

PANEL DISCUSSION: IS LUCID DREAMING RELATED TO HIGHER STATES OF CONSCIOUSNESS?

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Jayne Gackenbach: In this panel discussion we will address the question, "Is Lucid Dreaming Related To Higher States Of Consciousness?"

The members of the panel include myself, and I am from Athabasca University, Charles ("Skip") Alexander from Maharishi International University, Fariba Bogzaran from California Institute of Integral Studies in San Francisco, Melissa Derfler from University of California, Irvine, and Harry Hunt, from Brock University.

I want to begin by talking to you about a model that I've come up with that's very tentative and preliminary, and builds heavily on Skip and Harry's work as well as my own reading, research, and interviews.

The reason I got into research and wrote on lucid dreaming in the first place is because I was interested in higher states of consciousness. That's always been my passion. As an ASIDE from that, I got involved in dreaming. I'm really glad I did, because my work in dreaming has helped to ground me and ground my work in lucid dreaming. I see lucid dreaming as a bridge from the essential human experience of all dreams -- which reflect our activity, our feelings and our experience of daily life -- to the transpersonal, the transcendent, the experiences that seem in some sense larger than us.

In fact, the idea of conceptualizing lucidity and related types of dreaming as a bridge is one that underlies a lot of Skip's theoretical and experimental work; his findings have influenced my thinking. Equally important to understanding the relationship of lucid dreaming to higher states of consciousness is the idea of conceptualizing lucid dreaming as a form of meditation or at least related to meditation. Harry has done a lot of original work in this area which has influenced my thinking.

What I've done is used these ideas in the context of my own supporting research and come up with a possible five-stage process. This process largely emerges from the

experiences of a meditator who is not a psychologist, which is a MAJOR advantage, as we psychologists tend to get stuck in our own language. He's from another of the sciences -- it's not human -- and was able to say things in a way that I found very communicative. I found it helped ME sort out some of these ideas. I put all of these ideas together with some of the work of George Gillespie as well as other sophisticated lucid dreamers. George is also not a psychologist: he's is a theologian working on a Ph.D. in Sanskrit.

First, the minimalist definition of lucid dreaming is knowing that you are dreaming while you are dreaming. You are sound asleep and it occurs to you that it's a dream, or that you are sleeping as the case may be.

Now you can build on that initial awareness. There are all kinds of things that you can go with in such a state some of which have already caused concern such as, should you control lucid dreaming? [Editors Note: See panel discussion from the annual meeting of the Association for the Study of Dreams elsewhere in this issue of *Lucidity Letter*.]

Thus in the first stage the actor is dominant. The actor is the person who is involved in it. The observer in this model is the one that recognizes, "I know this is a dream." However, the recognition initially tends to be very brief. Despite the recognition, the feeling is very "out there." The dream "feels" real. You are involved. You are impacted by the dream. The dream has this attractiveness to it, this draw to it, this allure to it. You are still involved in it.

At this point the dreamer may or may not decide to manipulate or engage the dream. One of the questions that I'd like the panel to talk about, is, "Should you engage the dream or not?"

The Tibetan Buddhist tradition says "Yes!" That's one of their yogas. In that tradition you go in and actively engage, and become involved with, and create deities and all sorts of other things. Other traditions say, "No!" You'd be wiser to simply watch it go by and not get attached to that activity.

At some point it may occur to the dreamer that what is "out there" is in fact "in here". I'm generating that; it's as if I made an imaginal world, as it were. At this point two paths may open, one being to actively engage what is "out there;" create it, manipulate it, engage it, ask questions of it, whatever. The other is that there may be a shift of attention to inside, away from "out there," so that "out there" may dissolve. It may change character. I'm not sure, but the beginning of a separateness beyond the cognition that this is a dream emerges. This is the Second Stage.

