Chapter 2

Altered states of consciousness:- Characteristics.

In this chapter, we will study what is consciousness, characteristics of its normal state and the characteristics of altered states.

What is consciousness, can be answered from the viewpoint of ontology or metaphysics.

Normal states of consciousness:-

The normal rational consciousness of the world is built upon the sensory data. Sensory inputs are processed by the mind into mental images. These are then analyzed, conceptualized, evaluated by the intellect through reason. The essence of the same is stored in the form of memory. Our perception of the world is a highly complex process. There is no direct, one to one relationship between the properties of the physical stimulate and the sensations they cause. The sensory inputs and sensations resulting from them is the only means through which we perceive the world. Neither the mind nor the brain is in direct contact with the world. Hence we never see the things as they really are. What we perceive are mental images and the concepts drawn from the interaction of the mind and intellect with the sensations. Our brains are programmed by the sensations to think and perceive in a particular way. The memory functions as a frame of reference for our perceptions. In other words memory conditions our consciousness.
The three states of consciousness are the wakeful state, dream state and sleep state. As per yoga sūtra-s, the fourth state of consciousness comes only when the memory is purified.

When mind loses its subjectivity and when we see things as they are without any conditioning.¹

The ontological or metaphysical viewpoint looks at consciousness as either real or unreal. It discusses consciousness as the first principal or ultimate reality.

The characteristics of consciousness are described and are recommended as goals of human life. This is second viewpoint.

The third way is the logical study of concepts used in studying consciousness.

The ontological and normative account of Upanishads is well studied and is popular among the people. Its mystico-religious element asserts the existence of consciousness and recommends the realization of Ātman as an obligation i.e. kartavya.

It regards ātman as simple, immortal, infinite, real, divine substance. Materialist metaphysics does not agree with this concept. Since there is no empirical evidence to support either side, these two views are always controversial. So Kant² says that transcendental metaphysics is a battlefield of controversies.

The new approach of studying consciousness is different from that of mystico-religious or metaphysical approach. It is conceptual, analytical.

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¹ P.Y.S. पूर्विष्ठरूपीय स्वस्थक्रेतिव्याप्ति निर्णय निर्धारक || 1.43
study which aims at clarity and not at establishing experience. Its method is not speculative or empirical. It is analytic. Its origin is in 19th century, British analytic tradition, saw rejection of metaphysics as unscientific, speculative etc. and it was declared that goal of philosophy is not the search of reality or Ultimate first principle but clarity of thought. It is study of logic of predicates ascribing consciousness.

History of consciousness can be traced back to the history of philosophy of mind. So let us study the history and definitions of consciousness.

A) Western Views:-

Western philosophers since the time of Descartes and Locke have struggled to define the nature of consciousness and find the properties of same.

Representation of consciousness from the seventeenth century

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1) John Locke⁴, the British philosopher in seventeenth century defined consciousness as “the perception of what passes in a man’s own mind.

2) Consciousness⁵ (French-conscience) is defined in 1753 volume of Diderot and Alembert’s Encyclopedia as “the opinion or internal feeling that we ourselves have from what we do.”

3) English word ‘conscious’⁶ is derived from Latin conscious (con-together and scio is to know), but Latin word means ‘knowing with’ or ‘having joint or common knowledge with another’. Latin phrase ‘conscious sibi ’ has meaning close to current concept of consciousness. Another word ‘conscientia’ means moral conscience or ‘knowledge that a witness has of the deed of someone else’. Rene Descartes (1596-1650) used conscientia the way modern speakers use ‘conscience’.

4) As per Oxford dictionary⁷, consciousness is a state of being conscious, awake, and aware of knowing things by bodily senses and mental power.

We have no consciousness in deep sleep. Consciousness is all the ideas thoughts, feelings, wishes, intentions, recollection of persons.

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The neurobiological model of modern science postulates that consciousness is a feature of cells, tissues, organs and systems of our body and best known in the brain implying that consciousness does not exist without body.

5) The Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy in 1998 defines consciousness as follows:8

**Consciousness** — Philosophers have used the term 'consciousness' for four main topics: knowledge in general, intentionality, introspection (and the knowledge it specifically generates) and phenomenal experience... Something within one's *mind* is 'introspectively conscious' just in case one introspects it (or is poised to do so). Introspection is often thought to deliver one's primary knowledge of one's *mental* life. An experience or other *mental* entity is 'phenomenally conscious' just in case there is 'something it is like' for one to have it. The clearest examples are: perceptual experience, such as tastings and seeing; bodily-sensational experiences, such as those of pains, tickles and itches; imaginative experiences, such as those of one's own actions or perceptions; and streams of thought, as in the experience of thinking 'in words' or 'in images'. Introspection and phenomenality seem independent, or dissociable, although this is controversial.

