Chapter Three
Dreams

All Sleep Full of Dreams

Again, about the sleep, it is like that because the ordinary state of sleep is an unconscious condition. One has always dreams throughout the night, but the surface being is then unconscious and records only a few of them that come through and even these it records in an incoherent way. Really one is acting or working on one plane or another throughout sleep except for a few minutes. When the inner consciousness grows, then one becomes more and more aware of what is going on, what one is doing and sleep is no longer quite the same thing — for it is more conscious.

* They [people who speak of “sound and dreamless sleep”] simply mean that when they come back, they are not conscious of having dreamed. In the sleep the consciousness goes into other planes and has experiences there and when these are translated perfectly or imperfectly by the physical mind, they are called dreams. All the time of sleep such dreams take place, but sometimes one remembers and at other times does not at all remember. Sometimes also one goes low down into the subconscious and the dreams are there, but so deep down that when one comes up there is not even the consciousness that one had dreamed.

* All sleep is full of dreams. Why should night or day make any difference?

Different Kinds of Dreams

Everybody has dreams in sleep though all do not remember
them. In these dreams one goes to all kinds of places in all kinds of worlds and sees and does things there or has experience of what happens there. Some of these dreams have importance and a meaning for the sadhana — most have none or very little.

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These dreams are not all mere dreams, all have not a casual, incoherent or subconscious building. Many are records or transcripts of experiences on the vital plane into which one enters in sleep, some are scenes or events of the subtle physical plane. There one often undergoes happenings or carries on actions that resemble those of the physical life with the same surroundings and the same people, though usually there is in arrangement and feature some or a considerable difference. But it may also be a contact with other surroundings and with other people, not known in the physical life or not belonging at all to the physical world.

In the waking state you are conscious only of a certain limited field and action of your nature. In sleep you can become vividly aware of things beyond this field — a larger mental or vital nature behind the waking state or else a subtler physical or a subconscious nature which contains much that is there in you but not distinguishably active in the waking state. All these obscure tracts have to be cleared or else there can be no change of the Prakriti. You should not allow yourself to be disturbed by the press of vital or subconscious dreams — for these two make up the larger part of dream-experience — but aspire to get rid of these things and of the activities they indicate, to be conscious and reject all but the divine Truth; the more you get that Truth and cling to it in the waking state, rejecting all else, the more all this inferior dream-stuff will get clear.

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It is the subconscious that is active in ordinary dreams. But in the dreams in which one goes out into other planes of consciousness, mental, vital, subtle physical, it is part of the inner being, inner mental or vital or physical that is usually active.
A dream, when it is not from the subconscient, is either symbolic or else an experience of some supraphysical plane or a formation thrown in by some mental or vital or either force or in rare cases an indication of some event actual or probable in the past, present or future.

This is an instance of a dream of exact physical prevision. The power to have such dreams is comparatively rare, for ordinarily such previsions come in inner vision but not in sleep. In dreams vital or mental formations often take shape which sometimes fulfil themselves in essence, but not with this accuracy of detail.

It is only a particular class of dreams that do that. Most coherent dreams are either symbolic or indicate things that take place in the mental or vital planes rather than on the physical.

This indicates a power of conscious thought-formation. Thoughts have an effective power — usually by creating an atmosphere or tendencies — thus when one is ill, those around should not have thoughts of gloomy foreboding, grief or fear, for that works against cure. But the capacity of conscious thought-formation is a special power and uncommon. It can be acquired or come of itself by sadhana.

All dreams of this kind [indicating future events] are very obviously formations such as one often meets on the vital, more rarely on the mental plane. Sometimes they are the formations of your own mind or vital; sometimes they are the formations of other minds with an exact or a modified transcription in yours; sometimes formations come that are made by the non-human forces or beings of these other planes. These things are not true and need not become true in the physical world, but they may still have effects in the physical if they are framed with that purpose or that tendency and, if they are allowed, they may realise their events or their meaning — for they are most often symbolical or schematic — in the inner or the outer life. The proper course with them is simply to observe and understand
and, if they are from a hostile source, reject or destroy them.