At the Third Stage lucid dreams appear to be short, perhaps because of how they are perceived. Such dreams have been described as a thought that arises, that you take note of and then let go. One interviewee compared this to a kneejerk. "I had a kneejerk, but that's all, it was passing, I'm not attached to that kneejerk." The action of the dream does not grip you. You don't identify with it, as opposed to the first step where the focus is more on the active, participatory aspect. At Stage Three, it's just the inner state of awareness that is dominant.

In Stage Four the inner wakefulness now clearly dominates. You are not absorbed in dreams, but rather in the witness. In the work I have been doing with Skip and Bob Cranson we have been trying to make a distinction between witnessing and lucidity. Rather than calling it active versus passive lucidity, we think they may be something entirely different. But when you have categories they are typically not clean: there is a continuum. The notion of a continuum of conscious experience in sleep is part of what this model is trying to address.

So now you are absorbed not in the dream, but in the witness. This sort of sleep awareness can be so continuous that you may for months go without recalling a dream, losing awareness of even the passage of time.

Finally in Stage Five, once the dreamer has moved into the transcendental state, or pure consciousness, he or she moves "into" the experience. One interviewee talked about how everything condenses, condenses, and is gone, and then just opens up, but opens up in a way that seems to not be sensory-bound. There's no mental images, no emotional feelings, no sense of body or state of mind, but rather a quality of unboundedness. Here the ineffable quality of describing these experiences often dominates. One dreamer talks about it as a "web of relationships", which, may reflect his particular world view as a physical scientist whereas another view from another interviewee focuses on the numinous aspect of "the light" also perhaps reflecting a mindset as a theologian and Sanskrit scholar.

Member of the Audience: You used the term, "witnessing?"

Gackenbach: It is a conceptualization which I struggled with for what? Five years? Hours, and hours! Why don't we just go to Skip, and he'll talk more about that.

Charles (Skip) Alexander: Let me begin by saying that the Vedic tradition from ancient India, as it has been introduced in the West by Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, is the context in which I've had almost all my experience. In that tradition, as Maharishi has talked about it with people who have been meditating for fifteen or twenty years, he doesn't usually use the word "lucid." In fact, he doesn't use the words, "lucid

dreaming." But he HAS described in a great deal of detail, a similar experience which he calls "witnessing" -- witnessing in waking, witnessing in dreaming and witnessing in sleep. He says that all three of these are possibilities.

And so when I was beginning to interact with Jayne, she was into lucid dreaming, I was into witnessing.

Gackenbach: And we were in Iowa!

Alexander: And we were in Iowa! So we grappled with bridges between these different ways of looking at consciousness in sleep.

The very simplest way that I felt comfortable with was to think of lucid dreaming as it's typically studied, as a precursor to witnessing. I have to say maybe, because I haven't talked to Maharishi in any detail about it in order to see it from his point of view.

In terms of witnessing the best road into witnessing is through meditation. At least it is the simplest way for ME to get at it. When you practice TM (I'm not an expert on other traditions) -- you experience a particular thought, a sound called a "mantra," from which we take the sound value, not its meaning, so we don't associate it with any thoughts. It's not something you could do that with the word "baseball." If you repeated that, we'd think of baseball, and then we'd think of the Cubs, then we'd get upset, or we'd get happy!

The mantra is a sound without meaning which is said by the tradition to be very charming and settling to the mind. When you entertain it in your awareness, the sound begins to refine; it becomes quieter, more delicate, more abstract, more nonvocal. Eventually, the sound itself disappears. It's as if the awareness is following the sound. It's the chicken and the egg -- I don't know if the awareness is going down and that's refining the appreciation of the sound or visa versa. In any event they are correlated. As the sound is being experienced as a quieter level of thought, more delicate, then the awareness is becoming increasingly subtle as well.

Eventually duality between the knower and his or her thought is transcended. There is no separate thought of a particular sound or of the mantra or any other thought.

