

In the Name of Allah

# ZHINE

## *Tibetan Dream Yoga*

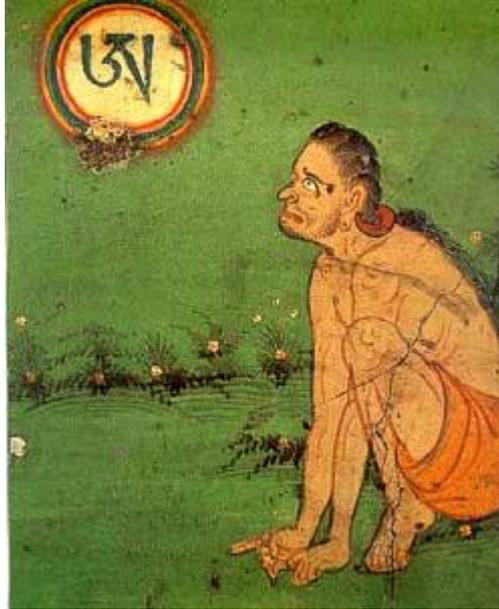
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# TIBETAN DREAM YOGA - CALM ABIDING "ZHINÈ"

## Part 1



Concentration on the Tibetan letter "A"

### [Concentration on the letter A](#)

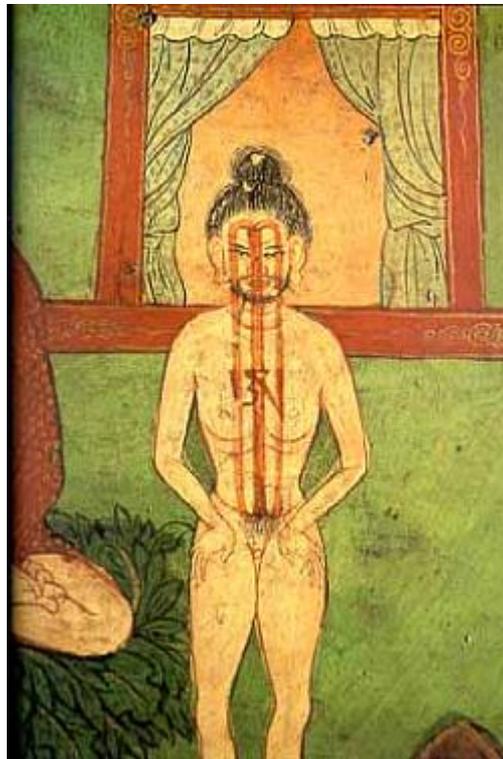
An interesting way of unfolding the mysteries of the inner process is through dream yoga. A successful seeker in dream-work must be stable enough in presence to avoid being swept away by the winds of karmic emotions and lost in the dream. As the mind steadies, dreams become longer, less fragmented, and more easily remembered, and lucidity is developed.. Waking life is equally enhanced as we find that we are increasingly protected from being carried away by the habitual emotional reactions that draw us into distraction and unhappiness. Dream -work can instead develop the positive traits that lead to happiness and support the seeker in the spiritual journey.

All yogic and spiritual disciplines include some form of practice that develops concentration and quiets the mind. In the Tibetan tradition this practice is called calm abiding (zhine). We recognize three stages in the development of stability: **forceful zhine**, **natural zhine**, and **ultimate zhine**. Zhine begins with mental fixation on an object and, when concentration is strong enough, moves on to fixation without an object. (Same principle as working with the Perfect Model presented to you on this website).

Begin the practice by sitting comfortably on a chair or in the five-pointed meditation posture: the legs crossed, the hands folded in the lap in meditation position with palms up and placed one on top of the other, the spine straight but not rigid, the head tilted down slightly to straighten the neck, and the eyes open. The eyes should be relaxed, not too wide open and not too closed. The object of concentration should be placed so that the eyes can

look straight ahead, neither up nor down. During the practice try not to move, not even to swallow or blink, while keeping the mind one pointedly on the **object**. Even if tears should stream down your face, do not move. Let the breathing be natural.

Generally, for practice with an object, Zhine practitioners use the Tibetan letter **A** as the object of concentration. This letter has many symbolic meanings but here is used simply as a support for the development of focus. Other objects may also be used — the letter **A** of the English alphabet, an image of your Perfect Model, or any other sacred Image, the sound of a mantra, the breath — almost anything. However, it is good to use something connected to the sacred, as it serves to inspire you. Also, try to use the same object each time you practice, rather than switching between objects, because the continuity acts as a support of the practice. It is also somewhat preferable to **focus on a physical object that is outside the body**, as the purpose is to develop stability during the perception of external objects and, eventually, of the objects in dream.



. Concentration on the Tibetan letter "A"

If you wish to use the Tibetan "**A**" you can write it on a piece of paper about an inch square. Traditionally, the letter is white and is enclosed in five concentric colored circles: the center circle that is the direct background for the "**A**" is indigo; around it is a blue circle, then green, red, yellow, and white ones. Tape the paper to a stick that is just long enough to support the paper at eye level when you sit for practice, and make a base that holds it upright. Place it so that the "**A**" is about a foot and a half in front of your eyes.



The Tibetan Letter "A"

Many signs of progress can arise during the practice. As concentration strengthens and the periods of practice are extended, strange sensations arise in the body and many strange visual phenomena appear. You may find your mind doing strange things, too! That is all right. These experiences are a natural part of the development of concentration; they arise as the mind settles, so be neither disturbed by nor excited about them.

### FORCEFUL ZHINE

The first stage of practice is called "forceful" because it requires effort. The mind is easily and quickly distracted, and it may seem impossible to remain focused on the object for even a minute. In the beginning, it is helpful to practice in numerous short sessions alternating with breaks. Do not let the mind wander during the break, but instead recite a mantra, or work with visualization, or work with another practice you may know, such as the development of compassion. After the break, return to the fixation practice. If you are ready to practice but do not have the particular object you have been using, visualize a ball of light on your forehead and center yourself there. The practice should be done once or twice a day, and can be done more frequently if you have the time. Developing concentration is like strengthening the muscles of the body: exercise must be done regularly and frequently. To become stronger keep pushing against your limits.

Keep the mind on the object. Do not follow the thoughts of the past or the future. Do not allow the attention to be carried away by fantasy, sound, physical sensation, or any other distraction. Just remain in the sensuality of the present moment, and with your whole strength and clarity focus the mind through the eye, on the object. Do not lose the awareness of the object even for a second. Breathe gently, and then more gently, until the sense of breathing is lost. Slowly allow yourself to enter more deeply into quiet and calm. Make certain that the body is kept relaxed; do not tense up in concentration. Neither should you allow yourself to fall into a stupor, a dullness, or a trance.