There are other dreams that have not the same character but are a representation or transcription of things that actually happen on other planes, in other worlds under other conditions than ours. There are, again, some dreams that are purely symbolic and some that indicate existing movements and propensities in us, whether familiar or undetected by the waking mind, or exploit old memories or else raise up things either passively stored or still active in the subconscient, a mass of various stuff which has to be changed or got rid of as one rises into a higher consciousness. If one learns how to interpret, one can get from dreams much knowledge of the secrets of our nature and of other-nature.

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Those [dreams] which are formed from subconscient impressions arranged at haphazard (subconscient mind, vital or physical) either have no significance or some meaning which is difficult to find and not very much worth knowing even if it is found. Other dreams are either simply happenings of the mental, vital or subtle physical worlds or else belong to the wider mental, vital or subtle physical plane and have a meaning which the figures of the dream are trying to communicate.

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It often happens that when something is thrown out of the waking consciousness it still occurs in dream. This recurrence is of two kinds. One is when the thing is gone, but the memory and impression of it remains in the subconscient and comes up in dream-form in sleep. These subconscient dream-recurrences are of no importance; they are shadows rather than realities. The other is when dreams come in the vital to test or to show how far in some part of the inner being the old movement remains or is conquered. For in sleep the control of the waking consciousness and will is not there. If then even in spite of that one is conscious in sleep and either does not feel the old movement when the circumstances that formerly caused it are repeated in dream or else soon conquers and throws it out, then it must be understood
that there too the victory is won. Your dream which seems to have corresponded with realities was a true experience of this kind; the old movement did come from habit, but at once you became conscious and rejected it. This is an encouraging sign and promises complete removal in a very short time.

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Subconscient dreams and lower vital dreams are usually incoherent. Higher vital dreams are usually and mental dreams are always coherent.

**Subconscient Dreams**

When one is in the physical consciousness, then the sleep is apt to be of the subconscious kind, often heavy and unrefreshing, the dreams also of the subconscious kind, incoherent and meaningless or if there is a meaning the dream symbols are so confused and obscure that it is not possible to follow it. It is by bringing the Mother’s Light into the subconscious that this can be dispelled and the sleep becomes restful or luminous and conscious.

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A dream from the subconscious plane has no meaning; it is simply a *khichudi* of impressions and memories left in the subconscious from the past.

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Dreams of this kind *[in which old vital movements occur]* arise from the subconscious. It is one of the most embarrassing elements of Yogic experience to find how obstinately the subconscious retains what has been settled and done with in the upper layers of the consciousness. But just for that reason these dreams are often a useful indication as they enable us to pursue things to their obscure roots in this underworld and excise them. No, it does not indicate that you are taking in any part of your consciousness your present pursuit of Yoga as a stopgap, but merely that old vital tendencies and activities are still there in that mys-
terious and obscure subconscious limbo and that their ghosts can rise twittering to the surface when the conscious will is in abeyance. If the dream was trivial, it would seem to show that this ghost was not a strong demon like the militant Norwegian saga revenants but a phantom from an unsubstantial Hades.

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Most people have that kind of dream at night. It is because the thoughts and memories that belong to the past are there always in some part of the being, even if they are not active in the waking state, and they become active at night. That is why one is constantly meeting the people once known, either one goes to the old places and meets them or they come.

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You seem to be attaching too much importance to dreams. Keep your waking mind and vital free — you can deal afterwards with the dreams which will then be only memories from the subconscious.

Vital Dreams

Most among the sadhaks see many dreams of the vital plane when they sleep. In sleep the being goes out into other worlds and planes and it has to pass through the vital on the way — and as the vital is nearest to the waking consciousness, it is there it most vividly remembers. Probably you see better dreams but do not remember them.

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In dreams on the vital plane there is always a deviation from the norm of the physical fact — sometimes this is because of the free play in the vital, but at others it is only a fantasy of formation either in the vital itself or in the subconscious mind which transcribes the incidents of the dream and sometimes alters them by contributions of its own.

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These are dreams of the vital plane — they have probably some reference to something going on in your vital, but these dreams cannot be precisely interpreted unless there is either a clue that is clear on the surface or else you yourself can relate it to something in your experience of which you are aware. The images of the ascent and the coming down of water (consciousness or some other gift from above) are frequent and the general meaning is always the same — but the precise significance here is not clear.

