



Mysteries of Sleep and Dreams

By Dr. Douglas Gabriel

“I turn away from the light to the holy, inexpressible, mysterious night. Light had its allotted time; but timeless and infinite is the reign of the night – the duration of sleep eternal. But even more heavenly than the flashing stars are those infinite eyes which the night opens within us, and which see further even than the palest of those innumerable hosts.”

Novalis, *Hymns to the Night*

“We dream of travels throughout the universe: is not the universe within us? We do not know the depths of our spirit. The mysterious path leads within. In us, or nowhere, lies eternity with its worlds, the past and the future.”

Novalis, *Pollen and Fragments*

Even though humanity has placed the most profound attention and interest on discovering the nature of sleep and dreams, it has understood little and is still mystified by the mysteries found in the night. Sleep is considered the “little death” that informs both our waking and sleeping hours. About one third of human life is spent in sleep and even though clever scientists have analyzed what they can from sleep and dreams, “measure, number, and weight”, they ultimately admit they know almost nothing about the effects of “sleep” upon the psychological and spiritual nature of the human being. Without “good sleep”, humans fall apart psychologically and can become rather useless in the “waking” world. The “cause and effect” of dreams leave scientists baffled and promising new and further research on this oldest of human puzzles. The ancients had temples where people came to sleep and dream and then have those dreams interpreted by the temple priests and priestesses. Usually, exposure to sunlight was the major cure for bad dreams and physical illness. Thus, modern science seems to know less about sleep and dreams than our ancestors did.

Prophetic dreams, visions, daydreams, and precognitive dreams fill the holy books of the different religions. Many of the prophets of the Old Testament were advisors to kings and rulers who guided their culture via the interpretation of the king's, or their own, dreams. The king dreamt for the entire kingdom but often could not interpret the mysterious symbols and chaotic story-lines of dreams. It took wisdom and insight to unravel what was meant in a dream. Dreams were seen to originate in the divine world, sent as messengers of the gods. But only a spiritual initiate could ferret out the hidden meaning of dream's dynamic symbols. This gift of discernment was considered extremely important for creating a "bridge of communication" between the waking world and the ocean of messages arising in dreams. The necessity to comprehend dreams is still paramount in human evolution. Dreams that arise from sleep or daydreams often become the driving force of one's personal destiny.

Science tells us that we have different stages of sleep that repeat themselves throughout, some with dreams and some without. They call these stages "rapid eye movement" or "non-rapid eye movement" but, in effect, they don't know much more than that. They measure and label but fall short of understanding the cause, nature, or mechanisms of these stages of sleep. They are able to measure brain-waves of various types and intensity, but again can't understand what drives brain-wave phenomena. Science, limited to the five senses, can't make heads nor tails of what causes the various manifestations and effects of sleep and dreams, even though they measure the activity of the brain during sleep and follow the motion of energy moving from one part of the brain to another. Science doesn't seem to be able to manipulate dreams, even though there are hundreds of man-made chemicals that can dramatically effect sleep and sleeplessness. But the ancients knew that a life without sleep creates illness and perhaps a shortened life.

Life without dreams is considered normal in our hyper-materialistic age and the restorative powers of sleep and dreams are hardly considered an issue for good psychological and physical health. Ultimately, sleep and dreams remain hidden in the darkness of night, the bosom of the goddess Nyx, the Great Mother of Sleep and Death. All things fall back into Mother Night from whence they came – the dark unseen world. But modern materialistic thinkers simply ignore sleep and

dreams as the antithesis of waking consciousness, which is much preferred. The waking condition of consciousness is seen as the ultimate, while all else is common dust – dreams of fancy. This sad devolution of human consciousness sounds the death knell of soul and spiritual evolution and ignores the mercy and grace of life-giving sleep and dreams and the blessings of death.

Waking consciousness wears down the life body (etheric body) of the human being during the day. The physical and etheric bodies are worn out by the desire body (astral body) and the I Am (ego) during the course of wakefulness. During sleep, the etheric body restores the physical body while the astral body and ego are, more or less, outside of the etheric and physical bodies. The intermittent awareness of the ego during sleep is attempting to digest and integrate the thinking, feeling, and willing of the human being that was expended during the waking hours. Thus, Night-time heals Day-time or the human being cannot maintain homeostasis and equilibrium between these two entirely different worlds that are often quite the opposite. During sleep, reason and morality don't seem to rule that realm, whereas they are key components of the waking world. The physical laws of space and time have little authority in dreams. Thus, we have two distinct lives and they often do not coincide or agree, creating conundrums for the conscious subconscious and the unconscious aspects of the waking mind to contemplate.

Rudolf Steiner, the great spiritual scientist, helps us understand the nature and mechanisms of sleep, dreams, and death. He also gives indications on the psychological, mental, and psycho-kinetic aspects of the stages of dreams. He clearly describes the differences between the sleep and dreams of materialists compared to spiritual scientists (aspirants and initiates). Steiner has given us more information about sleep and dreams than modern science. These short quotes of Steiner demonstrate his insightfulness concerning these states of being. These short quotes can be found in a section below in their unedited form.

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Sleep is a great educator.

In deep sleep we experience unconsciously the spiritual aspect of our daily life.

The existing destiny of a person confronts his soul during sleep.

What rests in the depths of sleep was also the source of what preserved humanity's knowledge of the divine.

During the sleep state the astral body receives the images from the world about it. It lives there actually in the universe, separated from the physical and ether bodies, in the same universe out of which the entire human being is born. The astral body, during sleep, returns to its home and on awaking brings back with it renewed forces into life.

Hence, during the whole of our existence on Earth, the experiences of the Ego in sleep remain subconscious for ordinary consciousness, and even for Imaginative consciousness.

Dreams takes shape in order that certain tensions in the soul may be overcome.

The world of dream-pictures is really like a veil concealing the spiritual world. When we dream, we sink down into this spiritual reality.

In the life of dreams the soul is in the world of the Eternal, free from the body.

In dreams, a person experiences the spiritual world in such a way that as the result of the impact with the bodily constitution, sense-images take shape.

Dreams are a definite signpost to the spiritual world itself. The realm of dreams is an admonition to humanity to seek for the spiritual world.

Neither logic or moral judgment play any part at all in dreams. Dreams have a rule entirely different from that of ordinary logic. Moral judgment is silent in dreams.

In sleep we all live within the formative forces of the cosmos, within the cosmic thoughts; just as man is immersed when he jumps into water, so is everyone immersed, in sleep, in the formative forces of the cosmos.

Our life of soul from going to sleep to waking is, so to say, in a little planetary cosmos. Thus, during sleep man becomes in very truth a cosmic being.

From the time I go to sleep until I awaken, my soul will be in the spirit world to meet the higher being who guides me through this earthly life - the guiding genius of my life. When I awaken from this meeting, I will have felt the wafting of the wings of my genius that has touched my soul.

When we cross the Threshold to the spiritual world we are at once faced with three worlds. One might say that a person lives a philosophical life during the first stage of sleep, and in the second stage he lives a cosmological life, so, in the third stage, he lives a life of being permeated with divinity.

Dreams arises when the soul impacts the body. The dream is not experienced in the body, but it is caused by the impact of the soul with the body.

In dreams, the human being is not experiencing through the bodily constitution but through the spirit-and-soul.

Dreams lead us to recognize that they are like a window into the super-sensible world. Behind this window the Ego is actively weaving, and this weaving goes on from one earthly life to the next.

The dreams we have as we go to sleep, and the dreams we have just before waking, both draw on the experiences of the day, break them up and give them all sorts of fantastic forms.

In one kind of dream, we have pictures of experiences undergone in the outer world; in the other, pictorial representations of our own internal organs.

The difference between dream-consciousness and the waking state grows ever smaller and smaller. The dreamer becomes, in the fullest meaning of the word, awake in his dream-life. It must become possible for him during waking hours to recall quite consciously the beings he has observed in dreams.

The dream therefore points to deep subconscious and unconscious grounds of the life of soul. But the pictures unfolded by the dream are only a clothing of what is actually being experienced in the course of it.

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From the realm of night, the ancients received shared dreams, visions, and communications with higher worlds – sometimes called the realm of fairy, fantasy, visions, prophecy, dreams, and nightmares. Over long periods of time, individual tribes and kingdoms shared common dreams, fables, legends, myths, and spiritual insight that became a catechism of moral teachings. These stories are found in all traditional religions as fables, parables, and teachings that provide moral instruction and training. They often have cruel and violent elements to the stories and severe punishments for evil-doers. Animals, as symbols of the human astral body, often play the lead characters in these moral imaginations and exemplify exaggerated desires, and then suffer the consequences for the evil deeds. The ancient Indian *Jataka Tales* or *Aesop's Fables*, or *Grimm's Fairy Tales* are “made of such things as dreams.” These dream stories transcend space and time and directly encounter the divine moral world through the plot of the story and its outcome. Fairy tales take place in realms beyond space and time – “once upon a time”, and “if things have not changed, they are still there today”, create a realm beyond the limits of time and space that is transcendent. Through the catharsis of the characters in the story, the collective “group soul” instructs the individual about the path to moral development – a sort of moral collective unconsciousness rising into wakefulness.

Some dreams and fairy tales are a language of the spirit that was taught to our ancestors from the “Imaginal Realm” as a moral path of spiritual development.

What are often called “dreams” in today’s world are frequently confused with the “moral desires” of a person that arise from their personal hopes, visions, and longing for a beautiful future. These types of dreams, that can be the moral driving force throughout in entire life, are sometimes inspired by intuitions that arise in dreams, dreamless sleep, and trance states of consciousness during sleep. Once again, sleep delivers the teachings of the spiritual world, the moral world order that arises in a person through waking, dreaming, unconsciousness, and subconsciousness. Often, anyone but an aspirant on the road to initiation will not be able to tell whether their personal “dreams” for their life came from Day or Night consciousness, or a blend of the two. In other words, from sleep comes a dialogue with the divine, a transcendent experience in a realm other than the physical realm that seems to possess a higher moral consciousness, and a living conscience.

During sleep we contact another world, not a silly world of multiple dimensions, divergent time-lines, alternate universes, or aliens from another galaxy, but a world where our sacred, daily restoration takes place. For those who can “wake-up” in their dreams, dreamless sleep, and dreamless trance states of consciousness, it is a realm where you can meet and commune with higher hierarchical beings who live there. In the three realms of sleep and dreams we may contact Angels through Moral Imagination created through “living light” that is filled with wisdom and warmth. Through interactions with the Archangels we may unite with Moral Inspiration that sounds through the solar system’s harmony of the spheres. Through uniting with the Archai (Time Spirits) Moral Intuitions act with divine power of knowing through the creative Divine Word – the force of eternal creation raying in from the fixed stars. These three realms are usually closed to those who haven’t done the requisite preparation in moral training, mind control through refined thinking, and the development of a pure and stainless heart of selflessness.

Sleep is the little sister of death and, essentially, they share the same realms. During sleep and during death, the soul and spirit (astral & ego) expand outwards

into nine realms of being. Humans, at the current stage of evolution, only remember the first three generally; and even then, in a much-diminished replica of those realms. Materialists, who have no spiritual practice, cannot expand outward in all directions even to the realm of the Moon's sphere of activity. They are bound by their attachment to the material world and have developed no love for the spiritual beings who inhabit the higher realms. Thus, they can only rise to the lower levels of astral desire between the Earth and the Moon. This realm is sometimes referred to as the realm of hungry ghosts who eat the unsatiated desire of unwitting humans. Asuric beings feed from the Seven Deadly Sins as nourishment and Ahriman instills evil during sleep to help imprison humans in the physical world.

An Initiate, on the other hand, during sleep expands outwards through the first three realms of the Angels, Archangels, and Archai into the Sun realm (Christ) and the planetary spheres beyond: Mars, Jupiter, and Saturn. Reaching the "ring pass not", the rings of Saturn, the Initiate looks out to the sphere of the fixed stars in all directions and receives the blessings of the higher hierarchies of the Thrones, Cherubim, and Seraphim. Then, the Initiate turns and proceeds back thru all nine realms, including the Sun realm where the Kyriotetes, Dynamis, and Elohim work, into the lower stages of consciousness approaching the dream state again with the help of the Moon.

The path of the Initiate at night is the same path taken after death. After death, there are a few more steps to be taken but the nine realms are the same living realms of the hierarchy that an Initiate can experience with developed supersensible organs that understand the language of the spirit spoken at each level. An Initiate, through spiritual practices, can also cross the threshold between the physical and spiritual world consciously in prayer, meditation, and spiritual rituals. The aspirant is unconscious in these realms because they have little moral offerings to give to the hierarchical realms and thus cannot, in turn, be feed by the higher beings of the hierarchy while they pass through those realms. An Initiate offers moral thinking, feeling, and willing that has been consciously developed out of freedom and love through higher consciousness as food to the gods, and then the gods offer the nectar and ambrosia of heaven in return. This symbiotic spiritual relationship happens every night in sleep, and

between death and a new birth. Sleep is practice for death, and death is a birth into the spirit. For an Initiate, every deed is an opportunity for selfless love to flow through them to others from an endless source of moral, divine truth, beauty, goodness, and love. Thus, the Initiate can manifest the “threshold consciousness” that creates an opportunity to bring spirit into the physical world and moral human love into the spirit realms. This restorative nourishment of humanity and the hierarchy is the reason sleep can bring new life to the etheric body.

Materialistic science recognizes four “states” of sleep: Rapid Eye Movement (REM), and three Non-REM states (N1, N2, and N3). The state of REM happens at the beginning of the 90 minutes cycles of sleep and again between N2 and N3 and again before waking. The state of REM is when the sleeper dreams. Little is understood about these cycles or why dreams appear during REM.

Rudolf Steiner teaches, like most religions, that one should pray before sleep and review your day in reverse order with special emphasis on how your thinking, feeling, and willing affected others throughout the day. It is important to do this in reverse order from evening back to the morning. One must “re-perceive” one’s deeds with a concern for the karmic influences you created by your thoughts, feelings, and deeds. These three elements of reviewing of the day, to create a “clear conscience”, happen in the three realms Steiner describes in detail and are now called N1, N2, and N3. Rapid Eye Movement is directly connected to the recommended “review of the day” in reverse order. In other words, the aspirant to initiation is going through the Rapid Eye Movement memory that is part of decompression and integration into the whole being of thinking, feeling, and willing in these Non-REM states of N1, N2, and N3. These realms coincide with Steiner’s indications and illuminates the soul/spirit reality that N1 is the realm of Imagination and digests the thinking of the day, N2 is where Inspiration digests daily feelings, and N3 is where willpower and deeds are digested and integrated into the soul/spirit of the individual.

If aspirants faithfully reviews the day looking for the karmic influences that were created, then they help the spiritual hierarchy in those three realms of sleep to “pre-digest” the thinking, feeling, and willing of the day. Then, human

participation in karma and destiny becomes consciously evident and the aspirant is free to commune with higher beings and receive the gifts they wish to bestow on a soul/spirit that is acknowledging the work of the divine. The aspirant and Initiate become spiritual helpers in the process of Earthly and Cosmic nourishment, what Rudolf Steiner calls the “etherization of the blood.”

Rudolf Steiner has provided the most comprehensive understanding of sleep and dreams available. We have collected numerous quotations from Dr. Steiner’s different lecture cycles to illuminate his indications on these important areas of study and we provide them below to help you in your studies. But before we offer these wisdom-filled insights we would like to summarize what modern science has to say about sleep and dreams.

The Materialistic Scientific View of Sleep and Dreams

According to the current Earth-bound scientific understanding of sleep and dreams, sleep is divided into two broad types: Non-Rapid Eye Movement (non-REM or NREM) sleep, and Rapid Eye Movement (REM) sleep. Non-REM and REM sleep are so different that physiologists identify them as distinct behavioral states. Non-REM sleep occurs first and after a transitional period that is called slow-wave sleep or deep sleep. During this phase, body temperature and heart rate fall, and the brain uses less energy. REM sleep, also known as paradoxical sleep, represents a smaller portion of total sleep time. REM sleep is the main occasion for dreams (or nightmares), and is associated with desynchronized and fast brain waves, eye movements, loss of muscle tone, and suspension of homeostasis.

The sleep cycle of alternate NREM and REM sleep takes an average of 90 minutes, occurring 4 -6 times in a good night's sleep. The American Academy of Sleep Medicine (AASM) divides NREM into three stages: N1, N2, and N3, the last of which is also called delta sleep or slow-wave sleep. The whole period normally proceeds in the order: REM - N1 → N2 → N3 → N2 → REM. REM sleep also occurs as a person returns to stage 2 or 1 from a deep sleep. There is a greater

amount of deep sleep (stage N3) earlier in the night, while the proportion of REM sleep increases in the two cycles just before natural awakening.

Lack of sleep affects our memory and ability to think clearly, and sleep deprivation can lead to neurological dysfunction such as mood swings and hallucinations. Those who do not get enough sleep are at higher risk of developing obesity and cardiovascular disease. Sleep difficulties are associated with adverse effects on well-being, functioning, and quality of life. Lack of or altered sleep can disrupt family life, well-being, and the ability to care for others or oneself. Each phase and stage of sleep includes variations in muscle tone, brain wave patterns, and eye movements. The time spent in each sleep stage develops and changes as we age, with the consistent trend being that amounts of sleep decreases as individuals age.

Transitions between sleep and waking states are orchestrated by multiple brain structures, which include: the hypothalamus controls onset of sleep, the hippocampus controls memory active during dreaming, the amygdala controls the emotion center active during dreaming, the thalamus prevents sensory signals from reaching the cortex, the reticular formation regulates the transition between sleep and wakefulness, and the pons helps initiate REM sleep.