6) 1989 version of the *Macmillan Dictionary of Psychology* defines consciousness as:9

**Consciousness**: The having of perceptions, thoughts, feelings and awareness. The term is impossible to define except in terms that are unintelligible without a grasp of what consciousness means. Many fall

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into the trap of equating consciousness with self-consciousness to be conscious it is only necessary to be aware of the external world. Consciousness is a fascinating but elusive phenomenon: it is impossible to specify what it is, what it does, or why it has evolved. Nothing worth reading has been written on it.

7) Consciousness\(^1\) is the state or quality of awareness or of being aware of external object or something within oneself. It has been defined as sentience, awareness, subjectivity, ability to experience or to feel, wakefulness, having a sense of selfhood and the executive control system of the mind.

8) Webster third new International Dictionary defines consciousness as\(^{10}\)

a) Awareness or perception of an inward psychological or spiritual fact: intuitively perceived knowledge of something in one’s inner self
b) Inward awareness of an external object, state or fact
c) Concerned awareness, interest, concern-often used as attributive noun.
d) The state or activity that is characterized by sensation, emotion, volition or thought.

\(^{10}\) Webster third new \textit{International Dictionary}, London.
e) The totality in psychology of sensations, perceptions, ideas, attitudes and feelings of which an individual or group is aware of at any given time or within a particular time span.

B) Cambridge Declaration on animal consciousness:--

In 2012, A group of neuroscientists attending a conference, on ‘Consciousness in human and non-human animals’ at Cambridge University, UK, Signed this declaration. The absence of a neocortex does not appear to preclude an organism from experiencing affective states. Convergent evidence indicates that non-human animals have the neuroanatomical, neurochemical, and neurophysiological substrates of conscious states along with the capacity to exhibit intentional behaviors. Consequently, the weight of evidence indicates that humans are not unique in possessing the neurological substrates that generate consciousness. Non-human animals, including all mammals and birds, and many other creatures, including octopuses, also possess these neurological substrates.

Consciousness in animals:–11

The sense in which animals (or human infants) can be said to have consciousness or a self-concept has been hotly debated; it is often referred to as the debate over animal minds. The best known research technique in this area is the mirror test devised by Gordon G. Gallup, in which the skin of an animal (or human infant) is marked while it is asleep or sedated with a mark that cannot be seen directly but is visible in a mirror. It is then

allowed to see its reflection in a mirror; if the animal spontaneously
directs grooming behaviour towards the mark that is taken as an indication
that it is aware of itself. Over the past 30 years, many studies have found
evidence that animals recognise themselves in mirrors. Self-awareness by
this criterion has been reported for Apes, common chimpanzees, bonobos,
orangutans and gorillas, elephants, dolphins, magpies.

Until recently it was thought that self-recognition was absent from
animals without a neocortex, and was restricted to mammals with large
brains and well developed social cognition. However, in 2008 a study of
self-recognition in corvids reported significant results for magpies.
Mammals and birds inherited the same brain components from their last
common ancestor nearly 300 million years ago, and have since
independently evolved and formed significantly different brain types. The
results of the mirror and mark tests showed that neocortex-less magpies
are capable of understanding that a mirror image belongs to their own
body. The findings show that magpies respond in the mirror and mark test
in a manner similar to apes, dolphins and elephants. This is a remarkable capability that, although not fully concrete in its determination of self-recognition, is at least a prerequisite of self-recognition. This is not only of interest regarding the convergent evolution of social intelligence; it is also valuable for an understanding of the general principles that govern cognitive evolution and their underlying neural mechanisms. The magpies were chosen to study based on their empathy/lifestyle, a possible precursor for their ability of self-awareness. However even in chimpanzee, the species most studied and with the most convincing findings, clear-cut evidence of self-recognition is not obtained in all individuals tested. Occurrence is about 75% in young adults and considerably less in young and old individuals. For monkeys, non-primate mammals, and in a number of bird species, exploration of the mirror and social displays were observed. However, hints at mirror-induced self-directed behaviour have been obtained. The mirror test has attracted controversy among some researchers because it is entirely focused on vision, the primary sense in humans, while other species rely more heavily on other senses such as

1) The olfactory sense in dogs.
2) Pain or suffering
3) Language
4) Cognitive bias and emotion
5) Neuroscience and neural correlates.
6) Metacognition
7) Mirror neuros etc. are other criteria’s found in animals.
D) Eastern Views:-

Recent philosophers like Swami Vivekananda gives yoga as the process of evolution and consciousness.