* Your dreams are of a very familiar kind, both coming often to sadhaks. The first is a sort of formation on the vital plane or a possibility for the future — whether or how it will come about in the physical is a different matter. The other is an excursion into the vital world where there are all the types and forms of things that happen here, each having its own region or province there. One is constantly going into these planes (and others also, mental and psychic and subtle physical as well as vital) and seeing and doing things there. Very often what one does and experiences there is a symbol of things in the nature, tendencies, achievements, difficulties, things hidden within or only half-seen on the surface. This one came clearly to show how far you have travelled from certain elements, tendencies or possibilities that were there in the past. The feeling in the dream was the sign of that progress.

* A great many people have these dreams [of flying]. It is the vital being that goes out in sleep and moves about in the vital worlds and has this sense of floating in the air in its own (vital) body. The waves of a sea having the colour of lightning must have been the atmosphere of some vital province. I have known of some sadhaks, when they go at first out of the body in a more conscious way, thinking they have actually levitated, the vividness of the movement is so intense, but it is simply the vital body going out.

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Flying during sleep over houses, streets, etc. simply means that the consciousness in the vital sheath has gone out and is moving over places in the vital or subtle physical world (even sometimes the material); it is always in the vital sheath that one flies like that.

The ascending movement is different—in that, it is the consciousness that goes high up to other planes or lands and comes down again to the body.

It is a dream of the vital plane. In these dreams the figures of the physical life take another form and meaning and the consciousness that lives and acts among them is not the outer physical consciousness but some inner vital part of the being. The insurrection of the French soldiers is a figure of some disturbance on the vital plane which wants to happen and affect the inner life. The import of the dream is the readiness of the vital inner consciousness to put its reliance on the Mother and take refuge in her against all possible disturbances or perils of the inner life.

These dreams are of the vital plane. Those about going home come from a part of the vital which still keeps the memory of the past relations and goes there during the sleep. The dreams about the Mother record meetings with her on the vital plane. For the first you should throw them away when you awake and not let your vital keep their impress. The experiences you had there (of the Mother coming in the heart and telling you) were psychic in character, not of the vital dream kind.

The difficulty you have in sadhana may come from the vital or physical mind becoming active. That often happens after the first experiences of calm and silence. One has to detach oneself from these activities in meditation as a witness and call down the original calm into these parts also. But this may take time. If one can in meditation sufficiently isolate oneself from the surroundings and go inside, the quietude comes more quickly.
The dream was of a kind one often has in the vital plane in which one gets into inextricable difficulties till suddenly one finds the way out. Gujerat in the dream was not Gujerat, but only a symbol of one part of the vital world which is opposed to the spiritual life and full of vital powers that come in the way either by fraud or by force. These dreams are indications of certain parts of vital nature (not one’s own, but the general vital Nature) which stand in the way of spiritual fulfilment. When one goes there and masters them, then one is free from any intervention of these parts of Nature in the sadhana.

Symbolic Dreams on the Vital Plane

The dreams you describe are very clearly symbolic dreams on the vital plane. These dreams may symbolise anything, forces at play, the underlying structure and tissue of things done or experienced, actual or potential happenings, real or suggested movements or changes in the inner or outer nature.

The timidity of which the apprehension in the dream was an indication, was probably not anything in the conscious mind or higher vital, but something subconscient in the lower vital nature. This part always feels itself small and insignificant and has very easily a fear of being submerged by the greater consciousness—a fear which in some may amount at the first contact to something like a panic alarm or terror.

These dreams are quite symbolical of the vital forces that come and attack you. If you face them with courage they are reduced to helplessness. I don't think it is at all your father and brother that you meet—although something of their hostile feelings may be taken advantage of by those forces to take their forms—also they may do it in order to create sympathy in you and prevent you from acting against them. But apart from that the figures of the physical mother and father and relatives are very often symbolical of the physical or the hereditary nature or
generally of the ordinary nature in which we are born.

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Your dream was evidently a symbolic representation of some part of the vital plane (corresponding to a part of human nature also) in which the Mother had made her house (established something of her consciousness). The village represented some formation of human life in which there is outward beauty and harmony as in certain parts of European life, but no touch of the Divine. The jungle represented the surroundings in which this formation has been made — it is made in the midst of a vital nature which is wild and savage and full of dangerous things — the village, the formation is therefore something quite insecure and artificial. That is indeed the nature of much of human civilisation, an artificial construction in the midst of a dangerously unregenerated vital nature, and it can collapse at any moment. The sea is the vital consciousness itself, for water is often a symbol of the vital. The footpath seems to indicate something the Mother wants the sadhaks to build, to form in that part of the vital, but which is not easy to make and only can be made by constant perseverance which will finally prevail against the instability of the vital. Vital dreams of this kind are often very interesting and instructive if one can get the clue to their symbols, but to get the clue is not always easy.