Then there is just a state of inner wakefulness, which is on the one hand silent, because there is no thought content, but on the other hand you feel more awake, as if you have woken up from the waking state. You feel more alert on the one hand, and on the other hand more subtle, because the mind is silent in terms of cognitive processing. The body is physiologically in a deep state of rest at that point, even virtual breath suspension,

yet the awareness is there.

We also call that experience "restful alertness" or a "self-referral" experience which is why I found this morning's talk by Melissa Derfler about self-organizing principles so interesting. The process of knowing is no longer mediated by "normal" thinking. The experience of awareness is not awake to anything other than itself; it's not awake to a thought, or perception, or feeling. In that sense we call it self-referring.

One simple analogy is that ordinarily awareness is like this [draws circular figure on board], and there's some boundary, and then there's an outside, that's perception, and what's happening is that permeable little holes are being dug through this circle on the boundary, and our awareness becomes diffuse, increasingly diffuse until the thoughts have gone away.

At first we may still experience our awareness as localized. We are so used to having a "me", and a thing that "I" experience, the subject of "me". But then awareness begins to diffuse to the center of me and the peripheries of awareness, and then it becomes just nonlocal. The awareness experience is unbounded experience in space and time. There's just awareness. The experience is not that "I am this," or "I am that," but it is just "I AM," or "am-ness" or "being." So it's "knowingNESS." [Editor's note: For another description of this state occurring spontaneously in the lucid dream of a person who had never heard of it, see the Gebremedhin article elsewhere in this issue of *Lucidity Letter*.]

Now, when this state of knowingness is maintained, according to Maharishi's tradition, the silent, settled state can come to be maintained along with active changing states. When this state of knowingness becomes maintained along with active states, silently and separately, then that becomes a "witness" to the changing states of waking, dreaming and sleeping. So that it's awake, it's aware of itself, it's a knowingness, and yet it also stands as a silent observer to the active thinking process, or the dream process, or the deep sleep process.

One of the original ways we who were working on witnessing thought that maybe we could tease these things apart is to look at deep sleep, because ordinarily the lucid research has been in the area of dreaming.

If this witnessing component transcends thought of any kind, and it's a fourth major state of consciousness which can then be maintained (the pure consciousness state we also call "transcendental consciousness" [TC]), we should be able to see that even during deep sleep, even if every cognitive system we know of is out cold. That shouldn't turn off the TC being-state, if it is something new and different. It's a level of self-referral awareness which is independent of ordinary waking and dreaming processes.

So we began to study witnessing in the deep sleep of advanced meditators, in other words, the subjective experience of this inner silence even when there is no dreaming going on. If you look at the EEG, you are at least stage 2 but usually in stage 3 or stage 4 sleep if you are in deep sleep. That's work that's going on now with Lynn Israelson Mason, Fred Travis, Michael Provo and Jayne. We have begun to look at some very advanced practitioners who, by self-report, say that they are awake even during deep sleep. [Editor's note: See also the Cranson et al., Mason et al., and Meirsman articles elsewhere in this issue of *Lucidity Letter*]

So we are beginning to look at witnessing in ways it is less likely to get confused with lucidity in dreaming. Lucid dreaming may be a state involving cognitive processing which is not unlike waking state cognitive processing but somehow those processes are going along with dreaming.

In the earliest types of lucid dreaming experiences people have told me, and various experiences I've had, you can feel like you've woken up in your dream. It's really your waking individual ego that's woken up in your dream; in the early, earlier, earliest stages, you go, "Wow! I'm in my dream, and I'm me!" You look in your wallet and see you've got your I.D. here, and ask, "What am I going to do?" You're tricked because it turns out you are not nearly as rational as you thought you were, but it's like you are awake in your dream, but the wakefulness is not unlike your ordinary thinking, perceiving self.

Witnessing, in the sense that Maharishi would mean, is much more developed, a further process of awakening, a deeper process of awakening that transcends ordinary waking activity then takes on this self-referring quality, without boundaries in space and time, nonlocal.