1) Swami Vivekananda:- Yoga is a process for accelerating the natural process of evolution into a single life or a few years of our existence or even a few weeks. In his commentary on Pātañjala Yogasūtra, while discussing yogasūtra II.25, Swami Vivekananda writes¹²:-

“Each soul is potentially divine.
The goal is to manifest this Divinity within,
By controlling nature, external and internal.
Do this either by work or worship, or psychic.
Control, or philosophy-by one or more or all these-and be free. This is whole of religion.
Doctrines, or dogmas, or rituals, or books,
or temples, or forms are but secondary details.”

Yoga is the process of evolution of human consciousness from man to superman to divine man finally realizing divine consciousness.

Before we discuss Upaniṣadic concept of consciousness, it will be interesting to discuss the concept of pramāṇa i.e. means of valid knowledge. Though this concept is discussed in all major philosophies of India, here we discuss the Sāṁkhya yoga-view on pramāṇa.

¹² Swami Vivekananda, My India-The India Eternal, Ramkrishna Mission Institute of Culture, Gole park, Calcutta, 29, second reprint, p. 79.
Means of valid knowledge as per Sāṁkhya Philosophy -

Perception, Inference and Valid Testimony are the means; (by these) all other means of right cognition too are established (as they are included in the above three); proof is intended to be of three Kinds. It is through the proofs that the Provable are established.\(^{13}\)

Here, the term \textit{pramāṇa} (means of cognition) indicates the things to be defined; \textit{pramāṇa} is that by which things are rightly cognized; because of this (explanation) \textit{pramāṇa} comes to be recognized as the instrument of right cognition. And this is a modification of the mind (\textit{cittavṛtti}) in relation to an object, which is free from (such defects as) ambiguity, perversion, and non-apprehension. Right cognition is the result brought about by this instrument in the form of apprehension by a human agent, and its means is \textit{pramāṇa}. By this definition of \textit{pramāṇa} does not apply to all other means which lead to doubt, wrong apprehension and recollection.

Facts of right knowledge are based on direct cognition, inference or testimony.\(^{14}\)


\(^{14}\) P.Y.S.1.7, \textit{प्रयक्तानुयायिनी: प्रयाणलि}\ |

Pramāṇa which may be translated approximately as right knowledge or knowledge related to facts, comprises all those experiences in which the mind is in direct or indirect contact with the object of the senses at the time and mental perception corresponds with the objects. Although three sources of right knowledge are mentioned in the sūtra and only in one (pratyakṣa) there is direct contact with the object, this does not mean that there is no contact with the object in the other two. The contact in these two cases is indirect, through some other or person. A simple illustration will make this clear. Suppose you see your car coming to your door. You recognize it at once.

This knowledge is, of course, pratyakṣa. Now, if you are sitting in your room and here the familiar sound of your car in front of your house you recognize it at once as your car. Here your knowledge is based on contact with the object but the contact is indirect and involves the element of inference. Now suppose again you neither see nor hear the car but your servant comes and says that your car is at the door. Here again contact with the object is indirect but knowledge is based on testimony. In all these three cases since the image springs up in your brain corresponds with a fact, the cittavṛtti comes under the category of pramāṇa or right knowledge. If it does not, for example, if your inference with regard to the presence of your car is wrong or the servant makes an incorrect report, then your knowledge is wrong and belongs to the second category i.e. viparyaya. Knowledge of the pramāṇa type may be based partly on one partly on another of these three sources but if it corresponds with facts, it belongs to this type.
3) Concept of consciousness in *Pātañjala Yogasūtra* -

Commenting on *Pātañjala Yogasūtra* 4.22, Taimini beautifully explains 15:-

Knowledge of its own nature through self-cognition (is obtained) when Consciousness assumes that form in which it does not pass from place to place. 16

If cognition takes place through the agency of the mind and in the subtest cognitions pertaining to the deepest level of the mind, we can know only the mind thus illuminated by consciousness, the question naturally arises ‘How are we to know consciousness itself or that light which illuminates the mind at all its level?’

*Citeh* means ‘of consciousness’ and is derived from *citi* and not *citta* which means the mind. *Apratisamkrāmayaḥ* means ‘not passing from one to another’ i.e. not passing from one level of *citta* to another or from one vehicle to another. In *samādhi* consciousness passes form one level of *citta* to another and the phrase refers to the stage when this process stops or is brought to its limit. *Tad ākārāppattu* means ‘on the accomplishment or assumption of own form’. Consciousness normally functions through the *mind*. This phrase refers to the condition in which it is freed from the limitations of the mind and is functioning in its own form.