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The dream you relate in your letter is not of the psychic but of the vital plane — it relates entirely to conflicting movements of the vital consciousness, representing on the one side the attachments of the vital nature, on the other the movement of the higher (inner) vital to get free from them. Dreams like this one on the vital plane have to be observed and understood as indications of what is going on within you, but must not be taken too literally, as they are often symbolic and figurative, and cannot be always accepted as decisive directions for action in the external life. Thus the figure of the Mother taking a meal of rice with rice-water and salt might be a valid symbol — in this case for the
Mother’s freedom from all food desire and the necessity of your lower vital attaining to the same freedom; but if you gave it an external and physical application, e.g. that the Mother had actually taken to such a diet and you should do the same, the interpretation would be an obvious mistake. So also the part about the service can only have been enacted on the vital plane to test or to stimulate the vital being’s readiness to give up the service, if and when the Mother might demand any such action from you. But to deduce from a vital experience of this kind, however useful for a vital change, that you ought actually to give up service, would be as much a mistake as to take up a diet of rice and salt and rice-water on the strength of that part of the dream.

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Yes, your feeling about the protection is perfectly true.  
The dream about X and going to the Mother was an experience of something that took place on the vital plane. Things happen there that have some connection with the nature and life here, but they happen differently because there it is not the physical beings that meet, but the vital beings of people. One can gather what is the nature of one’s own inner vital being — which is often very different from the physical personality that acts in front in the body. By the acting of the consciousness in these dreams the inner parts of the being begin to be more active and have more influence on the outer nature. Your inner vital being seems from the dream experiences that you have related to be very strong, faithful, clear-minded, resolute, able to deal with the hostile forces and their activities in the right way and do the right thing.

The sensation of going somewhere means that part of the consciousness is going into some other plane than the physical. The men you saw and also the vision that came afterwards belonged to these supraphysical worlds. The vision seems to be symbolic of something from above, but of what is not quite clear from the details. Gold is the colour of the Truth that comes from above.
Formations in Vital Dreams

These are dreams of the vital planes. Sometimes they are actual appearances — things that happen on that plane. But sometimes they are merely formations, thoughts or feelings put into shape. Not necessarily your thoughts or feelings, but those of others also or things floating in the atmosphere — or else formations made by the beings of those planes.

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I said this dream was an actual happening on the vital plane, not a formation. If somebody attacks you in the street, that is not a formation. But if somebody hypnotises you and suggests to you that you are ill — that suggestion is a formation put in by the hypnotiser.

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Your dream was not a sign of the worldly desire in you, but only a test or ordeal dream such as you have had before. Your absence of response in the dream shows that you have no such inclination towards these things as many have. The whole was only a formation or suggestion of outer forces on the vital plane to see what kind of response, if any, your consciousness would make.

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These are dreams of the vital plane in which the vital plane takes up the spiritual experience and tries to turn it into forms of ego with a suggestion afterwards of loss of power and of consciousness and a fall. You should attach no importance to these dreams except as an indication of mixture in the sleeping state.

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It is singular that you should have accepted dreams of this kind as true or allowed them to determine or influence your conduct even in the slightest degree. These dreams are nothing but formations of the obscure lower-vital consciousness; they are made up of its desires, instincts and subconscious memories, all jumbled
together to weave an incoherent dream-scene and dream-story and, in this case, used by some vital Desire-Force of that plane to turn you into the instrument of its movement. They have no other value for the Sadhana than to show you vividly what is there in your lower vital nature, whether awake on the surface or lying in wait in the subconscient parts. The only thing to do with them is to turn the Light upon those parts and call on the Divine Power to expunge them from the nature. It is perfectly easy for this Desire-Force or for the subliminal part of the mind to create images of anyone it pleases or to reproduce the voice and make him or her speak or act in any way convenient to it.

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These are experiences of the vital plane; they have a meaning if one knows how to interpret them. This one indicates the possibility of strong attacks on the vital plane, but at the same time promises protection. These are formations of the vital plane, sometimes things that try to happen but not necessarily effective. One can observe and understand, but not allow them to influence the mind; for often adverse forces try to influence the mind by suggestion through these dream experiences.