Do not think about the object, just let it be in awareness. This is an important distinction to make. Thinking about the object is not the kind of concentration we are developing. The point is just to keep the mind placed on the object, on the sense perception of the object, to undistractedly remain aware of the presence of the object. When the mind does get distracted and it often will in the beginning, gently bring it back to the object and leave it there.



### [NATURAL ZHINE](#)

As stability is developed, the second stage of practice is entered: natural zhine. In the first stage, concentration is developed by continually directing the attention to the object and developing control over the unruly mind. In the second stage, the mind is absorbed in contemplation of the object and there is no longer the need for force to hold it still. A relaxed and pleasant tranquility is established, in which the mind is quiet and thoughts arise without distracting the mind from the object. The elements of the body become harmonized and the prana moves evenly and gently throughout the body. This is an appropriate time to move to fixation without an object.

Abandoning the physical object, simply fix the focus on space. It is helpful to gaze into expansive space, like the sky, but the practice can be done even in a small room by fixing on the space between your body and the wall. Remain steady and calm. Leave the body

relaxed.

Rather than focusing on an imagined point in space, allow the mind, while remaining in strong presence, to be diffuse. We call this "dissolving the mind" in space, or "merging the mind with space." It will lead to stable tranquility and the third stage of zhine practice.

### ULTIMATE ZHINE

Whereas in the second stage there is still some heaviness involved in the absorption in the object, the third stage is characterized by a mind that is tranquil but light, relaxed, and pliable. Thoughts arise and dissolve spontaneously and without effort. The mind is integrated fully with its own movement.



In the Dzogchen tradition, this is traditionally when the master introduces the student to the natural state of mind. Because the student has developed zhine, the master can point to what the student has already experienced rather than describing a new state that must be attained. The explanation, which is known as the "pointing out" instruction, is meant to lead the student to recognize what is already there, to discriminate the moving mind in thought and concept from the nature of mind, which is pure, non-dual awareness. This is the ultimate stage of zhine practice, abiding in non-dual presence, rigpa (awareness) itself.

### OBSTACLES

In developing the zhine practice, there are three obstacles that must be overcome: agitation, drowsiness, and laxity.

### **Agitation**

Agitation causes the mind to jump restlessly from one thought to another and makes concentration difficult. To prevent this, calm yourself before the practice session by avoiding too much physical or mental activity. Slow stretches may help to relax the body and quiet the mind. Once you are sitting, take a few deep, slow breaths. Make it a practice to focus the mind immediately when you start the practice to avoid developing the habit of mentally wandering while sitting in meditation posture.

### **Drowsiness**

The second obstacle is drowsiness or sleepiness, which moves into the mind like a fog, a heaviness and torpor that blunts awareness. When it does this, try to strengthen the mind's focus on the object in order to penetrate the drowsiness. You may find that drowsiness is actually a kind of movement of the mind that you can stop with strong concentration. If this does not work, take a break, stretch, and perhaps do some practice while standing.

### **Laxity**

The third obstacle is laxity. When encountering this obstacle you may feel that your mind is calm, but in a passive, weak mental state in which the concentration has no strength. It is important to recognize this state for what it is. It can be a pleasant and relaxed experience and, if mistaken for correct meditation, may cause the practitioner to spend years mistakenly cultivating it, with no discernable change in the quality of consciousness. If your focus loses strength and your practice becomes lax, straighten your posture and wake up your mind. Reinforce the attention and guard the stability of presence. Regard the practice as something precious, which it is, and as something that will lead to the attainment of the highest realization, which it will. Strengthen the intention and automatically the wakefulness of the mind is strengthened.

Zhine practice should be done every day until the mind is quiet and stable. It is not only a preliminary practice, but is helpful at any point in the practitioner's life; even very advanced yogis practice zhine. The stability of mind developed through zhine is the foundation of dream yoga and all other meditation practices. Once we have achieved a strong and reliable steadiness in calm presence, we can develop this steadiness in all aspects of life. When stable, this presence can always be found, and we will not be carried away by thoughts and emotions. Then, even though karmic traces continue to produce dream images after falling asleep, we remain in awareness. This opens the door to the further practices of both dream and sleep yogas.

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*(These are excerpts from two different Dzogchen Dream Yoga books - "Dream Yoga and the Practice of Natural light" by Namkhai Norbu and "The Tibetan yogas of dream and Sleep" by Tenzin Wangyal Rimpoche)*



## TIBETAN DREAM YOGA

### Part : 2

[How dreams can help](#) - [Cultivating our innate ability to wake up within the dream can](#) - [Awakening within a dream](#) - [The six yogas of Tibet](#) - [Spiritual benefit of Tibetan dream yoga](#) - [Dreaming](#) - [The practice of Tibetan dream yoga](#) - [Daytime practice](#) - [Mirror practice](#) - [Partner exercise](#) - [Wake-up practice](#) - [Night time practice](#) - [Deepening your practice](#) - [The life long practice of Tibetan dream yoga](#)

His Holiness the Fourteenth Dalai Lama said: "Tibetan Buddhism considers sleep to be a form of nourishment, like food, that restores and refreshes the body. Another type of nourishment is *samadhi*, or meditative concentration. If one becomes advanced enough in the practice of meditative concentration, then this itself sustains or nourishes the body."



Dreams are a significant part of our life. They are as real and unreal as life itself. Dreams are extremely personal - and transpersonal, too. Our dreams are a reflection of ourselves: in dreams, no matter how many characters appear, we meet ourselves. Dreams are mirrors to our soul. They can help us to better understand ourselves, our world, and the nature of reality. Dreams introduce us to other dimensions of experience. Here, time and space are much more liquid and plastic; they can be shaped and reshaped almost at will. Dreams hint of other worlds, other lives. They are a glimpse of our afterlife. Everyone dreams, although not all dreams are remembered equally. Fifty-six percent of Americans have had a lucid dream - that is, a dream in which one is aware that one is dreaming. Twenty-one percent say they have a lucid dream once a

month or more. Meditators report vividly clear, self-aware dreams weekly and even more often.

### [How Dreams Can Help Us](#)

Great healers have long recognized the power of dreams to inform and support us. Hippocrates said, "Dreams are one of the most important ways to diagnose a patient's illness." Sigmund Freud's turn-of-the-century work, *The Interpretation of Dreams*, marked the beginning of the era of modern psychology and psychoanalysis. Certain dreams can convey *subconscious*, valuable information to the dreamer. A week before the event, Abraham Lincoln dreamed that he would be assassinated. The emperor Constantine dreamed of radiant Greek letters spelling the name of Christ and was converted, leading to the dramatic conversion of the entire Byzantine Empire. I, myself, have received messages, teachings, and blessings through my dreams from the spiritual masters I have known and loved in this lifetime.