*svabuddhi* means ‘buddhi’ as it really is and not as it functions through the medium of the *mind*. We know only this function of Perfection as it appears in association with ‘citta’. ‘*Svabuddhi*’ is the function of perception as it is when exercised upon itself. *Samvedanam*

16 P.S.Y.IV.22 चिन्ताप्रतिसामाक्रामायायं द्वारा तत्कालीन स्ववृद्धिकर्मयोगसूत्रम्
means ‘knowing of’. Knowing is really a function of consciousness but when exercised through the mind becomes knowing something outside or external to pure consciousness.

The phrase svabuddhisamvedanam therefore means the knowledge which results when the faculty of buddhi is turned upon itself. Normally, buddhi functions through citta and helps the mind to perceive and understand objects in its realm. But when it is freed from the association of citta it automatically turns upon itself and illuminates its own nature, i.e. consciousness. It is because the power of illumination is inherent in it that illuminates citta when it functions through citta.

If a light is enclosed within a translucent globe it reveals the globe. If the globe is removed the light reveals itself. Buddhi is that faculty which enables the mind to perceive and understand objects in this external world as mind is not capable of doing so as it is inert. But it is not possible to understand the pure consciousness, as long as buddhi is functioning through medium of mind. It is only when it assumes that form in which all movement from one level of citta to another has been eliminated that it reveals its real nature.

Citta or the mind has many levels corresponding to different vehicles of consciousness and in Samadhi consciousness moves up and down from one level to another between center and periphery. In this kind of movement of consciousness there is no movement of space but only movement in different dimensions, the center from which consciousness functions remaining same. When consciousness, in the state of samādhi, has penetrated into the deepest level of citta, then only the true nature is realized. In this state the perceiver, perception and perceived all merge into one self–illuminated reality. So we know consciousness - “by diving
in *samādhi* into our consciousness until our mind in its subtlest form is transcended and the Reality hidden beneath it is revealed.\(^{17}\)

This means we cannot understand the real nature of consciousness by standard methods of Modern Psychology. In Modern psychology, consciousness is covered with many layers of mind which obscures and modifies its nature as it infiltrates into the outermost physical mechanism of brain. We thus observe consciousness in its ordinary manifestations through the physical brain under the greatest possible limitations and it is not possible to form any idea with regard to its true nature from these extremely partial or distorted manifestations.

It’s similar to a person staying in an area where there is always cloudy weather trying to form an idea about a bright sunshine. So it’s impossible to know the true nature of consciousness by adopting ordinary means available to the modern psychologist but the effective way is “Yogic method”. This is also a subjective method, but this is the only method available. The laboratory studies and the physical instruments cannot be devised which would reveal the nature of consciousness.

The whole field of modern psychology can be illuminated in the most effective manner if facts of yogic philosophy are properly understood and used in the study of psychological problems.

Here there is no linkage between yogic philosophy and religion. But a religious man can interpret all ideas of yogic philosophy in religious terms and the consciousness which Yogi wants to uncover is nothing but Supreme Reality which is commonly referred to as God. God is recognized by every religion to be a mighty being whose consciousness

\(^{17}\) *Ibid*, p. 421-422.
transcends the manifested Universe. He is considered to be hidden in every human heart. He is supposed to transcend mind. The great yogī Swami Ramatirtha used to say that God is a circle whose center is everywhere, but circumference is nowhere. But with Yogic philosophy, there is a definite and unfailing technique like any modern science, to discover consciousness.

4) Upniṣadic Concept of Brahman – The absolute

According to Upāniṣad-s, pure consciousness or Ātman is beyond any description. It is infinite, indescribable (ananta, anirvacanīya, avācya) beyond the grasp of any ordinary pramāṇa-s (valid source of knowledge). It can be grasped by intuition, sādhana, divine grace etc. It is the highest stage, which is disembodied. Embodied consciousness is with the cover. It is finite. It is consciousness along with the body, which is jīvatmā.

According to Upāniṣad, motor organs, sense organs and even mind do not function for themselves, but work for conscious agent i.e jīvatmā. This is explained with the help of the analogy of chariot and a charioteer of Kaṭha Upāniṣad.

Know the Ātman as the Lord of the chariot, the body as the chariot; know the intellect as the charioteer and the mind again as the reins.\textsuperscript{18}

Upāniṣad-s maintain that there is interdependence between mind, Prāṇa and sense organs thereby by controlling one the other can be controlled, e.g. Prāṇa can be controlled by control of breath. And by

\textsuperscript{18} K. U., Tr Swami Chinmayananda, Discourses on Kathopaniṣad, Central Chinmaya Mission Trust, Powai, Mumbai, 2006, p.135 अनान्तं गन्धिनं विचिदं अर्गरं र्थमवं तु | बुध्दव्य तु सारिवं विचिदं मनः प्राणं च ||3.3
controlling same mind can be controlled. All *Upaniṣad*-s give importance to *praṇava* which is symbolic expression of pure consciousness. Pure consciousness is indescribable but it is symbolically suggested. It is said that divinity is fond of suggestive language.