Approximately 75% of sleep is spent in the NREM stages, with the majority spent in the N2 stage. The first REM period is short, and, as the night progresses, longer periods of REM and decreased time in deep sleep (NREM) occur.

Beta waves are the highest frequency, lowest amplitude while Alpha waves are seen during quiet/relaxed wakefulness. The first stage is the waking stage which depends on whether the eyes are open or closed. During eye-open wakefulness, Beta waves predominate. As individuals become drowsy and close their eyes, Alpha waves become the predominant pattern.

N1 (Stage 1) - Light Sleep produces Theta waves at a low voltage. This is the lightest stage of sleep and begins when more than 50% of the Alpha waves are replaced with low-amplitude mixed-frequency (LAMF) activity. Muscle tone is

present in the skeletal muscle and breathing tends to occur at a regular rate. This stage lasts around 1 to 5 minutes, consisting of 5% of total sleep time.

N2 (Stage 2) - Deeper Sleep produces Sleep Spindles and K complexes. This stage represents deeper sleep as your heart rate and body temperature drop. It is characterized by the presence of Sleep Spindles, K-complexes, or both. Sleep spindles are brief, powerful bursts of neuronal firing in the superior temporal gyri, anterior cingulate, insular cortices, and thalamus inducing calcium influx into cortical pyramidal cells. This mechanism is believed to be integral to synaptic plasticity. Numerous studies suggest that Sleep Spindles play an important role in memory consolidation, specifically procedural and declarative memory. K-complexes are long Delta waves that last for approximately one second and are known to be the longest and most distinct of all brain waves. K-complexes have been shown to function in maintaining sleep and memory consolidation. Stage 2 sleep lasts around 25 minutes in the first cycle and lengthens with each successive cycle, eventually consisting of about 45% of total sleep. This stage of sleep is when teeth grinding occurs.

N3 (Stage 3) - Deepest Non-REM Sleep produces Delta waves with the lowest frequency and highest amplitude. N3 is also known as Slow-Wave Sleep (SWS). This is considered the deepest stage of sleep and is characterized by signals with much lower frequencies and higher amplitudes, known as Delta waves. This stage is the most difficult to awaken from, and, for some people, even loud noises will not awaken them. As people age, they tend to spend less time in this slow, Delta wave sleep and more time in stage N2 sleep. Although this stage has the greatest arousal threshold, if someone is awoken during this stage, they will have a transient phase of mental foginess, known as sleep inertia. This is the stage when the body repairs and regrows tissues, builds bone and muscle and strengthens the immune system. This is also the stage when sleepwalking, night terrors, and bedwetting occurs. It constitutes approximately 25% of total sleep time.

Rapid Eye Movement- REM produces Beta waves that are similar to brain waves during wakefulness. REM is associated with dreaming and is not considered a restful sleep stage. While the EEG is similar to an awake individual, the skeletal

muscles are atonic and without movement, except for the eyes and diaphragmatic breathing muscles, which remain active. However, the breathing rate becomes more erratic and irregular. This stage usually starts 90 minutes after you fall asleep, with each of your REM cycles getting longer throughout the night. The first period typically lasts 10 minutes, with the final one lasting up to an hour. It constitutes approximately 25% of total sleep time.

REM is associated with dreaming and irregular muscle movements as well as rapid movements of the eyes. During REM, a person is more difficult to arouse by sensory stimuli than during SWS. People tend to awaken spontaneously in the morning during an episode of REM sleep.

REM produces a loss of motor tone, increased brain oxygen use, increased and variable pulse and blood pressure, increased levels of acetylcholine. The brain is highly active throughout REM sleep, increasing brain metabolism by up to 20%.

The REM phase is also known as paradoxical sleep and sometimes desynchronized sleep or dreamy sleep, because of physiological similarities to waking states including rapid, low-voltage desynchronized brain waves. Electrical and chemical activity regulating this phase seems to originate in the brain stem and is characterized most notably by an abundance of the neurotransmitter acetylcholine, combined with a nearly complete absence of monoamine neurotransmitters histamine, serotonin and norepinephrine. Experiences of REM sleep are not transferred to permanent memory due to absence of norepinephrine.

The transition to REM sleep brings marked physical changes, beginning with electrical bursts called "ponto-geniculo-occipital waves" (PGO waves) originating in the brain stem. Organisms in REM sleep suspend central homeostasis, allowing large fluctuations in respiration, thermoregulation and circulation which do not occur in any other modes of sleeping or waking. During REM, the body abruptly loses muscle tone, a state known as REM atonia.

The most pronounced physiological changes in sleep occur in the brain. The brain uses significantly less energy during sleep than it does when awake, especially during non-REM sleep. In areas with reduced activity, the brain restores its

supply of adenosine triphosphate (ATP), the molecule used for short-term storage and transport of energy. In quiet waking, the brain is responsible for 20% of the body's energy use, thus this reduction has a noticeable effect on overall energy consumption. During slow-wave sleep, humans secrete bursts of growth hormone. All sleep, even during the day, is associated with the secretion of prolactin.

Key physiological methods for monitoring and measuring changes during sleep include electroencephalography (EEG) of brain waves, electrooculography (EOG) of eye movements, and electromyography (EMG) of skeletal muscle activity. Simultaneous collection of these measurements is called polysomnography and can be performed in a specialized sleep laboratory. Sleep researchers also use simplified electrocardiography (EKG) for cardiac activity and actigraphy for motor movements. The electrical activity seen on an EEG represents brain waves. The amplitude of EEG waves at a particular frequency corresponds to various points in the sleep-wake cycle, such as being asleep, being awake, or falling asleep. Alpha, beta, theta, gamma, and delta waves are all seen in the different stages of sleep. Each waveform maintains a different frequency and amplitude depending on the sleep state.

The Nature of Sleep and Dreams According to Rudolf Steiner

All quotations are from the work of Dr. Rudolf Steiner. The initial group of shorter quotes can be found in their complete form, along with citations, in the section below them.

Dr. Steiner has told us:

When we have gone to sleep, and the sense-perceptions have been gradually paralyzed and the will-impulses have ceased to work, we experience in the first place an undifferentiated condition of soul, comparable with swimming - space is almost completely wiped out. The soul feels as if it were like a wave in a great sea. An experience of being forsaken and alone or sinking into an abyss, hovering over an abyss as it were, fills the soul. However, a general sense of time persists.

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During the first stage of sleep, subject and object cannot at first be distinguished. Night brings, at a certain stage of sleep, anxiety. Into this anxiety must flow power man has gained from religious or similar experience on the day before, then a reviving and refreshing force streams into the organism for the new day that follows.

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Inspired Knowledge leads us to see how this inner life of night-time is connected with an unfolding of inner forces, comparable with the unfolding of the forces of breathing and of circulation and is a copy of the planetary movements of our system. We are inserted into something which is a copy, so to speak in miniature, of our planetary cosmos or rather of its movements. Our life of soul from going to sleep to waking is, so to say, in a little planetary cosmos.

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Whoever enters in a right and living way into an experience of the Mystery of Golgotha will have Christ for his strong guide in the moment when his soul comes into the realm of anxiety during the time between going to sleep and waking.

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He now lives in the third stage of sleep in the constellations, or rather in copies of the constellations, of the fixed stars of the zodiac. Thus, during sleep man becomes in very truth a cosmic being. When through Intuition we attain to a knowledge of the experience of the fixed stars, then we learn at the same time that the forces which lead man back again into the physical organism are Moon forces.

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The initiative man is able to carry in his powers of ideation, and of feeling, and thought during day-waking life is an after-effect of the experience of the fixed stars during the night, whilst the powers of combination he is able to carry in them, the powers of wisdom and cleverness, are an after-effect of the planetary experience. The experience of the fixed stars shoots into our life of day by way of the metabolism of food. The whole process of metabolism is fired by what we experience at night in connection with the stars. Nor would we be able to think intelligently unless we received into our breathing and blood-circulation during the day the after-effects of the planetary experience of the night.

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To be sure, we are not spread out into the entire planetary cosmos, but we are of extraordinary size while expanding outwards, compared with our physical size in the daytime.

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It is a fact that, during the night, every human being first experiences an etheric preliminary state of cosmic anxiety and longing for the Divine, then a planetary state, as he feels the facsimiles of the planetary movements in his astral body, and he has the experience of the fixed stars in that he feels — or would feel if he were conscious — that he experiences his own soul-spiritual inner self as a facsimile of the heavens, of the fixed stars.

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It is the lunar forces which again and again return him, when he wakes, to his physical body. The moon is connected in general with all that brings the human being from his spiritual life into the physical life.

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This shows you that, whereas the human being in the sleep state experiences as his inner nature merely facsimiles of the planetary world, the world of the fixed stars, he now passes through these worlds in their reality between death and a new birth. He passes through these worlds; they become his inner nature.

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That which leaves us during sleep and returns on awakening consist of the actualized judgments of our moral deeds. If I have accomplished a good deed during the day, its effect is reflected in my sleep body within the spirit-soul substance that leaves me during sleep. My moral quality lives within this. And, when the human being passes through the Portal of Death, he takes with him his whole actualized moral evaluation.

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During the first stage of sleep, one is a purely spiritual being yearning for the Divine. In the second stage of sleep man experiences a reflection of the movements of the planets, and how, for one who has already a relation to the Mystery of Golgotha, Christ then appears, to be his Guide through the otherwise chaotic experiences that come to him while he is living his way through a kind of reproduction or copy of the life of the stars and the planets.

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Between falling asleep and awakening, man actually covers the whole cosmic existence beyond the Earth. We leave behind us our religious feeling and our moral feeling, we leave them behind with the physical and with the ether-body, and our soul and spirit live as an a-moral being during the time of sleep.

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We are living during this time in a world that has been irradiated by the light of the Sun. This means that the moral ordering of the world has gone out of the ether. Consequently, the Ahrimanic Being has access to the ether in which we find ourselves as soon as we fall asleep. And this Ahrimanic Being speaks to man while he is asleep. And what he says is most mischievous, for he is rightly called the father of lies; he makes good appear bad to the sleeping human being and bad good. Ahriman makes evil appear good.

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The man of olden time passed into the group-soul when he fell asleep; and when he awoke and returned to his physical and to his etheric body, he brought with him a strong feeling of belonging to his group.

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Inasmuch as the Ego is well inside the sympathetic system and the astral body well inside the spinal system during sleep, man with respect to his sympathetic and his spinal nervous system is awake in his sleep and asleep in his waking life.

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During sleep, therefore, he enters right into the things that in waking life show him only their outer side. But it is only what is experienced by the astral organization, when outside the physical and etheric bodies, that can be brought back into the thoughts of the etheric body, not what is experienced out there by the Ego. Hence, during the whole of our existence on Earth, the experiences of the Ego in sleep remain subconscious for ordinary consciousness, and even for Imaginative consciousness. They are revealed only to Inspired consciousness.

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In sleep a man gathers up sufficient strength to imprint on the etheric body those experiences that can be put into thoughts. But during his life on Earth he lacks the power to deal with the wishes and desires which during sleep are experienced by the Ego in connection with earthly affairs — for these also are gone over during sleep. In our epoch, therefore, only the part of sleep-life that can

be transformed into thoughts, imprinted in thoughts, passes over into the conscious waking life of earthly men; while the sleep-experiences of the Ego lie hidden behind the veil of existence.

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Between waking and sleeping we are left to form our own opinions about ourselves. As I have sufficiently shown during these lectures, the spiritual content of the Cosmos takes the moral as its natural law, and what the Cosmos has to say about our true nature and our actions is experienced by the Ego during sleep.

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Whereas by day you go through your experiences — leaving short sleeps aside — from morning to evening, during the night, in sleep, you live through these experiences backwards — from evening to morning. This is in order that we may experience whatever the spiritual Cosmos has to say about the way we have lived through the day.

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Just as thoughts and ideas are for the waking consciousness the clearest and most definite things of all, while feeling is darker and really a kind of dreaming, and willing the condition of the greatest insensibility — as it were a kind of sleep — so we have these three degrees of the sleeping consciousness. We have the sleep in which ordinary consciousness experiences the dream and a higher clairvoyant consciousness the cosmic thoughts; we have the second state of sleep which for the ordinary consciousness remains hidden, but so appears to the consciousness of Inspiration that everywhere the deeds of divine, spiritual beings are revealed; and we have the third state of sleep, which to intuitional consciousness is life within the divine, spiritual beings themselves.

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True and genuine love for human beings during the waking state leads us, during sleep, to the bosom of the Archai. And there, while the Ego is resting in the bosom of these Beings, karma or destiny is shaped. Karma is woven by the Ego during the period of sleep with the help of the Archai.

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When that which we bring out of sleep into the body lights up as the voice of conscience, there is working, in this voice, all that has been bestowed by the Hierarchy of the Exusiai and Kyriotetes.

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From out of sleep, Exusiai, Dynamis, Kyriotetes bear as moral power into our bodily nature what we grasp in thoughts: Seraphim, Cherubim and Thrones bear this out into the universe, so that our own moral forces become world-creative forces.

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At the first stage of clairvoyance, greater order enters into dreams; man sees marvelous forms and hears words that are pregnant with meaning. At the second stage of clairvoyance, dreams become precise and clear. To attain the third stage of Devachan, thought must be freed from bondage to the things of the physical world. Man can then live consciously in the world of thought, quite independently of the actual content of thought.

Selections from Rudolf Steiner's Works

Spiritual Relationships in the Human Organism, The Experiences of Sleep and their Spiritual Background, Stuttgart, October 9, 1922, GA 218

When a man goes to sleep, you know how in the moment of doing so the consciousness, already growing vague and indistinct, is often confused by dreams. This dream-world can, to begin with, help us very little indeed towards a knowledge of the life of the soul. For all we can know about dreams in daytime consciousness with the ordinary means of knowledge remains something that is quite external. Dreams are obviously not things upon which we can build in a sure and well-defined way, until we have a knowledge about sleep itself by some other means. He who truly acquires a knowledge of the condition of sleep knows very well that dreams are, in reality, misleading rather than enlightening. **What the soul experiences in sleep it experiences unconsciously. But now, since I am going to place a picture of it before you arising from Imaginative, Inspired and Intuitive Knowledge, I must portray it as if it were experienced consciously.** I shall have to describe to you the experiences of the soul from going to sleep to waking as if they were experienced

in consciousness. They are not; nevertheless, what I describe is truly experienced by the soul, although without knowing anything of it.

When we have gone to sleep, and the sense-perceptions have been gradually paralyzed and the will-impulses have ceased to work, we experience in the first place an undifferentiated condition of soul. In this undefined experience a strong sense of time is present, but all feeling of **space is almost completely wiped out.** It is an experience that is **comparable with swimming;** we are, so to speak, moving about in a general, indefinite world-substance.

One might say, **the soul feels as if it were like a wave in a great sea,** a wave that is organized within itself and yet feels itself surrounded on every hand by the sea and affected by the influences of the sea much as during the life of day the soul is affected by impressions of color, tone or warmth, perceiving them in a quite definite and differentiated manner. In the life of day, you feel yourself as a human being enclosed within your skin and having a definite **position in space.** In the moment that follows the going to sleep, you feel like a wave in a universal sea; you feel yourself now here, now there; as I said, the definite sense of space ceases. **A general sense of time, however, persists.**

And now a still further experience is united with this one. **A tremendous need for the support of the spiritual makes itself felt in the soul,** a great need and longing to be united with the spiritual. In the universal sea in which one is swimming, one has, as it were, **lost that feeling of security which comes from being in contact with the material things of the world of our waking hours.** Hence one feels — one would feel, that is, if the condition were conscious — **a deep yearning to be united with the divine and spiritual.** And one may say too that this experience of movement in an undifferentiated world-substance carries with it the sense of being concealed and protected within divine-spiritual reality.

During sleep one enters in an intensely real and living way into the undefined existence I have described; nor would he ever in the waking state come to a feeling of God, were it not that he has experienced the corresponding fact in the

first stage of sleep. **We owe to sleep something that has untold significance for our deep inner nature as human beings.**

But now this experience is united with another, namely, **an experience of being forsaken and alone.** It is like **sinking into an abyss.** If a man were to experience consciously this first stage of sleep without right preparation, he would in truth be exposed to great risk, for he would find it quite unbearable **to lose in this way almost all sense of space and live merely in a general, universal feeling of time,** to feel himself in this vague way merely a part of a universal sea of substance, where scarcely anything is distinguishable — **where indeed the only thing one can distinguish is that one is a self within a universal world-existence.** If consciousness were present, one would actually have the sensation of **hovering over an abyss.**

In the past, power came to people with the impulses they received from the Mystery-centers, and they were able to carry out of ordinary day life into the life of night, into the life of sleep, the strength to hold their own against the anxiety described above. The anxiety rose up out of the depths of the life of sleep. If a person was to have power to bring away with them out of this anxiety not general fatigue or exhaustion or the like, but instead a freshness of his whole organism, then **he had to acquire that power on the previous day during the waking life.**

Such is the connection between day and night. Night brings, at a certain stage of sleep, anxiety. Into this anxiety must flow power man has gained from religious or similar experience on the day before; and when these two things come together and unite — the power remaining over from the day before and the new and original experience of the night — **then a reviving and refreshing force streams into the organism for the new day that follows.**

The experience of the soul during sleep is not attached in any way to the senses, nevertheless it too is a well-defined inner life that can also be referred to something, in the same way that the inner life of day can be referred to the life of breathing and the life of circulation. **Inspired Knowledge leads us to see**

how this inner life of night-time is connected with an unfolding of inner forces, comparable with the unfolding of the forces of breathing and of circulation, and is a copy of the planetary movements of our system. Note well, I do not say that every night from going to sleep until waking we are ourselves within, or united with, the movements of the planets, but that **we are inserted into something which is a copy, so to speak in miniature, of our planetary cosmos or rather of its movements.** Then we must say for the night-time: there revolves in us a copy of the movement of Mercury, of the movement of Venus, of the movement of Jupiter. **Our life of soul from going to sleep to waking is, so to say, in a little planetary cosmos.**

Whoever enters in a right and living way into an experience of the Mystery of Golgotha **will have Christ for his strong guide in the moment when his soul comes into the realm of anxiety during the time between going to sleep and waking.** Thus, the humanity of modern times has through the Christ-experience what an older humanity had from the Mysteries.

