CHAPTER IV

Lucid Dreaming – The Transitional World between Waking and Dreaming

‘All that we see or seem is but a dream within a dream’.
- Edgar Allan Poe

The subject of all our experiences, whether waking or dreaming, comes in two flavors: objective facts and subjective impressions. The world of our dream experiences is an intermixture of these two aspects of reality, taking roots in the objective reality and branching out in the mental arena. The world of dreams is the acme of creative power of our subjective being. Dreams is a wonderland where the departed revisit us; we could do all the eerie and unnatural, and even live out our fantasies. Our dreams are formed from our memories, hopes and fears – the essence of what we consider as ‘we’.

The world of dreams, just like this present moment, feels entirely convincing, utterly real and immediate as long as we are experiencing it and we fail to make best use of this mind-created reality as we are simply caught in the dream imagery and never experience freedom. Thus every night, dreams end up as lost opportunities to experience freedom and celebrate consciousness in all its grandeur. Becoming aware that the truly convincing and utterly overwhelming vivid and realistic experiences of a dream are, after all, only a dream and not a physical reality is a profound opportunity to understand the nature of reality and our own consciousness.

1. WHY CAN’T WE REALIZE THAT WE ARE DREAMING?

There are several reasons for this. Whether awake or dreaming, in reality, we are experiencing only the tanmatras or sense qualia and not anything else. These sense qualia are also capable of being registered and stored in our mind. Hence essentially whether awake or dreaming, we are interacting with only the qualia – there being no difference. However, if we somehow manage to arouse logical discretion while dreaming, the stored qualia owing to lack of physical support from the external world fail consistency test upon scrutiny in the dream world. Hence, though ordinary dreams
do not reveal any apparent clues to identify them as such, lucid dreamers or those who wake up while dreaming are able to identify the incongruities and inconsistencies in the dream projections and realize that they are dreaming. It all depends on how much 'awake' we are while we are dreaming.

It is important to understand that we are not the same being throughout the twenty four hour cycle of the day. Our consciousness vacillates between the two extremes of sleep and waking with many intermediate states. Dream is a twilight zone between these two known extremes. Even within the waking state, our conscious is very different from when it feels lethargic to when it is at its intellectual best. Thus our conscious is also phasic, just like the moon. In the twilight zone of dream world, our mental abilities and faculties are greatly repressed. We lack critical and reasoned thinking because the conditions are unpropitious. Just as we fall victim to illusory experiences in waking world owing to unfavorable conditions, our conscious state creates such conditions to our brain chemistry, which greatly hamper our scope for normal activity. The dreaming brain, neuroscience tells us, is similar to the state of a person under the influence of alcohol.

Another reason is to do with our habit. We are never used to questioning any of our experience or doubting the veracity. We have never cultivated such critical thinking in our waking state and are habituated to acting as though our responses are mechanically programmed. Therefore, it is hardly surprising that we ever ask ‘Is this a dream?’ in our dreams. Lucid dreamers attempt to raise the awareness of the critical faculties of our dreaming minds to a level where they can recognize that they are dreaming while they are. ‘In many ways, the experience of the lucid dreaming to our standard dreaming is, what the peak mental clarity is to normal waking consciousness is. To achieve this state we will need to become connoisseurs of consciousness; we must learn what it really means to be aware’ (Love, 2013, p. 5).

It is important to remind ourselves that there is hardly any difference in the neural activity of the brain – whether we are awake or dreaming. In both the states, we literally live through our experiences. However, we fail to distinguish dream from waking not because brain neural activities are almost, if not exactly, the same during both the states, as neurobiology wants us to believe; in fact it is because our mind
believes in the reality of the visuals presented to it in dreams so much so that, it causes corresponding neural correlates in the brain; it is not the other way round.

A great deal of our bodily functions is carried out by autonomic nervous system. Dreaming, like breathing is largely an involuntary process. Then how to enter into this rather no-entry zone of autonomic system? Yogic texts say breathe is the entry point. When we focus our attention on breathe we begin to bring the respiratory system under conscious control which was also, hitherto an automatic process. This way, we gain entry into the autonomic system and gradually we gain access to the hitherto forbidden regions of our unconscious. Rob Preece says in *The Psychology of Buddhist Tantra*, ‘When we are willing to take the psyche seriously, and listen to its symbolic expression, we can gain greater clarity and insight into the forces that influence us…We will no longer be victims of the unconscious’ (Preece, 2012)’. Our breathing patter is one such symbolic expression. When we are agitated our breathing becomes shallow and short and when we are completely relaxed, our breathing pattern turns into long and rhythmic sequence. Steady practice of mindful breathing during waking offers us foray into the autonomic processes. Tenzin Rinpoche (2010) reminds us that *prāṇa* and mind can be likened to a blind horse and a lame person. Separately they are helpless but together they make a functional unit.

Despite the fact that dreaming has been integral to our very living since time immemorial, except for a few dream yogis, we as a human race have not been able to produce any expert dreamers or dream artists. Due to the influence of psychoanalysis on us, we look at dream and sleep only from an analytical view to interpret the dream content. This is purely a diagnostic perspective concerned with the dream content only. We hardly wonder why this grand illusion should occur to us at all in the first place. We come across people describing their dreams either in wonderment or in fear but hardly come across anyone saying he/she steers their dreams to their choice and that he/she fully enjoys the dream reveries every time they fall asleep. We have plenty of dream interpreters but we, as a race, have not been able to produce dream aficionados who can train and guide people on how to explore these states for enjoyment and personal gains and help people realize the true meaning of experience, self, reality and other metaphysical truths. ‘If only we manage to inspire a whole generation to become adventurers and explorers of dream world’, as Love (2013)
wishes, ‘those who can navigate the dream state as it occurs, if only people are trained how to actively participate in dreams, not simply recall, only then people begin to appreciate the absolute wonder and beauty of dreaming with awareness’ (p.71). The fast growing lucid dreaming community across the globe is inviting everyone to explore and understand this previously overlooked miracle of the human mind.

Dreams have helped humanity to find solutions to pestering problems throughout the timeline. But when we manage to dream with lucidity, it can be very potent way of thinking ‘outside the box’, giving one a unique access to the creative potential of the mind.

II. WHAT IS LUCID DREAMING?

In the simplest terms lucid dreaming is a peculiar mental state of dream in which the dreamer realizes that he/she is dreaming. Love (2013) defines ‘A lucid dream is, in essence, the meeting of two seemingly contradictory states of mind; dreaming and consciousness’ (p. 8). Even though the person is asleep, and is indeed watching a dream the mind suddenly becomes empowered with clarity, critical thinking and awareness that the experience is just a dream! Sometimes lucid dreaming is also termed as ‘conscious dreaming’ which is a less popular term. Lucid dreaming, like its less attractive counterpart, the ordinary dreaming is after all our own mental creation, a mental fantasy, or a natural virtual reality. The central aspect of lucidity is the ability to gain insight, whether in dreaming or waking, and not being carried away by the phenomenon. Lucidity experts claim that it is an exhilarating and rewarding state of mind in which one becomes aware of awareness itself. Robert Waggoner, a lucid dream expert, is cited by Charlie Morley (2013) to have once told him, ‘Lucid dreaming helps us to see the magic that already exists’ (p. 14).

In all our normal and routine dreams we have the ability only to recall the dream memories after we wake up but we never really live the dream moments fully with awareness. However lucidity while dreaming lets us realize this with such a degree of awareness that we could exert an almost unlimited control over it. It is waking up inside of a dream but at the same time not disturbing it so as to make it vanish. Lucid dreaming is one of nature’s free gifts to mankind which can be harnessed with practice and honed as a skill with perseverance and diligence. Charlie (2013) says ‘if you dream, you can lucid dream – it just takes some practice’ (p. 24).
Lucid dreaming can be defined as ‘the rare phenomenon that a dreamer is aware of the fact that he or she is currently dreaming. Lucidity can be conceptually analyzed as the gradual stabilization of an EAM (epistemic agent model that describes the awareness of ‘I am a knowing self’). There are different types and stages of lucidity, and there has been recent progress in isolating the neural correlates of such transitions. The ‘meta—awareness’ that is regained in dream lucidity may be interestingly related to the termination of mind-wandering episodes during waking periods’ (Blanke & Metzinger, 2009).

Neurochemically, both lucid dreaming and meditation involve striking the right balance – while in lucid dreaming the attempt is to arouse aminergic system to become partially activated, but at the same time not making the cholinergic system to retreat completely; on the other hand in meditation the effort is to allow the cholinergic system to be partially activated while we are awake, yet not allowing it to completely dominate and incapacitate the aminergic system and taking advantage of such chemical state to train the mind. Ordinary dream is the meditation of an untrained mind. It is an uncontrolled ‘dhyāna’.

Charlie Morley (2013) contends that till such time one experiences lucid dreams fully, one will be tempted to think dreams only as unreal and inconsequential. ‘When we become lucid in our dreams and learn to stabilize that lucidity, we quickly learn that a lucid dream is as real as waking reality. It’s just a reality with different dimensions’ (p. 10). Love (2013) compares non-lucid dreams as equivalent to being strapped to a cinema chair and forced to watch whichever film our minds decide to play, and lucid dreaming with an interactive pastime where freedom abounds.