Some contemporary psychologists consider lucid dreaming a valuable practice for personal growth. This model is, however, different from Tibetan dream yoga. The spiritual practice goes deeper, helping us work with the great passages of life and death. Tibetan dream yoga teaches us how to navigate the groundlessness of moment-to-moment existence, which typically makes no intellectual sense. It is at this level that we cut through the illusory nature of mind and truly experience our marvelous human existence.

### [Cultivating our innate ability to wake up within the dream can:](#)

- Increase clarity and lucidity, both waking and sleeping
- Help us realize the transparent, dream-like nature of experience
- Free the mind
- Release energy blockages and accumulated tension and stress
- Loosen habits and make us more open, attuned, and flexible
- Unleash and mobilize creativity
- Bring repressions and denials into consciousness
- Clarify and dispel confusion
- Solve problems
- Reveal the process of death and rebirth
- Heal and relax us
- Expose fantasies
- Unlock aspirations and potentials
- Facilitate direct encounters with our shadow nature
- Provide spiritual blessings, visions, and guidance
- Help open our innate psychic capacities
- Remove hindrances and obstacles
- Help prepare (rehearse) us for death and the afterlife

## Awakening within the dream

The seminal Chinese philosopher Chuang Tzu dreamed he was a butterfly. Upon awakening, he wondered whether he was a man who had dreamed he was a butterfly, or a butterfly dreaming he was a man. Chuang Tzu's musings underscore a fundamental truth: life is like a dream.

Spiritual life is about awakening from the dream of unreality. The word *Buddha* itself is from the word *bodhi*, "awakeful." Buddhist wisdom and practice help us to awaken to who and what we truly are, and to recognize the difference between the real and the unreal in our daily life. All of our spiritual practices are designed to awaken us from the daydream of illusion and confusion, where we are like sleepwalkers, semiconsciously muddling our way through life.

Self-knowledge through spiritual awakening helps us become masters of circumstances and conditions, rather than victims. This is why the Armenian spiritual master George Gurdjieff said: "Contemporary man is born asleep, lives asleep, and dies asleep. And what knowledge could a sleeping man have? If you think about it and at the same time remember that sleep is the chief feature of our being, you will soon understand that if man wishes to obtain knowledge, he should first of all think about how to awaken himself, that is about how to change his being."

South American shamans call this awakening from the dream of life "shapeshifting": entering into a spiritual journey with the explicit purpose of transformation. Shapeshifting and other forms of conscious dream-work can, through regular practice, help us experience other realms of existence, visit our dear departed, and achieve spiritual mastery.

Australian aborigines say we all live in the dreamtime: we are like dream characters, living out our lives beyond the illusion of being born and dying. Tibetan masters call this dreamtime the *bardo*, or intermediate stage. Bardos exist between the ending of one state and the beginning of another, such as birth and death - or death and rebirth. Dreaming, too, is a bardo, marking the seemingly unstructured zone between waking and sleeping.

Tibetan Buddhism is unique among Buddhist schools in teaching us how to awaken within the dream and how to practice spiritually while sleeping. This is the essence of Tibetan dream yoga, and the focus of all the practices associated with it. The Yoga of the Dream State, an ancient Tibetan manual on the practice of dream yoga and lucid dreaming teaches that we can learn five

spiritually significant wisdom lessons through assiduously practicing this path of awakening:

- Dreams can be altered through will and attention
- Dreams are unstable, impermanent, and unreal — much like fantasies, magical illusions, mirages, and hallucinations
  - Daily perceptions in the everyday waking state are also unreal
- All life is here today and gone tomorrow, like a dream; there is nothing to hold on to
- Conscious dreamwork can lead us to the realization of wholeness, perfect balance, and unity.

For centuries, Tibetan masters have taught their students how to use dreamtime and dream space to further spiritual progress by increasing awareness during the dream state. *Tibetan Dream Yoga* brings you these same techniques for realizing the five wisdom lessons and reaping the benefits of awakening within the dream.

### [The Six Yogas of Tibet](#)

Tibetan dream yoga is one of the renowned Six Yogas of Tibet, an ancient Buddhist teaching that originates with the enlightened yogic adepts (*siddhas*) - of ancient India. These yogas (or practices), utilized for a millennium by all four schools of Tibetan Buddhism, help us to utilize the body/mind/spirit as a vehicle for awakening and enlightenment — by day, by night, and in the afterlife (bardo).

#### **The Six Yogas are:**

- Inner heat (mystic incandescence) yoga
  - Illusory body yoga
    - Dream yoga
    - Clear light yoga
    - Bardo yoga
- Conscious transformation yoga

The Six Yogas tradition was first brought to Tibet thirteen hundred years ago by the Indian tantric master Padmasambhava, founder of the Ancient School (*Nyingmapa*) of Tibetan Buddhism. Padmasambhava himself received the teachings he codified as The Yoga of the Dream State from a mysterious yogi named Lawapa. In ensuing centuries, as Buddhism grew and flourished in Tibet, Marpa the Translator and other Tibetan sages made the grueling journey on foot to India to study from yogic masters, then brought the teaching back with them.

Through practicing the Six Yogas, we come to realize the infinite emptiness/openness, ungraspable quality, and luminosity that is the true

nature of reality. Dream interpretation, the use of dreams for predictions and healing, and the development of psychic powers and healing abilities can arise naturally from the continuous practice of dream yoga and the related yogas (especially clear light, inner heat, and illusory body).

### [The Spiritual Benefits of Tibetan Dream Yoga](#)

His Holiness the Fourteenth Dalai Lama has this to say about awakening our dream body and using it for spiritual progress and development:

"There is said to be a relationship between dreaming, on the one hand, and the gross and subtle levels of the body on the other. But it is also said that there is a 'special dream state.' In that state, the special dream body is created from the mind and from vital energy (*prana*) within the body. This special dream body is able to dissociate entirely from the gross physical body and travel elsewhere."

One way of developing this special dream body is first of all to recognize a dream as a dream when it occurs. Then you find that the dream is malleable, and you make efforts to gain control over it. Gradually you become very skilled in this, increasing your ability to control the contents of the dream so that it accords to your own desires. Eventually it is possible to dissociate your dream body from your gross physical body. In contrast, in the normal dream state, dreaming occurs within the body. But as a result of specific training, the dream body can go elsewhere. This first technique is accomplished entirely by the power of desire or aspiration.