So, you could end up in the situation that your individual ego, your ordinary ego in the dream, is acting, and the Silent Witness is outside the dream, just being awake. That's something more.

In one sense there is a clear continuum, which Robert Cranson has also talked about and is a process of identification. When you're really locked in your dream--as you were saying, Harry, when you move in and out of your dream--then the dream is real, just like when you are awake, you think this is real. I mean, this is real! [He knocks on the wooden table!] You're locked in and you identify with your dream; you don't know you are dreaming. Lucidity seems to me in principle to be a more advanced state, even in the classical sense of these deep traditions, because you've begun this process of differentiation from the dream world. So you are less identified. You may still be

identified with cognitive processes, and there may be another step, when you de-identify with the dream altogether, and you identify with this silent state.

Gackenbach: Next, we have Harry Hunt.

Harry Hunt: I'll start by addressing the more general issue of the relationship between meditation and lucid dreaming. What I've been struck by is the similarity between the dawning of lucid awareness in the dream and the goal of meditative practices, such that it's tempting to say that lucid dreaming is the spontaneous emergence in dreaming of a meditative-like state.

Meditation aims to develop a receptive witnessing attitude and potentially integrate that into the ongoing participatory activities of everyday life, so that you have a kind of balancing of participating in a situation and being detached from it at the same time. That's basically what's happening in the lucid dream, at least the prototypically lucid dream. You're in the dream, you're participating, at the same time you are aware it's a dream. When this is successfully achieved and maintained for a while, the subjective experiences of many lucid dreamers are rather like those of some accounts of meditative practice. There is an increased sense of clarity, a sense of presence in the dream, and often a sense of exhilaration that is rather like classical accounts of peak experience.

It is also interesting that when you look at Tibetan Buddhism -- where I've had most of my personal experience -- something very much like lucid dreaming seems to be defined by them as the state that allows meditative practice to proceed during dreaming as well as when you are awake. We tried, at Brock University, to test this out with a very small group of Tibetan Buddhist meditators. We did find modest correlations between the length of time they had engaged in meditative practice and the frequency of spontaneous lucidity. These were not meditators who were aiming for lucid dreaming, or dream yoga, these were beginning practitioners. Also, the longer they had been meditating, and the more their dreams tended to be lucid, the more the dream content of those dreams tended to be archetypal and ecstatic, involving mandala-like structures, experiences of white light, and encounters with very powerful deities and dream beings.

Within the idea that lucid dreaming is a spontaneously developing meditative state, I tend to think that there are multiple lines of development or articulation.

On the one hand, there is Maharishi's Vedic witnessing tradition, deepening the aspect of meditation that involves receptive detachment and observation. The Tibetan tradition does that to some extent in that they also talk about the capacity of a continuous lucid awareness being carried throughout dreaming and throughout dreamless sleep.

But the Tibetan tradition also emphasizes some degree of control and deliberate manipulation of the dream, an aspect of higher practice. For example, a Tibetan lucid dreaming practitioner might deliberately call up his or her guru or a guiding deity and ask that being for teachings in the dream, using the lucid dream as an opportunity to deepen understanding. Or there might be deliberate manipulation of the dream content rather like the sort of magical practices with which some western lucid dreamers become involved -- making some things in the dream disappear and making other things appear. However, the point of doing that kind of practice in the Tibetan tradition would be to help teach oneself about the illusory nature of all experience. There is also some description in Tibetan Buddhism of merging with the "light of the void" in one's lucid dreams.

My own bias has been that the emphasis on dream control in the secular western literature has no significant spiritual or transpersonal aspect, but reflects a more egoistic kind of gratification. So that I have tended to regard the emphasis on lucid sexuality, flying, and deliberately changing dream content as little more than psychic adventuring.

Of late, however, I've been reading in the very interesting works by A. H. Almaas on what he calls "essential" realization. For Almaas, there are very different aspects of "essence" or spiritual realization. What he's doing, I think, is taking classical accounts of peak experience and ecstatic realization and pointing out, that they show different aspects or sides -- each of which may receive a differential emphasis in the various spiritual traditions.