Having lived during the second stage of sleep in the copy of the planetary movements, he now lives in the constellations, or rather in copies of the constellations, of the fixed stars of the zodiac. This experience is a very real fact during the **third stage** of the life of man by night. He begins then also to experience the difference between the Sun as a planet and as a fixed star.

During the second stage of sleep the Sun has actually, in this experience, planetary qualities; we learn to know the conspicuous and distinct relation in which it stands to the whole life of man on Earth. **In the third stage we learn to know the Sun in its constellation in relation to the other constellations of the stars,** for example, of the zodiac.

We owe it to the experience of the planets that our breathing process and circulatory process are, if I may so express it, 'enfired;' but in order for these processes to be permeated, as they need to be, with substance, in order that they may be continually carrying the means of nourishment to the whole of the

organism, they require the stimulation that is given by the experience of the fixed stars. **Thus, during sleep man becomes in very truth a cosmic being.** This third stage of sleep is the deepest of all. **When through Intuition we attain to a knowledge of the experience of the fixed stars, then we learn at the same time that the forces which lead man back again into the physical organism are Moon forces.** The deepest point is reached in the third stage of sleep, and we are then led back stage by stage by the Moon forces, which are always intimately connected with the bringing into the physical world of soul-and-spirit.

It is a fact that the initiative man is able to carry in his powers of ideation, and of feeling, and thought during day-waking life is an after-effect of the experience of the fixed stars during the night, whilst the powers of combination he is able to carry in them, the powers of wisdom and cleverness, are an after-effect of the planetary experience. That which rays into the life of day from the cosmos, coming from the experience of the night, is obliged however to enter by way of the body. **The experience of the fixed stars shoots into our life of day by way of the metabolism of food.** Our food would not enter our head in such a way as to enable us to unfold powers of initiative, were it not that **the whole process of metabolism is fired by what we experience at night in connection with the stars. Nor would we be able to think intelligently unless we received into our breathing and blood-circulation during the day the after-effects of the planetary experience of the night.**

A true understanding of the human being is alone possible when we become conscious in the widest sense of the fact that man lives not only in his physical body within his skin, but in the whole world. This life in the whole world is concealed from ordinary consciousness only because it is very much dulled and dimmed for the waking life of day. At most we can say that in the general sensation and experience of light we have something of an after-working of our share in the being of a universal cosmos. And there are perhaps other feelings, very dull and dim, wherein man has something left between waking and going to sleep of that sense of being within the cosmos. **All such feelings, however, that are given to man remain silent within him by day in order that he**

may unfold his individual consciousness, in order that he may not be disturbed by whatever plays into his experience from the Cosmos.

During the night the case is reversed. There man has a cosmic experience. True, it is a copy only, but it is a faithful copy, as I have indicated. By night man has, in reality, a cosmic experience and because he must pass through this cosmic experience, therefore is his day-consciousness darkened and paralyzed.

***The Concealed Aspects of Human Existence and the Christ Impulse,*
*The Hague, November 5, 1922, GA 218***

After the transition through dreams — as I intimated before — man passes, as regards the normal consciousness, into unconsciousness. **But the reality of this unconscious state, as it manifests itself to the higher, supersensible knowledge,** is that, directly after falling asleep, man enters into a sort of contourless existence. If he should realize his condition consciously, he would feel himself **poured out into an etheric realm. He would feel himself outside of his body, not limited, however, but widely diffused;** he would sense or observe his body as some object outside of himself. If this condition should become conscious, it would be filled, as regards man's soul nature, with a certain inner anxiety or uneasiness. **He feels that he has lost the firm support of the body, as though he stood before an abyss.**

This objective element of a soul-spirit anxiety man experiences while he enters through the portal of sleep into the sleep state. But with the feeling of anxiety something else is connected: a feeling of **deep longing for a Divine-Spiritual Reality that streams and weaves through the cosmos.**

If sleep continues, something peculiar occurs; **the soul exists as though split, as though split up into many souls.** If the human being should experience this condition consciously — which only the modern initiate can completely behold — he would have the sensation of being many souls and consequently think that he had lost himself. Every one of these soul beings, which really are merely shadowy images of souls, represents something in which he has lost himself.

Through the after-effect of a religious mood, the soul has sufficient strength to bear the sensation of being split.

In order to possess health during the waking hours of the day, **it is essential that we carry into our sleep life the feeling of our unity with the divine-spiritual Beings, in whose realm of activity we immerse the eternal kernel of our own being. And it is only by a right existence within a spirit-soul world between falling asleep and awakening that we can produce the right and health-bringing forces of a spirit-soul element, so necessary for our waking life.**

During this second stage of sleep, the human being acquires not a cosmic consciousness, but a cosmic experience in lieu of the ordinary physical consciousness. As stated before, only the initiate goes through this cosmic experience consciously, but everyone has this experience in the night between falling asleep and waking up. **And in this second stage of sleep the human being is in such a state of life that his inner nature carries out imitations of the planetary movements of our solar system.** During the day we experience ourselves in our physical body. When we speak of ourselves as physical human beings, we say that inside of us are our lungs, our heart, our stomach, our brain, etc. ... this constitutes our physical inner nature. In the second stage of sleep the movement of Venus, of Mercury, of the sun, and of the moon constitute our inner spirit-soul nature. This whole reciprocal action of the planetary movements of our solar system, we do not bear it directly within us, not the planetary movements themselves; but facsimiles, astral facsimiles of them then constitute our inner organism. **To be sure, we are not spread out into the entire planetary cosmos, but we are of extraordinary size, compared with our physical size in the daytime.** We do not bear within us the real Venus each time that we are in the state of sleep, but a facsimile of its movement. In the second stage of sleep, between falling asleep and awakening, that which occurs in the spirit-soul part of our being consists of these **circulations of the planetary movements in astral substance, just as our blood circulates through our physical organism during the day, stimulated by the movement of breathing.** Thus, through the night we have circulating within us as our inner life, so to speak, a facsimile of our cosmos.

After this experience, we enter the third stage of sleep. In this third stage we have an additional experience — of course, the experiences of the preceding stage always remains and the experiences of the next stage are added thereto — in the third stage is included, what I should like to call the experience of the fixed stars. **After experiencing the circulation of the planetary facsimiles, we actually experience the formations of the fixed stars, that which in former times, for instance, was called the images of the Zodiac.** And this experience is essential to the soul aspect of the human being, because **he has to carry the after-effect of this experience with the fixed stars into his waking life in order to have the strength at all to control and vitalize his physical organism at all times through his soul.**

It is a fact that, during the night, every human being first experiences an etheric preliminary state of cosmic anxiety and longing for the Divine, then a planetary state, as he feels the facsimiles of the planetary movements in his astral body, and he has the experience of the fixed stars in that he feels — or would feel if he were conscious — that he experiences his own soul-spiritual inner self as a facsimile of the heavens, of the fixed stars.

While all other planetary and fixed star forces actually draw the human being out of his physical body, **it is the lunar forces which again and again return him, when he wakes, to his physical body. The moon is connected in general with all that brings the human being from his spiritual life into the physical life.** It, therefore, makes no difference — the physical constellation is not the thing to be considered, although a certain significance attaches thereto — whether we have to do with new moon, full moon, the first or last quarter of the moon; in the spiritual world the moon is always present. It is the lunar forces which lead the human being back into the physical world, into his physical body.

This shows you that, whereas the human being in the sleep state experiences as his inner nature merely facsimiles of the planetary world, the world of the fixed stars, he now passes through these

worlds in their reality between death and a new birth. He passes through these worlds; they become his inner nature. And it is always the lunar forces which bring us back to the earth. They differ essentially from all other stellar forces in this respect, in that they bring us back to the earth. In the sleep state they bring us back to the earth; they bring us back also after we have experienced all that I have briefly described, in order to enter once more a life course on the earth.

But let us consider once again that which is there outside of the physical body, in the form of astral body and ego organization, between falling asleep and awakening. It is not fabricated from physical bones and physical blood; it is a spirit-soul entity. But **our whole moral intrinsic quality is woven into it.** Just as we consist, when awake, of bones, blood, and nerves, so does **that which leaves us during sleep and returns on awakening consist of the actualized judgments of our moral deeds. If I have accomplished a good deed during the day, its effect is reflected in my sleep body within the spirit-soul substance that leaves me during sleep. My moral quality lives within this. And, when the human being passes through the Portal of Death, he takes with him his whole actualized moral evaluation.** It is a fact that, between birth and death in the earthly life, the human being creates within himself a **second being.** This second human being, who leaves the body every night, is the result of our moral or immoral life, and we take it with us through the Portal of Death.

Planetary Spheres and their Influence on Man's Life on Earth and in the Spiritual Worlds, Lecture IV, Life in the Spiritual Spheres and the Return to Earth, London, November 12, 1922, GA 218

When man passes from day-consciousness into sleep-consciousness — which is for the man of the present time unconsciousness — he is not in his physical body, nor in his etheric body. **During sleep he is a purely spiritual being.**

You will remember how **in sleep man goes out into the cosmic ether and feeling himself in the midst of a vast and vague unknown is at first**

overcome with anxiety and apprehension; then you will also remember how in this moment something awakens in the soul which one can call — borrowing the expression from conscious life — **a yearning for the Divine.** And we went on to speak of how **in the second stage of sleep man experiences a reflection of the movements of the planets, and how, for one who has already a relation to the Mystery of Golgotha, Christ then appears, to be his Guide through the otherwise chaotic experiences that come to him while he is living his way through a kind of reproduction or copy of the life of the stars and the planets.** For now comes the experience of the fixed stars. Man goes forth, from the planetary spheres — we mean of course the copy of the planetary spheres — **and enters upon an experience of the constellations of the fixed stars. So that between falling asleep and awaking, man covers the whole cosmic existence beyond the Earth.** I told you moreover that it is the forces of the Moon (the spiritual counterpart of what reveals itself to us in the various lunar phenomena) that bring man back again in the morning — or whenever he wakes up — bring him back into his physical and into his etheric body.

And when we fall asleep and leave our physical and etheric bodies, then we take with us what we have acquired in this way during waking hours on Earth by beholding Nature; but strange as it may sound, **we leave behind us our religious feeling and our moral feeling, we leave them behind with the physical and with the ether-body, and our soul and spirit live as an a-moral being during the time of sleep.**

This has an important consequence for us. **We are living during this time in a world that has been irradiated by the light of the Sun. This means that the moral ordering of the world has gone out of the ether. Consequently, the Ahrimanic Being has access to the ether in which we find ourselves as soon as we fall asleep. And this Ahrimanic Being speaks to man while he is asleep. And what he says is most mischievous, for he is rightly called the father of lies; he makes good appear bad to the sleeping human being and bad good.**

In the case of a highly conscientious and devout man, who has a fine moral feeling, his moral sensibility enters so deeply into his soul that he takes it with him into sleep; with the result that he sleeps badly, believing as he does that he has been guilty of many misdeeds. A bad man, on the other hand, whose moral sensibility is very little developed, will carry with him into sleep no such **pangs of conscience**, — and this will mean of course at the same time that he will have, spiritually speaking, **an open ear for the whisperings of Ahriman who makes evil appear good**.

The enticement to evil to which man is exposed during sleep is, in truth, exceedingly great, and it can easily happen that in the morning he brings over with him from sleep terrible demonic forces of temptation. Only when he has come down again into his physical and etheric body, will a man who is not very good and upright begin to feel pricks of conscience, — not before. There is thus abundant possibility for, man to fall a victim to Ahriman during the time of sleep.

Yes, **sleep is a great educator**, more than you would think; on the one hand it educates man, it is true, in evil, as we have seen; but on the other hand, it educates him in democracy. **The man of olden time passed into the group-soul when he fell asleep; and when he awoke and returned to his physical and to his etheric body, he brought with him a strong feeling of belonging to his group.**

Man, of course, carries in him all the time the part of his nature that is exposed in sleep at the present day to the temptations of demonic forces, he has it in him continuously. Only, when he is awake, he has to let it merge into the moral and religious consciousness. The religious side of man is given to him, as we saw, by the powers that live with him in his physical body, and the moral side by the powers that live with him in his ether-body.

Philosophy, Cosmology and Religion, Section 5, The Soul's Experiences in Sleep, Dornach, September 10, 1922, GA 215

For ordinary consciousness the phenomena of sleep appear as follows: sense perception begins to dim down, in the end it is entirely extinguished; the same also happens in the case of thinking, feeling and willing. Except for the transitional state when we are dreaming, man sinks into an unconscious condition. But what happens to the soul then — and this must be strongly emphasized — is something absolutely real. What remains unconscious to ordinary consciousness in this respect can be illuminated by imaginative, inspired and intuitive cognition. Therefore, I will describe for you the soul's experiences during sleep. At least sketchily, I will describe how imagination, inspiration and intuition can perceive what, for ordinary consciousness, is unconscious. I will outline the soul's experiences as if they were lived through consciously, for they are experienced consciously through higher cognition. It is not as if the soul were unconscious throughout the night, but what would otherwise have remained unconscious can be seen by means of imagination, inspiration and intuition. Light can in this way be cast upon it so that it becomes visible. The following then comes into view.

When man first enters into the state of sleep, the sense world around him ceases to exist for the soul. He goes into an inner experience that is undifferentiated, in a certain sense indefinite. The soul feels — I say feels but it does not feel; if it were conscious, it would feel — it feels enlarged as in a widespread fog. In this inward feeling and experiencing **during this first stage of sleep subject and object cannot at first be distinguished**. No separate phenomena and facts are distinguishable; it is a general sensing of a nebulous universality, which is sensed as one's own existence. But simultaneously there appears in the sleeping person what may be called a deep need to rest in the divine essence of the cosmos. With this outflowing of experience into an undifferentiated condition is mixed an indefinite longing — one must use such a word after all — “to rest in God. “As I said, I describe it as if the events, experienced unconsciously, were passed through consciously. Thus, the external world of daytime, everything the soul receives through the senses, is swallowed up. All the stimuli through which the soul feels in the body are gone and, likewise, all the impulses by means of which

the soul sends its will through the body are gone. The soul has at first a general, universal sensation accompanied by a longing for God.

In this condition, which arises initially after falling asleep, dreams can intervene. They are either symbolic pictures of outer experiences, memory pictures, symbolic images of inner bodily conditions, and so on, or they are dreams in which certain true facts of the spiritual world can be intermingled without the ordinary dreamer being able to acquire a definite knowledge of what the dreams really contain. Even for one who views this condition of soul with imaginative cognition — for by means of it one can do this already — dreams do not throw light upon the inner facts, rather do they veil the real truth. For this truth, in relation to what is meant here, can only be perceived by a person, if, out of his own free will, he prepares himself in an appropriate manner through soul exercises such as have been described here. Only as a result of these soul exercises can a clear view of this first stage of sleep be attained.

If you look with such cognitional faculties into this first stage of sleep, when you can divine it, it shows itself to be similar to, but not exactly the same as the unconscious experiences of earliest childhood. Indeed, if man were in a position to bring these experiences to consciousness and pour them into the concepts and ideas of ordinary consciousness, such as philosophy is occupied with, then these philosophical ideas would attain reality. The philosophy to which we should thus attain would be something real. So, it can also be said that in the first stage of every sleep man becomes an unconscious philosopher. He attains to what in waking consciousness is cultivated in his soul as ideas, as dialectics and logical laws. If the flowing into the cosmic mists of the etheric world and the soul's longing to rest in God could be permeated with the experience of actuality, if man could bring these two soul experiences to consciousness and pour them into abstract philosophical ideas, then these ideas would come alive. Philosophy would then be as it was in Greece before Socrates, and in still earlier epochs of humanity. It would be an inwardly experienced reality.

We have now learned to know two stages of man's unfolding: that of his earliest childhood, which, if brought to consciousness, would represent the reality of philosophical ideas and the experience of the first stage of sleep, which, as we

have noted, is quite similar to the unconscious experience of childhood, and which, when brought to consciousness, could in the same way give a living experience of reality to a philosophy worked out during waking life. That describes the first, somewhat brief stages that a human being undergoes from the time of falling asleep to waking up.

After the soul has been for a time in the state of sleep described above, another condition sets in. **This second stage of sleep is such that instead of the experience of his own physical and etheric bodies, which he has when awake, man has a form of experience through which he feels inside himself the cosmos that in daytime surrounds him.** While in the first stage the soul experiences no clear distinction between subject and object, this difference now becomes increasingly meaningful except that during sleep man has come into the reverse condition from that of being awake. He now feels and experiences himself in the cosmos and looks back on his physical and etheric organisms as upon an object. Just as he vaguely feels his organs — lungs, liver, heart, and so on — in day consciousness, now, in sleep, he experiences the cosmic content within himself; he himself becomes, as it were, cosmos in his soul. Not as if he extended out into the whole cosmos; rather, he experiences something like a reflection of the cosmos within him.