There is another technique that arrives at the same end by means of prana yoga. These are meditative practices that utilize the subtle, vital energies in the body. For these techniques it is also necessary to recognize the sleep state as it occurs.



*According to sleep researchers, we typically experience four stages of sleep.*

- **Hypnagogic sleep** - the state of drowsiness we experience as we begin falling asleep
- **Ordinary sleep**- here, we enter a true sleeping state, but can still be easily awakened
- **Deeper sleep** - vital functions slow down, and we are more likely to

sleep through disturbances

- **Deep sleep** - muscles are totally relaxed, and it would be difficult to wake us up (we only spend about fifteen percent of our sleeping hours at this stage)

It takes about an hour to cycle through all four stages; then we go back in reverse order to stage 1. Before beginning the cycle again, however, we experience rapid eye movements (REM) under our closed lids. Research shows that this is when we dream. We spend twenty to twenty-five percent of our sleep time in this state. In order to practice dream yoga, we must introduce awareness during the periods of REM sleep (which last from a few minutes to half an hour). If we can identify that stage while asleep -perhaps with the help of an assistant or a dream-light device - we can further incubate, develop, and enhance the awareness practice of becoming conscious and lucid within the dream state.

### Dreaming

Tibetan dream yoga texts teach us that, in general, there are three types of dreams: Ordinary, karmic dreams, arising mostly from the day's activities, and from previous life activities, thoughts, experiences, and contacts.

- "Clear light" dreams: spiritual visions, blessings, and energy openings
- Lucid dreams, which are characterized by awareness that one is dreaming

*Under these three broad divisions, dreams can be divided into a further six categories:*

- Dreams of events that occurred while we were still awake
- Dreams about other people, alive or dead
- Forgotten elements emerging from the subconscious
- Archetypal content, evocative symbols, and so on
- Extrasensory perceptions, profound dreams, and omens
- Radiant, luminous, spiritual dreams

Recurrent dreams, nightmares, dreams of death, and other kinds of commonly reported dreams all fall within the first four dream categories. In the interests of developing deeper awareness of your dreams, you may find it helpful to identify the category that applies whenever you recall a particular dream.

### The Practices of Tibetan Dream Yoga

It is important to create a spiritual context for the practice of Tibetan dream yoga. Lucid dreaming can easily be misused to perpetuate the problems we

experience in our waking lives. For example, one might direct one's dream toward a gratifying encounter or a vengeful fantasy. You will find that the techniques on *Tibetan Dream Yoga* somehow don't work as well when used for such purposes.

*Tibetan dream yoga practice comprises three parts:*

- Daytime practice, designed to help us recognize the dreamlike nature of all existence and thereby prepare us to experience our dreams as vividly as we do our waking activities
- Morning wake-up practices that help us recall our dreams, and confirm our determination to recall more of them
- Night time practice, which prepares the ground for lucid dreaming and spiritual

### Daytime Practice :

*During the day, practice these four points:*

- Contemplating the body as illusory and unreal
- Contemplating the mind and mental activities as similarly insubstantial
- Regarding the world and all phenomena and experience as dreamlike, insubstantial, impermanent, and unreal
- Recognizing the relativity and ungraspable quality such as time, space, knowledge, and awareness

Reminding ourselves of these four truths throughout our waking hours helps to dissolve the barrier between the dream of life and the sleeping dream. As we become more adept at these practices, we begin to regard our nighttime dreams as continuations of our waking dream and we learn how to bring habitual awareness to both.

### Mirror Practice

The following mirror practice is an effective way of perceiving the dreamlike nature of "reality", and especially of "self". From time to time during the day, take a few minutes to do it.

- 1 Stand in front of a mirror and look into your own eyes.
2. Hold up a hand mirror behind your right or left ear and look at its reflection in the larger mirror. Keep angling the hand mirror so as to fragment and multiply your image as much as possible. Let your mind fragment along with the image.

3. After a few minutes, angle the hand mirror back until you return to the original, single image in the mirror in front of you.

The analogy of a mirror image is, like dreams, traditionally used to describe the insubstantial nature of our everyday experience. The mirror practice helps bring that teaching to life. The fragmented image is the kind we might see in a dream; yet we are seeing it while we're fully awake — or are we?

Allowing your mind to "fall apart" also helps ventilate the solidity we typically attribute to our world, and especially to our "self."

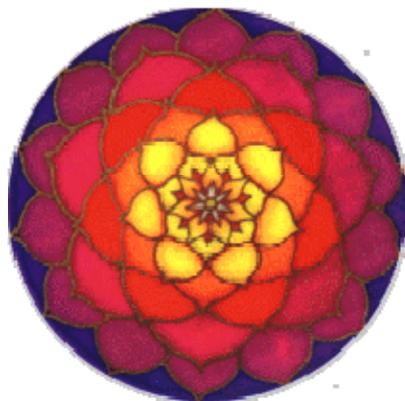
### Partner Exercise

Here is a traditional dream yoga practice you can do with a partner. This is an immensely useful technique, not only for challenging the distinction between sleeping dreams and the dream of being awake, but also for applying your training to practical, everyday situations.

- 1 - Insult, blame, and criticize your partner. Your partner should listen to all of this as echoes; empty sounds.

- 2 – Trade places. Now have your partner disparage you, while you practice just hearing the sounds and not taking the words to heart

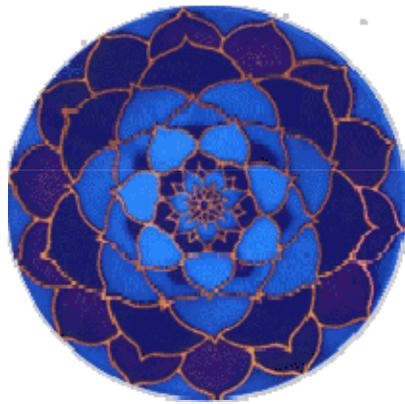
- 3 – Try doing this same exercise using praise and flattery instead of blame. In either case, the listening partner should practice not reacting in any way, recognizing what is being said as a dream. At first, you may find it difficult to maintain equanimity while you do this practice. Stay with it – you will find that doing so yields rich rewards over time.



### Wake-up Practice

The moments immediately after waking are the most fertile for recalling dreams. The following practices are designed to support and strengthen your recall. They will also facilitate a mindful transition between the sleeping and waking dream states. Upon waking in the morning, practice:

- The lion's out-breath - breathing out with the sound "ah"
- The lion-like posture for awakening and purifying - sitting up in bed with raised head and gazing and emphasizing the exhalation, repeating the "ah" out breath three times
- Raising the energy - standing up, reaching the fingertips to the sky, and repeating the lion's out-breath
- Entering into mindful reflection on the transition between the states of sleeping, dreaming, and waking reality - coming into the present moment, recording dreams. Thus, you will enter the day recognizing that all things are like a dream, illusion, fantasy, mirage, and so forth.