*Taittirīya Upaniṣad* in Śīkṣāvalli says ‘AUM is brahman. AUM is all’”

Hence before starting any work, omkar chanting is performed. Patañjali says -

His (of īśvara) designator is om

The approach of *Upaniṣad*-s is mystico-metaphysical. The Upanishads define consciousness as the ultimate Reality, the first principal, called the ātman or the Brahman. This is accepted by Sāṁkhya / Vedanta Schools.

In Upanishads, problem is not seen as mind body problem, as mind is considered different from self and it has a material basis. If we look at Upaniṣadic account, then we find that according to *Upaniṣad*-s, physical and mental predicates can be applied only to jīvātman which is contingently, accidently connected with a physical body. *Upaniṣad*-s do not accept Čārvāka view which says jīva is caitanyvisista or living body qualified by consciousness. So consciousness is devoid of predicates ascribing material qualities such as size, shape, length, breadth etc.

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19 *Taittirīya Upaniṣad, A.T Paperprint, Mumbai, second edition.*

20 *P.Y.S.1.27. तंय वाकः प्रणवं: ||६-२७||*
In nutshell, in Western world consciousness is mainly equated with rationality and that too with problem solving. The limitations of consciousness research are it omits animals, birds, insects etc.

**Concept of Consciousness in different Upaniṣad-s**

**Kaṭha Upaniṣad –**

1) Beyond the senses are the sense-objects; beyond these objects is the mind; beyond the mind is the intellect and beyond the intellect is the Great Self.²¹

2) He Self-existent (Brahman) creates the senses with outgoing tendencies; therefore, man behold the external universe and not the internal Self (Ātman). But some wise men with eyes averted (with their senses turned away) from sensual objects, desirous of Immortality, see the Ātman within.²²

**Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad -**

Verily all this is the immortal Brahman. He is everywhere-above, below, in front, at the back, on the right, on the left. All this world is indeed the supreme Brahman.²³

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²¹ *Kaṭha Upaniṣad*, इन्द्रियम्यः पर्ग ह्याः अर्थव्यस्तः पर्ण ना: | मनस्तु पति वुँधि: दुःशंस्त्रा महान परः | ||१० ||

²² *Kaṭha Upaniṣad*,

परालिवः गानि वृत्ताणि व्यस्ति: नास्ति नानारुपः | कृष्णव मोहः पुत्रमात्राय अजुनलवश्वरूपमेवविविधः | ||११ ||

Taittirīya Upaniṣad -

Quoting from this Upaniṣad which describes pure state of consciousness, Swami Vivekananda says

“From where the mind comes back with speech being unable to reach, knowing the bliss of Brahman no more is fear. That is dehypnotisation”

“I have neither virtue nor vice, nor misery, nor happiness, I care neither for Vedas nor scriptures nor ceremonies. I am neither food, nor eating nor eater, I am existence, Absolute knowledge and Absolute bliss (Sat-cit- Ananda)”

Taittirīya Upaniṣad also gives the concept of Pañcakośa which is discussed below.

Pañcakośa Concept –( Taittirīya Upaniṣad ) The personality of an Individual is considered to consist of five sheaths. Shankaracharya in Tattvabodha gives beautiful explanation of five sheaths as -

The Food sheath, the vital Air sheath, the Mental sheath, the Intellectual sheath, and the Bliss Sheath are the five sheaths.

A kośa does not really indicate a covering because the all-pervading Ātman cannot be “covered” by the limited gross matter. Kośa means the universal error due to identification resulting from Ignorance. It appears as if Ātman is covered by a sheath.

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26 Tattvabodha of Shankarachrya ,published by Central Chinmaya mission Trust,Mumbai, V ,P22.
1) Annamaya kośa -

That which is born of food, which grows by food, and goes back to earth which is of the nature of food, is called the Food sheath – this is the gross body.\(^{27}\)

The gross body is designated as annamaya kośa or the food sheath. It is so called, because the body is born out of the product of food eaten by the parents. It subsequently grows due to and is maintained by the modification of food and on death, disappears into the earth to eventually become food.

The identification of the Self with gross body creates the appearance of the food sheath. The suffix *maya* (in annamaya) means *vikāra* or modification. Thus annamaya means that which is made of the modification of food.