The first unconscious experience — which even so is wholly real — is, I might say, a fragmentation of this inner soul experience. The soul feels as if it were divided up into many separate parts of a manifoldness. It feels itself not as a unity but as a multiplicity; as if, when awake, we were to experience ourselves in the brain not as a homogeneous being but as a multiplicity of eyes, ears, lungs, liver and so on, and we were missing the sense of unity. **Thus, during sleep, we experience, so to say, the cosmic ingredients without at first experiencing their unity. That brings about a condition of soul which, if we were conscious of it, we should have to describe as permeated by anxiety, even fear.** The soul, however, really experiences the objective processes that cause this nightly anxiety, just as the organic processes of the physical and etheric organisms underlie what might be experienced here or there by the soul as anxiety coming from within. They are, in fact, fear-inspiring occurrences that the soul has to live through.

In this stage of sleep, occurrences of waking life now reveal their effects. For modern man living after the Mystery of Golgotha there appear the after-effects of what he experiences in waking life as inner religious devotion to Christ and the Mystery of Golgotha. The attention man gives to it, all reverence and worship that he develops for the Christ and that Mystery during his waking life, have after-effects in this second stage of sleep. It was otherwise for those who lived on earth before the Mystery of Golgotha. They received from their religious leaders appropriate measures, religious functions to carry out, whose effects they could carry over into sleep and that worked there in such a way that this anxiety could gradually be overcome. For a person living after the Mystery of Golgotha his inner bond with Christ, his feeling of belonging to Him, the religious rituals directed to Christ Jesus, his whole relation to Him and his actual conduct in reference to this relationship, all this now works into the life of sleep and helps to overcome that anxiety which oppresses the soul.

If, in daytime, we have developed a relation to the Christ, we actually meet His guiding power during this second stage of sleep. It is this guiding power of Christ through which we overcome the anxiety that oppresses the soul. Out of this anxiety there develops a cosmic relationship of the soul to the world. As a result of the development of this relationship, but in such a way that the soul experiences it as its inner life, the movements of the planetary system in our solar cosmos stand before the soul. It does not expand out into the planetary world during sleep, but an inner replica of it lives in the soul. It actually experiences the planetary cosmos in a replica. Even if what the soul experiences every night as a small, inner globe, a celestial globe, does not illuminate day consciousness, it does stream into the reality of daily life and continues on in the physical and etheric organizations in the systems of breathing and blood circulation, the whole rhythmic system, we find that these processes are accompanied by impulses and stimuli that live in the physical and the etheric body and work into waking life out of the inner planetary experience which the soul has in sleep. **While we are awake, therefore, the planetary movements of our solar system pulse through our breathing and circulation as after-effects of sleep.**

During sleep — supersensible vision shows us that astral and ego organizations are outside the physical and etheric bodies — the planetary movements do not work directly. They are experienced by the soul outside the physical and etheric organisms. But within the sleeping physical body the impulses from the previous night echo and reverberate, the same impulses that have pulsed through breathing and circulation during the day. During the following night an after-effect of these impulses is present, and they are renewed the next morning as a consequence of what the soul experienced in the night as an inner replica of the planetary cosmos.

Now in addition to this cosmic experience during the second stage of sleep something else happens. The soul receives distinct impressions of all the relationships it has ever entertained with human souls in its various lives on earth. **We actually have within us, I might say, “markings” of all the relationships we have had with other human souls in successive earth lives. They now appear before the soul in a certain pictorial form.** Although unconsciously, the soul really experiences everything that has been good or bad in its dealings with other people. Likewise, it experiences its developing relationships with spiritual beings who dwell in the cosmos and never live in a physical body, who always live in a super-sensible existence as opposed to the physical life of man. **The human soul in sleep thus lives in a rich network of relations with those human souls with whom it has established such connections.** These connections reappear, as does everything that has remained from them as after-effects of the right and wrong a person has done to others, the good and evil he may have caused. **In short, the existing destiny of a person confronts his soul in this stage of sleep.**

What an older philosophy has called karma appears at this stage every night before man's soul. Since the planetary experiences continue to work as stimuli in the breathing and blood circulation, and thus in man's physical and etheric organizations, it is possible for someone capable of perceiving such things through inspired cognition to observe that this experience of repeated earth lives also plays over into day consciousness, even though it is not directly present. It is clearly evident to inspired cognition, which perceives what the soul experiences, that repeated earth lives are a fact, for to the view of inspiration they present

themselves directly together with the relationships established at any time with other people. Man's development through repeated earth lives presents itself because these relationships are beheld. One relationship points back to one certain earth life, another points to another life, and so on. In this way, karma appears before man's eyes as an established fact.

The experiences of the soul during sleep work in such a manner into day consciousness that man's general mood, making itself felt during the day in the form of a dull awareness of himself, depends on what we undergo in this second stage of sleep. Whether we feel happy or unhappy in our dimly perceived inner self, whether we feel lively or languid, is to a great extent the result of what is experienced in this stage of sleep. So, during this stage we find ourselves actually outside in the cosmos, even though what we experience within the soul is a copy of the cosmos; and what we experience of repeated earth lives and karma appears before the soul as images and reflections. These replicas of the cosmos and our destiny that stand before our soul contain what can be called man's inner existence in the cosmos. If you are able to formulate in concepts and ideas what has been attained through inspired cognition by letting it stream back into ordinary consciousness, you arrive at a true cosmology that encompasses the whole of man. Such a cosmology then is an experienced cosmology. **We can say that when this stage of sleep is consciously reflected back, man learns to recognize himself as a member of the cosmic order — a cosmic order that is expressed in a planetary sense, as a cosmic ordering of nature.**

But now, within this cosmic order, the moral world order arises. This is not as it is in earth life, where on the one side we find the order of nature with its own systems of laws but lacking morality, and on the other side a moral world order experienced as far as earthly existence is concerned only in the soul. Instead, we have a unified world before us. What we experience as a planetary cosmos is permeated and spiritually impregnated by a continuous stream of moral impulses. We live simultaneously in a natural and a moral cosmos.

You realize the full significance of these nightly events for waking life. So, we can say that what the soul experiences in the cosmos between going to sleep and

waking is more real and full of meaning for man's outward configuration than what confronts him by day, for the life functions of the physical and etheric bodies, as well as our own moral condition, are results of our cosmic experience during sleep.

The third stage of sleep is characterized by a gradual transition from experiences within the planetary cosmos to an experience of the world of the fixed stars, so that this world is experienced by the soul as a kind of reflection. Yet these are not reflections of those outer sense pictures of the constellations such as we have in waking life. Instead, the soul becomes familiar with those beings of whom it was said in earlier lectures that intuition recognizes as the spiritual beings corresponding to the stars. Here in the sense world in our physical consciousness we experience the physical sense pictures of the stars. When, as I have described, we penetrate the spiritual world with intuition, we recognize that the sun and other fixed stars as perceived by ordinary sense perception are merely the reflected physical images of certain spiritual beings. **The soul lives within these spiritual beings of the stars during the third stage of sleep.** It feels after-images of the star constellations, that is to say, **it feels the relationships that exist between the activities of the spiritual star-beings.** The soul experiences such constellations.

Ancient dreamlike science specifically described how the life of the fixed star constellations and zodiac streamed into the soul. This is, after all, the main part of the soul's experience in **sleep**. In the sense world you arrive at a better correspondence to the single spiritual beings if you look at the constellations as a whole instead of gazing at single stars. **In sleep, the soul, being free of the physical and etheric bodies, becomes so liberated that it confronts them both as objects, just as we usually have around us the objects of the external world as perceived by the senses.** The soul really finds its way as a spiritual being into a cosmos consisting of other spiritual beings. What it unconsciously goes through there can be illuminated by intuitive knowledge. But the experiences there also have their after-effects in waking life; the general well-being, health and vigor of the human body — not of the soul as in the first stage of sleep — are after-effects of what the soul experiences during the night among

star-beings. Especially there comes before the soul, even if unconsciously, the whole event of birth in its broadest sense; that is, the way the soul enters a physical body through conception and embryonic life. Again, there comes before the soul how the body is abandoned in death and how man's spirit being passes into the soul-spiritual world. Every night, the truth concerning the events of birth and death really confront the soul. It is also an after-effect of the night-time experiences that man has a dim feeling during the day that birth and death by no means signify for human life only what they appear to be to sense observation. It is simply not true that a man with sound common sense could believe that birth and death are nothing but the events they appear to be in outer material life. Man in fact does not believe this, but it is not true to say that the reason for his disbelief is only because in his fantasy he imagines that he is an eternal being whose existence persists beyond death. No, man cannot believe it because of the picture experienced every night by the soul of how man enters earth life from the spiritual world and withdraws again into the world of spirit. This picture streams into the soul by day and is experienced by it as a vague feeling about the world and human life.

What appears during waking life as religious longing, as religious awareness, is an after-effect of the soul's experience among the stars. What I have just described is the stage of man's deepest sleep. In actual fact, **it is out of his sleep that man derives the religious feelings of his waking life.**

Just as religious life can be founded today in knowledge by means of the experience resembling that of primordial humanity but permeated and formulated in intuitions by the fully developed consciousness, it can also be said that man can attain this religious knowledge if, through super-sensible intuition, he is able to perceive and illuminate the condition of deepest sleep. **For what rests in the depths of sleep was also the source of what preserved man's knowledge of the divine.** Our day-consciousness is only a reflection of the potentialities for consciousness open to man. Likewise, what man bears within him as a natural religious feeling appears as a reflection of the glory and sublimity experienced by his soul, even if unconsciously, in the third stage of sleep. **Man sinks into the life of sleep not only to renew his tired body, or to gain the stimuli from sleep that his breathing and circulation**

need, or to acquire from the spiritual world the other impulses he needs. What permeates him with religious feeling penetrates to the soul's surface, to the region of day-consciousness from the profound depths through which human soul life streams during sleep.

One might say that as man lives a philosophical life during the first stage of sleep, similar to that of earliest childhood — however paradoxical that sounds to present-day consciousness — and as in the second stage he lives a cosmological life, so, in the third stage, he lives a life of being permeated with divinity. From this third stage of sleep, man must then return to daytime consciousness.

Having retraced the above-mentioned stages in backward sequence during the last stage of sleep, man returns again to waking consciousness. Since man's soul and spirit are outside his physical and etheric organizations in sleep, if this phenomenon of sleep is to be comprehended fully, intuitive knowledge must answer the question: Why is man drawn back into his physical and etheric bodies again? What impulse is at work there? If the intuitive perception of sleep is extended far enough, it is possible to recognize this impulse. As man cognizes these spiritual beings who correspond to the sun or the constellations of the other fixed stars, he then recognizes that the impulse comes from the spiritual beings whose reflection in our physical world is the moon. Indeed, the forces of the moon permeate our whole cosmos, and when, through intuition, we recognize not only the physical existence of the moon but also her spiritual correlations, we find that these spiritual beings, who correspond to the physical moon, are the entities who, in their working together, produce the impulses to bring us back into our physical and etheric bodies after we have reached the deepest stage of sleep. It is above all the moon forces that connect man's astral and ego organization with his physical and etheric organisms.

Every night, when out of the spiritual world the soul desires to re-enter its physical and etheric bodies, it must place itself within the streams of the moon forces. It is of no concern here — that will be obvious to you — whether it be new or full moon. For even when, as new moon, the moon is not visible to the senses, those forces are nevertheless active throughout the cosmos that bring the soul

back into the etheric and physical bodies from the spiritual worlds. They are active even though the moon's phases appearing to the senses as half-moon, full moon, etc., are metamorphosed sense pictures that correspond to events in the soul being of the moon; these, to be sure, have something to do with man's spirit and soul in the physical and etheric bodies. Indeed, the particular configuration in which man's soul-spiritual and physical-etheric natures are linked is determined by those forces that rule and interweave in the cosmos and come to physical expression in the moon, the sense object, with her various phases that we perceive.

Thus, we can also look into the concealed aspects of man's life of waking and sleeping and inform ourselves concerning what it is that brings him back each morning into his daytime life. He returns through the same stages in reverse order, and while he passes through the last stage, which is permeated by a longing for God, the dreams mix again into his sleep life and he gradually submerges into his physical and etheric organizations.

The Cyclic Movement of Sleeping and Waking, Dornach, November 6, 1916, GA 172

In waking life, we say, the Ego and astral body are inside the physical body and the etheric, in sleep they are outside. In general, it is so: sleeping and waking represent a kind of cyclic movement for the human being. Strictly speaking, it only applies to the head when we say that the Ego and astral body of man are outside the physical and etheric body during sleep. In actual fact, precisely because they are outside the physical and etheric head of man, the Ego and astral body in sleep are acting all the more vividly upon the rest of man's organization. During **sleep**—when the Ego and astral body are working- upon man as it were from without—all that is not 'head' in man, but the remainder of his organization, is subjected to a far stronger influence by the Ego and the astral body, than it is in waking life. Indeed, we may truly say, the influence which the Ego and astral body wield over the head of man in waking life, —this influence they wield over the remaining organism during **sleep**.

Bearing this in mind, we shall readily conceive that **there is a peculiarly vivid relationship in sleep between our Ego and our sympathetic nervous system.** This system, as you know, is mainly spread out in the abdominal organism, and with its strands it envelops the spinal column from without. Now these relations between the Ego and the sympathetic system are loosened during our day-waking life. They are still there, but they are loosened. In sleep they are more intimate. Moreover, the relations between the astral body and nerves of the spinal column are more intimate in sleep than in our day-waking life. Thus we may say: **during our sleep the most intimate relationships arise, between our astral body and the nerves of our spinal column, and at the same time between our Ego and our sympathetic nervous system.** In **sleep**, with our Ego we live more or less intensely in connection with our sympathetic system. Once the mysterious world of dreams is more accurately studied, what I am now saying out of spiritual- scientific research will soon be recognized.

If you bear this in mind, you will find the way over to another most essential thought. Something deeply significant is given to our life inasmuch as there is this rhythmic alternation, for example, in the living-together of the Ego with the sympathetic and the astral body with the spinal nervous system—a rhythmic alternation which is really identical with that between sleeping and waking. It will not appear altogether surprising to you, if we now assert: **Inasmuch as the Ego is well inside the sympathetic system and the astral body well inside the spinal system during sleep, man with respect to his sympathetic and his spinal nervous system is awake in his sleep and asleep in his waking life.**

Man needs this rhythmic alternation. His Ego and his astral body are in the head during his day-waking life and outside of it during his sleep. Inasmuch as they are outside the head during sleep, they develop a vivid inner life together with this other system, as I described before. The Ego and astral body need this alternation of diving down into the head, and going out of it. When man is outside the head with his Ego and his astral body, he develops not only the intimate relation to the rest of the body through the sympathetic and the spinal nervous system. For on the other side he also develops spiritual relations to the Spiritual World.

Corresponding to this active living-together with the spinal and with the sympathetic nervous system, we have an active living-together in soul and spirit with the Spiritual World. At night the soul-and-spirit is outside the head, and consequently unfolds this vivid life in the remaining organism. Conversely we must say that in the day-waking life, when the Ego and astral body are more in the head, we are living together spiritually with our surrounding spiritual environment. We dive down, as it were, into a spiritual inner world in our sleep; but on awakening we plunge into a spiritual world around us.

Occult Science, Section III Sleep and Death, GA 13

When man sinks into sleep, there is a change in the relationship of his members. That part of the sleeping man that lies in bed contains the physical and ether bodies, but not the astral body and not the ego. Because the ether body remains united with the physical body in sleep, the life-activities continue; for, the moment the physical body were left to itself, it would have to crumble to dust. What, however, is extinguished in sleep includes the mental images, pain and pleasure, joy and sorrow, the capacity to express a conscious will, and similar facts of existence. The astral body is the bearer of all this. An unbiased point of view can naturally never entertain the thought that in sleep the astral body is destroyed along with all pleasure and pain and the world of ideas and will. It simply exists in an other state. In order that the human ego and astral body not only be filled with joy and sorrow and all the other facts of existence mentioned above, but also have a conscious perception of them, it is necessary that the astral body be united with the physical and ether bodies. In the waking state, all three are united; in the sleeping state, the astral body withdraws from the physical and ether bodies. It assumes a different kind of existence from the one that falls to its lot during its union with the physical and ether bodies. It is the task of supersensible knowledge to consider this other kind of existence in the astral body. Observed from the standpoint of the outer world, the astral body disappears in sleep; supersensible perception must follow its life until it again takes possession of the physical and ether bodies on awakening. Just as in all cases where it is a matter of knowledge of the hidden things and events of the

world, so supersensible observation is necessary for the discovery of the facts of the sleeping state in their particular form.

Although the astral body, during sleep, experiences no mental pictures and also no pleasure and pain, it does not remain inactive. On the contrary, it is just in the sleep state that a lively activity is incumbent upon it. It is an activity into which it must again and again enter in rhythmical succession, if it has been for a time active in connection with the physical and ether bodies. But this fatigue is the expression of the fact that the astral body and ego, during sleep, prepare themselves to transform, during the following waking state, what has arisen in the physical and ether bodies through purely organic formative activity when freed from the presence of the spirit and soul elements.