Lucid dreaming is experienced by a miniscule population. Most of the people normally sleep quite unawares of their dream time and quickly forget the content of their dreams once they wake up. Some people manage to remember their dreams and report that their dreams were long and vivid. Some others have excellent ability to day dream and fantasize. However, lucid dream is neither vivid dreaming, day-dreaming nor imagination. Lucid dreams certainly are overwhelmingly vivid, realistic and are remembered clearly after waking up but unless the dreamer becomes absolutely aware at the time of the dream that he was dreaming, it cannot be called a lucid dream. Lucid dreamers exhibit all the characteristics of a person experiencing a real dream.
with their neurobiological signals attesting to this. Lucid dream can be distinguished by another important factor from ordinary dreaming. Once we become aware that our experience is a dream suddenly our dream-behavior changes; it become more matured, logical, sensible and wise! ‘A lucid dreamer frees himself from the inappropriate responses of a normal dreamer’ (Love, 2013, p. 6). Love further adds that ‘lucidity can be best measured by the appropriateness of one’s emotions thoughts and behaviors to the knowledge that one is dreaming’ (p. 166). Charlie Morley (2013) puts them as ‘among the most thrilling experiences to be had’ (p. 3). It is ‘a full-color, high-definition and hyper-realistic experience that can profoundly reconfigure our perceptions of reality’ (p. 3). It is a form of mind training. The most important thing to learn, whether it be dreaming or waking life is to ‘to switch off the autopilot and to wake up to life.’ Charlie Morley (2013) puts it succinctly ‘To dream lucidly is to live lucidly’ (p. 13).

Lucid dreamers claim the very first experience of lucid dream is going to be such a profound and life-changing event that compels us to seek answers about the nature of our reality and of what it means to be human. Like in the dream, even in our waking lives we are often simply lost in the events taking place and we don’t live the moments. Only on rare occasions that sometime our awareness touches new heights and we feel those moments of our lives as the most cherished ones. Lucid dreaming brings this cherished feeling to our otherwise normal dreaming. With lucid dreaming, we can turn an unknown, bizarre world of dreams into a magical world of adventure. When we begin to experience what it feels like to exist each moment, suddenly we begin to enrich our lives and we begin to comprehend what a great boon it is to be conscious.

We hardly make any ‘reality check’ to make sure that this moment of experience is not a dream and instead, lead our lives in utter monotony attending to it rather as passive participants. Love (2013) says ‘the question ‘Are you dreaming?’ is relevant not only to every moment of your life, more importantly – it is a doorway to another world.

Lucid dreaming is more than simply an amusement park ride or an elaborate computer simulation. In reality, through lucid dreaming we are approaching some of the deepest mysterious of life; it provides us a platform to explore what it means to be a
conscious, intelligent species called humans. Essentially, with lucid dreaming we approach directly those seemingly eternal enigmas of what is reality, what is an experience and who is experiencing. Thus, lucid dreaming inevitably leads us to the important ontological question: “what is real?”

Morley (2013) contends that when dreams are experienced with full lucidity, they no longer seem dreamy at all; on the contrary they look and feel real. They appear so real and compel us to ask questions about the reality of our waking perceptions. The experience of lucid dreaming makes us stand in awe at the creative potential of the human mind. It feels as though we have travelled to another dimension of existence. But at the same time, lucid dreaming does not mean lucidity divests us of touch with physical reality of the waking life; ‘once we can penetrate the persuasive reality of the dreamscape and know it as an illusion, we become better equipped to recognize self-deception in the waking state. This recognition makes us more grounded and more aware’ (pp. 5-6).

We need to realize that essentially, whether it is ordinary dream or lucid dream, our mind is creating a dreamscape that incredibly mimics the outside world, while another part of our own mind is interacting with this projection. So, in a dream we are both, the creator and the created, the projector and the projected. This fact can be appreciated to the full in the real time when we turn lucid in our dreams. Once lucid in our dreams, we become aware that we are sleeping on our bed, and yet are creating our own mental world and moving around in it! This is such a rich conscious state that reveals the infinite potential of the human mind that it is comparable to supernatural states of dhyāna described in yogic texts. Being able to be mindful in dream and sleep is considered as a great spiritual attainment in eastern religions such as Sanātana Dharma (Hinduism) and Buddhism. Lucid dreamers call this experience as ‘undeniably one of the most exciting and rewarding practices we may ever engage in, with a wealth of both psychological and spiritual benefits’ (Morley, Dreams of Awakening, 2013, p. 14). Though lucid dreaming is not easy to master, it’s a completely safe practice, open to all ages and abilities, offering a unique insight into our own psychology (Morley, Dreams of Awakening, 2013).

Because lucid dreamers realize that the world they are experiencing is a creation of their own imagination, they can consciously influence the outcome of their dreams.
With practice one gains greater and greater control over the lucid dreaming and in theory could even manipulate the dream environment and the characters to his liking. Comparing with the standards of the physical world and social norms, they can do virtually anything. In fact the only limiting factor during a lucid dream is the limitations of our imaginative mind. They can create and transform objects, people, situations, and worlds – even themselves. This provides them with an opportunity to get to the core of what is experience and what is real, ultimately leading them to the primal question of who they really are.

However, almost all lucid experts warn that the desire to ‘control one's dreams through lucid dreaming’, is an ill-advised and a kind of impossible aim. Although with training an advanced lucidity practitioner can gain a remarkable level of volitional influence over many aspects of their subjective experience, there is always a much larger aspect of mind creating the majority of the dream. Even the well trained lucid dreamers hardly have one lucid dream a day. On a normal day, we have about five dream periods each night. Even if one dream period is transformed into a lucid dream, other four dream periods will have ordinary dream experience where our unconscious mind decides what dreams may come. Waggoner (2009) says, ‘No sailor controls the sea. Similarly, no lucid dreamer controls the dream (p. 17)’. Just as a sailor cannot control the overwhelming power of the sea, a dreamer is also largely under the control of his unconscious. Recalling and sharing his own experiences, Charlie (2013) tells us any such attempt to control and command the dream world would invariably lead to a loving but firm slap from the motherly dreaming mind, either through an inexplicable loss of lucid control or a bombardment with nightmarish shadow material.

### III. KINDS OF LUCID DREAMING

Lucidity can be achieved while dreaming in two different ways. Dr. Stephen LaBerge (1990) coined two terms to define these two ways of becoming lucid in dreams as Wake Initiated Lucid Dream (WILD) and Dream Initiated Lucid Dream (DILD).

DILD is developing awareness while dreaming. Normally as we go to bed, we get into hypnagogic state, then enter into N2 and N3 NREM states and then enter a small duration REM, briefly wakeup for a while, change our body posture and thus complete one sleep cycle. Typically in a night, we continue 4-5 sleep cycles of about
ninety minute duration. With each sleep cycle, the duration of REM sleep where we experience structured narrative dreams increases and around the last REM phase, with practice, we can suddenly become aware in our dreams that we are dreaming. This lucid awareness can descend on us slowly or can happen in an overwhelmingly dramatic way. Sometimes we might not enter into full lucidity but dangle in a partial lucidity, a grey area between vivid and lucid dreaming. Thus DILD is essentially turning an ordinary dream into a lucid one after the dream has begun. DILD is relatively easier to achieve with determination in about three weeks, ‘most likely due to the fact that a dream already contains elements of conscious activity’ (Love, 2013, p.67). For novice practitioners of lucid dreaming, many of their first DILDS occur at the later part of a dream, because the brain chemistry begins to gear towards the waking state resulting in their critical faculties becoming more astute.

On the other hand there is rather a difficult way of becoming lucid in dreaming. This is by maintaining awareness while slipping into the sleep and recognizing the process entering into sleep and dreams. This awareness will then have to be maintained throughout the sleep in ‘low flame’ until we enter the visually rich REM sleep and the moment the dream narrative begins, we should be able to remember that we are watching a dream. This is comparatively very hard to achieve and so there is a bypass to this which seasoned lucid dreamers suggest. Instead of maintaining conscious awareness throughout the entire sleep cycles, say for five and half to six hours, which is possible only for sleep yogis, an easier way is to complete the bodily requirement of deep NREM sleep by sleeping till early morning and then waking up for an hour and then reentering the sleep in the wee hours of the day. This way, we would directly enter into REM sleep and if we manage to hold our wakeful awareness in this process we would directly enter into WILD. However, it is said that only advanced lucid dreamers are able to achieve this WILD. ‘WILDS are far more elusive and peculiar phenomenon than that of the DILDs. It is falling asleep consciously, directly into a dream’ (Love, 2013, p. 100). ‘WILDS are long lucid dreams with a high degree of clarity. While they may be slightly harder to initiate, they are worth trying’ (p. 103). WILD dreams often closely resemble the environment in which we are sleeping as that is the point from where we take off into our dream state.
Daniel Love (2013) points out that ‘once combined, dreaming and conscious awareness will always result in a lucid dreaming. Whilst a lucid dream may always be a lucid dream, how you enter into it can have a profound impact on the nature of the experience’ (p. 98). He looks at WILD as adding dreaming to consciousness and DILD as adding consciousness to dreaming and further adds that ‘whichever state is being added to the other that needs to be stabilized. As the primary state of DILD is dreaming, it will initially be the dominant of the two states, so once consciousness is added, one will need to spend a little time grounding oneself and attempt to increase one’s awareness. That is to say at the start of a DILD the dream will most likely be very vivid and stable but our consciousness may well not be’ (p. 99).

Daniel Love (2013) makes a rather queer observation which the researcher begs to differ. He says:

‘A such, (in case of DILD) we are simply looking to increase the conscious element to the critical level where it becomes fully activated and useful. In contrast, a WILD starts with consciousness where unless exhausted to the point of hallucination, there are no elements of dreaming already present, so we are attempting a more dramatic shift in mental state’ (p. 34).

The researcher begs to differ because consciousness (read mind) already contains stream of thoughts which get consolidated in the course of dreaming. They become solidified and take a more visual quality as the activity of the senses is shut out. Hence it is wrong to argue that WILD does not have elements of dreams embedded in it.

WILD often results in some bizarre sensations and experiences. ‘Feeling of electrical vibrations running through the body, extra limbs or bizarre distortions of bodily parts, feelings of dropping or floating, temperature changes, the feeling of something or someone touching our body, strange noises, voices or people calling our name, etc.,’ (p. 102) are reported by Love (2013) as common WILD dream experiences, which seem utterly real and convincing. Love (2013) also points out that ‘many accounts of astral travel and alien abduction share a striking, and unlikely to be coincidental, resemblance to the experience of a WILD’ (p. 101).
IV. WHO CAN LEARN LUCID DREAMING?