Accordingly, he distinguishes what he calls an "awareness" aspect of essence, which I would see as being particularly developed in the witnessing meditation of the Vedic and Tibetan traditions.

He separates "awareness" from a "mergence" aspect of essence, which would be best reflected in the ecstatic "dissolving" into an entity higher than yourself. I mentioned that the Tibetan tradition develops this in some of their accounts of lucid dreaming.

Finally -- and here's where the control dimension of lucidity may come in -- he locates a "strength" aspect of essence, which appears most directly in the "I am" quality of some spiritual experiences -- an increased sense of "presence". In many ways, Gurdjieff-type traditions of self-remembering, which would be a meditative practice fully integrated into ongoing daily life seems to highlight this aspect of developing a sense of personal essence, and presence.

Now Almaas sees this "strength" aspect as a transpersonal or spiritual line of growth

and argues that full spiritual development requires articulation on all these and some other dimensions.

From this point of view, I am now less inclined to automatically assume there is a single line of spiritual development in lucid dreaming -- especially one that would necessarily exclude dream control. Perhaps using lucid dreams to fly or to magically change dream content might well be quite empowering and useful in certain stages of meditative realization or in some meditative traditions rather than others. There may be no meaningful distinction between lower or higher within these varieties of essential development. Each would have its own line of unfolding and each would ideally need the others for balance. Each could also have its pathological or disorganizing aspects if it was overdone or if it became fixated.

In terms of such one-sided imbalance the problem with the mergence aspect of meditation could be that it can be misused as an impersonal expansion and escape from the personal.

The problem with the cultivation of pure awareness is that if it becomes overly fixated that could turn into more of a withdrawal and false detachment.

Then finally, and it's always seemed to me, most obviously, the control aspect of lucid dreaming and the meditative traditions can become an egoistic indulgence and self-gratification. That is always the danger for what Almaas would call the strength aspect of essence, while nonetheless reminding us that dream control can also be used to reach positive forms of essential "strength" and "presence" as well.

What I'm suggesting then is that it does make sense to see prototypical lucid dreaming as a kind of spontaneous meditative state, but that there may be different lines of development that then become available rather than just one or two.

Fariba Bogzaran: You concluded with something that I wanted to conclude with, Harry.

Hunt: That's all right. Can I find out how you got there?

Bogzaran: I would like to share with you some of my research findings on the experience of the Divine within the lucid dream state, which is an experience of an altered state of awareness in dream life. Many individuals have reported experiencing the Divine in lucid dreams. These experiences seem to vary in level and type from one individual to another. In many of my own lucid dreams, I have asked the question, "Who is the Divine?" or I have said, "I would like to experience the Great

Spirit." Since my definition of the Divine is broad and not very specific, my personal experiences of the Divine in lucid dreams vary in many ways, from particles of light and mind/body sensations to visions of moving and changing forms.

My curiosity about this subject made me want to explore it further in a study suitable for my graduate thesis. One night, while contemplating whether or not I should spend the amount of time that would be needed for researching a topic of this nature, I turned on the radio to listen to some music, and came across a talk show which arrested me. A Dutch psychologist, Ole Nydal, who has written a book called *Entering the Diamond Way*, was talking about enlightenment. He had spent years studying and practicing Buddhism in Tibet. I decided to tape the talk, hoping he would say something about dreams.

Soon after I started taping, I heard him say, "Those moments during a dream when we know we dream, those moments when we really know this is a dream, actually those moments are that state of enlightenment. If we could hold that, our mind would become limitless and it could enter into past and future." [New Dimension radio, winter 1988].

The impact of these words was that of an affirmation of my research project.

In the Judeo-Christian Bible, God says, "Hear now my words. If there be a prophet among you, I will make myself known to him in a vision and will speak unto him in a dream." In one of the B'hai writings, we read, "Consider thy state when asleep. Verily this phenomena is the most mysterious of the signs of God amongst men."