Something similar occurs with the human astral body on awaking. During sleep it is in a world like itself; in a certain sense it constitutes something that belongs to this world. On awaking, the physical and ether bodies suck it up; they fill themselves with it. They contain the organs through which the astral body perceives the outer world. But in order that it may acquire this perception, it must separate itself from its own world. From this world it can only receive the prototypes that it needs for the ether body. — Just as the physical body receives its food, for example, from its environment, so **during the sleep state the astral body receives the images from the world about it. It lives there actually in the universe, separated from the physical and ether bodies, in the same universe out of which the entire human being is born.** The source of the images through which the human being receives his form lies in this universe. **During sleep he is harmoniously inserted into it, and during the waking state he lifts himself out of this all-encompassing harmony in order to gain external perception. In sleep, his astral body returns to this cosmic harmony and on awaking again brings back to his bodies sufficient strength from it to enable him to dispense with his dwelling within the cosmic harmony for a certain length of time. The astral body, during sleep, returns to its home and on awaking brings back with it renewed forces into life.** These forces that the astral body brings with it on awaking find outer expression in the refreshment that healthy sleep affords. Further descriptions of occult science will

show that this home of the astral body is more encompassing than that which belongs to the physical body of the physical environment in the narrower sense. Whereas the human being is physically a part of the earth, his astral body belongs to worlds in which still other cosmic bodies besides our earth are embedded. Therefore **he enters, during sleep, into a world to which other worlds than the earth belong**, a fact that will only become clear from later descriptions.

We see that as soon as the senses cease their activity, something creative asserts itself in man. This is the same creative element that is also present in completely dreamless sleep and there presents the soul state that appears as the antithesis of the soul's waking state. If this dreamless sleep is to take place, the astral body must be withdrawn from the ether and physical bodies. During the dream state, it is separated from the physical body in so far as it no longer has any connection with this body's sense organs, but it still retains a certain connection with the ether body. That the processes of the astral body can be perceived in pictures is due to this connection with the ether body. The moment this connection ceases, the pictures sink down into the darkness of unconsciousness, and we have dreamless sleep. **The arbitrary and often absurd character of dream pictures rests upon the fact that the astral body, because of its separation from the sense organs of the physical body, cannot relate its pictures to the proper objects and events of the external environment.**

In passing over into sleep, the astral body only severs its connection with the ether and physical bodies, the latter remaining bound together; in death, the physical body, however, is severed from the ether body. The physical body is left to its own forces and must, for that reason, disintegrate as a corpse. When death occurs, the ether body enters into a state that it never experienced during the time between birth and death, except under rare conditions that will be spoken of later. It is now united with its astral body, without the presence of the physical body, for the ether body and astral body do not separate immediately after death. For a time they remain together by means of a force whose existence is easily to be understood. If it did not exist, the ether body could not sever itself from the physical body, for it is bound to it. This is seen in sleep when the astral body is

unable to tear these two members of the human organism apart. This force begins its activity at death. It severs the ether body from the physical, with the result that the ether body is now united with the astral body. Supersensible observation shows that after death this union varies in different people. Its duration is measured by days. For the present this duration is only mentioned by way of information. — Later the astral body separates from its ether body also and continues on its way bereft of it. During the union of the two bodies man is in a condition that enables him to perceive the experiences of his astral body. As long as the physical body is present, the work of refreshing the worn out organs must begin from the moment the astral body is severed from it. With the severance of the physical body this work ceases. The force that is employed for this work when the human being sleeps remains after death and can now be used to make the astral body's own processes perceptible.

In the period immediately following death the experiences of the past appear summarized in a memory-picture. After the separation of the ether body and the astral body, the latter is left to itself in its further journey. It is not difficult to see that, within the astral body, everything remains that it has made its own through its own activity during its sojourn in the physical body. To a certain degree, the ego has developed spirit self, life spirit, and spirit man. As far as they are developed, they receive their existence, not from what exists as organs in the bodies, but from the ego. The ego is the very member that needs no external organs for self-perception; it also needs none in order to remain in possession of what it has united with itself. The objection can be made, **“Why, then, is there no perception in sleep of this spirit self, life spirit, and spirit man, which have been developed?”** There is none, because the ego is **fettered to the physical body between birth and death. Even though in sleep the ego, united with the astral body, is outside the physical body, it remains, nevertheless, in close union with the latter, for the activity of the astral body is directed toward this physical body.** Thus, the ego with its perception is relegated to the external sense world and cannot therefore receive the revelations of the spirit in its direct form.

The Evolution of Consciousness, Section 8 During Sleep and Death,
Penmaenmawr, August 26, 1923, GA 227

If we have here the etheric body and the astral is there asleep, then **on the verge of waking or of going to sleep a continuous struggle takes place, a movement full of life, expressed outwardly in the dream, but signifying inwardly this weaving of experiences into the etheric and physical bodies. It is only when a man has slept on some experience two or three times — perhaps more often — that the experience is united with the memories already bound up with his etheric and physical bodies.** The point is that the experience has to be transformed into memory, which is left lying in bed during sleep, for a memory is essentially the expression in thought of the physical and etheric bodies.

During sleep, a man lives with his Ego and astral organization outside his physical and etheric bodies. While in this state as a being of soul and spirit, as Ego and astral organization, he is interwoven with the spiritual forces pervading the whole Cosmos. He is in the world that is, figuratively speaking, outside his skin — the world of which the only impressions he receives in waking life come through his senses. **During sleep, therefore, he enters right into the things that in waking life show him only their outer side. But it is only what is experienced by the astral organization, when outside the physical and etheric bodies, that can be brought back into the thoughts of the etheric body, not what is experienced out there by the Ego. Hence, during the whole of our existence on Earth, the experiences of the Ego in sleep remain subconscious for ordinary consciousness, and even for Imaginative consciousness. They are revealed only to Inspired consciousness, as already described.**

In sleep a man gathers up sufficient strength to imprint on the etheric body those experiences that can be put into thoughts. But during his life on Earth he lacks the power to deal with the wishes and desires which during sleep are experienced by the Ego in connection with earthly affairs — for these also are gone over during sleep. In our epoch, therefore, only the part of sleep-life that can be transformed

into thoughts, imprinted in thoughts, passes over into the conscious waking life of earthly men; while the sleep-experiences of the Ego lie hidden behind the veil of existence.

Now if we would pass on to the world accessible to Inspiration, in which we are as Ego between going to sleep and waking, we come to one dimension only; we then have to do with a one-dimensional world. This transition to a one-dimensional world, taken for granted by the faculty of Inspiration — the faculty, that is, of actually perceiving the spiritual in which we live between going to sleep and waking — this understanding of a world with only one dimension has always been part of Initiation-knowledge.

But it is not only a human being himself who has something to say about his experiences; his experiences and actions are the concern of the whole spiritual Cosmos. The Cosmos judges whether an action, a thought or feeling is to be declared good or bad. **Between waking and sleeping we are left to form our own opinions about ourselves. As I have sufficiently shown during these lectures, the spiritual content of the Cosmos takes the moral as its natural law, and what the Cosmos has to say about our true nature and our actions is experienced by the Ego during sleep.** Inspired cognition shows how the Ego, even during the shortest sleep, experiences over again everything the individual has gone through from his last moment of waking until his present sleep — however long or short this period may be. So a man, in the successive states of waking, sleeping, waking, sleeping, experiences again in sleep whatever he went through during his last waking time, especially where his own activities were concerned.

As far as this is the experience of the Ego, it remains outside ordinary consciousness, but Inspiration can call it up. Then the particular nature of the experience is disclosed, and we find it is gone through in reverse order to our experience by day. Whereas by day you go through your experiences — leaving short sleeps aside — **from morning to evening, during the night, in sleep, you live through these experiences backwards — from evening to morning.** This is in order that we may experience whatever the spiritual Cosmos has to say about the way we have lived through the day.

In fact it is like this with the panorama that appears during those two or three days after death. Then, later, comes a period when soul and spirit have gained sufficient strength to experience in the spiritual world all that could manifest only unconsciously, in picture form, while we were **asleep** at night during our life on Earth. It now comes before us as experience. A man then passes through a period — lasting about one-third of his life on Earth, approximately the time normally spent in sleep — when he experiences his nights again, but in a backward direction. So he lives through his last night first, then the night before, and so on right back to the time of his birth and conception.

Aspects of Human Evolution, Lecture VIII, Berlin 24 July 24, 1917

In sleep we all live within these formative forces of the cosmos, within the cosmic thoughts; just as man is immersed when he jumps into water, so is everyone immersed, in sleep, in the formative forces of the cosmos. Besides this life within the formative forces of the cosmos there are two other conditions of the life of sleep, just as in waking life the human being not only thinks, but feels and wills. Thinking, the possession of thoughts, corresponds in sleep to the life of the cosmic formative forces. This means that, when we become conscious in the lightest sleep, we are living in the formative forces of the cosmos. It is as though we were swimming through the cosmos from one end to the other, floating through thoughts — thoughts which are, however, forces. **In this lightest sleep we float through the thought-forces of the cosmos. But there is also a deeper sleep — a sleep from which nothing can be brought into the waking life of the day unless we have practiced special exercises of the soul.** A person can bring back something into the waking life through the dream only from the lightest sleep, but, as I have already said, these dream-pictures are not authoritative, for the same dream can be clothed in the most varied pictures. In very light sleep we can always dream, that is, we can always bring something over into consciousness; we can feel that we have had at least some experiences in **sleep**. This is, however, only the case with the very lightest kind of sleep. Of deeper sleep nothing can be known until we can enter it with Inspirational consciousness, and then we become aware of more than is described in *Occult Science*.

When sleep is so light that dreams can be brought back into ordinary life, then one who is able to look into these worlds perceives the surging, weaving thought-pictures, the cosmic Imaginations which reveal cosmic mysteries showing that human beings indeed belong to a cosmic world just as they belong to the world in which they live consciously from awakening to falling asleep. For what I have described in Occult Science is not as though one merely painted something on a surface, but everything is in perpetual movement, in perpetual activity. At a definite moment, however, pictures begin to appear in this world through which human beings pass in light sleep, though they know nothing of it. The pictures become distinct; their light is enhanced; they reveal certain realities lying behind them. The pictures fade away again, and nothing remains in the consciousness but a kind of feeling that they have died down. Then they rise up again, and in this alternation of activity and withdrawal, something appears which can be called the harmony of the spheres, cosmic music. Thus, cosmic music does not reveal itself only as melody and harmony but as the deeds and activities of those beings who dwell in the spiritual world, as the deeds of the Angeloi, Archangeloi, Archai, and so on.

The spiritual beings who guide and direct the world out of the spirit are seen, moving as it were through the surging sea of pictures. It is the world that is perceived through Inspiration, the second world. Let me call it the revelations of spiritual cosmic beings. And this world of the revelation of spiritual cosmic beings is the second element of sleep, as feeling is the second element of waking consciousness. Thus, during sleep not only does the human being enter the realm of cosmic thoughts, but within these flowing cosmic thoughts there are revealed the deeds of cosmic beings who belong to the spiritual world.

In addition to these two conditions of sleep there is yet a third of which human beings have as a rule no sort of awareness. They usually know that they can sleep lightly, and they know also that dreams emerge from this light sleep. They know that there is a dreamless sleep. But the utmost that they can know of this third condition of sleep is that on awakening they may be conscious of the fact that, during sleep, they had been faced with some difficulty, with something which they must conquer in the first hours after awaking. I am sure that many of you are familiar with this feeling in the morning, where one knows that one has not

slept quite in the ordinary way, but that something was there which has left a certain sense of difficulty, that will take some time to overcome when one regains consciousness in the morning. **This is an indication of that third condition of sleep, the content of which can be apprehended only through Intuition.** It is a condition which is of great significance to the human being.

When they are in the lightest sleep human beings are still actually concerned with a great deal that belongs to the experiences of waking consciousness. In a certain sense they still participate in their breathing processes; they also participate, although not from within but from without, in the blood circulation and the other processes of the body. In the second condition of sleep they do not actually participate in the processes of their bodily life; they are concerned with a world that is common both to the body and to the soul. Some element connected with the body plays over into the soul, just as something passes over from the light into the plant when it is developing in the light of day. But when they are in the third condition of sleep, there is something within them which — if I may so express it — has become mineral, for in this state the salts of the body are especially strongly deposited. During this third state of sleep a very strong storing up of salts takes place in the physical body — with their souls human beings live in the inner being of the mineral world.

Now let us imagine that the following experiment may be made. You lie down in bed and fall into a light sleep from which dreams may emerge into ordinary consciousness. You pass over into a deeper sleep from which no dreams proceed, but in which the soul is still connected with the physical body. You then enter into a sleep in which strong accumulations of salts take place in the physical body. The soul can have no relation to what is thus taking place in the body. However, if you had placed beside your bed a mountain crystal, it would be possible for you to enter with your soul right into the inner being of the crystal; you would perceive it from within outwards. This is not possible either in the first or in the second condition of sleep. In the first state of sleep, the content of which can enter into the dream, you would, had you dreamed of the crystal, still perceive it as some kind of crystal — it would certainly be a shadowy experience, but something of the nature of a crystal would be there. In the second state of sleep the crystal would be experienced in a less definite sense; and if you could then still dream —

that is not possible in the ordinary way but we will imagine it to be so — then you would have the experience that the crystal becomes indefinite and forms itself into a kind of sphere or ellipsoid, and then recedes again. But if you could dream in the deepest sleep — that is, if you could bring into it the consciousness of Intuition — then out of this deepest sleep, this third condition of sleep, you would so experience the crystal that it would seem as though inwardly you followed these lines of form to the apex, and back again. **You would experience the inner being of the crystal; you would be living within it.** And so also in the case of other minerals. Not only would you experience the form, but also the inner forces. In short, the third condition of sleep is one which lifts human beings wholly out of their bodies and places them within the spiritual world. In this third stage of sleep, we live with the essential being of the spiritual world itself. That is, we stand within the essence, within the being, of Angeloi, Archangeloi and of all those beings whom we otherwise perceive outwardly, in their manifestations. Between waking and sleeping we see with our sense consciousness, as it were, the external manifestations of the Gods in nature. During sleep we enter either the world of pictures, in the first condition, or into the world of manifestation, the revelation of spiritual beings, in the second condition. And when we reach the third condition, we live within the divine spiritual beings themselves.

Thus, just as in our waking consciousness we live the life of thinking, feeling and willing, so during sleep we either flow with the cosmic thoughts, or out of these cosmic thoughts the deeds of divine spiritual beings are revealed, or these spiritual beings so take us up into themselves that we rest within them with our souls. **Just as thoughts and ideas are for the waking consciousness the clearest and most definite things of all, while feeling is darker and really a kind of dreaming, and willing the condition of the greatest insensibility — as it were a kind of sleep — so we have these three degrees of the sleeping consciousness. We have the sleep in which ordinary consciousness experiences the dream and a higher clairvoyant consciousness the cosmic thoughts; we have the second state of sleep which for the ordinary consciousness remains hidden, but so appears to the consciousness of Inspiration that everywhere the deeds of divine, spiritual beings are revealed; and we have the third state of sleep, which to intuitional consciousness is life within**

the divine, spiritual beings themselves. This can be expressed by saying that we dive down, for instance, into the inner being of the minerals. This third state of sleep has, however, yet another element of great significance for the human being.

In the second stage of sleep, as I have said, we find in the surging pictures, alternately appearing and disappearing, the cosmic being of the Angeloi, Archangeloi, and so on. But we find ourselves as well. We find ourselves as beings of soul; not, however, as we now are, but as we were before birth, before conception. We learn to know how we have lived between death and a new birth. This belongs to this second world. And every time we pass through dreamless sleep, we live in this same world in which we lived before we descended into our physical body. But when we pass over into the third condition of sleep and are able to awake there, when the consciousness of Intuition awakes, then we experience our destiny — our karma. We know then why certain capacities are ours in this life as the results of a previous one. We know why in this life we have been led into connection with this or that personality; we learn to know our destiny, our karma.

Before the Mystery of Golgotha, in the period of evolution before the appearance of Christ on Earth, human beings — we ourselves in earlier incarnations — entered very often into this third condition of sleep. But before they sank down into this sleep their Angel appeared and raised them out of it again. This is the significant thing: we can always raise ourselves out of the first state, and out of the second state of sleep, but not out of the third. Before the appearance of Christ on Earth we must have died in this third condition of sleep if Angels, or some other beings, had not raised us out of it. Since the appearance of Christ, the Christ-force has been united with the Earth. Every time that we must awaken out of this third state of sleep, the Christ-force which came to be united with the Earth through the Mystery of Golgotha must come to our aid. The human being can enter into the inner being of the crystal but cannot emerge again without the Christ-Force.

**The Forming of Destiny in Sleeping and Waking, Lecture I, Berne,
April 6, 1923, GA 224**

One quality alone brings the Ego, during sleep, into right connection with the Archai, namely **true human love, universal and unselfish love for human beings, sincere interest in every fellow man with whom life brings us into contact.** I do not mean sympathy or antipathy, which are merely the outcome of something we are not willing to overcome. **True and genuine love for human beings during the waking state leads us, during sleep, to the bosom of the Archai. And there, while the Ego is resting in the bosom of these Beings, karma or destiny is shaped.** A verdict is passed: 'I am satisfied with what I have performed with my arms and legs.' And out of the satisfaction or dissatisfaction is born a power that not only plays a part in the period immediately following death but continues on to the next earthly life — the power to shape destiny aright, so that true balance and adjustment are brought about in all those things which in one earthly life we have experienced in the Ego during sleep, in communion with the Archai.