### Nighttime Practice

After going to bed, practice these four points in order to create the conditions for mindful, lucid dreaming.

- Chant the following prayer three times to remind you of and strengthen your resolve to awaken within the dream, for the benefit of the ultimate awakening of all beings: "May I awaken within this dream and grasp the fact that I am dreaming, so that all dreamlike beings may likewise awaken from the nightmare of illusory suffering and confusion".
- Lie on one side with your legs together and knees slightly bent. Let your bent arm take the weight of your torso by resting your head on your open hand. This is the posture of the sleeping Buddha, as he has been traditionally depicted at the moment of passing into *nirvana* (death).
- Bringing your attention to your throat chakra, visualize your energy rising up out of your body. Feel it rise up from your heart chakra with your breath and pass into your "third eye" or brow chakra: the point between your eyebrows. Visualize it as a full, luminous moon behind your eyes. Go into the light.

- Visualize the letter "A" (symbolizing infinite space) on the surface of the moon.
- Notice whatever images begin to appear on the sphere of light behind your eyes.

### Deepening Your Practice

*To progress still further in Tibetan dream yoga,*

- Pay careful attention to your dreams
- Record your dreams in a dream journal upon waking each morning
- Recognize recurrent images, themes, associations, and patterns
- Contemplate the archetypal, symbolic content and meanings of your dreams
- Reflect on the similarities and differences between night dreams, daydreams, fantasies, visions, ideas, projections, and so on
- Wake yourself up during the night to reaffirm your resolve to awaken within the dream and grasp the fact that you are dreaming
- Sit up in meditation posture while sleeping to maintain continuous awareness while inducing and incubating lucid dreaming
- Have a dream assistant at hand to guide you while asleep, helping you learn to retain conscious presence during dreams
- Meditate alone in darkness to develop the inner clarity of the Clear Light Mind - the mind unaffected by illusion
- During the day, maintain awareness that everything you experience is like a dream
  - Chant the dream yoga prayer by day and by night to help reinforce your intention to awaken within the dream. (if you want, or change the wordings)



## THE LIFELONG PRACTICE OF TIBETAN DREAM YOGA

Like any spiritual practice, Tibetan dream yoga will reveal more substantial benefits the longer and more consistently you practice it. In the Buddhist tradition, however, discipline alone is not enough to bring your practice fully alive. Motivation — the reason you practice in the first place - is considered as crucial as technique and commitment.

You will have noticed that the Tibetan dream yoga chant includes an aspiration to help free all beings of their suffering. This intention lies at the root of all Buddhist practice. The underlying teaching is that all living beings are interconnected: none of us can be completely free so long as any of us is still asleep.

As you practice Tibetan dream yoga, recognize that the suffering you seek to alleviate through spiritual practice is, in fact, universal. Recognize, too, that the more awake you are, the more helpful you can be to those you care about in fact, to, to everyone you come into contact with. Practice with the intention of working with your own individual part of the whole, in order to bring all of human awareness to a new level. In this way, you will derive the greatest possible benefits from your dream yoga practice.

### **Some sayings about dreams:**

*"Dreams are a reservoir of knowledge and experience, yet they are often overlooked as a vehicle for exploring reality"- **Tarthang Tulku Yoga Practice***

*"All that we see is but a dream within a dream"- **Edgar Allen Poe***

*"A dream not interpreted is like a letter not read"- **The Talmud***

*"Dreams are real as long as they last. Can we say more of life?" – **Henry Havelock Ellis***

*"You beings on earth who are deep in slumber... Stop sleeping! Wake up! What are you waiting for?"- **The Zohar***

*"There are some who are awake even while asleep, and then there are those who, apparently awake, are deeply asleep" – **Lalla***

*"Do not sleep like an animal that mixes sleep and reality" - **Tibetan instruction for dream yoga practice***

*"Let sleep itself be an exercise in piety, for such as our life and conduct have been so also of necessity will be our dreams" – **Saint Basil***



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*(These are excerpts from three different Dzogchen Dream Yoga books  
Dream Yoga and the Practice of Natural light by Namkhai Norbu - The Tibetan  
Yogas of Dream and Sleep by Tenzin Wangyal Rimpoche - Sleeping, Dreaming,  
and Dying by the Dalai Lama )*

## **Guideline to Dream Interpretation**

[How do you relate to dreams? A framework for dreams](#)



*Painting by Bob Venosa*

*All dreams work to accomplish one of two things*

- 1** To solve the problems of your conscious, waking life.
- 2** To present you with access to new potentials and creativity. Because dreams come from all levels of your being, understanding the imagery and type of dream is the key to understanding and actualizing the messages you receive during sleep.
- 3** Symbols express those things for which we have no words. By working with them, we use both hemispheres of the brain and tap the subconscious mind more fully, which in turn opens the doors to our intuitive self

A dream symbol could literally represent itself as well as its possible interpretations. The images and symbols may also represent aspects of your personality. When you begin to reflect on the symbols, always start

by registering your first impressions but don't stop with the obvious. Dreams are symbolic representations, not reproductions. The dream images always represent more than themselves, and so the more you work with them, the more you will understand them.

Dreams do not come to tell you what you already know. Look at the dream images and symbols as pieces of a puzzle that you can put together only by finding out what they mean to you.

### How do you relate to the dream?

**1** Start by looking at how the dream could be reflecting something going on in your daily life.

**2** Then move on to the more subtle, free association with the dream images.

**3** What's the first thing you would normally think about in connection to that symbol or image, activity or person appearing in your dream scenario?

**4** doing more than representing themselves. They may also represent qualities or characteristics that you have "projected" on them. For example, you may dream of your grandfather, a man who was very kind to you. The quality of kindness is therefore associated with your grandfather, so dreaming of him could symbolize kindness. (You will know the difference between a symbolic representation of a quality or characteristic and a real "psychic" contact with a loved one.)

**5** Examine the emotions within the dream scenario. What is the predominant emotion associated with the dream? Remember that it may be the emotion aroused that is the key and the scenario is simply a vehicle to deliver the message.