Lucid dreaming is a practice that can be learned by anybody. In fact, it is more like regaining our lost ability from the childhood. Studies suggest that children naturally experience lucid dreams (Hobson A., 2005). It is probably because the children have unrestrained imagination with their right brain dominating, making them intuitive and creative. But our life in the society demands a different set of mental responses and so slowly we as adults begin to see logic, pattern etc., which we have learnt from our culture and practice them throughout our lives as the reality, mistaking the product of our cultural ignorance as representing the reality. This left brain domination makes us rigid and removed from the sensitivity required for lucid dreaming. However, it is reported that 'artistic adults such as actors, musicians and artists, often retain their right-brain inclination, which is why they also seem to have spontaneous lucid dreams more often than other people'(Morley, Dreams of Awakening, 2013, p. 13).

Morley (2013) also informs us that people who have good physical body balance (such as break-dancers) are often good at lucid dreaming. He says people with certain characteristics are more likely to gain lucidity in dreaming than others. According to him, artistic, mindful, break-dancing, shamanic-drumming, female, teenagers are more like to get lucid in their dreams (p. 15).

V. TIMING THE LUCIDITY

Though spontaneous lucidity is also reported by people, ordinarily unless we make serious effort, our dreams don’t turn lucid. Any attempt to become lucid while dreaming is rather an uphill task owing to the fact that the brain chemistry during dreaming is very different from the watchful awareness of waking conscious. Hence ‘mental preparation, brain chemistry and proper timing are very critical for attempting to lucid dreaming’ (Love, 2013, p. 107).

Love (2013) informs us that the ‘dream building’ occurs layer by layer, often the auditory and tactile aspects of dream being the first to form. As we enter into sleep one of the important developments is onset of sleep paralysis. Normally by the time sleep paralysis ensues we would lose our conscious awareness and so do not notice its inception. But if we manage to maintain sufficient awareness, sleep paralysis is suggested by lucid dreamers as almost certainly the single most favorable time to attempt to induce a lucid dream.
For inducing lucidity certain times of our sleep are found to be more conducive. In the early morning hours we normally enter long duration REM sleep which is an effective ground for becoming lucid. Lucid experts suggest that the induction attempts should best be made after at least five hours into sleep, when REM increases in both length and regularity. It is also reported that waking up from a short dream almost guarantees entering REM sleep directly. Waking up an hour earlier than usual remaining awake for that hour, and returning to sleep helps in inducing lucidity. Interestingly ‘many lucid dreamers report developing an intuition to predict when they are most likely to experience REM’ (Love, 2013, p. 111).

When people are woken up from NREM, they report being in a kind of groggy mental fog and as being in deep thought. This suggests that NREM is akin to deep meditation sans mindful awareness and if we manage to bring in conscious awareness into NREM it is a perfect combination for serious practice of yoga. The sure shot way to bring our brain out of the fog of its sleeping state is to engage ourselves mentally in an activity that requires our critical and logical faculties. Intentions of our minds have the power to shift the chemical balance of the brain in the direction of an activity it is required to be achieved. Every day whenever we are transitioning from one state to other our very brain chemistry changes in a jiffy as though some magic wand is waved. With some serious effort we will manage to bring in the perfect combination of brain chemistry that is conducive to lucid dreaming and lucid living.

### VI. HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF LUCID DREAMING

Effort to control or at least influence dreams is a very old practice across the cultures. ‘Dream incubation’ has traditionally been the term used to define the process attempted, before sleep, to influence the general theme of the dream. Egyptians, were known to incubate dreams by long customary rituals. In ancient Greece, specially designed structures called ‘asklepieion’, in honor of their god of medicine, were used for focused prayers and to find cures or answers to their ailments and problems in dreams. After spending the night sleeping in the temple, people used to report the resultant dream to the priest, who then interpreted it and prescribed a cure. Similar practices and temples have been used in the Middle East and the Roman empire. (Love, 2013, p. 93).
Historians of lucid dreams tell us that the first description of lucid dreams can be traced back to fourth century B.C., in the Aristotle’s treatise on dreams (2009) where he wrote: ‘Often when one is asleep, there is something in consciousness which declares that what then presents itself is but a dream’. St Augustine in the early fifth century AD is stated to have written a letter to a priest where he described a dreamer named Gennadius who was prompted by a seer in a dream, through a series of intense philosophical questions to realize that he was in fact experiencing a dream. Augustine argues that just as in a dream we experience without the need of a physical body, in the same manner we would be able to experience after life.

Celebrated Spanish Sufi master Ibn El Arabi who lived in 12-13th centuries is known as the greatest of all Sufis. He says ‘a person must control his thoughts in a dream; the development of such a mental alertness is of great value and should be developed by all’.

Lucid dreaming was first detailedly described in 1867 by a French dream enthusiast named Marquis d’Hervey de Saint-Denys with the anonymous publication of *Les reves et les moyens de les diriger: observations pratiques* (dreams and how to guide them, practical observations). He first coined the term ‘lucid dream’ albeit in his native French as ‘reve’ meaning lucid. This publication demonstrated lucid dreaming as a learnable skill (Love, 2013, p. 17).

Saint-Denys’ chronicling of factors affecting dreams requires special mention. He discovered the relation between our thoughts in the daytime and the dreams we experience in sleep and suggested that anyone looking to increase their enjoyment of dreams should fill their minds with pleasant thoughts. He also learnt to associate a particular dream character with a particular tune and would indeed see the relevant person in his dream when the tune was played while he was sleeping. He performed a similar experiment involving scent. He took an unfamiliar bottle of scent with him during a holiday and repeatedly exposed himself to this scent, having soaked his handkerchief in it. Once he returned, he arranged for his servant to sprinkle a few drops of that scent on his pillow while he slept and as he had hoped, he dreamt once again of visiting those mountains. However some of his observations seem off the track. His conviction that a dreamer would not experience anything that he had not
previously experienced in waking life is wrong. For example a great number of people ‘fly’ in their dreams which should not have been possible had he been correct.

Lucid dreaming did not draw the attention of mainstream scientists as much as it should have, because it was thought as a subject suitable for the study only by the parapsychologists. Morley (2013) laments that ‘regardless of thousands of years of first-hand reports and an entire arena of Buddhist teachings on the subject, most sleep and dream researchers considered the idea of conscious awareness within dreams a flaky new-age delusion’ (p. 27). Interestingly, though Sigmund Freud aroused interest in dreams among the scientists and the laity with his classic ‘Interpretation of Dreams’, he did not mention anything about lucid dreaming.

Frederick Van Eden a famous Dutch writer and psychiatrist is credited with coining the term lucid dreaming in his paper titled ‘A Study of Dreams’ published in Proceedings of the Society of Psychic Research. Though people unacquainted with the concept of lucid dreaming may at first consider it as a contradiction to be both aware and asleep at the same time, Van Eden commented, ‘In lucid dreams the sleeper remembers his daily life [and] reaches a state of perfect awareness… Yet the sleep is undisturbed, deep and refreshing’. He listed seven categories of dreams, lucid dreaming being the seventh. He made several important observations, one being the experience of a dream body independent of the physical body. While waking up, he made sure that his dream body was in a different position to that of his sleeping physical body and was able to witness the transition between the two as he woke. He described the distinct sensation of having two bodies, creating a ‘double recollection’, which he described as the ‘most wonderful’ and something he enjoyed repeating. He also made a very pertinent point that flying or floating in non-lucid dreams was often a sign that lucidity was close at hand, such an experience being completely out of normal range of waking human experience. He also observed that sometimes we experience false awakening and think we have woken up until a point when we would notice an inconsistency which would indicate the true nature of predicament. These dreams area convincing copy of the experience of genuinely waking up and hence are called false awakening.
In 1969 famed American psychologist Charles Tart, known for his contribution to parapsychological studies, mentioned lucid dreaming in an anthology of papers called *Altered States of Consciousness*.

Mary Lucy Arnold Forster trained herself to recognize her unpleasant dreams as ‘only dreams’ and face them boldly. This idea she even attempted to teach children.

Oliver Fox, English writer poet and occultist, wrote that he became lucid in his dreams whenever he recognized subtle inconsistencies in his dreams. Once lucidity dawned, he writes, ‘instantly the vividness of life increased a hundred fold. Never had the sea and sky and trees shown with such glamorous beauty; even the commonplace houses seemed alive and mystically beautiful. Never had I felt so absolutely well so clear brained so inexpressibly free! The sensation was exquisite beyond words’ (Fox, 2000, p. 28). He called them dreams of knowledge.

Russian philosopher P. D. Ouspensky who was the famed disciple of Gurdjieff highlighted the idea of consciously entering a dream directly from waking, rather than developing consciousness during the dream.

Carlos Castaneda referred to lucid dreaming in his third book to *Journey to Ixtlan*, where the Shaman don Juan teaches the now famous technique of finding one’s hand in a dream in order to stabilize in lucidity. His ninth book *The Art of Dreaming* published in 1993 covers the complete teachings of Don Juan.

Dr. Jayne Gackenbach studied the role personality traits played in influencing one’s ability to lucid dream. He runs a website called spiritwatch.ca that chronicles various aspects of lucid dreaming.

Dr. Keith Hearne, a psychologist, at Hull University, is the pioneer who experimentally demonstrated lucid dreaming as a real dream state way back in 1975. While Ram Narayana (1923) wanted to find a method or technique that would carry some proof from the wakeful world into the dream world, Hearne recorded the first ever deliberate signals sent from within the dream to the outside world by a lucid dreamer named Alan Worsley. He wanted to devise a mechanism through which a lucid dreamer could communicate with the external world that he is aware that he is dreaming. He realized that though our muscles are paralyzed while we are dreaming,
which is called sleep atonia, the eye and the respiratory muscles remain active. Taking advantage of this, he asked his lucid dream subject Alan Worsley, to send signals from the dream world a set of smooth horizontal eye movements that were very different from the random eye movements of REM sleep or alter his breathing patterns. These signals were then picked up by the eye-movement recorders in the lab, while the EEG machine tracked his brain activity. In the final hour of Worsley’s sleep cycle, something remarkable happened. Worsley was able to send a regular set of large zigzags, a proof that he was deliberately moving the eyes remembering the instructions given to him when he was awake. In a way Worsley managed a smooth sailing to and fro between the wakeful and dream worlds. Even though he was also suggested beforehand to press a physical switch, he could not press a physical micro switch due to the paralysis in dreams.

