boundary between self and "other" not begin to blur? This is that part of our many-folded being where we create new roles for ourselves and also act out those roles. Hence the famous quote: "Follow your dream." When we, as the dreamer, are conscious of our dreams, that is, when we begin to look at our dreams as great gifts from the great beyond with a very personal message for each one of us, then the threshold of the first plane of consciousness has been crossed.

We no longer wake up from sleep or dream-like reverie, whatever the case may be, to say: "Oh, that was just a dream, it's not real." Rather we say: "What is the dream trying to tell me?" And the self-revelation from dreams varies from person to person, depending on their essential nature, worldly ties, inclinations, and the capacity to interpret dreams.

Sigmund Freud has done some ground-breaking work in his *Interpretation of Dreams*, further expanded by CG Jung by his theories of the "unconscious." This, then, is a world of spirits, for the dream figures of our dreams do not have material bodies. Sometimes they are even without form, as in disembodied voices or music. We can even meet and talk to the "dead" on this plane, if we are not too fearful!

One remembers Rabindranath's secret meetings with Kalidas while he was writing poetry on their famous house-boat on the Padma, or Dante's communion with Virgil in the *Divine Comedy,* or, for that matter, the great prophets' encounters with Gabriel and other angels. Perhaps, the only factor that separates the common man from these inspired geniuses is faith in one's dreams. They take their dreams seriously while others regard them as momentary lapses of reason, or recreation, or a temporary release from worldly worries. But this is that plane of our being which transcends the space-time boundaries.

This is the point where we begin to realize the meaning of the famous Indian icon of Lord Vishnu, who is sleeping in the ocean, a symbol of the unconscious depths of our minds. As he dreams, the golden seeds of countless universes begin to bloom. This plane then is our meeting point with Lord Vishnu.

How often have we seen people carry out intuitions or instructions that they received in their dreams! After all this, can we ever brush aside our dreams as being mere phantoms? They are the very source of our creative powers. Just as a baby floats in its maternal womb dreaming of a world beyond the womb, with its mother providing it with sustenance and safety, so does Vishnu nurture us in our sleep, or dream-like state, so we can materialize our dreams. Some express their dreams artistically, through poetry or music, and some express them in new religious doctrines

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or mythological symbols, while others enter into deep meditative states to delve even further.

For people who go past the threshold of dream-consciousness, the deep dreamless sleep consciousness begins. As a matter of fact, Campbell is deeply indebted to the Mandukya Upanishad for his theories, and his writing has shown with illuminating clarity how the Occidental or Western mythological symbols and the Oriental symbols coincide, complement, or even borrow from each other.

A recurrent mythical symbol in his comparative mythological study of the Orient and the Occident is the Celtic legend of Tristan and Isolt. They represent the search of every individual soul for meaning, for passionate love, and for the ultimate consummation of love where the lovers become one: Tristan is Isolt, Isolt is Tristan.

And like Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet, their love affair also ends in tragedy, at least, on the material plane of day-to-day reality. But on this plane of dreamless sleep consciousness they are shown to be a conjoined pair in a coffin-like box, awaiting resurrection.

This is the mystical enactment of the famous Sufi saying "Baqa-billah." The beloved and his object of love are one. One dies completely to the worldly self and reunites with the one. This, in the Tristan-Isolt legend is known as "The Love-Death." This is where Vishnu and his consort Lakshmi are one. Love's consummation, viewed in the metaphysical light, then, is not just a physical gratification of the senses, but also a painful death. It is the death of the worldly person.

"The rest is silence ..." as Shakespeare puts it through the words of Hamlet. Although for Hamlet this silence was not earned through a consciously undertaken spiritual quest but rather something that descended on him to relieve him of the burden he could no longer carry.

Of this silence, Campbell has written: "The fourth portion of the self is silence unqualified: neither of anything nor of no thing; neither inward nor outward-turned, nor the two together; neither knowing nor unknowing ...utterly quiet, peaceful-blissful, without a second. This is the self to be realized."

This is the "Adaytam" of the Vedantic philosophy, the "There is none but Allah" of Islam, "the Great Void" of Taoist philosophy. This is the realm from "where words turn back."

Is it any wonder that we are, therefore, always using words to go beyond words, singing to feel the silence beyond the song, dancing in a frenzied manner like dervishes to find the still centre of the dance or, even fighting, and killing, to realize that in silence, in God, we are deathless? This is the plane from where "the Lila" begins all over again.

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