the spiritual point of view. But people with heavy *rajas/tamas* usually don't know they are ignorant according to our definition.

Ute: So could we say that, from a *jiva* and *karma yoga* (cause and effect) point of view, a non-violent action ranks higher than a non-violent thought or non-violent dream? But from the perspective of awareness all actions, thoughts or dreams are equally unreal?

James: If you value peace of mind, then non-violent waking and dream experiences are more valuable than violent ones. If you don't value peace of mind, then no.

Ute: Could you fine tune my thought process so that I get back on-track?

James: Do you feel guilty because you have violent dreams? If you do, take the dreams in the *karma yoga* spirit. They are *Isvara* calling attention to something that you need to investigate and resolve.

Ute: Thank you so much, and see you very soon!