If there are signs of the Divine in our dreams, there must be a way we can all experience the presence of the Divine, and experience such a state of being. I didn't dare form a hypothesis on this subject, as I knew there was nothing I could prove. I was simply interested in exploring to what extent our intentions, concerns, and desires for the presence of the Divine would lead us to such a dream experience. In other words, the study was about "incubating" the Divine in lucid dreams.

The results of this research project were reported at length in the June 1990 issue of *Lucidity Letter* [Vol. 9 No. 1]. Research showed that individuals who had formulated a clear idea of who the Divine is (or who had personalized the Divine), encountered a Divine figure consistent with their beliefs, whereas individuals who did not have a clear idea about the Divine had a variety of encounters and unexpected experiences.

I feel that each individual experiences the Divine in their own unique way and the Divine can manifest itself in many different forms. In the study, it seemed that the experience was just as meaningful for individuals who encountered the Divine as a

person as for those who encountered the Divine in various other forms, visions and sense experiences.

In addition, the way individuals formulated their incubation questions and statements affected the way they approached their lucid dreams. When subjects formulated the task as "wanting to experience" or "opening themselves to the Divine" they adopted a more passive role. The Divine seemed to appear to them. Individuals who formulated the task as seeking the Divine, were more actively looking for the Divine; in most cases they were able to have a Divine encounter as well.

From this study I can say that the intention of wanting to be in the presence of the Divine may lead one to have such an experience in the lucid dream state. Individuals had a different level of control over this encounter in the lucid dreams depending on whether their intention was to passively wait for or actively look for the Divine. Those individuals who were passively waiting experienced the Divine presence appearing to them or experienced it in their body. Events happened to them. The subjects who sought the Divine seemed to have more control over the dream. They were seeking in the dream for the Divine and most cases found the Divine.

The data that I have collected leads me to say that lucid dreams can be another path toward the experience of the Divine. The Divine seems to manifest itself in many forms in lucid dreams; there is no one way to experience this. Furthermore, there are no higher and lower levels; instead, there are interwoven levels for experiencing the divine within that state. Being lucid within the dream is in itself a shift to another level of consciousness (the unconscious becomes conscious); wanting to be in the presence of the Divine is another dimension. "Lucidity" is there. The state is just "is." The individual taps into that state for his experience depending on where the individual is.

Gackenbach: Melissa Derfler.

Melissa Derfler: To start with, I think I'd like to say that I don't consider myself to be an expert on lucid dreaming, and certainly not on higher consciousness. I think I am an explorer in both of these areas, much as I would imagine everyone in this room is. So what I would like to do is to explore some thoughts and concepts that I have considered in both of these areas and share them with you.

First of all I think one notion that has been brought up here in this panel and is coming under some further consideration now in general is what do we really mean when we say "higher" consciousness? Is there a better way to conceptualize? Rather than there being "higher" and "lower", what we are really seeing is that there is a wider, fuller, deeper, greater, more inclusive, more integrative kind of consciousness or awareness

that seems to be capable of emerging into human awareness.

Georges Gurdjieff was mentioned by Harry Hunt here and I've had a little bit of opportunity to study some of his writings and thoughts about human consciousness. It is interesting that he had a phrase that he used frequently, that he felt that modern man was actually asleep. That is exactly the term that he used. Of course he didn't understand English quite as well as we do, so he used that as a kind of shorthand but it's nonetheless an interesting metaphor for him to have chosen.

His hypothesis was that the consciousness that we call our usual waking state is not a finished state. It is not all there is to know or be when we say we are conscious. It's an evolving, an emerging state. The consciousness of human beings ten thousand years ago was not the consciousness that we experience now and it's not the consciousness that we are capable of experiencing, if the evolution of consciousness and the ascent of consciousness continues, as it appears to be doing.