**6** When you wake up, does a particular feeling remain? For example, are you frightened, frustrated, happy, excited?

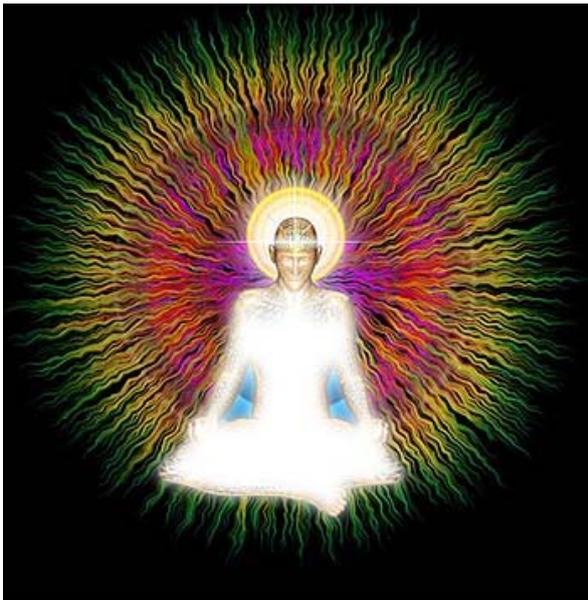
Dreams often exaggerate emotions, qualities and situations to get a particular message across to you. This does not mean that you have that quality or will experience that situation to the intensity you experienced within the dream. When this occurs, you are often being given a strong thump on the head to pay attention! This is what nightmares do. They are dynamic calls for your attention. They show you your greatest fears, fears that must be confronted.

Dreams often come in a series. Various dreams in a single or successive nights may be different ways of saying the same thing. The subconscious mind may be communicating the same message to you in different ways

to make sure that you get it. Look for relationships and symbols that reoccur and notice the similarities. Ask yourself what they have in common.

Proper dream interpretation leads towards greater understanding of yourself, but do not lose touch with your common sense in dream work. On the surface, dreams may seem to predict futures events or alarming situations, but do not jump to conclusions. With practice, you will be able to discern if a dream is precognitive (reflecting future events) or not.

Dreams use symbols to make you develop and understand your personal symbolic language. This language comes directly from your soul and uses symbols and images from impersonal archetypes and from personal experience to make a strong or subtle impact on your psyche. This symbolic language is unique, given just to you, in the hope that it will make you conscious of your real needs and problems. This language of the soul also helps you to unfold your creativity and activates the spiritual dimension within your psyche.



*Painting by John Vega*

### [A framework for dream work might be:](#)

- 1 Choose a dream.**
- 2 Determine the dream type, issue, crisis, a block, a resolution already included in the dream.**
- 3 Make a list of the symbols in the dream.**
- 4 Find out the relationships between symbols.**
- 5 Find out the relationships between the dream ego and the symbols.**

- 6 Find out the similarities and contrasts in the dream.
- 7 List what the dream ego is and is not doing in the dream
- 8 Find out about the ego's relationships with other items in the dream.
- 9 Make a summary, and list what you have discovered.

This is a basic method of working with dreams that helps you develop self-analysis, observation, and a "conscious" and "lucid" state of consciousness. You can follow it up with different methods.

Dream work helps those who want to know themselves, since like a mirror, it not only projects who we are but also displays what we need to do. In other words, dreams are the best guides to reveal what you have on your conscience, what needs to be worked out in your life, and how to become a better and happier person.

Finally, keep a dream journal that represents the "mirror of your soul" and helps you understand yourself better. Write your dream down as soon as possible, even just a few words, to remind you of your dream, for the more importance you give to your dream work, the more inner messages and intelligent guidance you will receive

It is during my Psychosynthesis training, in London in 1984, that I was given this Guideline to Dream Interpretation.

*(Author Unknown) taken from a Psychosynthesis paper*



## TEACHING IN DREAMS

There are numerous examples in the Tibetan tradition of practitioners who received teachings in dreams. Often the dreams come in sequence, each night's dream starting where the previous night's dream ends, and in this way transmitting entire, detailed teachings until a precise and appropriate point of completion is reached, at which point the dreams stop. Volumes of teachings have been "discovered" this way, including many of the practices that Tibetans have been doing for centuries. This is what we call "mind treasure" (*gong-ter*). stabilize in consciousness without identifying with the conventional self. The practitioner whose clarity is unobscured by karmic traces and samsaric dreams has access to the wisdom inherent in consciousness itself.

Authentic teachings discovered in dream do not come from the intellect. It is not like going to the library and doing research and then writing a book, using the intellect to collect and synthesize information as a scholar might. Although many good teachings come from the intellect, they are not considered mind treasures. The wisdom of the Buddhas is self-originated, rising from the depths of consciousness, complete in itself. This does not mean that mind treasure teachings will not resemble existing teachings, for they will.

Furthermore, these teachings can be found in different cultures and in different historical periods, and can be similar even though they do not inform each other. Historians work to trace a teaching back in time in order to point out how it was influenced by a similar teaching, where the historical connection took place, and so on, and often they find such a link. But the underlying truth is that these teachings arise spontaneously from humans when they reach a certain point in their individual development. The teachings are inherent in the foundational wisdom that any culture can eventually access. They are not only Buddhist or Bon teachings; they are teachings for all humans.

If we have the karma to help other beings, the teachings from a dream may be of benefit to others. But it may also be the case, if we have karma with a lineage, for example, that

the teachings discovered in a dream will be particularly for our own practice, perhaps as a specific remedy to overcome a particular obstacle.

Imagine entering a cave and finding a volume of teachings hidden inside. This is finding in a physical space. Mind treasures are found in consciousness rather than in the physical world. Masters have been known to find these treasures both in dreams of clarity and when awake. In order to receive these kinds of teaching in a dream, the practitioner must have developed certain capacities, such as being able to stabilize in consciousness without identifying with the conventional self. The practitioner whose clarity is unobscured by karmic traces and samsaric dreams has access to the wisdom inherent in consciousness itself.

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*(From The Tibetan Yogas of Dream and Sleep by Tenzin Wangyal Rimpoche)*



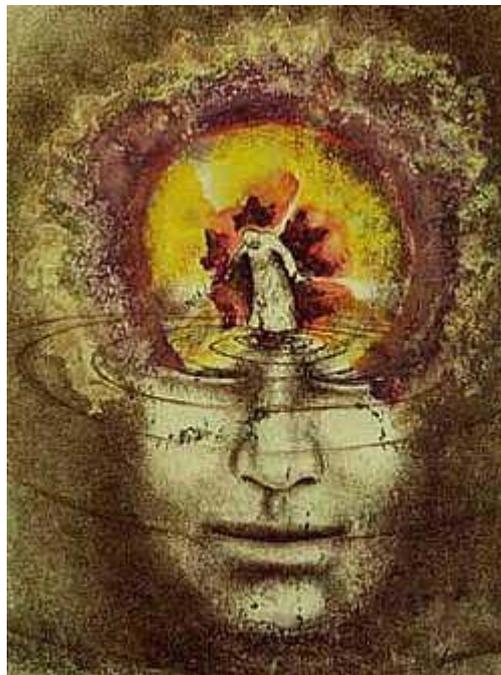
# IMPORTANCE OF DREAMS IN THE MYSTICAL PROCESS

## Part : I

[Dreams are tools](#) - [Dreams and the psyche](#) - [The Inner Process of dreams](#) - [Dreams as Teachings](#)

There is basically no difference between the waking state and that of dream, except that one seems more stable than the other. Only after there is awakening in the form of enlightenment is it realized that the waking world itself is indeed nothing but a long dream resulting from mental disposition - a movement in Consciousness in which what seems a solid body and its sufferings are really an illusion.