2) Prāṇamaya Kośa -

The five physiological functions as Prāṇa etc. (*Prāṇa, Apāna, Vyāna, Udāna and Samāna*) together with the five organs of action namely speech etc. form the *prāṇamaya kośa* the Vital Air Sheath.\(^{28}\)

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\(^{27}\) *Ibid.*, V.1,P22, अन्नर्मये भूत्वा अन्नर्मये बुद्धिम् प्राणे अनन्नर्मये बुद्धिम् प्राणेन्द्रियेन तङ्गामः कोऽः स्थङ्कःरिः

\(^{28}\) *Tattvabodha*, Ibid,V.2,P23, प्राणाया: प्राणाया: अग्निविनिपत्तस्य प्रानेन्द्रियाः कोऽः: |
The five physiological functions in the body, together with the five organs of action are known as the prāṇamaya kośa. The identifications of the functions of the prāṇa (e.g. “I” am hungry, thirsty, etc.) has the effect of causing the vital Air Sheath. The Self mistakes himself to be the prāṇa.

The five physiological functions of prāṇa are as follows:

- Prāṇa - Respiration
- Apāna - Evacuation or Rejection
- Vyāna - Circulation
- Udāna - Reaction, throwing out
- Samāna - Assimilation/ Digestion

Udāna stands for the reaction from within the body, e.g. vomiting tears, etc. It becomes active at the time of death, the five organs of action are also included in the prāṇamaya kośa.

3) Manomaya Kośa:-

The mind and five organs of perception together form the Mental sheath.29

Mind is the faculty which receives stimuli from outer world through the organ of perception. It is also the seat of emotions and feelings. The mind together with the five organs of perception constitute the manomaya kośa. The identification of the Self with these functions creates the appearance of a “Mental sheath” (e.g. I am happy, unhappy, angry, etc.)

29 Ibid, V-3,P24,
4) Vijñānmayakośa -

The intellect, along with the five organs of perceptions together form the intellect sheath.\(^{30}\)

The intellect is the deciding faculty as well as that which creates a sense of doer ship (ahamkāra). The mind and the intellect are really two aspects of the same thinking faculty. The same faculty when feeling emotions or vacillating, is called mind. It is called intellect when it determines or decides something. The nature of the intellect is “cognition (as against “volition” of the mind).

The intellect, together with the five organs of perception forms the intellect sheath (I am the knower, doer, etc.)

5) Ānandamayakośa -

Established in avidyā, which is lot of the form of the Causal body, of impure nature united with the \(vṛtti\)-s (Modifications) like priya, moda and pramoda.\(^{31}\)

The ignorance and the bliss, experienced by a person during the deep sleep state, constitute the 
\(ānandamaya kośa\). The suffix maya is used here in the sense of saturation or preponderance, rather than modification as in other sheaths.

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\(^{30}\) *ibid*, V-4,P24, युधिष्ठिरानंदिप्रत्यक्षमन्निर्विज्ञानपञ्चमिलनमन: कोष: |

\(^{31}\) *ibid*, p.25,verse 5.5 एवम अतिरिक्ताय द्वितीयवेदान्तममलिनमन: प्रियान्त्वेत्वादलिन्यात्मस्त: अनानन्दमय: कोष: |
One is not aware of the gross and the subtle bodies during this state, but the existence is filled with vṛtti-s (through modifications) like ‘priya’, ‘Moda’ and ‘Pramoda’. Priya, Moda and Pramoda, vṛtti-s indicate the intensity of joy experienced by a person. ‘Priya vṛtti is the joy felt at the thought of an object of like. ‘Moda is the joy felt when the object is possessed. ‘Pramoda’ is the joy of experiencing the desired object. The Bliss Sheath is the same as the Causal Body.

Thus each of the five sheaths apparently “covers” Ātman which is not perceived in its true nature because of identification with the elements corresponding to the sheaths. It is not that the five sheaths are progressive, i.e. one is inside the other and so on. Each of the sheaths independently “covers” the Ātman depending upon whether the “I” is identified with the body of the mind or the intellect, etc. at any given time.

The five sheaths designate the five common universal errors (not considering the errors that people commit because of identification with family, society, etc.)

Ātman is described as Pañcakośātīta i.e. one who transcends all the five sheaths. It is not identified with any of them but is present in each one of them.

Just as bangles, ear-rings, houses etc. known as ‘mine’ are all other than the knower – so too, the five sheaths known by the Self as ‘my body, Prāṇa-s, my mind, my intellect and my knowledge” (should all be other than the knower, and so cannot be the Ātman ).

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32 *ibid*. P26,V.6, मद्यां यर सरीयां मानांप्रणां कहांमधीमेवः श्रान्नात्मि न्योनि ज्ञापने तथ्या मद्यार्यभिमान साता कांतक्षुण्डलपुराविक्षम्यातिनित्ति पञ्चकोशानिक्षम्यातिनित्ति मद्यालं ज्ञानानि न स्वाशि || ||
The knower is always different from the known. Just as the personal belongings such as bangles, ear – rings, house, etc., are also known by me and are therefore different from me. It is only when I identify myself with these sheaths that I become limited by them for example, if I identify myself with the house, my mobility is greatly restricted. When I identify with body, the limitation of the body is mine, similarly the emotions of the mind and the ignorance of the intellect.