Daniel Love(2013) vividly describes in his book how Dr. Keith Hearne conducted his experiment in his laboratory:

His subject, Worsley was a local shop worker and an experienced lucid dreamer. Worsley dreamt that he was wandering the university wearing electrodes. It was this peculiarity that cued him into an awareness that he must be dreaming, thus initiating lucidity. This demonstrates the power of association and expectation in influencing the theme of one’s dreams. Hearne’s dream reports of his subjects contained elements that were related to their sleeping circumstances in the lab. Hearne’s discoveries include among others, lucidity was generally preceded by a burst of especially brisk rapid eye movement, lasting generally around 22 seconds.

He created Dream Machine the world first device that would help users both overcome nightmares and initiate lucid dreaming. The device sends electrical impulses to the risks that are weak enough so as not to wake the dreamer, but cue them into realizing they were dreaming. A second use for the machine was to help users avoid having nightmares. The sensitivity of the device could be set to recognize particularly rapid breathing, which is often associated with strong emotional
content in a dream. It would then send an alarm to immediately to awaken the dreamer. (pp. 31-32).

Almost at the same time while Keith Hearne was conducting laboratory experimentation on lucid dreaming, Stephen LaBerge another researcher was busy in the United States working his way to establishing lucid dreaming as a genuine phenomenon experienced by the dreamers during a special conscious condition. In fact the credit for pioneering and popularizing lucid dreaming among the general public should mainly go to Stephen LaBerge. Charlie (2013) points out that the first song to be sung in the lucid dream state by LaBerge’s research team was ‘Life is but a Dream’.

Now, with the help of modern scientific instruments like EEG and MRI, scientists have been able to pinpoint when the dreamer turned lucid in his dreams by identifying the exact neurophysiological correlates. The researchers concluded that ‘lucid dreaming constitutes a hybrid state of consciousness with definable and measurable differences from the waking state and from the REM [rapid eye movement] dream state’ (Voss, Holzmann, Tuin, & Hobson, 2009). They discovered that when lucid consciousness was attained within the dream, activity in areas associated with self-assessment and self-perception increased markedly within seconds (Max-Planck-Gesellschaft, 2012).

Charlie Morley (2013) identified four main levels of lucidity and called the whole array of lucidity as lucidity spectrum. However, he points out that the transition from one level to the other need not be a linear one and sometime the conscious awareness may suddenly burst in our dreams taking us directly to very high levels of lucidity.

**VII. LUCIDITY SPECTRUM**

Like anything and everything in life or indeed in universe, there is no clear cut dichotomy as ‘lucid’ and ‘non-lucid’ dreams but rather a gradient of different hues and colors forming the full spectrum of dream based on degrees of awareness within the dream, ranging from a suspicion that we might be dreaming to fully conscious reflective awareness.
**Level 1: Pre-lucid**

Celia Green, a dream researcher coined this term ‘pre-lucid’ to describe the state of mind in which we suspect that all that we are experiencing could be a dream. A great deal of persons experiencing vivid and long dreams with good dream recall often come to this pre-lucid state some time or the other and might not find a headway unless they seriously begin to practice lucidity inducing techniques. Pre-lucid state normally dawns when we realize some anomaly or aberration in the dream. For example, we are pre-lucid if we find ourselves thinking, ‘I don’t usually go out in public in my underwear... Could I be dreaming?’

**Level 2: Semi-lucid**

In this level we suddenly become aware that we are lucid dreaming but it does not sustain for long. We may be lucid one moment, then become distracted by the dream and slip back into non-lucidity. More commonly, the initial ‘lucidity flash’ can be so exciting that we wake ourselves up.

**Level 3: Fully Lucid**

This is the state of fully conscious reflective awareness within the dream, coupled with volitional interaction with the dreamscape and dream characters. Here we are fully aware that we’re dreaming and can begin to influence the dreamscape and narrative of the dream by engaging in whatever activity we want to do. With full lucidity, we can maintain awareness for the entirety of the dream period, which may be an hour or more in length (Morley, Dreams Of Awakening, 2013, p. 8).

**Level 4: Super-lucid**

This is a term coined by Robert Waggoner to describe the state in which we have a level of awareness that surpasses full lucidity, due to an experience of partial non-dual awareness. A super-lucid dream is, akin to experiencing non-dual awareness in which the clarity of mind is so strong that it may temporarily dissolve the dreamer’s sense of self.

The implications of super-lucid state are explained by Morley (2013):

> The fundamental difference between ‘fully lucid’ and ‘super-lucid’ rests on a subtle but profound shift of perception. Most of us experiencing a fully lucid dream will interact with the dream as if it is waking reality. For example, we might use a door to get from one
room to another or fly through the air to travel to a new place. In a super-lucid dream, however, we’ll just walk straight through the wall or instantly appear somewhere at will rather than travel there. While super-lucid, we base all our actions upon the realization that everything in the dream is a creation of the mind, without slipping back into the dualistic interactions of lower-level full lucidity.

We experience a witnessing dream from a gentle non-preferential perspective, fully aware that we are dreaming but without any desire to influence or interact with the dream. Instead we allow it to unfold on its own, often as though we are watching it on a movie screen (p. 9).

Kant calls this inner awakening the appreciative insight one gains after knowing, “starry sky within”. Such witnessing dreams, with non-dual awareness are generally attained with prolonged meditation – the meditator effectively carries the daytime’s quiet non-preferential mindfulness into the night.

**VIII. THE WAR OF TITANS... CONSCIOUSNESS WITH UNCONSCIOUS**

The battle of sentient beings with unknown unconscious has been raging ever since life first appeared on earth. As the life progressed on the evolutionary ladder, we humans, a few other primates and avians began our adventurous sorties into the unknown fathoms of unconscious and succeeded in converting some portion of unconscious into the twilight zone of dream world. Dream world thus, is an intermediate state where the battle between the consciousness and the unconsciousness is fought daily. For a typical human being, this is a ground where he is not equipped with the right paraphernalia to win the battle. Having entered into the domain of unconscious, his critical thinking, mindful awareness, introspecting ability, memory recall are all critically hampered. He ventures into the battle ground only to find himself overwhelmed by the spontaneously exuding projections from the unconscious. Science tells us that we humans evolved with dreaming built into our design. This battle would culminate with the victory of consciousness entering and annexing the deepest aspects of unconscious. For this to happen along the lines of evolution would take eons. But fortunately, human race is on such a threshold that we could speed up the whole process by cultivating to be mindfully aware while awake.
and carrying the same into dreaming – which is termed lucid dreaming. Lucid dreaming is establishing the supremacy of conscious awareness over otherwise uncontrolled features of deep recesses of our unconscious which would get illuminated involuntarily. Once dream zone is thus brought under conscious volition, the same begins to percolate into the unconscious deep sleep as well, just as mindful waking percolates into dream state and converts it into lucid dreaming. This is the culmination of triumph of consciousness… a real celebration of our existence.

It is a matter of common observation that the world we live in is composed of inanimate objects like mountains and rocks, plants and trees, animals of lower order, and humans. If this world of us with its above constituents is segregated and put in a sequential order, with consciousness as the basis for this assortment, a definite pattern emerges which looks something like this:

**Rocks and Mountains → Plants and Trees → unicellular organisms → Insects → Animals → Human beings**

The components of lowest order of existence viz. rocks and mountains are endowed with no conscious will at all that is, they are incapable of doing anything by themselves. If, for example, water is flowing by the side of a rock eroding it, the rock can just do nothing – neither use it for its benefit nor avoid it.

On the other hand, the next state of existence i.e., the plants have better ability than their predecessors in the sense that they can use the water for their benefit, but at the same time they are incapable of avoiding it even if it is submerging them and proving harmful for their existence. Here only the utility is brought under control while avoidance is still out of reach.

The next state of existence, the lower order animals (including invertebrates and vertebrates) are endowed with better control of their environment than their predecessors and they can both use it or avoid it to *some extent*. Thus they have comparatively a better control of their environment, *implying that they can exercise their consciousness comparatively to a better extent*. But they necessarily have to depend on the nature for their survival as they can do nothing about it when draught
comes or when their lands are inundated with flood in a spate. Yet no doubt, these organisms have far many options than their earlier cousins.

A primitive or less civilized man, on the other hand has further control of his environment as he could dig wells for water, or run away from the course of a river predicting or apprehending gushing waters. His mind is far developed than his other living companions of lower order and hence his judgment of the environment around him is far superior – thus giving him greater control. This is the state where the Manas is first transforming itself into Buddhi offering him better control on his environment. The budding Buddhi concretized itself and dawn of modern civilization took place. Thus the present day modern man has far better control of the world he lives in.

The theory of evolution also states that the life on earth took to the above course in the above order to reach the height of its present day existence of human beings. That is, all of the above states of existence shall have to be treated as a links of a chain, the preceding ones producing the subsequent ones. When placed in this way, a definite pattern in a sequential order emerges.

In the inanimate state of existence there were just no options, just take things as they come. As the Prakrti evolved itself into life force subsequently being endowed with Manas and Buddhi, the options grew from two to many. Thus as we are climbing the rungs of the ladder of evolution we are better equipped to control the prakṛti and the unconscious aspect of the self. Here the patter would look something like this:

Stage 1: Inanimate world with no options (Pancha Bhūtika Prapancha)

Stage 2: Plants and Trees with only a couple of options (entry of Prāṇa)

Stage 3: Lower rung organisms up to Mammalians with quite a few options (full grown Prāṇa plus entry of Manas)

Stage 4: Primitive man to civilized man (significant control of his environment and hence greater options for his consciousness (full grown Manas plus entry of Buddhi)
Stage 5: Modern man (with fast evolving Buddhi) options fast becoming innumerable as greater and greater control of his environment is achieved.