Ramesh Balsekar



Painting by Marica S. Lauck & Deborah Koff-Chapin

This chapter is dedicated to readers who have proven to themselves that dreams are more than just dreams, that they are indeed "tools" teaching us to look at ourselves in an impartial and impersonal way.

### [Dreams are tools](#)

Dreams are tools of transformation. Moreover, at a certain level of inner work, dreams stop being dreams and instead become spiritual levels of consciousness.

But, in the meantime, dreams open invisible doors to subtler levels of spiritual growth, awakening in seekers of truth and wisdom, our permanent witness or soul within our conscious selves.

Let us first introduce the symbol of the trident, the logo of the sea-god Poseidon/Neptune. What connection does that have with the process of dreaming? Poseidon, the god of seas and oceans, holds the trident as a mark of his command

of the waters. In the context of dream work, he represents the king of the subconscious levels of the psyche. In fact, with his trident, Poseidon also commands the monsters of the deep, which reminds us of the deep waters of the subconscious and its own monsters and shadowy figures. The subconscious can therefore be compared to the abysmal depths of the ocean; the bottomless deep waters symbolize the subconscious and unconscious parts of our psyche where emotions and instincts mingle and mix without purpose or direction.

The three menacing elongated prongs of the trident look like weapons and are used for penetrating, scratching and wounding, so in the symbolic context of dream work, the trident is a penetrating device, effectively "wounding" and scraping what is useless and needs to be separated and removed from the virginal aspect of the psyche. But this wounding opens three deep holes that allows the penetration by the spiritual light of the soul that nourishes and illuminates the unconscious part in us. Through this purification, our unconscious becomes conscious of itself. Thus the trident symbolically opens these three "gates" to higher levels of enlightenment.

Let us examine these three "wounds" and three "gates."

The three wounds have the power of transmuting our self-consciousness from its dualistic awareness to its source, Cosmic Consciousness. In piercing and perforating our "self-conscious" aspect, the prongs transmute the egotistic and lower psychic character traits into their spiritual perfect ideals. Thus the trident is an awakening device a powerful symbol for our purification and spiritual advancement through dream work.

From a religious aspect, the trident and the net represent two symbols of Christ as "Fisher of Man." Furthermore, the trident's prongs are of an equal length, symbolizing the Trinity. Hence, the trident is an effective instrument of purification and purgation for awakening the inferior parts of the psyche and sensitizing them to higher spiritual impulses coming from the psyche that are influenced by the permanent witness.

Moreover, the trident, as a symbol of Trinity, impregnates and penetrates with its triune spiritual energies the lower and higher aspects of our self-consciousness. In Christian tradition, the trident is placed in Satan's hands as an instrument of punishment. However, esoteric tradition and spiritual psychology tell us that we need to go deep within ourselves to discover the blocked energies, and then, "fish" them out, as it were, so as to bring them into the light of consciousness. Turning our attention within subtly develops the intuitive faculty of our sixth sense to help us understand who we are and what we need to do to reintegrate our perfect model.



**Tiratna**

**In Buddhism, the trident is taken as a symbol of the Tiratna, or triple jewel (Buddha, Dharma, Sangha, meaning the Awakened One, the Truth expounded by Him, and the followers living in accordance with this Truth). It may also be regarded as the triple current of energy in man. And in our own spiritual context, the trident represents the instrument moving these same energies within our psyche.**

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### [Dreams and the Psyche](#)

**Dreams help us look deeper within our own psyche, to discover the Mystery of Man. But unless we devote ourselves and allocate time to work with the energies and meaning of dreams, they will always remain unsolicited and strange phenomena. That is why our psyche needs to dream, since dreams are a source of knowledge helping us in the process of releasing unwanted garbage. Dreams are given to us to rescue us from lethargy and unconsciousness.**

**Previous chapters have compared the psyche to a mirror reflecting whatever preoccupies it. What is reflected in dreams are the thoughts and emotions of our good and bad intentions and experiences. It is in the mirror of our psyche that real purification and understanding take place, since we must become conscious of what appears on the surface of our psyche. The conscious impressions coming from a dream have an important role to play in the awakening process as a whole, and each dream, each symbol enriches this process, since spiritual dream work takes into account the subtle purification process of the whole man. Dreams about purification are given to those of us who want to awaken our permanent and spiritual witnesses. To do that, we must unite them in our "ordinary" level of self-consciousness. Therefore, we must become aware of our unconscious traits that need transformation. Without this, our ego cannot continue on this journey.**

**This kind of spiritual work in itself exposes the psyche to the influences and intuitions pouring in from the permanent witness (see About the Mystery of Man, parts 1 – 4). This is the first important means of access, the "key" opening the door of Poseidon's mysterious palace in which are gathered all the past and present experiences, all the fears and stresses imprisoned since time immemorial. Those unconscious doubts and worries linger hopelessly in the depth of darkness awaiting the right moment for the thunderbolt of consciousness to penetrate them and bring**

them to the light of understanding. As a consequence of these delicate operations, the retrieved or "fished out" blocked energies float on the surface of dreams captured by our self-conscious ego. To help us understand their meaning, they take, in dreams, the shape of potent personal and universal symbols and archetypes. The ego must process these with subtlety, intuition and sensitivity, so that their meaning becomes clear and illuminating.

At first, these types of dreams are usually experienced as nightmares since our consciousness has to reorganize and focus its attention on the inner dynamics of dream work. With phantasmagoric, incomprehensible, and senseless dreams, we must try to focus our attention and use our intuition to grasp the irrational within ourselves. So, we should not ignore dream sequences that might have nothing in common with each other or appear nonsensical. It really doesn't matter if the beginning of a dream doesn't match what follows it. Analogous to a jigsaw puzzle, we should use our intuition to retrieve the "seed idea" and meaning of each part of our dreams. The expansion of the "seed ideas" and "meaning" is important, and it doesn't matter if our intuition reveals different symbols or meanings to the dream. What counts is the effort exerted by our psyche to unravel a new dimension. Our ego must turn its attention to within itself, in the silent space within Being, where the impelling magnetic presence of the intelligence of the heart reigns.