**According to Vedanta philosophy**, the ultimate reality "Brahman is without attributes and form. (nirguna, nirakara) It manifests as sat-cit-ānanda i.e. existence, consciousness and bliss.

These three aspects coexist in all beings –animate and inanimate.

In purest form consciousness is beyond space, time and causation. It is omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent. In individual, consciousness is reflection of awareness.

Śāṅkaracārya in Ātmabodha, verses 54 to 57 says -

Realize that to be Brahman, the attainment of which leaves nothing more to be attained, the blessedness of which leaves no other blessing to be desired and the knowledge of which leaves nothing more to be known.

Realize that to be Brahman, having seen which nothing more remains to be seen, having become which, one is not born again in this world and having known which, nothing remains to be known.
The one eternal, non-dual, infinite which pervades all the quarters, above, below and all that which exists in between, which is of the nature of existence-Consciousness-Bliss realize that to be Brahman.\(^{36}\)

Realize that to be Brahman which is non-dual, indivisible one and blissful, and which is indicated in Vedanta as the immutable Substratum, realized after the negation of all tangible objects.\(^{37}\)

On this basis, Śāṅkaracārya says that the experience of pure being cannot be described, because in that case it will be limited by the feeble pours of our speech.

For liberation or achieving perfection, Shankaracharya has recommended, sādhanacatuṣṭaya. This will be discussed in next chapter.

5) Srī Aurobindo on consciousness:-

Srī. Aurobindo explains the word consciousness relating to various states of mind. His definition of word consciousness is given on page 82 in this chapter.
Altered states of Consciousness:

These higher states of consciousness or states of super consciousness are really what we mean by ‘Altered states of Consciousness’. Though people belong to different faith, religion and culture there are certain common characteristics of these altered states as reported by them.

In the words of Rudolf Otto\textsuperscript{38},

"One and the same experience speaks here, only by chance in varying dialects. We maintain that in mysticism there are indeed strong primal impulses working in the human soul which as such are completely unaffected by the differences or climate or geographical position or of a race. These show in their similarity an inner relationship of types of human experience and spiritual life which is truly astonishing."

Apparent differences occur because the altered states are essentially ineffable and when expressed on the background of cultural and religious frame of reference get "colored" differently. However, if one studies the mystic literature from different parts of the world, the striking similarities in the lifestyle and teaching of saints, similar types of extra sensory perceptions like ‘divine sound’, ‘divine light’, ‘divine smell’, divine vision’ can be noted.

\textsuperscript{38} Otto, \textit{Mysticism East and West}, Merridian Book, New York,1932, p.XVI,
Now we will discuss the normal and Altered state of consciousness as explained by ancient texts as *Māṇḍukya Upaniṣad* and also the views of latest master Śrī Aurobindo. Śrī Aurobindo defines word consciousness as:–

Consciousness is a force which can transform things. Consciousness is usually identified with mind, but mental consciousness is only in the human range. There are ranges of consciousness above and below the human range…By consciousness is meant something which is essentially the same throughout but variable in status, condition and operation, in which in some grades or conditions the activity we call consciousness exists either in a suppressed or an unorganized or a differently organized state.39

These classifications of consciousness into Waking, Dream and Sleep states and beyond as *Turīya* are discussed in the *Māṇḍukya Upaniṣad*. They are discussed in various other books of Indian philosophy and *Yoga* like *Vivekacūḍāmaṇi* also. They throw much light on problems of human psychology which after all constitute the main concern of *Yoga*. While the four-fold classification of *Jāģṛt, Svapna, Suṣupti* and *Turīya* are not identical with the four-fold categories of Higher Mind, Illumined Mind, Intuitive Mind and Over Mind of Aurobindo, there is much that is common and so a comparative study of the two classifications would help.

a) **Māṇḍukya Upaniṣad**

This *Upaniṣad* describes four states of consciousness as follows:-

Translation:- The first quarter (*Pāda*) is *Vaiśvānara* whose sphere of activity is the waking state, who is conscious of the external world of objects, who has seven limbs and nineteen mouths, and who enjoys the gross objects of the world.

1) **(Waking/conscious state)**: *Vaiśvā* means universe and *nara* means presence, body, figure or form. In waking state you are connected with world with 19 mouths of *Vaiśvānara*. Here 19 mouths represent the *Jñānenedriya-s* (five sense organs), *Karmendriya-s* (five action organs), *pañca-tattva-s* (five elements) and *antaḥkaraṇa* with its four components as *manas* (mind), *buddhi* (intellect), *ahamkāra* (ego) and *citta* (memory).

