

The Mandukya Upanishad

Introducing the Pranava AUM, and the Four States of Consciousness

Some questions for contemplation.....

Tajasa the dreaming state: Just as in a dream you have subject and object, where you are the perceiver and there is the perceived, and we all can agree a dream is created within your mind - we are told in the waking state it is just the same where from a more expansive state of consciousness we find that we have created subject and object, yet it too is also created within the mind. Is this possible?

To put it in another way, if we can create a perceiver and the perceived in dreams, so there is both an 'experiencer' and a narrative which unfolds, could we be doing the same in the waking state? Could both be created in the mind? Are they two aspects of the mind?

Do our dreams seem real at the time of dreaming? Are there things to be seen, heard, felt? emotions and thoughts arising? is there sensory input? can we act? do we have desires? Could this be the same for our waking state where it only seems real at the time of being awake? Could we also awaken out of the waking state just as we can awaken from the dream state?

We may think that dreams are less real than the waking state because we believe they are simply created by the impressions of our daily waking state but how do we know if the waking state is not also created by impressions of which we are unaware during normal waking consciousness? Can we become more conscious of this state whilst dreaming, and would this bring us wisdom?

Prajna, the state of deep sleep: In deep sleep is there happiness and satisfaction, no desires to be fulfilled? Is this state one in which all sensory information and the mind no longer operate? Does deep sleep lead to increased vitality? Is it possible that in deep sleep we experience a kind of union where we are no longer separate? Is it possible to become conscious of being in deep sleep?

The state of Turiya, the fourth state: Turiya cannot be described or thought about as that would make it an object, rather it is the One who Knows Itself, wherein all is contained, so there is no other. This is the experience of the Supreme Self, Brahman a.k.a. Paramatman, which contains all else within it. It is beyond all duality, This and That, even beyond existence and non-existence. Here it becomes possible to experience Sat-Chit-Ananda, Being-Consciousness-Bliss, although there is no 'I' that is experiencing as such? What would be the best description for Turiya, could it be Silence or perhaps 'Is-ness' i.e. That which is?

The significance of OM.....

It is known as the 'imperishable Om' symbolising **all that is**, the past present and future, **and all that is not. That is the A represents the waking state, U the dreaming state, M the state of deep sleep and AUM for Consciousness or Brahman itself** It is everything that can be known or experienced. It also refers to Brahman, that which is already exists in its own right, which is nameless and formless which encompasses all phenomena but transcends them, being the essential Reality.

To signify essential reality it is the first vibratory sound, and as such is the Pranava, the primordial vibration from which all is created. It is the:

- seed of all forms which are made of differing frequencies of vibration (rupa)
- seed of all language which is our ability to use language, name and conceptualise (nama)
- seed mantra of all other mantras

We can connect with it through the chant of AUM, creating a sympathetic vibration, attuning ourselves to the potential for Life and the flow of Life itself.

Through AUM we are connecting with our essential formless nature.

- When chanting AUM the whole sound box is used so unity is conveyed to your system as a vibration.
- We can focus upon the Universal, where individual concerns and thoughts are allowed to dissolve away, to do this you can imagine you are the ocean (Paramatman) into which all of the rivers of objects and your separate sense of self (Jivatman) are drawn inwards and emptying themselves into the ocean
- If during and after chanting AUM you feel peaceful and calm, then you have done well

” Turiya is represented by AUM. Though indivisible, it has three sounds.” v8

A is the first letter of the alphabet, and the first sound we feel we can utter when we open the mouth so it is equated to the waking state which we feel is our ‘normal’ state. In v9 we are told that if we meditate on the harmony between OM and the waking state all desire is fulfilled.

U is the middle letter of the vowels, and when we utter U it occurs in the middle of the throat denoting the dream state which occurs between waking and sleeping. In v10 we are told that if we meditate on the harmony between OM and the dreaming state then there is no conflict within or without, and there is newfound knowledge that will affect all those around you.

M is the final letter of the alphabet concerned with closing and when chanted denotes the casual state of deep sleep in the heart. In v11 we are told that if we meditate on the harmony between OM and the deep sleep state then we can experience our true state of Being.

So where is the state of Turiya represented with the chant of AUM? It is the whole mantra, and the stillness experienced before, during and afterwards.

“Those who know AUM as the Self become the Self; Truly they become the Self.” v12

In this Upanishad we are given a method for Moksha or Freedom where freedom is found within a change of perspective where we are no longer identified with the body/mind, so that the peace and joy of pure consciousness takes centre stage.

That is, we can recognise that we are not limited to the waking, dreaming or sleep states of consciousness but can experience the transcendental state of turiya, beyond the activity of the mind, where we can know the Truth of our Being, and find fulfilment, beyond suffering. So, like the process of education where all previous learning is transfigured within more advanced learning, the previous learning (in this case the first three states of consciousness) take on a different value when we awaken to turiya.

Otherwise we are identified with our mind created inner and outer worlds where we are constantly seeking fulfilment or wholeness, and trying to exact consequences to our benefit to release a kind of inner tension. This means the mind can never rest, being attached to things that temporarily give pleasure or avoiding things that give pain, i.e. we are locked within name and form thereby continuing upon the wheel of existence, Samsara. We can let this knowledge be remembered in our daily lives.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eGAMRXIHmFo>