When the human being sleeps he is not merely resting from the fatigues of his daily life. Here in the physical world, man sleeps, works and speaks with his physical body; but he is active too in the spiritual world, while he is asleep. Since materialism denies that Ego and astral body exist and operate in full reality of being during sleep, materialism cannot possibly understand the world in its entirety. What is the 'moral world' to materialism? To materialism the 'moral world' is something the human being formulates in thought — something that has nothing to do with the actively creative powers of the world. But those who have true and penetrating perception of human life know that man lives within the moral world-order during sleep just as truly as during waking life he lives in air and light. This again leads us to something more that it is essential we should understand.

The workings of speech (and the same holds good for karma, too) accompany us when we die. Through the course of our life we have been connected — rightly, or perhaps inadequately — with the world of the Archangeloi. This relationship has repeated itself in every period of sleep, and we bear with us through the Gate of

Death into the spiritual world what has been given us by the Archangeloi during sleep. We can then find the way rightly into the spiritual world which is, indeed, the Logos, the world consisting of cosmic principles which have their images in the words of speech; we can find our way into the spiritual world to live out there our life between death and a new birth.

But the matter is not so simple. After death we have no physical body; we are able to turn to good account what the Archangeloi have conferred upon us from our periods of sleep. But when as physical human beings on the Earth, we wake from sleep, we have again to descend into a physical body. The Archangeloi cannot bestow upon us the power to do this. Still higher Hierarchies must add their work, namely, the Beings designated in Occult Science the Exusiai and the Kyriotetes. Into the urges, instincts and desires of the physical body — which offer resistance to us — these higher Beings must introduce the fruits of what we have achieved in communion with the Archangeloi through the spirituality of speech; and this now flames up within us, as the voice of conscience. **When that which we bring out of sleep into the body lights up as the voice of conscience, there is working, in this voice, all that has been bestowed by the Hierarchy of the Exusiai and Kyriotetes** — a Hierarchy more sublime than that of the Archangeloi.

In thought we can be free. But in order to use this freedom aright in the physical body, the proper equilibrium must be established in waking and sleeping life because we must be united not only with the Archai but also with the Dynamis.

The highest Hierarchy of all — Seraphim, Cherubim and Thrones — bear our deeds out into the universe. **From out of sleep, Exusiai, Dynamis, Kyriotetes bear as moral power into our bodily nature what we grasp in thoughts: Seraphim, Cherubim and Thrones bear this out into the universe, so that our own moral forces become world-creative forces.**

Sleep comes over man for this very purpose — that he may, himself, draw out of the spiritual world the power he needs for his physical life.

And now, from this point of view, study the connection of what I have sketched today in outline with my *Philosophy of Spiritual Activity*. As I have stated with emphasis there, it is not a matter of establishing the theory that the will must be free, but that the thought must be free. The thought must control the will if man is to be a free being. But a man's life must be suitably directed and ordered if the will is not to present insuperable hindrance to the thought that is free. **As men in the physical world we can make our thought free. Feeling becomes free only when we have established a true relationship with the Archangeloi; will becomes free when we have established a true relationship with the Archai.**

The living content of speech, as well as all that lives in our limbs, passes out, during sleep, together with the soul and spirit. Astral body and Ego go forth, but the ether-body remains with the physical body. The thinking that is bound up with the ether body continues within the ether-body; but we know nothing in ordinary consciousness of how this ether body thinks from the time of falling asleep to that of waking, because we are outside it. It is not true that thinking ceases during sleep; we think from the moment of falling asleep until we wake. Man's thoughts are in perpetual flow in his ether-body, only he is unaware of it. Not until the moment when he returns to the body do the thoughts light up in his consciousness. Man can become free in his life of thought because his thoughts are bound, through the ether-body, with the physical life of Earth; for he has been placed upon the Earth in order that he may become free. From the spiritual world alone can he draw the power of freedom — the power that leads to freedom in feeling and in will.

We can thus understand that there is a true relationship between freedom and karma, for freedom is connected with those members of man's being (physical body and ether-body) which remain behind during sleep. **Karma is woven by the Ego during the period of sleep**, — that is to say, in a realm beyond and apart from those members wherein freedom has its foundations. Karma does not weave the texture of free or unfree thoughts; karma weaves at feeling and will. Karma emerges from the depths of human nature, out of the 'dreaming' feeling and the 'sleeping' will.

Education, Section VII The Rhythmic System, Sleeping and Waking, Initiation, Ilkley, August 11, 1923, GA 307

In our modern civilization, where all eyes are concentrated on outer, material things, no attention is given to the consideration of the state of sleep, although man devotes to it one-third of his earthly life. This alternating rhythm of our waking and sleeping is of the greatest possible significance. Never should it be thought that man is inactive while he sleeps. He is inactive only in so far as the outer, external world is concerned, but as regards the health of his body, and more especially the welfare of his soul and spirit, sleep is all-important. True education can provide for a right life of sleep, for the activities which belong to man's waking hours are carried over into the condition of sleep, and this is especially the case with the child.

Now because we generate this process of inner combustion, we bring about something in our organism that sleep alone can rectify. In a certain sense we should literally burn up our bodies if sleep did not perpetually reduce combustion to its right degree of intensity. All this must again be understood in a subtle sense and not in the crude sense of Natural Science. **Sleep regulates the inner burning by spreading it over the whole organism, whereas otherwise it would confine itself to the organs of movement.**

The Evolution of Consciousness, Section 5, The Relation of Man to the Three Worlds, August 23, 1923, Pennaenmawr, GA 227

Dreams, of which I have already said something, pointing out that they should not be given too much importance in ordinary life on earth, **are nevertheless of immeasurable significance to those wishing to gain knowledge of man's relation to the super-sensible world.** They do indeed lead to that realm of experience where a man comes in contact with the super-sensible world, and the laws of nature cease to hold good. Thus, **the world of dream-pictures is really like a veil concealing the spiritual world**, and we can say: Here we have a man, and there a **dream-veil** behind which lies the spiritual world. It

makes a great difference, however, whether we enter the spiritual world unconsciously, as we do in dreams, or consciously through Imagination and Inspiration. For if we enter it consciously, everything there appears different from the physical world of nature. **Behind the veil of the dream**, behind what the Greeks called “chaos”, **the moral world is found to be just as real as is the world of nature here in the sense-world, where the laws of nature rule**. But the chaotic quality of the dream, its whirling confusion, show that its connection with the world lying behind the veil of chaos is a very special one.

It is really possible to speak of this world only when one's studies have reached the point to which these lectures have brought us. All that in his ordinary state of consciousness a man sees of the external world is merely its outward manifestation; in reality this is a great illusion. For behind it all is that spiritual reality which is active in it. **When a man dreams, he actually sinks down into this spiritual reality**, though without being properly prepared, so that what he meets appears to him in this whirling confusion. Thus, to begin with, our chief task is to learn why in dreams a man enters a world which, compared with that of nature, is so disorganized, so chaotic.

Three or four thousand years ago, as men were entering sleep, there arose in their souls like a dream a picture of the Guardian. They passed him by. And as they were returning from **sleep** to ordinary life, once again this picture appeared. The warnings they received on entering and leaving the spiritual world were not so clear as the warnings which I have said are given to those entering the spiritual world through Inspiration and Imagination. But as they fell asleep, and again as they awoke, they had a dreamlike experience of passing the Guardian of the Threshold, not unlike their other instinctive perceptions of the spiritual world. Further progress in the evolution of humanity — as we shall see in later lectures — required that man should gain his freedom by losing his spiritual vision, and he had to forfeit that half-sleeping, half-waking state during which he was able to behold, at least in a kind of dream, the majestic figure of the Guardian of the Threshold.

Nowadays, between going to sleep and waking, a man passes the Guardian but does not know it. He is blind and deaf to the Guardian, and that is why he finds himself in a dream-world which is so completely disorganized.

Now consider quite impartially the different way in which the people of older epochs knew how to speak of their dreams. Because of ignoring the Guardian every morning, every evening, and twice every time he takes an afternoon nap, a man to-day experiences this utter disorder and chaos in his dream-world. This can be seen in the form taken by any dream.

Only think: when we cross the Threshold — and we do so each time we go to sleep — there stands the majestic Guardian. He cannot be ignored without everything we meet in the spiritual world becoming disordered. How this happens is best seen in the metamorphosis undergone by the orderly thinking proper to the physical, naturalistic world when this passes into the imagery of dreams. Individual dreams can show this very clearly.

When, ignoring the Guardian, we cross the Threshold, we confront three worlds, and we can make nothing of them because we partly carry over into the world of spirit the outlook we are familiar with in the waking world. The spiritual world, however, asserts its own order to a certain extent. Then the following may come about. Imagine you are asleep in bed. At first with your feeling, with the middle part of your being, you are entirely under the influence of sleep. Then the coverlet slips; part of your body gets chilled, and it enters your dream consciousness that some part of you is unclothed. Now, because you are all at sea in the spiritual world and do not connect the sensation with any particular part of yourself, this feeling spreads, and you fancy you are without any clothes at all. It may be only a bit of your body that is exposed, but that bit becoming cold makes you feel bare all over.

Now in your dream you are still concerned with an impulse of will holding good when you are awake — which is to put on clothes when bare. In your sleep, however, you feel: I cannot put them on, something is preventing me. You are unable to move your limbs and you become conscious of this in your dream.

You see how it is. These two things, I feel I've nothing on, and I cannot put on my clothes — the physical world being no longer there to combine the two, one of which belongs to world II, the other to world I — are wrongly combined in your dream. And because in that same night you had thought about going for a walk, this also enters the course of the dream. Three separate conditions arise: I am going for a walk; I am horrified to find I have nothing on; I cannot put my clothes on.

Now just think. These three things, which in our ordinary materialistic life can be logically combined, fall asunder when, in passing by, you ignore the Guardian of the Threshold.

In this situation you feel yourself in three parts, among strangers, exposed to view on all sides without clothes and without power to put them on. That is your dream experience. What is connected for you in ordinary life through natural logic is separated in your dream and connected, chaotically, in conformity with the custom you take with you across the Threshold. You connect it as if in the spiritual world, too, one has to concern oneself with garments. Because of ignoring the Guardian of the Threshold, you carry over into the spiritual world a custom suited to the physical world. You connect the three worlds chaotically, according to the laws of the physical world, and you feel yourself to be in this situation.

In countless dreams the essential thing is that when we pass the Threshold without heeding the Guardian's warning, what we perceive here in the physical, naturalistic world as a harmonious unity falls apart, and we are confronted by three different worlds. By faithfully observing the warning given by the Guardian of the Threshold, we must find the way to unite these three worlds. To-day, a man in his dreams finds himself faced by these three worlds — it was not so to the same extent for anyone in older epochs, as can be seen from the dreams recorded in the Old Testament — and he then tries to connect the three worlds in accordance with laws valid in physical life. That is the reason for the chaotic connections in the three worlds, as they are experienced by a man of to-day.

You will see, therefore, that **dreams can show us this serious fact — that when we cross the Threshold to the spiritual world we are at once faced with three worlds**, and that we have both to enter them and to leave them in the right way. Dreams can teach us a very great deal about the physical world of the senses, as it is to-day, and also about that other world — the world of soul and spirit.

Knowledge of Higher Worlds and its Attainment, Section VII, The Continuity of Consciousness, GA 10

Human life runs its course in three alternating states or conditions, namely, waking, dreaming sleep, and dreamless sleep. The attainment of the higher knowledge of spiritual worlds can be readily understood if a conception be formed of the changes occurring in these three conditions, as experienced by one seeking such higher knowledge. When no training has been undertaken to attain this knowledge, human consciousness is continually interrupted by the restful interval of sleep. During these intervals the soul knows nothing of the outer world, and equally little of itself. Only at certain periods dreams emerge from the deep ocean of insensibility, dreams linked to the occurrences of the outer world or the conditions of the physical body. At first, dreams are only regarded as a particular manifestation of sleep-life, and thus only two states are generally spoken of, namely, sleeping and waking. For spiritual science, however, dreams have an independent significance apart from the other two conditions. In the foregoing chapter a description was given of the alteration ensuing in the dream-life of the person undertaking the ascent to higher knowledge. His dreams lose their meaningless, irregular and disconnected character and form themselves more and more into a world of law and order. With continued development, not only does this new world born out of the dream world come to be in no way inferior to outer physical reality as regards its inner truth, but facts reveal themselves in it representing a higher reality in the fullest sense of the word. Secrets and riddles lie concealed everywhere in the physical world. In the latter, the effects are seen of certain higher facts, but no one can penetrate to the causes whose perception is confined merely to his senses. These causes are partly revealed to the student in the condition described above and developed out of

dream life, a condition, however, in which he by no means remains stationary. True, he must not regard these revelations as actual knowledge so long as the same things do not also reveal themselves during ordinary waking life. But in time he achieves this as well: he develops this faculty of carrying over into waking consciousness the condition he created for himself out of dream life. Thus something new is introduced into the world of his senses that enriches it. Just as a person born blind and successfully operated upon will recognize the surrounding objects as enriched by all that the eye perceives, to, too, will anyone having become clairvoyant in the above manner perceive the whole world surrounding him peopled with new qualities, things, beings, and so forth. He now need no longer wait for his dreams to live in another world, but he can at any suitable moment put himself into the above condition for the purpose of higher perception. This condition then acquires a significance for him similar to the perception, in ordinary life, of things with active senses as opposed to inactive senses. It can truly be said that the student opens the eyes of his soul and beholds things which necessarily remain concealed from the bodily senses.

Now this condition is only transitional to still higher stages of knowledge. If the student continues his esoteric exercises he will find, in due time, that the radical change, as described above, does not confine itself to his dream life, but that this transformation also extends to what was previously a condition of deep dreamless sleep. Isolated conscious experiences begin to interrupt the complete insensibility of this deep sleep. Perceptions previously unknown to him emerge from the pervading unknown to him emerge from the pervading darkness of sleep. It is, of course, not easy to describe these perceptions, for our language is only adapted to the physical world, and therefore only approximate terms can be found to express what does not at all belong to that world.

Some idea can be given of those experiences which emerge from the insensibility of deep sleep if they be compared to a kind of hearing. We may speak of perceptible tones and words. While the experiences during dreaming sleep may fitly be designated as a kind of vision, the facts observed during deep sleep may be compared to auricular impressions. (It should be remarked in passing that for the spiritual world, too, the faculty of sight remains the higher. There, too, colors are higher than sounds and words. The student's first perceptions in this world

do not yet extend to the higher colors, but only to the lower tones. Only because man, according to his general development, is already more qualified for the world revealing itself in dreaming sleep does he at once perceive colors there. He is less qualified for the higher world unveiling itself in deep sleep; therefore the first revelations of it he receives are in tones and words; later on, he can here, too, ascend to colors and forms.)

Initiation and its Results, Section III, Dream Life, GA 10

An intimation that the student has arrived at the stage of evolution described in the foregoing chapter is the change which comes over his dream-life. Hitherto his dreams were confused and haphazard, but now they begin to assume a more regular character. Their pictures begin to arrange themselves in an orderly way, like the phenomena of daily life. He can discern in them laws, causes, and effects. The contents of his dreams will likewise change. While hitherto he discerned only the reverberations of daily life, mixed impressions of his surroundings or of his physical condition, there now appear before him pictures of a world with which he had no acquaintance. At first, indeed, the general nature of his dreams will remain as of old in so far as the dream differentiates itself from waking phenomena by presenting in emblematical form whatever it wishes to express. This dramatization cannot have escaped the notice of any attentive observer of dream-life. For instance, you may dream that you are catching some horrible creature and experiencing an unpleasant sensation in your hand. You wake up to discover that you are tightly holding a piece of the bed-clothes. The perception does not express itself plainly, but only through the allegorical image. Or you may dream that you are flying from some pursuer and in consequence you experience fear. On waking up you find that during sleep you had been suffering from palpitation of the heart. The stomach which is replete with indigestible food will cause uneasy dream-pictures. Occurrences in the neighborhood of the sleeping person may also reflect themselves allegorically in dreams. The striking of a clock may evoke the picture of soldiers marching by to the sound of their drums. Or a falling chair can become the origin of a complete dream-drama in which the sound of falling is translated into a gun report, and so forth. The more regulated dreams of the person whose etheric body has begun its development have also

this allegorical method of expression, but they will cease to repeat merely the facts of the physical environment or of the sense-body. As these dreams which owe their origin to such things become orderly they are mixed up with similar dream-pictures which are the expression of things and events in another world. Here one has experiences that lie beyond the range of one's waking consciousness. Now it must never be fancied that any true mystic will then make the things which in this manner he experiences in dreams the basis of any authoritative account of the higher world. One must only consider such dream-experiences as hints of a higher development. Very soon, as a further result of this, we find that the pictures of the dreaming student are no longer, as hitherto, withdrawn by the guidance of a careful intellect, but are regulated thereby, and methodically considered like the conceptions and impressions of the waking consciousness. **The difference between this dream-consciousness and the waking state grows ever smaller and smaller. The dreamer becomes, in the fullest meaning of the word, awake in his dream-life:** that is to say, he can feel himself to be the master and leader of the pictures which then appear.