So, *Vaiśvānara* uses these nineteen faculties to recognize, receive, process and analyze information from world. Both *Jñānenedriya-s* and *karmendriya-s* function.

Śrī Aurobindo explains⁴¹ the Waking state as characterized by *Vaiśvānara*. Now one of the meanings of *Vaiśvānara* is general or normal consciousness. By our normal consciousness we choose and decide, we accept and reject, we indulge in certain things and we deny certain other

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things. This is our normal consciousness which is caught in the conflict of choice. The waking state is characterized by the State of Inquiry (jijñāsā).

2) Taijas-

This is dreaming state. Here you are aware about luminosity of mind and prana partially as 50:50.

Translation: The second quarter (Pāda) is Taijas whose sphere of activity is the dream state, who is conscious of the internal worlds of objects who has seven limbs and nineteen mouths and who enjoys the subtle objects of the mental world. Only Jñānendriya-s function but karmendriya-s do not function.⁴²

From the Waking State- Jagrt- the aspirant must ascend to the Dream State- Svapna as indicated by the ancient seers. Śrī Aurobindo says⁴³ that the Dream-state of Yoga is completely different from the physical state of dream.

He describes the Dream state as “internalised mind liberated from narrow limitations of the physical outward-going senses”. In the Waking state one is constantly distracted by the impacts of the outer, physical world, but in the Dream State there is no distraction and therefore there is coherence which one does not see in mere physical dreams. The clarity of the Dream state is because of Taijas or illumination.

⁴² Ibid, Mandukya Upanishad with Gaudapada”s karika.
3) Prājnā — This is unconscious mind of Western psychology. Prājnā means “all knowing”. In this state total knowledge is contained within the mind. This is dreamless sleep-lying beyond desire. Neither Jñānendriya-s nor karmendriya-s function. Aurobido explains that, The ancient seers have described the dream state by word ubhayatva,, meaning bothness or duality, but the sleep state is indicated by advaita meaning non dual. Śrī Aurobindo says: - “The sleep self is described as Prajna, the Master of wisdom and knowledge.” This is a state of intuition, being intuition from within.

Thus the terms Waking, Dream and Sleep have a relevance to our normal consciousness. That which is awareness to the normal consciousness is known as the Waking state or Jagrt. That which, although emanating from a higher level, is still within the scope and range of the normal level is described as the Dream State. But that which is outside the scope and range of the normal consciousness is termed the Deep Sleep. Thus between the Waking and the Dream state there is a difference of degree.

4) Turīya

44 Ibid, Mandukya Upanishad with Gaudapada”s karika,
It is not that which is conscious of the internal subjective world, not that which is conscious of the external world, nor that which is conscious of both nor that which is a mass of consciousness, nor that which is a simple consciousness, nor is it unconscious. It is unseen by any sense organ, nor related to anything, incomprehensible by the mind, uninferable, unthinkable, indescribable, essentially of the self alone, negation of all phenomena, the peaceful, all bliss and the non-dual.

This is what is known as the fourth (Turīya). This is the Ātman and this is to be realized.\(^45\)

In this transcendent state, mind gets separated from influences of senses and sense objects. Mind is not influenced by saṅkalpa-s, vāsanā, desires, obsession and attachments. Here the Indian system of thought is ahead of Western psychology which stops at unconscious state.

In this state separation between your experience of outside world and internal world ends. Its agitations, wandering tendency lessens. Then the mind force awakens. The mind assumes total consciousness and becomes witness of the senses. It becomes its own witness and directs its behavior as well as that of senses. This is known as “state of Turīya” (state of super consciousness).

Śrī Aurobindo says in Savitri that Turīya state is where, a sheer self discovery of soul’ takes place.

It is the man of deep Sleep who is truly a spiritual man, for he is awake to that intimation of Reality where the ordinary man is totally

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\(^{45}\) Mandukya Upanishad with Gaudapada’s karika,
unaware. But in the Sleep state there are only intimations from the realm of the Real one is not yet face with Reality itself. This is the state which the ancient seer described as Turīya or the Fourth State.

The Turīya state is thus the where one discovers one’s true being. Self-discovery is indeed a moment of indescribable ecstasy. From Vaiśvānara to Taijasa, from Taijasa to Prajñā, and from Prajñā to Ānanda - this is the journey of Ascent which the ancient seer had mapped out.

Śrī Aurobindo says, “All yoga in its nature is a new birth, it is a birth out of ordinary, the mentalized material life of man into higher spiritual consciousness. So yoga is spiritual mutation.”

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