Thus, if dreams first appear confusing, it is because these types of dreams release the pressure and stressed energies blocked in our psyche. To release stress in dreams, the symbols are magnified so as to make an impact and emphasize certain aspects of a problem. Another reason for disturbing dreams is to help us become conscious of the nature of our stress or anxiety. We should use our intuition to look at the incongruous symbols in our dreams, trying to "respect" their meaning. Intuition assists us in "reading" what goes on in our psyche, since like a mirror, it reflects what goes on within us. This is how, from our permanent witness, we receive some practical solutions and interpretations. However, the exchange of intuitive ideas and feelings between our psyche and ego occurs only if our ego is open to change. If we are willing to work with the symbols, then a special flow of energy streams from our permanent witness, allowing us to understand what we must do to remove the problem, and transform what needs to change.

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### [The Inner Process of Dreams](#)

Spiritual psychology looks at the esoteric and intuitive aspect of dream work, and is based on inner guidance. However, psychology is based on the interpretation and analysis of psychologists or facilitators. These two approaches may sound and even look the same, but they are not. The first is solely based on inner revelation and the second on feedback and outside guidance. The first is used by mystics, those guided by their soul, who seek a closer relationship with their permanent witness. The second is used by those who are only interested in finding solutions to problems, new directions and meaning in times of crisis.

Both are useful and important dream work tools to purify and transform the psyche.

If we want to know who we are, then we should start with the psychological approach, either alone, in a group, or with a therapist. We should also seek the guidance of the inner master, or presence within. Whichever way we choose, our first step should always be with the psychological approach before starting any other kind of spiritual work, since, this approach takes us to the depth of our psyche and is part of an alchemical process. This is our descent into the world of Poseidon where our unconscious self waits. The quest to awaken our spiritual awareness can begin only after a certain amount of purification and transformation of the psyche. Our consciousness, having taken the downward journey, is eventually drawn towards an ascending path. Then, what we receive becomes more subtle and enlightening since it comes without distortion directly from the soul.

If we are serious in our work with the spiritual level of dreams, we must also realize that dreams are like seeds containing potential whole trees. Dreams, therefore, contain the seed ideas coming from the permanent witness. Their purpose is to transform our ordinary levels of consciousness to higher spiritual ones, since some dreams are in themselves examples of spiritual planes co-existing in our psyche that are the seeds waiting in our subconscious to be recognized and awakened by our ego. In other words, they are our spiritual levels of consciousness that permeate into our everyday consciousness. This is the grounding aspect of the whole process of dreams since, if we need to fathom the Mystery of Being and experience our own harmony and unity with it, then the nature of our dreams changes. Moreover, the essence and meaning of our dreams take a more abstract and irrational quality that cannot be shared with anyone, since they come directly from our permanent witness as a language of our soul, a language that can only be understood only intuitively. .

The spiritual dimension of dreams could be described, at best, as delicate and subtle experiences given directly by our permanent witness to our consciousness in order to foster a healing and purifying, leading to a new level of consciousness in us, which we must allow to unfold in our ordinary lives.

What really matters here is our wish for inner transformation, since strong desire to unfold a higher level of consciousness is an illuminating catalyst that energizes our psyche. This is an important element in dream work. The power of concentration and a strong desire to work with dreams as tools for our own transformation opens naturally and directly the inner path to the permanent witness.

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### [Dreams can become mystical Teachings](#)

Dream work is comparable to learning a new language. First we must learn the alphabet. Dreams are a new symbolic world opening up in our self-consciousness.

Why do we say "self-consciousness"? Because, unless our self-consciousness awakens whilst dreaming, our dreams will have no impact and we will not remember anything of great importance. Thus we must gradually stimulate and

awaken our self-consciousness during dreams so that they can be something more than mere stress release.

Later, when our ego or self-consciousness "awakens" to its true nature—the impersonal Cosmic Consciousness—then dreams and the inner process take a new direction, and we see, understand and experience them in a totally different way since, from then on, our ego or self-consciousness realizes that it is just a vehicle for Cosmic Consciousness. We then perceive all kinds of dreams and astral projections differently, since the veil separating them from Cosmic Consciousness is no more. Our ego knows that it is just a reflection of the blazing light of the presence of God or Pure Being. When the veil is torn, and ego and soul meet and merge, the true identity of the Creator and initiator of our inner process becomes even clearer. The impersonal Cosmic Consciousness within us is the sole creator of dreams, and its limited self-conscious counterpart, our ego, it is seen at the other end of the process as the receiver of dreams.

The mission of Cosmic Consciousness within man is to enlighten man's ego. In other words, Cosmic Consciousness actively guides the process of awakening the ego to its true nature, hence it directs the inner world of dreams and astral projections during sleep. Cosmic Consciousness takes over and creates whatever is necessary for our self-consciousness to understand and experience our ego. That is why prophets, saints and disciples of all religions and philosophies have been enlightened and have received knowledge and wisdom through their dreams, visions and astral travels. The ways that our soul carries out its initiatory course of action to awaken our ego and open up the "rainbow bridge to infinity" is a source of great gratitude and awe.

A good manual to read about a step-by -step introduction to working with dreams is: "The Dreamwork Manual" by Strepthon Kaplan Williams - Published by "The Aquarian Press".



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## IMPORTANCE OF DREAMS IN THE MYSTICAL PROCESS

Part II

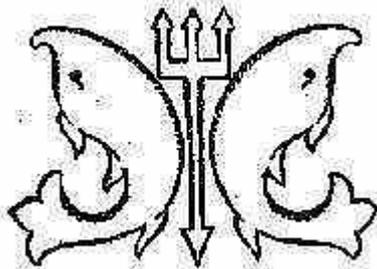
PICTURES



*The Inner Process awakens from within...*



*Poseidon the God of the Sea with his Trident the Tool of the Awakening process from the deep unconscious self...*



*Dolphin and Trident Keys for the inner process*



*Tiratna, or triple jewel*



*Trident of Purification*



*The Three Nails symbolic tools for the awakening process*



1



2

*1 - In the sealed vessel sits Poseidon/Neptune,  
with his trident and the two Witnesses.*

*2 - Detail of the hermetically sealed vessel with the Sun and Moon  
symbols of our Permanent and Spiritual Witnesses.*

- The End -