During his dreams the individual actually finds himself in a world which is other than that of his physical senses. But if he possesses only unevolved spiritual organs, he can receive from that world only the confused dramatizations already mentioned. It would only be as much at his disposal as would be the sense-world to a being equipped with nothing but the most rudimentary of eyes. In consequence he could only discern in this world the reflections and reverberations of ordinary life. Yet in dreams he can see these, because his soul interweaves its daily perceptions as pictures into the stuff of which that other world consists. It must here be clearly understood that in addition to the workaday conscious life, one leads in this world a second and unconscious existence. Everything that one perceives or thinks becomes impressed upon this other world. Only if the lotus-flowers are evolved can one perceive these impressions. Now certain minute beginnings of the lotus-flowers are always at the disposal of anyone. During daily consciousness he cannot perceive with them, because the impressions made on him are very faint. It is for similar reasons that during the daytime one cannot see the stars. They cannot strike our perceptions when opposed by the fierce and active sunlight, and it is

just in this way that faint spiritual impressions cannot make themselves felt in opposition to the masterful impressions of the physical senses. When the door of outward sense is closed in sleep, these impressions can emerge confusedly, and then the dreamer remembers what he has experienced in another world. Yet, as already remarked, at first these experiences are nothing more than that which conceptions related to the physical senses have impressed on the spiritual world. Only the developed lotus-flowers make it possible for manifestations which are unconnected with the physical world to show themselves. Out of the development of the etheric body arises a full knowledge concerning the impressions that are conveyed from one world to another. With this the student's communication with a new world has begun. He must now — by means of the instructions given in his occult training — first of all acquire a twofold nature. **It must become possible for him during waking hours to recall quite consciously the beings he has observed in dreams.** If he has acquired this faculty he will then become able to make these observations during his ordinary waking state. His attention will have become so concentrated upon spiritual impressions that these impressions need no longer vanish in the light of those which come through the senses, but are, as it were, always at hand.

Manifestations of the Unconscious Dreams, Hallucinations, Visions, Sonmanbulism, Mediumship, Berlin, March 21, 1918, GA 67

Everyone is familiar with the external characteristics of the upsurging and ebbing life of pictures arising in dreams. I shall speak of a few of these characteristics only. The dream arises as the result of some definite instigation. Firstly, there are dreams which have been instigated by the senses. A dream may arise because a clock is ticking away beside us. In certain circumstances the pendulum-beats become the trampling of horses, or perhaps something else. Certain sense-images, therefore, are found in the dream. I lay particular stress on this, for dream-experience bases itself upon numerous impressions received by the outer senses. But what works upon the outer senses never works in the dream in the same form as in the ordinary waking life of day. The sense-impression is always transformed into symbolism — a transformation that is actually brought about by the life of soul.

But dreams can also be due to inner stimuli, and again it is not the stimuli as such which appear, but the sense-image which has been transformed, cast into symbolism, by the soul. For example, someone dreams of a very hot stove; he wakes up with his heart thumping. Dreams of flying which occur very frequently, are due, as a rule, to some kind of abnormal process taking place in the lungs during sleep. Hundreds of such examples could be quoted and the different categories of dreams enumerated at great length. Although we cannot enter exhaustively into the deeper aspects of sleep, I want still to speak of certain points.

Literature offers no evidence of particular success in discovering elements in the human soul capable of showing what is actually going on in the soul when bringing about such transformations of the outer stimuli of dreams. Here it must be said that what is actually working in the dream is not the faculty which in ordinary waking life enables man to link one mental picture to another. What is of paramount importance in man's life of feeling is always the decisive factor in the structure assumed by the pictures of dream. From this point of view, therefore, **the dream takes shape in order that certain tensions in the soul may be overcome.** The picture which, as such, has no special significance, is born from this need to lead tension over to relaxation, relaxation over to tension. The soul conjures before itself something that can be an imaginative indication of the real gist of the matter.

Examination of the whole range of the life of dream brings to light two peculiar features which must be particularly borne in mind. **The one is that what is usually called logic plays no part in dreams. The dream has a rule entirely different from that of ordinary logic** for the way in which it passes from one object to the other. Naturally you will be able to insist that many dreams take a perfectly logical course. But this is only apparently the case, as everyone who can observe these things intimately, knows. If dream-pictures present themselves in logical sequence, the reason is not that you yourself produce this sequence during the **dream** but that you are placing side by side, mental images which you have already connected together logically at some time or which have been so connected by some agency in life. In such a case, logic in the dream is reminiscence; the logic has been imported into the dream; the action

of the dream does not in itself proceed according to the rules of ordinary logic.

Moral judgment is also silent in dreams. It is well known that in dream a man may commit all kinds of misdeeds of which he would be ashamed in waking life. It can be argued that conscience begins to stir in dream, that it often makes itself felt in a very remarkable way. Think only of the dreams contained in Shakespeare's plays — poets generally have a good reason for such things — and you will find that they might appear to suggest that moral reproaches make themselves particularly conspicuous through dreams. What is true is that in the dream we are snatched away from the faculty of ordinary moral judgment which in connection with human beings in outer life we must and can exercise. If the dream seems to present moral ideas and moral reproaches in concrete pictures, this is not due to the fact that as dreamers we form moral judgments, but that when we act morally the soul feels a certain inner satisfaction; we are inwardly gratified about something to which we can give moral assent. It is this state of satisfaction, not the moral judgment, that presents itself to the soul in the dream. **Neither logic or moral judgment play any part at all in dreams.**

Pictures do indeed surge up and fade away in dreams but their actual relation to the external world is not changed; the form assumed by the pictures is such that this relation remains as it was. The relation to the external world, that which as bald environment giving contour to the outer impressions, approaches man as he opens his senses during waking life — this does not penetrate into the dream. Impressions can indeed be made upon a man, but the characteristics of what the senses make out of those impressions are absent. The soul puts an emblem, a symbol, in the place of the ordinary, bald impression. Therefore, the actual relation to the outer world does not change. **In the normal dream the human being is as shut off from the external world as he is in normal sleep; he is also shut off from his own body.** What rises up from his bodily nature does not come to direct expression as is the case when he is united in the normal way with his body.

Attempts to explain the nature of dream simply by using methods and sources available to external science will always be in vain, because there is nothing with

which the dream can truly be compared. It occurs in the ordinary world as a kind of miraculous happening. That is the essential point. The spiritual investigator alone is in the position of being able to compare the dream with something else.

The first stage of knowledge of the spiritual world is then capable of being compared with the unconscious activity at work in dreams. A man who makes real progress in knowledge of the spiritual world gradually begins to experience that his dreams themselves are changing. They become more and more rational, and crazy images gradually turn into pictures which have real meaning; the whole life of dream becomes charged with meaning. In this way the spiritual investigator comes to know the peculiar nature of the relation between the life of dream and the kind of life he must adopt in the interests of spiritual investigation. This puts him in the position of being able to say what it is in the soul that is actually doing the dreaming. For he comes to know something besides, namely, the condition of soul in which he finds himself while experiencing the pictures and ideas of genuine Imagination. He knows that with his soul he is then within the spiritual world. When this particular condition of the life of soul is experienced, it can be compared with the condition of the soul in dreams. This scrupulous comparison reveals that what is actually dreaming in the soul, what is active in the soul while the chaotic actions of dreams are in play, is the spiritual, eternal core of man's being. When he dreams, man is in the world to which he belongs as a being of spirit-and-soul. There you have the gist of the matter. **The dream therefore points to deep subconscious and unconscious grounds of the life of soul. But the pictures unfolded by the dream are only a clothing of what is actually being experienced in the course of it.**

A man who is really free from his body in spiritual experience has the spiritual world before him with its happenings and its beings, whereas the dreamer has not yet awakened his consciousness to the degree where this is possible for him. His soul resorts to the reminiscences of ordinary life and **the dream arises when the soul impacts the body. The dream is not experienced in the body but it is caused by the impact of the soul with the body.** Hence the things which constitute the course of his life present themselves to the dreamer, but grouped in such a way that they bring to expression the inner tendencies of

which I have spoken. In reality, therefore, the dream is experienced by a man's own essential being of soul-and-spirit. But it is not the Eternal that is experienced; what is experienced is the Temporal. **It is the Eternal that is consciously active in the dream; but this activity is mediated by the Transitory, the Transient. The essential point is that in the dream the Eternal is experiencing the Temporal, the Transitory — the content of life.**

I have now briefly explained the nature of dream as viewed in the light of Spiritual Science and why it is that the content of the dream is not an expression of what is actually going on in the soul when relaxation follows tension and tension follows relaxation. **In the life of dream the soul is in the world of the Eternal, free from the body.** But what enters into the consciousness as the clothing of this experience arises from the connection with the ordinary circumstances of life.

In point of fact, **the dream passes only slightly into the abnormal life of soul. Spiritual Science shows that the soul is free from the body in dream, that the experiences of dream are independent of bodily experiences; they are separated from the link with the outer world that is present in waking life. In the dream, man is actually free from his body.**

Among all these manifestations the life of **dream** alone remains within the sphere of the normal, because **in dream the human being is not experiencing through the bodily constitution but through the spirit-and-soul**; as a being of spirit-and-soul he strikes up against the body and the physical experiences. Hence in respect of the life of dream too, man is able to exercise correctives and to give it its right place in the rest of life. **In dream, man experiences the spiritual world in such a way that as the result of impact with the bodily constitution, sense-images take shape.**

When it is realized that **through the seemingly chaotic life of dream man is admonished to find the path into the true spiritual world**, the significance of such study becomes evident. A great world-riddle is knocking here

at the door of human life. **This world-riddle is the dream with its strange pictures in which logic and moral judgment are lacking but which are a definite signpost to the spiritual world itself. The realm of dream is an admonition to man to seek for the spiritual world,** and the aim of Spiritual Science is to fulfil this admonition.

Knowledge of the Higher Worlds and its Attainment, Section VI, The Transformation of Dream Life, GA 10

An intimation that the student has reached or will soon reach the stage of development described in the preceding chapter will be found in the change which comes over his dream life. His dreams, hitherto confused and haphazard, now begin to assume a more regular character. Their pictures begin to succeed each other in sensible connection, like the thoughts and ideas of daily life. He can discern in them law, cause, and effect. The content, too, of his dreams is changed. While hitherto he discerned only reminiscences of daily life and transformed impressions of his surroundings or of his physical condition, there now appear before him pictures of a world he has hitherto not known. At first the general character of his dream life remains unchanged, in as far as dreams are distinguished from waking mental activity by the symbolical presentation of what they wish to express. No attentive observer of dream life can fail to detect this characteristic. For instance, a person may dream that he has caught some horrible creature, and he feels an unpleasant sensation in his hand. He wakes to discover that he is tightly grasping a corner of the blanket. The truth is not presented to the mind, except through the medium of a symbolical image. A man may dream that he is flying from some pursuer and is stricken with fear. On waking, he finds that he has been suffering, during sleep, from palpitations of the heart. Disquieting dreams can also be traced to indigestible food. Occurrences in the immediate vicinity may also reflect themselves symbolically in dreams. The striking of a clock may evoke the picture of a troop of soldiers marching by to the beat of drums. A falling chair may be the occasion of a whole dream drama in which the sound of the fall is reproduced as the report of a gun, and so forth. The more regulated dreams of esoteric students whose etheric body has begun its development retain this symbolical method of expression, but they will cease

merely to reflect reality connected with the physical body and physical environment. As the dreams due to the latter causes become more connected, they are mingled with similar pictures expressing things and events of another world. These are the first experiences lying beyond the range of waking consciousness.

Yet no true mystic will ever make his experiences in dreams the basis of any authoritative account of the higher world. Such dreams must be merely considered as providing the first hint of a higher development. Very soon and as a further result, the student's dreams will no longer remain beyond the reach of intellectual guidance as heretofore, but on the contrary, will be mentally controlled and supervised like the impressions and conceptions of waking consciousness. **The difference between dream and waking consciousness grows ever smaller. The dreamer remains awake in the fullest sense of the word during his dream life; that is, he is aware of his mastery and control over his own vivid mental activity.**

During our dreams we are actually in a world other than that of our senses; but with undeveloped spiritual organs we can form none other than the confused conceptions of it described above.

***The Evolution of Consciousness, Section 4, Dream Life,*
*Pennaenmawr, August 22, 1923, GA 227***

Between a man's waking life and his life in sleep — which yesterday I was able to picture for you at least in outline — there comes his dream life. It may have little significance for the immediate actualities of daily existence, but it has the greatest imaginable significance for a deeper knowledge of both world and man. This is not only because what a dream signifies must, in the Spiritual Science spoken of here, be fully recognized, so that the study of it may lead on to many other matters, but also because of the particular importance of dream life as a chink, shall we say, through which certain other worlds, different from the one experienced by human beings when awake, shine into this ordinary world. **So it is that the puzzling elements in dream pictures often call attention**

both to other worlds, below or above the one normally accessible, and also give some indication of the nature of these worlds.

On the other hand, it is extraordinarily difficult from the standpoint of higher consciousness, to go deeply into the enigmas of dream life, for dreams have power to lead people into the greatest imaginable illusions. It is precisely when dreams are in question that people are inclined to go wrong over the relation of something illusory to the reality behind it.

Between falling asleep and waking we have our whole human life. We have to bring to bear on it all that as earthly beings we can conceive and think, and by this means try to unravel the strange forms taken by dreams. The great difficulty is to distinguish the immediate content of the dream, which may be sheer illusion, from the reality which lies behind it, for the reality may be something quite different. But anyone who gradually gets accustomed to finding his way among all the intricacies of dream life will finally see that we need not pay much attention to the pictures conjured up before the soul, for these pictures are shaped by the etheric body left behind in bed. This etheric body is the bearer of our thoughts and conceptions and these are absent from our real being during sleep. We have to separate the content of these conceptions from what I would call the dramatic course of the dream, and learn so to fix our attention on the dramatic element that it prompts questions such as: If I had this experience in waking life, would it give me immense pleasure? And, if I felt pleasure and had a sense of relief in this dream, was I heading in the dream for a catastrophe? Was I leaving some kind of exhibition and suddenly everything got into confusion — there was a crash and a disaster? Such questions must be given first place in the study of dreams — **not the thought-content but the dramatic incidents.**

All this shows how we have to look for the key to a dream not — as is often done — by considering its content in an external way, but by studying its dramatic course and the effect it has on the dreamer's soul and spirit. Then, when our conceptual faculty has been strengthened by the exercises referred to in the past few days, we shall gradually progress from the illusory picture-world of the dream and be able to grasp through the dramatic element the true basis of all that we experience as super-sensible reality between going to sleep and waking.

The dream takes events that could happen in the sense-world and makes them chaotic. Everything becomes different; everything is broken up. In effect, everything in daily life with definite connections loses them to a certain extent in dreams. If we want to picture what actually happens — or appears to happen — in a dream.

The dream we have as we go to sleep and the dream we have just before waking both draw on the experiences of the day, break them up and give them all sorts of fantastic forms — at least we call them fantastic from the point of view of ordinary consciousness. The dissolving of a salt in a liquid is a good simile for the kind of thing that happens inwardly in a dream.

Dreams are a power which forcibly opposes nature's laws. While I am dreaming, the dream itself shows me that I am living in a world opposed to these laws, a world which refuses to be subject to them. While going to sleep in the evening and moving out of my physical and etheric bodies, I am still living half under the laws of nature, although I am already entering the world where they cease to be valid. Hence arises the confusion in the dream between natural laws and super-sensible laws; and it is the same while we are waking up again.

Thus, we can say that each time we go to sleep we sink into, a world where the laws of nature are not valid; and each time we wake we leave that world to re-enter a world subject to those laws. If we are to imagine the actual process, it is like this. **Picture the dream-world as a sea in which you are living and assume that in the morning you wake out of the waves of dream-life — it is as if you arose out of the surge of those waves. You move from the realm of super-sensible law into the realm of intellectual, material law. And it seems to you as though everything you see in sharp outlines on waking were born out of the fluid and the volatile.**

When from the point of view of what is revealed to us on the path I have been describing here — the path leading through Imagination, Inspiration, Intuition, to higher knowledge and super-sensible worlds — when we follow all that goes on during our dreaming, sleeping and re-awaking, then we see that a man sleeps

himself out of his daytime state into his life of sleep, out of which dreams may arise in a way that is chaotically vague, but also inwardly consistent. Behind, in bed, the physical body is left with the etheric body which is interwoven with the physical, giving it life, form, and power of growth. This twofold entity is left in the bed.

But another twofold entity goes out during sleep into a form of super-sensible existence which I might also describe to you in relation still to dream existence. For the higher knowledge given by Imagination, Inspiration, Intuition, it presents itself in the following way.

When a man goes out from his physical body and etheric body, his individuality resides in his astral body. Now, this astral body is made up of processes. Something happens in a man which develops out of his physical and etheric bodies, and it is these happenings which represent the astral body; whereas our concepts, our thoughts, are left behind in the etheric body.

Within the astral body there is spiritualized light, and cosmic warmth permeated by the force of the capacity for love. All this is present in the astral body, and at the time of waking it dives down into the etheric body. There it is held up and appears as the weaving, the action, of the dream. It may also appear in this way when, freeing itself from the physical and etheric bodies, it leaves the world of concepts. Thus, it belongs to the nature of the astral body to carry us out from our physical and etheric bodies.

During sleep too the Ego is active, but what it does is shown us by dreams in illusory pictures. In earthly life we are unable to take in what is already being woven during sleep for our next life on Earth. At the beginning of this lecture I explained how the dream, in the same confused way in which it presents the experiences of a past incarnation, also shows, in a chaotic form, what is prepared as a seed for humanity in future times.

Hence the right interpretation of **dreams leads us to recognize that they are like** a window through which we have only to look in the right way — **a window into the super-sensible world. Behind this window the Ego is**

actively weaving, and this weaving goes on from one earthly life to the next. When we can interpret a dream rightly, then, through this window from the transitory world in which we live as earthly men, we already perceive that everlasting world, that eternity, to which in our true inner being we belong.