Stage 6: Super Human beings (Gnostic beings?) Yet to descend on the earth + - + - + - ...

The world is a chain of events that follows a definite pattern and order, which we normally term as evolution. And there is no reason why the evolution should stop at this present level of human civilization - as human beings are only occupying the highest rung at present but they need not be the culmination of evolution in any case. If the above sequential order of evolution is analyzed, it leaves us to fairly guess that in the future course of the evolution, there is the imminence of emergence of “Super humans or Gnostic beings” who would stand at the pinnacle of Buddhi state and will have far better control on the events of their world and the options in front of them to choose from would be in multitudes and so have greater consciousness than their preceding states of existence, as is propounded in the philosophy of Aurobindo.

If this progress is presumed to continue to its final culmination, there would eventually be a state where the options are infinite and the consciousness is limitless. We will call this state as Brahman or the active principle with supreme consciousness.

This above sequence also gives us one more clue. That the world seems to be ascending a ladder that has inactivity at the lowest rung and each succeeding rung is more and more activated. It also suggests that everything that is at the unconscious end would evolve relentlessly, finally merging into the absolute active principle.

Unconsciousness and consciousness are at the two extremes of one long chain of existence, which can be represented with two colors with one extreme end as black and the other extreme end as white, with the stages in between in a state of gradual transition or gradation.

The transition from black to white or from unconsciousness to consciousness and various stages of the above gradient are mere results of different levels of veils or sheaths on the consciousness. Thus it can be assumed that the whole universe has its
existence between two extremities and transition from one extremity to the other is not erratic but necessarily follows a sequence. This macrocosmic transition of unconscious into consciousness is experienced in circadian rhythms by living organisms in the form of sleeping and waking at microcosmic level.

Thus the entire creation can be viewed as waging of war by the conscious on the unconscious. The speckle of consciousness which became manifest in the tiniest of organisms millions of years ago, through the laborious process of evolution has been slowly expanding its horizons into the unconscious world and has arrived at an important stage called humanity where the battle lines are more closely drawn. Microorganisms exhibit only circadian periods of activity and inactivity even though the life span of some of them lasts less than twenty four hours. Lower level organism exhibit what may be called sleep and waking. Starting from birds, most mammals, particularly Primates exhibit waking state with volitional consciousness and sleep with a distinct state of dreaming that can be distinguished into REM and NREM sleep stages. Thus as the organism scales up in the evolutionary ladder, it becomes more aware and develops greater control on the environment and also itself. Everyday these higher level primates, particularly the humans are venturing into the unconscious with some part of their conscious awareness still intact and we call it the dream state. But we still have a long way to go when we venture into even the deepest states of sleep with full consciousness. Sometime in future, on the scale of evolution there will arrive a species far conscious than humans which will have conscious control on not only the dream state but also on the deepest of our sleep. Lucid dreamers and dream yogis are far ahead of present day humans who know how to make use of their strong intentions to keep them awake even in the dream state and with repeated practice alter their brain connections. It is possible, with repeated efforts as Lamarckism suggests, lucid dreamers could transmit their genes to the next generation paving way for the creation of a new species within the humans.

Another great achievement of the humans as a species that made them superior to other animals is their ability to focus their attention. The degree of focus and unwavering attention are what distinguish a man from an animal. Animals can keep their attention focused only as long as there is change in their sensory input. The attention span of an animal lasts only for a few seconds and that too, is dependent on
movement, color, intensity, contrast and other such factors. The moment the
movement, variation in contrast, cease, the animal loses interest. Its attention gets
diverted and even dissipated and its unconscious brain takes over. Man is also an
animal but he belongs to the higher order; he also suffers from such attention deficit.
The decision to focus, to concentrate and to select and direct our thoughts requires an
almost a herculean effort. Hobson says ‘All that is most gloriously human is
dependent upon our capacity to direct our consciousness’. (Hobson J. A., Dreaming as
Delirium, 1999, p. 166)

The teleological objective of human life is to make substantial improvement in his
mindful attentiveness before he departs from his mundane existence. Indeed, the
ultimate purpose of all vidyas or learning is to enable the learner to gain mastery over
his ability to stay focused. School as a social institution for imparting education is
developed by the wise ancients with this precise purpose in mind. It is not the
information learnt in a school that is important; it is the gradual control one gains over
his attentive state of mind that matters most. When a child is made to sit in a school
and iterate a rhyme or a mathematical table, he is made to pay attention to some
specific activity for a considerable period of time. But as the novelty in the process
ceases, the act of consciously attending to the object at hand is replaced by passive
unconscious acts, as the autonomic nervous system takes control and the child is again
lost in his animalistic existence. The narrative of a teacher and other such lively
elements help him bring his attention back to focus.

The eventual objective of all this exercise is to enable the child to repeatedly bring
back passive unconscious acts into the realm of conscious attention. We normally
mistakenly believe that learning a thing so as to be able to do it unconsciously is the
mark of our mastery over it. But it is only one half of the story. Carrying out even the
habitual activity with mindful awareness is the real art, the summum bonum.

From the teleological perspective, every sentient being is constantly striving over
millions of its incarnations to gain mastery over keeping its awareness attentive and
mindful. However, among such millions of beings making effort to have better and
greater control over their attention span, only a few would elevate to the level of
maintaining their focus and attention for a longer span with comparably greater
intensity. Vyāsa in his bhāshya to Patanjali’s Yoga Śastra states that most humans do
not go beyond kshipta, moodha and vikshipta states — the inattentive, lethargic or hyperactive states of mind. He contends that only those who manage to bring their attention to ekagra and niruddha states lead purposeful existence. Rest all are simply carried away by their mental propensities just as dry leaves are blown away by the wind. When one-pointed focus is coupled with the innate artistic talent of the creator, a great piece of art comes into being. And new discoveries, creations, methodologies and new techniques are unraveled.

Our involvement and deep absorption in the act we are doing coupled with mental alertness makes even the intangible thought forms into tangible objects, even making them brim with life force! Indian and Tibetan Buddhist texts describe tulpa, a meditative practice in which the practitioner develops the power to materialize his thoughts into beings or objects through sheer mental prowess and spiritual discipline (Kanchi V. S., Romancing Art, 2015).

IX. DEVELOPING SELF AWARENESS AND CONTROL: THE ART OF LUCID DREAMING

Our dreams are products of our thinking. Love (2013) tells us that if we callously fill our mind with all the unwanted stuff, then our thoughts and dreams will also spew that garbage back at us. On the other hand if we choose a ‘healthy diet’ for our mind, the quality of our dreams will also improve accordingly. One of the several advantages we as civilized race have in cultivating focused attention is the development of language that includes reading and writing. The language skills help in successively connecting persons and events in a cohesive sequence of narration in our minds and all through this process, we focus our attention and thus training it to be able to maintain focus. Lucid dreamers also point out that reading helps lucid dreaming. Reading a novel — that boosts our imaginative faculties — before going to bed, does indeed help in lucid dreaming. Morley (2013) explains the reason by stating that our frontal cortex, where analytical and critical thinking takes place, is employed to imagine and visualize what we are reading. This region of brain helps in conceptualizing and interpreting what is being received. This region is not fully active when we are normally dreaming or when we are lost in a thought or in a routine activity. But when we regain our watchfulness this region suddenly gets activated as we focus on a task. Even when one becomes lucid in his/her dreams this region of the
brain is activated which can be read as lighted up with activity by the neuroscientists. For us to recognize that we’re dreaming this region of the brain plays the crucial role (Hurd, 2012). Charlie (2013) gives a very useful piece of advice for prospective lucid dreamers: engaging the right-brain for a long time in creative activities fills the lucidity tank of our mind to the brim. Logic, observation and discrimination are all powerful tools that are worth developing to aid in lucid dreaming. Some amino acid food supplements such as Cholinesterase inhibitors also promote lucid dreaming.

Experienced lucid dreamers suggest taking some time out before sleep to prepare the space for both our sleeping area and our mind and imbue our final minutes of wakefulness with the strong intention for lucidity.

In Bhagavad Gita Krishna wants Arjuna to become a yogi and repeatedly addresses him as gudākeṣa – which mean the one who conquered sleep. Further in the second chapter of Sāmkhya Yoga it is stated:

Yāniśāsarva-bhūtāntasyāṁ jāgartisaṁyami
yasyāṁ jāgratibhūtāni sāniśāpaśyatamuneh

What is night for all beings is the time of awakening for the self-controlled; and the time of awakening for all beings is night for the introspective sage.

In fact the state of mind during lucid dreaming and reciting a mantra and meditating on it while keeping the eyes closed is exactly alike. In both cases, we divest ourselves of the external sensory stimuli and focus onto the internal world but at the same time not allowing the sleep take over us or loosen our grip on conscious awareness. We do not lose our consciousness or mindful awareness and yet do not discard the internal mental imagery, rather allowing the internal scene to play and watching it with a wakeful mind.

