

Dreams: The door to consciousness



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**Abstract:**

This paper shall talk about the Buddhist interpretation of dreams, I tried to explain what ‘dreaming’ and ‘dreams’ means in Buddhism. This paper will also try to compare and contrast the Buddhist and Freudian interpretations of dreams.

**Keywords**:

Dreams, Osho, unfulfilled moments, repressed desires, consciousness, unconsciousness, awareness

**My Reviews of this interview**

**Osho: Dreams Are Your Unlived Life**

**From an interview with The Tennessean Nashville, Tennessee**

In this interview, the question is posed as to why Osho, who is portrayed as a common old man in this context, does not dream. Osho, known as a spiritual guru, provides an insightful response by explaining the reasons why people actually dream. He suggests that dreams arise from unfulfilled moments and repressed desires that stem from societal and cultural conditioning.

According to Osho, when individuals strive to conform to the expectations of a "civilized" society, they suppress their true nature and repress their genuine desires. As a result, these unexpressed desires find an outlet in the realm of dreams, where they can be fulfilled. Osho's explanation aligns with Sigmund Freud's wish fulfillment theory, which posits that dreams serve as a means for the unconscious mind to satisfy unmet needs and desires.

Moreover, Osho draws a comparison between humans and animals, pointing out that animals do not dream. By referencing "primitive" people, he suggests that even in societies that are more closely connected to their natural instincts and less influenced by societal expectations, the phenomenon of dreaming may be less prevalent or even absent. Osho uses this observation to support his argument that dreams primarily serve the purpose of wish fulfillment, arising from the repression of desires in a civilized society.

Overall, Osho's perspective on why people dream revolves around the concept of repressed desires and unfulfilled moments. He contends that dreams provide a space where individuals can experience the satisfaction of their suppressed desires, particularly in societies that emphasize conformity and the suppression of one's true nature

**Osho’s writings about dreams:**

In one of his writings, Osho introduces the idea that "anything and everything is but a dream," which may initially seem disconnected from the field of psychoanalysis. However, upon further exploration, it becomes clear that Osho employs the term "dream" to signify "awareness" or the act of being present in the current moment. The central concept behind this notion is that by perceiving everything as a dream, the significance of the past diminishes. Consequently, actions or events that occurred yesterday, regardless of their nature, become irrelevant.

This perspective gives rise to the idea of embracing the present moment and cultivating self-awareness. Psychoanalysis, too, aims to uncover the true self, and dreams serve as a means to access and understand our authentic nature. Osho includes the teachings of Buddha in his discussion of dreams, emphasizing the importance of self-awareness. He recounts an anecdote where Buddha was asked about his true identity, to which he responded that he was neither a god nor a human but "awareness" itself.

While "awareness" is a term commonly associated with philosophical discourse, and "dream" is typically used in casual conversations, Osho establishes a compelling argument for their similarity. By interpreting the term "dream" according to Osho's perspective, we discover a deeper connection between dreams and awareness.

Both Osho's concept of dreams and the notion of awareness share a common thread: the idea of being fully present in the current moment and embracing one's true self. By viewing everything as a dream, Osho encourages individuals to let go of attachment to the past and instead focus on cultivating self-awareness and living in the present. In this way, dreams become a tool for introspection and understanding one's authentic nature, aligning with the aims of psychoanalysis.

**Buddhism on Dreams**

In Buddhism, dreams hold a distinct significance and are perceived differently from waking life. They are often seen as a portal to another realm or as symbolic in nature. Buddhist folklore is replete with stories that illustrate the belief that dreaming transports individuals to alternate dimensions or states of consciousness. Even the historical Buddha, Siddhartha Gautama, is said to have experienced a series of seven prophetic dreams before attaining enlightenment.

Dreams in Buddhism are considered to have a deeper meaning beyond their surface content. They are interpreted symbolically, providing insights into one's spiritual path and personal growth. Buddhist monks, even in contemporary times, are asked to share their dreams from the previous night as part of completing rituals or gaining knowledge. These dreams play a significant role in guiding the monk's actions and decisions in relation to the ritual or their spiritual journey.

The association between Buddhist awareness and dreams is intriguing. It bears a resemblance to the underlying motive of psychoanalysis, which seeks to understand the true self by delving into the depths of dreams. In Buddhism, however, the interpretation goes even further, emphasizing not just understanding the dream but also living within the dream. The concept is about fully engaging with the present moment, much like the way one experiences a dream.

In Buddhism, dreams are not solely regarded as symbolic or spiritual experiences. They also convey the notion that life itself is akin to a dream. The teachings propagate the idea that existence, with its impermanence and transient nature, can be likened to a dream. This perspective encourages individuals to embrace the fluidity and ephemeral nature of life, fostering a deeper sense of presence and acceptance.

Overall, dreams hold a multifaceted role in Buddhism. They are seen as a means to access alternate realms or receive symbolic messages, and they serve as a reminder of the dream-like nature of life itself. By exploring the depths of their dreams, practitioners strive to uncover insights into their spiritual path and deepen their understanding of the true self.

Within Buddhism, we also have a practice of the Tibetan Buddhist Dream of Yoga where the main focus is to look into our experiences in dreams to discover whether or not we are truly awake. Being awake and asleep at the same time or having a lucid dream has been simplified in the West compared to its importance in the practices of Tibetan Vajrayana Buddhism.