So when we say that in a meditative state, we begin to become self-aware or self-remember at least in Gurdjieff's terms, and in many of the meditative approaches as well, it's really a very special state and in dreaming as well I think that it's inaccurate of us to dismiss that as just a breaking through of the usual egoic self. Especially in dreaming since we don't even usually have an awareness of our own being in a dream. That's really a very special breaking through for that to occur.

And in our waking everyday state, how often do we actually take the time to remember, "I am here, I am conscious, I am awake, I am a thinking being and a thinking mind." I doubt if we do that once during the entire day.

In our usual state, as Heidegger termed it, we are "thrown" into our environment, into our state of mind. We suddenly just find ourselves here and most of the time we are reacting and responding in an automatic kind of way. This is what Gurdjieff meant when he said we are in a state of sleep.

So I would argue that any time there is a breaking through of this awareness, that "I am" whether it's "I am dreaming," or "I am here," that's a special state right there. It is a wider consciousness than we are used to experiencing.

Now in neural net terms, it would certainly seem that we could define a wider consciousness in terms of, say, an accessing of a greater amount of the total state space, the model is very nicely applicable to this.

Perhaps we might say what we call our usual egoic self then is a very limited part of the

state space. It's a part we experience with high probability day after day after day, thus there is a continuity that we say is us.

If there is the possibility of breaking from that bounded ego, and accessing areas of the state space that are not usually accessible, we can indeed say that might be a wider kind of consciousness, a larger consciousness, a greater consciousness.

So again, in dreaming, since there is less of the sensory constraint, and you are already accessing a larger part of the net, and then in addition we have a lucid characteristic which diminishes certain of the cognitive constraints, you can see where already you are getting a sense of that expansiveness of that consciousness compared to where we spend most of our time.

Alexander: I want to make one distinction regarding passive versus active in the way Jayne was talking about the witness. She described the way that that's more passive and observing as opposed to being an active involvement in the dream process.

In terms of the Vedic conception, or in Maharishi's conception of witnessing, it is important to realize that in that experience our awareness has been identified with a state which is nonlocal in time and space, and which we experience subjectively as "being," or our "Self." The Self that is not ordinarily individualized or localized. In that Self we can't say "now I'm going to be more passive", or "now I'm going to be more active". The "I" that can be more passive or more active is the individualized ego.

When awareness transcends, as it does spontaneously to identify with the silent state of being, then that state is a witness to the ordinary activities, no matter how they are changing or not changing. The character of that state is this sort of silence and yet wakefulness at the same time. This is where it gets a little more complicated. As we INITIALLY experience silent being, it's a state of quiescence, evenness, peacefulness, and yet it's awake. We can say it is often accompanied by a feeling of blissfulness, settledness.

When you are experiencing witness, when your awareness has become identified with THAT, it's not a matter of being passive, or less active or more passive, because this is a whole new level. It is what it is. That experience of "am-ness" or "being" just is. Active or passive involves the individual world, the individual ego. You can be more active or more passive in your dream; but that which is doing that kind of thing is the individual ego, at least the way I'm conceptualizing it now.

When we transcend identification with the individual ego and become identified with the experience of being, It Is. It's not passive or active and those are simply words we

apply to it, but IT IS. It's a state of knowingness. Now we have the question of whether passivity will lead you to detachment. If your individual ego is being passive and trying to separate, that might lead to some withdrawal. But the experience of being is not the individual ego becoming withdrawn from reality. It's the expansion of the individual ego to identification with this being-state which Maharishi has sometimes described as the feeling of "mother is at home", to put it in a kind of quaint way.

You experience grounding in being. You've come back to the SOURCE of your individuality. You've put your roots down into the earth of your being. The idea is that you are coming back to the Being of yourself, the Being of the universe. That is not a process of withdrawing; that's a process of rooting in that which gives you sustenance at the very core of yourself. So, that's transcending the individuality, which could be passive, active, involved or withdrawn.