In all, the activities of human mind are concerned with two realms. Either we become outward, taking the aid of the sense organs and interact with the world. This state is what we call as being awake. In the neurobiological parlance, this is the activated state of aminergic system – that is associated chiefly with the activation of motor and visual cortices of the brain. Here our awareness is at its most comfortable level of wakefulness – though there are higher wakeful states that our awareness is capable of
attaining, as in the case of encountering a dreadful or a highly pleasant situation, euphoria resulting out of problem solving activity that required deep focus, extreme tiredness, drug induced heights, mindful meditation etc. Soon afterwards we generally fall back to our normal awareness levels that we are accustomed to exhibit. We try to alter this wakeful state of awareness through many manipulations in our daily lives, reducing it through alcohol consumption, enhancing it through psychedelic substances, etc., as each altered state of awareness unveils a new world in front of us and such indulgence is pleasurable to us due to their novelty. The other realm of the human mind is accessed through moving inward, by shutting the senses and disconnecting ourselves – as is done during dreaming, meditation, visualization, day dreaming, etc. In this state, our awareness is subdued and the cholinergic system takes the reins, activating the parasympathetic nervous system – one of the two important autonomic nervous systems. The autonomic nervous system functions to regulate the body's unconscious actions. Bringing the unconscious mind into the conscious awareness is what the object of yoga and meditation is all about. When we shut our senses and move inward, since we cut off the intensity of the sensory data, the internal world begins to become more conspicuous. Even while we are fully awake and indulging in the sensory world, we continue the activities of internal world through our subconscious talk and thoughts. But they are less conspicuous as they pale out in front of the intense sense data. The same subconscious talk and thoughts in our mind consolidate gradually as we move inward and begin to focus on them. This is the activation of the cholinergic system which, chemically speaking is the activation of acetylcholine – a neurochemical. The indistinct thought forms and the subconscious talk of our waking world begin to take more concrete visual forms and the whole array of dream objects and characters begin to become animated with life! The aminergic system becomes deactivated and subdued which results in the most important loss – the loss of conscious control on us. That means our reflective thinking, self-awareness, ability to consciously retrieve our memory etc., are lost. But if we manage to strike a balance between these two modes of our mind and keep us enough awake but letting the internal imagery to play, we reap the benefits of the two modes at the same time. That is, we enter a stage where the power of unconscious mind is unleashed, the best of its creative work is at display and we are awake as well with all the powers of our wakeful consciousness to discern and retain what is best to
us. This is what a meditative yogi or a lucid dreamer longs to achieve. Interestingly, once that is achieved, because we have conscious control on ourselves, this hybrid state of consciousness unveils before us hitherto unexplored new worlds and new possibilities. A yogi is often reminded in the vast yogic literature to keep his wakefulness intact while meditating on the object of meditation, lest he has every possibility of falling into the uncontrolled worlds of dreams reveries and sleep. With repeated practices, a lucid dreamer or meditative yogi masters to strike the right balance between the aminergic-cholinergic systems with the power of his mind.

The autonomic nervous system with sympathetic and parasympathetic systems is what the entire yogic system is concerned about. The chakra system of yoga runs in line with the spinal cord that regulates the autonomic nervous system.

There are two ways of attaining this balance – either chemically manipulate the physical brain so as to affect the mind or train the mind so as to alter the brain chemistry to the desired level. As Allan Hobson (2005) repeatedly points out, brain-mind is a unitary complex in which the brain and mind are inseparably connected. Specific brain states can bring about certain states of mind or rekindle a flash of memory or alter the mood. In the same fashion the mind has the ability to impact the brain chemistry. In fact ordinary human beings always alter their brain chemistry unknowingly with what all they process in their minds and as a result, sometime affect the brain chemistry to such an extent as to be reckoned in madmen; some use the same mind to generate such useful neural pathways and connections in the brain that they are reckoned among the best of scientists and yogis. Magnetic Resonance Imagery of insane people as well as meditative yogis shows distinctive changes in the neural pathways of the brain. It is evident from this that though the brain-mind is a unitary complex each affecting the other, normally we human beings manipulate the brain connections through our volition, intention, desire etc., of our minds and not the other way round. That is to say except as part of treatment of a specific mental illness we normally do not manipulate our brains to alter the state of the mind. This conclusively proves that we have direct connection with our minds and not with our brains and that our brains are, just like our hands and other parts and organs are mere instruments for executing our will. It is not the brain that is creating the mind, as neurochemistry hastily infers; rather it is the mind which impacts our brains.
Chapter IV: Lucid Dreaming – The Transitional World between Waking and Dreaming

X. THE TECHNIQUE OF MIND CONTROL

Charlie Morley offers a map that has three-part structure of Ground, Path and Germination, to explore the inner potential of mind and recognize its true nature (Morley, Dreams of Awakening, 2013, p. xiv).

Grounding Oneself

This is a practice that is carried out while one is awake and is carried into the dream world. Looking around, while awake, one should remind oneself with full conviction that everything seen around is just part of a dream and our mental creation. Speaking this loud to oneself has great effect. When this practice is done in dream it alienates one from the dream scenario, enabling one to act detachedly. Verbalized statements like “I am dreaming, I cannot be hurt” “Nothing is real” “I am in control” etc., help in the higher state of realization. There is an advice by the dream experts: ‘Should you wish to have more fun with this process singing your way around dreamland is equally as effective’. (Love, 2013, p. 168). This technique of alienating oneself from the mire of attachment to fascinations of the world has been practiced since times immemorial in India as a powerful tool inducing detachment and offering freedom. One saint of Maharashtra named Tukdoji Maharaj used to sing out loud the illusory and ephemeral nature of this phenomenal world. Was he reinforcing his conviction so as to enable him lead a lucid living in this waking world? We may never know.

Detaching from intense emotions and situations

Intense emotions, whether in waking or dreaming are detrimental to mental clarity. Traditionally this state of mind where it is trapped up in the mire, is despised in religious and philosophical literature as 'moh-maya'. Experienced lucid dreamers inform us that during almost every lucid dreaming, like in the waking life, there will be moments when our emotions become so intense that we risk losing our mental clarity owing to the events around us. This getting caught up in the dream is one of the biggest dangers for lucid dreamers. There are moments when the chance of slipping back into the mental fog of a non-lucid dream is a very real risk.

This danger can be countered through detachment. Depending on the circumstances we must either step-back, move away or simply stop fighting the tides of events, consciously. Repeating to ourselves that ‘this is a dream, nothing is real…I cannot be hurt I am in control’ will help get our grips back on ourselves. More often than not,
this thought alone will result in an instant reinstatement of our control. Even intense positive experiences can also overwhelm our awareness. Should there be any situation that is engaging us too strongly, we must simply detach from it. Over a period of time, such behavior will become our second nature.

There are two approaches to lucid dreaming. One is to merely letting the dream play out on its own terms, and not attempting to alter the flow of events at all, while at the same time, watching the unfolding events with awareness. The other is to exert oneself to manipulate the dream. Even though extreme lucid control is absolutely possible it is not an easy accomplishment. Lucid experts tell us that such skills to control dreams often start out rather limited and grow with both experience and time. The level of consciousness during the dream, combined with how developed the understanding of what it really means to be dreaming, are both directly in proportion to the level of control a dreamer will be able to exert. In other words the more you understand that the entire experience is a mental construction, the more you can alter and play with it. On the flip side of this, and as is experienced rightly in non-lucid dreams, the more you believe the dream to be reality the higher the chances that the dream will be in your control’ (Love, 2013, p. 172).

Laboratory research conducted by Stephen LaBerge and his team showed that ‘a sufficiently elevated level of central nervous system activation is necessary for the occurrence of lucid dreams’. He further points out ‘evidently, the high level of meta-cognitive function involved in lucid dreaming requires a corresponding level of neuronal activation high enough to activate the pre-sleep intention to recognize that you are dreaming. This level of cortical and meta-cognitive activation is only attained in the most intensified form of sleep: “phasic” REM’ (LaBerge, Lucidity Flashes, 2014).

“Sleep is the best meditation.” — HH The Dalai Lama

Lucidity, whether of dreaming or during waking, is by its very nature elusive. We fail to maintain the vigil, maintain the witness stance for long. Not being entangled in the experience is rather a matter of great diligence. We all must find our own personal methods to practice and attain lucidity. The skills learnt in lucid dreaming and in dream practice are easily transferable to other areas of life and can go a long way to improving many aspects of life.
Lucid dreaming is the first step to dream yoga, whose ultimate object is to finally culminate into sleep yoga. Because in the deep sleep the activity of the mind ceases, once we manage to keep ourselves awake, it leads to fathomless awareness which the Upanishads and the Tibetan Buddhist scriptures extol as our primordial essence. However for the practice of lucid dreaming, dream recollection is the primary prerequisite. This whole process is a yoga meaning our effort to reunite with our true nature. Elaborate description is available on the kind of regimen and habits a practitioner wishing to ‘awake’ himself must follow in various scriptures. For dream recollection and lucidity, foods categorized as *sāttvik* are highly conducive and *tāmasic and rājasic* foods are contraindicative. Our diet can have profound effect on our mental state. Foods rich in choline and vitamin B5 are recommended by the lucid dreamers as helpful.

\[
\text{yuktāhāra-vihārasya} \\
\text{yukta-ceṣṭasyakarmasu} \\
\text{yukta-svapnāvabodhasya} \\
\text{yogobhavatiduḥkha-hā}
\]

‘He who is balanced in eating and recreation, whose actions are moderate, whose dream and wakefulness are well balanced, for him the yoga ameliorates the suffering’. Yukta in Sanskrit is appropriateness. Appropriateness comes only with watchful awareness. In a deeper sense he who manages to be constantly watchful and mindful throughout the day and night while eating, acting or dreaming, for him this mindful awareness leads to cessation of misery. All soporific and intoxicating substances are proscribed in Buddhist, Jain and Hindu scriptures because they are incompatible with our effort to fight against the thick veil of unconsciousness. Scriptures warn, even if alcohol is consumed once, it amounts to a sin that cannot be surmounted for hundreds of births. However it is interesting to remind ourselves that while the scriptures are vociferous in condemning liquor as taboo for a yogi there is no such proscribing when it comes to ganja (marijuana) and bhang. In fact until the Indian Hemp Drugs Commission Report that was released at the end of 19th century, refusing to partake bhang was considered an offence. Lord Shiva who is considered as the first Yogi is also depicted as smoking chillum. Many revered yogis of India & Nepal are well known for their use of ganja for yogic purposes. However it is right to mention here
that mind altering the brain chemistry with its strong desire and intention to attain the heights of yoga is always welcome rather than altering the brain chemistry through drugs to induce the mind. Use of sleeping-tablets and tranquilizers and other soporific substances including smoking of hashish and consumption of opium etc., work against our ability to recall dreams and so are detrimental to lucid dreaming and subsequent dream yoga. Daniel love informs us (Love, 2013) smoking pot, alcohol and consumption of certain medicines collapse dream-recollection and are not beneficial.

