

The Three States

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Tom: James, I wrote about my understanding of the three states. If you have time, please let me know if this is correct.

Three States - One Reality

The waking state is the ego looking out and experiencing the world. For most of humanity, the ego assumes that it is the doer, enjoying or suffering experience.

The dream state is the unconscious projecting its position via dream symbols and a storyline. Dreams are different from the waking experience because the ego position is dormant or only a partial player. The ego is not in charge of the dream state.

It isn't in charge in the waking state either. It thinks it is in charge. The *vasanas* are in charge.

In deep dreamless sleep the ego is dormant and the unconscious is dormant. In this state there is true rest, as the mind is absent.

In this state the self experiences itself without limits and as peace/bliss. Awareness is present in all these states. How do we know that awareness is present in deep sleep? There are two answers. One is that upon awakening one knows that one had deep, restful sleep.

James: No problems so far. Yes, you have to be there to know that something happened. You are not there as the waker. You are there as awareness.

Tom: The other answer, which seems to be the better one, is that if a loud noise or other external event occurs, one is immediately awake. If awareness were not present, one would not hear or feel the event and one would remain asleep.

James: Yes.

Tom: When examined closely, it becomes clear that awareness is the background of all these states. Deep sleep is the best representation for awareness as potential, the blank screen on which the waking and dream states play out their scenes.

James: I am not sure what you mean by "potential." Deep sleep is not a representation. It is just awareness experiencing itself without knowledge of itself.

Tom: As soon as any experience appears in the waking or dream state, the object becomes conscious. Thus awareness becomes consciousness. Sometimes awareness is described as "pure consciousness."

James: The object does not become conscious. The object, any experience, becomes known by awareness. Awareness is consciousness. The problem here is a confusion between awareness/consciousness and reflected awareness/consciousness. Awareness doesn't become anything. It is always just awareness. The objects appearing it appear because they are reflected in the subtle body, which is not conscious. Most people take the subtle body to be the self and think it is conscious. It is just a mirror.

Tom: Awareness is the primal fact, the holder of all potential experience, the vessel in which all consciousness is contained. Since anything one can experience is consciousness, one can say that "all is consciousness." Yet all consciousness is contained in, or dependent on, awareness.

James: Awareness doesn't hold anything. The causal body holds all potential experience. It is awareness, but awareness is free of it.

The bad word here is "consciousness." You mean all experience appears in the subtle body and it's known by awareness/consciousness.

Tom: For this reason, when one identifies with awareness, all experience is but a show, characters on a screen. One then wears the world lightly. The world is just a garment one lays down easily, without regret. It's like a movie. When the show is over, there is no dismay at leaving the theater.

James: Yes.

Tom: Awareness is primary. That is what one is. Awareness doesn't suffer. Examine how one knows experience and see if you are not awareness. "That thou art." Now you have become peace.

James: Yes. If you can see that awareness is the means of knowledge for experience and that you are awareness, you are free.