Anthroposophy, An Introduction, Section 8, Dreams, Imaginative Cognition and the Building of Destiny, Dornach, February 9, 1924, GA 234

Yesterday I tried to show how a more intimate study of man's dream-life can lead us towards the Science of Initiation. To a certain extent, the point of view was that of ordinary consciousness. Today it will be my task to enter more deeply into the same subject-matter from the point of view of 'imaginative' cognition.

For the moment we will neglect the difference between the two kinds of dreams discussed yesterday and consider dreams as such. It will be a sound approach to describe 'imaginative' vision in relation to dreams which a man endowed with [moral] imagination may have. Let us compare such a dream with the self-perception attained by the imaginative seer when he looks back upon his own being — when he observes imaginatively his own or another's organs — or, perhaps, the whole human being as a complete organism. You see, the appearance of the dream-world to imaginative consciousness is quite different from its appearance to ordinary consciousness. The same is true of the physical and etheric organism. **Now the imaginative seer can dream too; and under certain circumstances his dreams will be just as chaotic as those of other people.** From his own experience he can quite well judge the world of dreams; for, side by side with the imaginative life that is inwardly coordinated, clear and luminous, the dream-world runs its ordinary course, just as it does side by side with waking life. I have often emphasized that one who attains really spiritual perception does not become a dreamer or enthusiast, living only in the higher worlds and not seeing external reality. People who are ever dreaming in higher worlds, or about them, and do not see external reality, are not initiates; they should be considered from a pathological point of view, at least in the psychological sense of the term. The real knowledge of initiation does

not estrange one from ordinary, physical life and its various relationships. On the contrary, it makes one a more painstaking, conscientious observer than without the faculty of seership. Indeed we may say: if a man has no sense of ordinary realities, no interest in ordinary realities, no interest in the details of others' lives, if he is so 'superior' that he sails through life without troubling about its details, he shows he is not a genuine seer. A man with imaginative cognition — he may, of course, also have 'inspired' and 'intuitive' cognition, but at present I am only speaking of 'imagination' — is quite well acquainted with dream-life from his own experience. Nevertheless, his conception of dreams is different. **He feels the dream as something with which he is connected, with which he unites himself much more strongly than is possible through ordinary consciousness. He can take dreams more seriously.** Indeed, only imagination justifies us taking our dreams seriously, for it enables us to look, as it were, behind dreaming and apprehend its dramatic course — its tensions, resolutions, catastrophes, and crises — rather than its detailed content. The individual content interests us less, even before we acquire imagination; we are more interested in studying whether the dream leads to a crisis, or to inner joy, to something that we find easy or that proves difficult — and the like.

It is the course of the dream just that which does not interest ordinary consciousness and which I can only call the dramatic quality of the dream — that begins to interest us most. We see behind the scenes of dream-life and, in doing so, become aware that we have before us something related to man's spiritual being in quite a definite way. We see that, **in a spiritual sense, the dream is the human being, as the seed is the plant.** And in this 'seed-like' man we learn to grasp what is really foreign to his present life — just as the seed taken from the plant in the autumn of a given year is foreign to the plant's life of that year and will only be at home in the plant-growth of the following year. It is just this way of studying the dream that gives imaginative consciousness its strongest impressions; for, in our own dreaming being, we detect more and more that we bear within us something that passes over to our next life on earth, germinating between death and a new birth and growing on into our next earthly life. It is the seed of this next earthly life that we learn to feel in the dream.

The human head is withering most; and the dream appears to imaginative perception as an emanation of the human head. On the other hand, the metabolic and limb organism appears to imaginative vision to be withering least of all. It appears very similar to the ordinary dream; it is least faded and most closely united, in form and content, with the future of man. The rhythmic organization contained in the chest is the connecting link between them, holding the balance.

On the other hand, when we try to understand the metabolic and limb system with imaginative consciousness, we say to our-selves: Your keen intellect does not help you here; you ought properly to sleep and dream of man, for man only apprehends this part of his organization by dreaming of it while awake.

So you see, we must proceed to a highly differentiated mode of perception when we begin to study man's physical organization imaginatively. We must become clever, terribly clever, when we study his head. **We must become dreamers when studying his system of limbs and metabolism.** And we must really swing to and fro, as it were, between dreaming and waking if we want to grasp, in imaginative vision, the wonderful structure of man's rhythmic system. But all this appears as the relic of his last life on earth. What he experiences in the waking state is the relic of his last life; this plays into his present life, giving him as much as I ascribed to him yesterday when I said of his life of action, for example, that **only as much of man's actions as he can dream of is really done by himself; the rest is done by the gods in and through him.** The present is active to this extent; all the rest comes from his former earthly lives. We see that this is so when we have a man before us and perceive his withering physical organization. And if we look at what man knows of himself while he dreams — dreams in his sleep — we have before us what man is preparing for the next life on earth. These things can be easily distinguished.

Consider man's life on earth. There are waking states interrupted again and again by sleep. Now a man who is not a 'sleepy-head' will spend about a third of his life asleep. During this third he does, in fact, live through the spiritual counterpart of his deeds; only he knows nothing of it, his dreams merely casting up ripples to the surface. Much of the spiritual counterpart is perceived in dreams, but only in the form of weak surface-ripples. **Nevertheless, in deep sleep we do**

experience unconsciously the whole spiritual aspect of our daily life.

So, we might put it this way: In our conscious daily life we experience what others think and feel, how they are helped or hindered by us; in **sleep** we experience unconsciously what the gods think about the deeds and thoughts of our waking life, though we know nothing of this. It is for this reason that one who sees into the secrets of life seems to himself so burdened with debt, so maimed — as I have described. All this has remained in the subconscious. Now after death it is really lived through consciously. For this reason man lives through the part of life he has slept through, i.e. about one-third, in time, of his earthly life. Thus, when he has passed through death, he lives through his nights again, backwards; only, what he lived through unconsciously, night by night, now becomes conscious.

Anthroposophy, An Introduction, Section 7, Dream-life and External Reality, Dornach, February 8, 1924, GA 234

Let us now consider this dream-life as it presents itself to us. **We can distinguish two different kinds of dreams.** The first conjures pictures of outer experiences before our soul. Years ago, or a few days maybe, we experienced this or that in a definite way; now a dream conjures up a picture more or less similar — usually dissimilar — to the external experience. If we discover the connection between this dream-picture and the external experience, we are at once struck by the transformation the latter has undergone. We do not usually relate the dream-picture to a particular experience in the outer world, for the resemblance does not strike us. Nevertheless, if we look more closely at this type of dream-life that conjures outer experiences in transformed pictures before the soul, we find that something in us takes hold of these experiences; we cannot, however, retain them as we can in the waking state, when we have full use of our bodily organs and experience the images of memory which resemble external life as far as possible. In memory we have pictures of outer life that are more or less true. Of course, there are people who dream in their memories, but this is regarded as abnormal. In our memories we have, more or less, true pictures, in our dreams, transformed pictures of outer life. That is one kind of dream.

There is, however, another kind, and this is really much more important for a knowledge of the dream-life. It is the kind in which, for example, a man dreams of seeing a row of white pillars, one of which is damaged or dirty; he wakes up with this dream and finds he has toothache. He then sees that the row of pillars 'symbolizes' the row of teeth; one tooth is aching, and this is represented by the damaged or, perhaps, dirty pillar. Or a man may wake up dreaming of a seething stove and find he has palpitation of the heart. Or he is distressed in his dream by a frog approaching his hand; he takes hold of the frog. He shudders and wakes up to find he is holding a corner of his blanket, grasped in sleep. These things can go much further. A man may dream of all kinds of snake-like forms and wake up with intestinal pains.

So, we see that there is a second kind of dream which gives pictorial, symbolic expression to man's inner organs. When we have grasped this, we learn to interpret many dream-figures in just this way. For example, we may dream of entering a vaulted cellar. The ceiling is black and covered with cobwebs; a repulsive sight. We wake up to find we have a headache. The interior of the skull is expressed in the vaulted cellar; we even notice that the cerebral convolutions are symbolized in the peculiar formations constituting the vault. If we pursue our studies further in this direction we find that all our organs can appear in dreams in this pictorial way.

Here, indeed, is something that points very clearly, by means of the dream, to the whole inner life of man. There are people who, while actually asleep and dreaming, compose subjects for quite good paintings. If you have studied these things you will know what particular organ is depicted, though in an altered, symbolic form. Such paintings sometimes possess unusual beauty; and when the artist is told what organ he has really symbolized so beautifully, he is quite startled, for he has not the same respect for his organs that he has for his paintings.

These two kinds of dream can be easily distinguished by one who is prepared to study the world of dreams in an intimate way. **In one kind of dream we have pictures of experiences undergone in the outer world; in the other, pictorial representations of our own internal organs.**

Now it is comparatively easy to pursue the study of dreams as far as this. Most people whose attention has been called to the existence of these two kinds will recall experiences of their own that justify this classification.

But to what does this classification point? Well, if you examine the first kind of dreams, studying the special kind of pictures contained, you find that widely different external experiences can be represented by the same dream; again, one and the same experience can be depicted in different people by different dreams.

Now, if we start from here and examine dreams of this (first) type, we find that the pictures derive their whole character chiefly from the nature of the man himself, from the individuality of his ego. If we have an understanding of dreams — I say, of dreams, not of dream-interpretation — we can often learn to know a man better from his dreams than from observing his external life. When we study all that a person experiences in such dreams we find that it always points back to the experience of the ego in the outer world.

On the other hand, when we study the second kind of dream, we find that what it conjures before the soul in dream pictures is only experienced in a dream. For, when awake, man experiences the form of his organs at most by studying scientific anatomy and physiology. That, however, is not a real experience; it is merely looking at them externally, as one looks at stones and plants. So we may ignore it and say that, in the ordinary consciousness of daily life, man experiences very little, or nothing at all, of his internal organism. The second kind of dream, however, puts this before him in pictures, although in transformed pictures.

Now, if we study a man's life, we find that it is governed by his ego — more or less, according to his strength of will and character. But the activity of the ego within human life very strongly resembles the first kind of dream-experience. Just try to examine closely whether a person's dreams are such that in them his experiences are greatly, violently altered. In anyone who has such dreams you will find a man of strong will-nature. On the other hand, a man who dreams his life almost as it actually is, not altering it in his dreams, will be found to be a man of weak will.

Thus, you see the action of the ego within a man's life expressed in the way he shapes his dreams. Such knowledge shows us that we have to relate dreams of the first kind to the human ego. Now we learnt in the last lectures that the ego and astral body are outside the physical and etheric bodies in sleep. Remembering this, we shall not be surprised to learn that Spiritual Science shows us that the ego then takes hold of the pictures of waking life — those pictures that it otherwise takes hold of in ordinary reality through the physical and etheric bodies. **The first kind of dream is an activity of the ego outside the physical and etheric bodies.**

What, then, is the second kind of dream? Of course it, too, must have something to do with what is outside the physical and etheric bodies during sleep. It cannot be the ego, for this knows nothing of the symbolic organ-forms presented by the dream. One is forced to see that it is the astral body of man that, in sleep, shapes these symbolic pictures of the inner organs, as the ego the pictures of external experience. Thus, the two kinds of dreams point to the activity of the ego and astral body between falling asleep and waking up.

We can go further. We have seen what a weak and what a strong man does in his dreams; we have seen that the weak man dreams of things almost exactly as he experienced them, while the strong man transforms and re-arranges them, coloring them by his own character. Pursuing this to the end, we can compare our result with a man's behavior in waking life. We then discover the following intensely interesting fact. Let a man tell you his dreams; notice how one dream-picture is linked to another; study the configuration of his dreams. Then, having formed an idea of the way he dreams, look at the man himself. Stimulated by the idea you have formed of his dream-life, you will be able to form a good picture of the way he acts in life. This leads us to remarkable secrets of human nature. If you study a man as he acts in life and learn to know his individual character, you will find that only a part of his actions proceeds from his own being, from his ego. If all depended on the ego, a man would really do what he dreams; the violent character would be as violent in life as in his dreams, while one who leaves his life almost unchanged in his dreams, would hold aloof from life at all points, let it

take its course, let things happen, shaping his life as little as he shapes his dreams.

And what a man does over and above this — how does that happen? My dear friends, we can very well say that it is done by God, by the spiritual beings of the world. All that man does, he does not do himself. In fact, he does just as much as he actually dreams; the rest is done through him and to him. Only, in ordinary life we do not train ourselves to observe these things; otherwise we would discover that we only actively participate in the deeds of life as much as we actively participate in our dreams. The world hinders the violent man from being as violent in life as in dreams; in the weak man instincts are working, and once more life itself adds that which happens through him, and of which he would not dream.

It is interesting to observe a man in some action of his life and to ask: what comes from him, and what from the world? From him proceeds just as much as he can dream, no more, no less. The world adds something in the case of a weak man and subtracts something in the case of a violent man. Seen in this light, dreams become extraordinarily interesting and give us deep insight into the being of man.

Through dreams he receives reminiscences of what he has experienced externally since descending to earth for his present life. 'Imagination' gives us pictures which, in the way they are experienced, can be very like dream-pictures; but they contain, not reminiscences of this earthly life, but of what preceded it. It is quite ridiculous for people who do not know Spiritual Science to say that imaginations may be dreams too. They ought only to consider what it is that we 'dream of' in imaginations. We do not dream of what the senses offer; the content represents man's being before he was endowed with senses. Imagination leads man to a new world.

When we look into man's inner life we receive the impression that certain symbolic pictures, whether they arise through imagination or in dreams [of the second kind], refer to what is within man, man's internal organization; on the other hand, the imaginations which refer to outer experiences are connected,

neither with man's internal organization nor with outer life, but with experiences of his pre-earthly state. Beside these imaginations one can only place dream experiences of the first kind, those relating to external experiences of earthly life; but there is no inner connection here between these imaginations and these dreams. Such a connection only exists for dreams of the second kind.

In such a radical case as this it is especially interesting to observe the dream-life. This differs from the dream-life of our ordinary contemporaries; it is much more interesting, but of course this has its reverse side. Still, objectively considered, illness is more interesting than health; from the subjective side — i.e. for the person concerned, as well as from the point of view of ordinary life, it is another matter. For a knowledge of the human being the dream-life of such a patient is really much more interesting than the dream-life of an ordinary contemporary.

In such a case you actually see a kind of connection between the ego and the whole dream-world; one might say, it is almost tangible. And we are led to ask the following questions: What is the relation of the dream pictures that refer to internal organs, to the imaginations that also refer to internal organs?

Well, viewed 'externally', the pictures of man's inner organization that are given in imagination, point to what was within man before he had his earthly body, before he was on the earth; the dream-pictures arise when once he is here. The imaginations point to the past, the dream-pictures to the present. But though an ordinary dream-picture that refers to an internal organ would correspond to a caricature of that organ, while the imagination would correspond to the perfect organ, nevertheless the caricature has the inherent possibility of growing into a perfect organ.

An Esoteric Cosmology, Lecture XII, The Devachanic World II, June 8, 1906, Paris, GA 94

At the first stage of clairvoyance, greater order enters into dreams; man sees marvelous forms and hears words that are pregnant with meaning. It becomes more and more possible to decipher the meaning of

dreams and to relate them to actuality. We may dream, for example, that a friend's house is on fire and then hear that he is ill. **The first faint glimpses of Devachan give the impression of a sky streaked with clouds which gradually turn into living forms.**

At the second stage of clairvoyance, dreams become precise and clear.

The geometrical and symbolic figures employed as the sacred signs of the great religions are, properly speaking, **the language of the creative Word, the living hieroglyphs of cosmic speech.** Among such symbols are: the cross, the sign of life; the pentagram or five-pointed star, the sign of sound or word; the hexagram or six-pointed star (two interlaced triangles) the sign of the macrocosm reflected in the microcosm, and so forth. At the second stage of clairvoyance, these signs — which we today delineate in abstract lines — appear full of color, life and radiance on a background of light. They are not, as yet, the garment of living beings, but they indicate, so to say, the norms and laws of creation. These signs were the basis of the animal forms chosen by the earliest Initiates to express the passage of the Sun through the Zodiacal constellations. The Initiates translated their visions into such signs and symbols. The most ancient characters employed in Sanskrit, Egyptian, Greek, and Runic scripts — every letter of which has ideographic meaning — were the expressions of heavenly ciphers.

In dreams, man beholds his own bodily form from without. He sees his body stretched on the couch but merely as an empty sheath. Around this empty form shines a radiant, ovoid form — the astral body. It has the appearance of an aura from which the body has been eliminated. **The body itself seems like a hollow, empty mold. It is a vision where everything is reversed as in a photographic negative.** The soul of crystal, plant, and animal is seen as a kind of radiation, whereas the physical substance appears as an empty sheath.

To attain the third stage of Devachan, thought must be freed from bondage to the things of the physical world. Man can then live consciously in the world of thought, quite independently of the actual content of thought. The pupil must experience the function of pure intellect, apart from its content. A new world will then be revealed. To the perception of the 'continents' and 'waters' of Devachan (the astral soul of things and the

streaming currents of life) will be added the perception of its 'air' or 'atmosphere.' This atmosphere is altogether different from our own; its substance is living, sonorous, sensitive. Waves, gleams of light and sounds arise in response to our gestures, acts and thoughts. Everything that happens on Earth reverberates in colors, light and sound. Whether it be in sleep or after death, the echoes of Earth can be experienced in these 'airs' of Devachan.