Structurally, nicotine molecules are very similar to the molecules of dream state inducing acetylcholine, a neurotransmitter. This is one of the many substances used by those who experiment by the chemical induction of lucidity. However longtime users have these receptors desensitized and may fail to experience vivid and lucid dreams. Practicing Word or math puzzles, playing computer games that engage our critical and logical abilities are helpful. Meditation in which the focus is to retain a witnessing alert consciousness is a popular and often cited pre-induction activity (Love, 2013, p. 117).

Cycle adjustment technique which means altering the sleeping times either one hour before or after also helps in lucidity induction.

Tibetan medicine as well as dream yoga techniques emphasize on the importance of right body postures for the smooth flow of rLung or prāṇa in the system which in turn helps in gaining lucidity while dreaming. Experienced lucid dreamers are also of the opinion that if we recline on our bed exposing the vital organs by lying on the back or side, it results in lighter sleep and higher mental arousal. More defensive and covered sleeping position such as the fetal position tends to result in deeper sleep with low mental arousal.

The familiarity of the sleeping environment is also an important factor – familiarity promoting deeper sleep and unfamiliarity results in lighter sleep. Love suggests a way to experience unfamiliarity in our own familiar bedroom – by sleeping in our bed in the opposite direction (Love, 2013)!

Logically speaking, the dream world need not obey any rules – either physical laws, or the rules of the society because after all, dream world, at the outset, seems to be our own self-created private world. However this view is not entirely correct. In a
normal dream, even though we create the world of our dreams yet we obey the rules of the dream world as a mere dream character rather than governing the dream world. Our dreams are a product our memories and imagination, both of which are programmed based on our past experiences. Hence a great majority of our dream environment seems a lot more similar to the waking world almost obey the same rules which we observe while awake. Further, there are rules and certain constraints imposed also due to the confines of neurology or by the ever flowing time. However, even the ordinary dreamscape occasionally bestows eerie situations and uncanny powers to the dream scenarios, disobeying known laws of physics and society. But still we should behave humbly and courteously with other dream characters just as we would expect ourselves to be in an ethically governed world for, this dream world and its inhabitants are in the most fundamental way, part of our own self.

XI. BENEFITS OF LUCID DREAMING

Practicing lucid dreaming is beneficial for improving the pleasantness of large proportion of dreams that are reported to be at least mildly unpleasant in nature. The occurrence of nightmares is reported to be at least taking place once in a month and this also can be a strong argument in support of putting efforts to becoming lucid in dreams. Traditionally, psychotherapists suggest people suffering from frequent nightmares to cure themselves by imagining the nightmare during waking hours with an alternative positive outcome and rewriting the plot with a happy ending. However, if such people learn to practice lucid dreaming this technique can be employed during the dream itself, allowing the direct interaction with the nightmare and the rewriting of the outcome and the response to events in the real time.

Lucid dreams are often described with adjectives such as ‘extraordinarily vivid’, ‘intense’, ‘pleasurable’, and ‘exhilarating’. People frequently consider their lucid dreams as among the most wonderful experiences of their lives. Practicing lucid dreaming can also dramatically improve the quality of waking life and get more out of our lives. Sometimes people doubt whether practicing lucid dreaming will mar the difference between waking and dreaming, making the practitioner lose sense of reality. On the contrary, lucid dreaming makes a person more aware and wiser than ever.
LaBerge (1990) thinks becoming self-conscious is not what is expected in lucid dreaming practice. He thinks such self-consciousness is detrimental to effective and natural flow of our performances. He says ‘I don’t think that you should always be conscious that you are dreaming any more than I think that you should always be conscious of what you are doing in waking life’ (p. 17). He thinks as long as our habits are working smoothly, we don’t need to direct our action consciously but when they are taking us in the wrong direction, whether dreaming or waking, we should be able to “wake up” to what we are doing wrong and consciously redirect our approach. But the researcher is of the opinion that cultivating self-awareness and self-consciousness, though in the beginning hampers smooth and seamless flow of our actions, is beneficial in the long run. Researcher also agrees that when we become self-conscious while delivering a public lecture, it would certainly interfere with the natural flow of our speech delivery. But practicing to maintain self-awareness throughout our daily activities vigilantly helps to cross the threshold and rather helps in being more effective and stable, since we become more centred in our being.

On a fundamental level lucid dreaming can offer unlimited fun in a three dimensional virtual world. Humans have the tendency to constantly seek new and novel ways to be entertained. Lucid dreaming, if people are taught, can be the ultimate stop for entertainment, pleasure and wish fulfillment. Love (2013) suggests several great ways to entertain ourselves in lucid dreaming. He says flight is one of the most liberating and enjoyable experiences of lucid dreaming. However since the upādāna kāraṇa or the ingredients of our dreaming essentially are our waking life memories, even the flight experience in dreams of a city dwelling dreamer is going to be marred by the real life obstructing objects such as electricity and telephone cables! However, we might remind ourselves that the only power these power line have over us is that which we give them via our belief.

Another interesting technique suggested by Love (2013) to adopt during dream flight is to reframe our minds and consider that it is not we who are flying but the ground is moving away from us, that the world around us is moving as we remain stationary. Perhaps we can convince ourselves that we are in an advanced virtual reality simulation and the environment is simply a projection completely under our control. Stephen Hawking, the celebrated astrophysicist of our times, says we can describe any
event such as we walking on the surface of the earth either as we, walking on the surface of a rather stationary earth or as we simply moving our legs back and forth over the earth's surface and earth moving backwards in relation to us. He says both these perspectives are perfectly valid from the point of view of physics! It is only because we are used to looking at things from a habituated view that the other view seems wrong to us.

Love (2013) further adds 'in lucid dreams one can explore humanity’s most basic pleasure to heart’s content – sex. This is one of the most popular activities pursued by dreamers. Some find that changing their gender in the dream world can allow them a new understanding of the sex from the perspective of their partners. Combining flying with sex can be a fascinating experience' (p. 204). In fact the fables and mythologies contained in Indian *purāṇas* are replete with such adventures by the yogis. Playing with the mirror reflections and the like could also prove great recreational and insightful exercises. In fact, our approach toward our lucid dreaming should be like that of a young child approaching the waking life, full of awe wonder and curiosity.

Spending dream time pleasantly improves our skills even in our waking life. Such lucid dream adventures help loosen our limiting mindsets and approach our waking life problems in more flexible and productive ways. In fact, 'we start to see that the waking world, like dream land is a place where, whilst a little more restricted, can still offer us a huge amount of pleasure and freedom if only we allow ourselves to invest the time and energy and believe to pursue our goals' (Love, 2013, p. 202). The platform of lucid dream can also be used to relive and rewrite the situations of which we would have preferred an alternative outcome. Love (2013) wonders: 'why simply day dream when you can relive the experience with the realism of a lucid dream' (p. 207).

The rewriting of dream narratives in lucid dreaming with conscious volition is suggested as a powerful background process that leads to the development of new and novel situations not just in the dream world but also in the physical world.

Another interesting and thought provoking suggestion is to seek advice from famous or historical figures of a particular field of knowledge to quickly get advice on a problem. Love quickly adds that though this knowledge and creativity will come
from inside our own self, by projecting this through a famous character our mind is freed from any self-limiting restrictions we may have placed on our own thinking’ (Love, 2013, p. 216). This is in line with the traditional approach of seeking solutions or wisdoms from a titular deity by a devotee, who it is said will bestow the right answer in the dream. This is possible because, with the help of lucid dreaming we get conscious access to the store house of our unconscious, allowing us the knowledge which was previously unavailable.

Other practical uses of lucid dreaming could be attempting to recall where we placed a lost item. The dream time coupled with conscious awareness is an ideal ground for recollecting obscure memories. The mind is also capable of filling in any gaps in our memory as well as knowledge with probable approximations to provide us with a complete the picture if need be. The accuracy of this filling by the mind is proportional to the degree of mental clarity such person has. Mind probably fills gaps to give continuous feel without which it encounters void leading to a sense of shock resulting in its dissolution. Philosophical texts of India inform us that mind without upadhi cannot sustain itself. However sometimes this picture provided by the mind could be utterly misleading. This can be the case with any form of retrieved memory, dreaming or otherwise. Precisely for this reason, Nyāya system categorized knowledge based on smrti as aprama – an undependable knowledge leading to erroneous understanding.

With lucid dreaming one can ‘design’ the person one likes to be in the future. By identifying the traits one likes to have in oneself, whenever one enters a lucid dream one should visualize oneself in the new ‘avatar’. ‘Goal setting with clearly defined goals combined with regular reflection and the relevant life style changes is a good start for making positive improvements in our life’. ‘Though one can use day dream visualization to this effect lucid dreaming is much more powerful and far more effective’ (Love, 2013, p. 222).

Achieving lucidity in dreaming is possible only with a conscious and dedicated practice during waking hours. Developing a skillful awareness of the world around is the key to attaining lucidity within the dream world. Much of this process of increasing awareness is gradual and certainly won’t happen overnight.
In waking or dreaming, one should constantly cultivate two most important habits: they are critical thinking and discrimination. This is precisely the technique adopted by the traditional meditation practices by trying to be ‘mindful’ in the waking life. This, in essence is a kind of waking-lucidity, an awareness of the current moment and an awareness of awareness itself. ‘Many lucid dreamers find that, not only are they awake in their dreams, but they are also no longer simply sleep walking through their daily lives; they ‘wake up’ to the waking world’ (Love, 2013, p. 242). Meditation is such a powerful boost to lucidity both in waking and dreaming that it is reported, practicing meditators have a much higher rate of lucid dreams than non-meditators, with some of them having spontaneous lucid dreams on a weekly basis. This is because mindful awareness during the day directly translates into mindful awareness during dreams. This mindful presence of ours in the ‘eternal now’ is called smriti or sati in Yogic parlance of Buddhism, Hinduism and Jainism and is extolled as most conducive to spiritual upliftment. Michael Katz (2011) says ‘one moment of spiritual practice in a lucid dream is equivalent to one week of spiritual practice in the waking state’ (p. 103).

Lucid dreaming helps us in tracking the graduation transition of consciousness in the 24 hour cycle in which it traverses through waking, dreaming and deep sleep. As this wakeful tracking of changes in conscious states becomes strong, we begin to realize that consciousness is indeed a unitary one and we misjudge the changes as three unconnected distinct states. We realize that experiences of three states belong to our own self and the actions taken in any of these worlds will have repercussions in the other. Love puts it succinctly thus: ‘Life improvements = dream improvement = life improvement = dream improvement and so on’ (Love, 2013, p. 249).

Spiritual awakening or realizing the true self is a highly extolled state of consciousness which essentially means seeing through the illusion of dualistic reality. However this realization is hard to achieve in the waking world that feels so solid and distinct from us.

Rob Nairn teacher of Charlie Morley is quoted to have told Charlie that ‘through lucid dreaming we experience the realization that what we thought to be real is actually not real, and so we are no longer experiencing the ignorance of the illusion. This is a taste of awakening (Morley, Dreams of Awakening, 2013, p. 52)’. 
Lucid dream offers a realization that however real, solid and separate things may seem, after all they are just an illusion. And quite notably, such illusion can even be created by the mind without anything actually being present physically! Wherefrom this mental world exudes? In fact our mind is just a void, from which exude spontaneously ephemeral intangible memories as perceptible sounds and images. This wondrous phenomenon – arising of phenomenon from an empty potentiality is described succinctly in Buddhism as Śunya.

Dzigar Kongtrul Rinpoche (2006) says this realization that everything is indeed nothing but emptiness enables us to be more flexible with experiences of the world: ‘When we understand that nothing exists independently, everything that does arise seems more dreamlike and less threatening. Because the nature of everything is emptiness, we can relax and enjoy the show’ (p. 12).

Alan Wallace, noted lucid dream expert says ‘through dream yoga the yogi can directly recognize the emptiness of the personal self and of phenomena’ (Wallace B. A., 2012, p. 77) because, Morley (2013) points out ‘if we can experience how convincingly real things are in our lucid dreams, we may become better able to experience the dreamlike nature of waking reality, too’ (p. 52).

Lucid dreaming compels us not to cling too much with the seemingly solid waking reality also, because our lucid dreaming experience would have already taught us that a similarly solid reality bursts forth in our mental arena which in fact is nothing but an absolute figment of our imagination.

Death is the most inevitable reality, a transition whose other side is obscure from this side. This final enigma of life requires proper preparation beforehand. Dzogchen Ponlop Rinpoche (2012) says ‘we have a choice to prepare ourselves to face the most uncomfortable moment of our lives or to meet that moment unprepared’ (p. 1).

Father "X"(1991), A Catholic Monk describes similarity between lucid dreams and Out of Body Experiences (OBE):

My lucid dreams are tied up with another phenomenon that of the out of body experience. . . . The essential difference between [OBE]
experiences and my lucid dreams is that I am totally conscious when I enter this other state of consciousness (OBE) whereas my lucid dreams always begin with a non-lucid dream which then becomes lucid.

How could someone who is totally conscious enter the dream state? All I know is that when the paralysis and vibrations come over me my vision [blurs] . . . but I am still aware of my surroundings. Then I am literally pulled out of my body and off I go. (p. 92)

Tibetan Buddhism eulogizes dream and sleep yoga practices, the advanced forms of lucid dreaming, as the most conducive practices for preparing oneself for death. Death is an intermediate bardo state where just as in dream world, our conscious awareness is greatly hampered and we are carried away by the afterlife imagery. Dalai Lama and Varela (1997) enlighten us that ‘each time we fall asleep and dream, we’re getting a trial run for death and dying (p. 45). Thus lucid dream practices where we attempt to witness the experiences of the dream with conscious awareness without getting entangled in the dream scenario is an effective training for the consciousness to recognize with equanimity the process of death and the after-death bardo.

Charlie (2013) quotes Bardo Thodal, saying ‘according to The Tibetan Book of the Dead, if we can manage to recognize the dreamlike hallucinations of the after-death bardo state as manifestations of the mind, we have the possibility of experiencing full spiritual awakening. It is said that even if a yogi has practiced meditation for a whole lifetime and still hasn't attained full realization, he has one last shot at it: death’ (p. 50).

It is said that the first Karmapa, the spiritual head of the Kagyu school of Tibetan Buddhism, attained full enlightenment at the age of 50 while practicing dream yoga.

Charlie (2013) suggests:

“engaging in meditation, prayer, visualization, mantra recitation is not only a great way to spend our dreaming hours, it’s also incredibly powerful, because our dream body is unhindered by the physical limitations of our waking body, meaning that we have the potential to reach levels of accomplishment that may seem impossible in the
waking state. Practices such as *tai chi* or *chi gong* which require flow of energy through our body, can greatly benefit from lucid dream practices because dream body is pure energy with no physical form, which means that these types of energy practices can be engaged to their maximum potential” (p. 51).

Dalai Lama (Varela & Lama, 1997) says that ‘going through this transition [from wakefulness into sleep] without blacking out is one of the highest accomplishments for a yogi’ (p. 40).

**XIII. THE FUTURE OF LUCID DREAMING**

Will lucidity remain a popular subject only on the fringe of society, or will it become something common place? This is a very pertinent question to probe as lucid dreaming becoming part and parcel of human society in large scale, if ever it is possible, has the potential to expedite the process of human evolution into Gnostic beings. In the present world we have already been able to bring in Virtual Reality (VR) headset into our lives where wearing a small headgear with an android phone, we can enter into the mindboggling and fascinating world of computer aided virtual world. These VR gadgets are already becoming very popular across the world. In fact we have been creating our own virtually realist world of dreams since eons but have not been able to design 'control buttons' on our creation yet, which are even accessible to the commoners. Love expresses positive hope that perhaps there will surface a technique, a device or medication or combination of these that will greatly enhance the accessibility of lucidity to those with a casual interest (Love, 2013, p. 256). He believes, future virtual worlds might have dream signs or their equivalent built into them, which help in waking up to reality without which, Love warns the future virtual works could cause significant psychological issues for their users.

Even though sensory inputs from the external world are greatly inhibited while we are sleeping, we know that changes in the external environment such as a ringing alarm clock could percolate into the dreams and the dreamer experiences dreams that have these inputs incorporated into them. Even lucid dream induction devises such as Nova Dreamer are developed that flash colorful lights on our closed eyelids and remind us in our ears through earphones that what we are experiencing is just a
dream. Thus we already have a technology, though at a very primary level, to communicate from waking world and influence the dream world.

Keith Hearne and Stephen LaBerge have established that communication from dream world to the waking world outside is possible by lucid dreamers way back in 1970s and 80s. Now as a logical next step, Love (2013) visualizes, communication between dreamers as future possibility where one dreamer could enter into the dream world of others. He demonstrates that this communication between two dreamer is achievable, though in a limited way, with aid of current technology as well. He describes it how:

Two dreamers would attempt to synchronies their sleep cycles aiming to fall asleep and awaken at the same times, so as to increase the chances of both of them experiencing REM concurrently. Both dreamers would whilst sleeping be wearing electronic sleep mask which monitor their REM patterns. These masks would be connected via a computer system, and both masks would be capable of both monitoring REM and signaling the signal either through light, sound or another means.

The dreamer who is to act as the messenger will have the arranged system to be on the lookout for one of several eye movement patterns. Each pattern will be associated with and cue a particular signal in the mask of other dreamer- let us say a single flash of light for one eye movement pattern, 2 flashes for second and 3 for third. Once the system had been setup, the dreamer who is to be receiver of the message will be informed that they are to look out for any flashing lights within their dreams and to count the number of flashes. They could also be told to perform a recognition eye movement signal on receipt of the message, once that the system will be also programmed to wait. With this system, both dreamers can respond to the others dream (Love, 2013, p. 259).

Why the dream yogis did not devise any such easy-to-enter-virtual-world techniques for the mass consumption despite the fact that dream yoga as a highly developed system is known to be in vogue at least for over one thousand years? Perhaps the
answer lies in the fact that virtual world of lucid dreaming could prove to be a powerful snare, an entanglement that catches its visitor in a more dreadful way than the waking world. Unless such visitor into the lucid world of virtual reality has a grounding in philosophical understanding of consciousness and reality, he is likely to be caught up in the wonders of lucid and virtual worlds just as millions of druggies find themselves addicted to drug reveries and find themselves lost in the mires of mental creation. If lucidity can be designed as a course with proper and structured content to practice, supported by safe lucidity inducing substances and VR gadgetry coupled with a strong foundation in philosophy, just as we meticulously do while designing a university course or program, it has the potential to transform the human species for good.

Charlie Morley (Dreams of Awakening, 2013) offers a few words of wisdom about dreaming and lucid dreaming in his book. He says:

> With every dream, the unconscious mind is offering us a hand of friendship. But far too often this is an offering we ignore, either by not remembering our dreams or by failing to acknowledge their value. Once we become lucidly aware within the dream, however, we are extending a hand towards the unconscious mind and finally making friends with it.

> This is the most important friendship we may ever have, and it is a friendship that will spill over into our waking state, too, in sudden bursts of creativity or spontaneous insights which let us know our new friend is always with us – even when we’re not dreaming. (p.12)

Lucid dreamer vouch that there is a majesty to lucid dreaming that is almost beyond words. To find ourselves fully present and aware in another world, a universe within our own mind, is simply so far removed from our daily ‘normal’ experiences that it can quite literally take our breath away. And lucid dreaming is the stepping stone for enlightenment in this very life!
Works Cited