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Your experience of the peace in the body was a very good one. As for the bad dream, it was a hostile formation from the vital world—a suggestion in a dream form intended to upset you. These things should be dismissed—you should say in yourself “It is false—no such thing can happen” and throw it away as you would a wrong suggestion in the waking state.

**Unpleasant or Bad Vital Dreams**

The experience of the hill and the rose and the sudden cold is one of those dream experiences that one gets on the vital plane,—for there things good and bad, pleasant and unpleasant are very close to each other.
Everybody has unpleasant or bad dreams and one can have them very frequently — they mean only that one gets into contact with or passes through the darker parts of the vital world. All of us do that in sleep, for we go out of the material plane and pass through many realms. But there is no reason to be afraid of these things. Have faith in the protection of the Mother and go to sleep with it around you — that is the best way of passing through these regions.

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These are dreams sent from the vital world. There are three things she must develop with regard to them:

1. to get the habit of calling the Mother at once in the dream itself;
2. not to fear — if one does not fear, these other world forces become helpless;
3. to put no belief in the reality of such formations and regard them only as suggestions put into form, just as one gets a frightful imagination of this or that happening but the reason knows it to be a mere work of imagination and is not moved by it.

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In sleep one enters into places of the vital world in which there are such dangers [as the threat of violence]; but if one goes there in full reliance on the Mother’s protection, all dangers either disappear or become ineffective.

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These dreams come from the vital world, — there is nobody in the Asram who does not have them or else has not had them. You must not get afraid or upset at these things, but look at them with indifference, without fear and passion.

Do not always be thinking of the Hostile Force or believe that everything of this kind is an attack of the Hostile Force. It is simply that in dream you entered into one part of an obscure vital world and saw or heard things there. Even if you are attacked,
you have to remain quiet and firm and call in the Mother’s Protection and Force.

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It is evident that X’s experience was only what is called a nightmare — an attack in sleep from some force of the vital world, to which he probably opened himself in some way, it may be by answering to the man from the street who carried the worst vital atmosphere around him. The figure of the woman was only a form given by his subconscient mind to this force. These forces are around everywhere, not only in one particular room or house, and if one opens the door to them, they come in wherever you are. It would have no importance but for the nervous reaction of irrational terror indulged in by X. One who wants to do sadhana has no business to indulge in such panics; it is a weakness incompatible with the demands of the Yoga and, if one cannot throw it aside, it is safer not to try the Yoga.

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Don’t allow these bad dreams to trouble you. They are formations meant to disturb the consciousness — if you are troubled and fear they succeed. If you refuse to accept them or, still better, dissolve them, in dream or when you wake, then they can do nothing.

Mental Dreams

There are many kinds of mental dreams, but the main difference [between mental and vital dreams] is that the mental are quite clear and coherent, their symbols are well-connected and easily intelligible and the forms also are clear cut and distinct in their significance. The vital are full of a pell mell of scenes, forms and incidents; the significance if any is fluid and depends upon a vital symbolism which it is not always easy for the mind to follow — everything is nearer to ordinary life and its confusions but still more chaotic.
People Seen in Dreams

The people of dream are very often different from the people of actuality. Sometimes it is the real man who comes on another plane — sometimes it is a thought, force etc. that puts on his appearance by some trick of association or other reason.

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These figures and intimations in dream may be due to three different causes —

1. Beings whom you meet in the supraphysical world and who interest themselves in you.

2. Forces of Nature, mind nature or vital nature, that take these human appearances and in a symbolic dream convey to you some formation of the universal Mind or Life. These messages can take the form of intimations or warnings of what is going to happen. The woman must have been such a Force of Nature, for her child and box are evidently symbolic — the child of some creation or formation of hers which she wanted you to accept and keep in your consciousness, the box of some habitual movements which this force also wanted you to harbour. The offer to take care of you was only a way of saying that it wanted to control you. To dismiss all that was the right thing to do.

3. Constructions of your own mind in the form of dreams so as to convey to you intimations it had received or perceptions of some force of nature which, as in the last dream, it wanted the inner being to reject.

The Waking and Dream States

There is no solid connection [between the waking and dream states], but there can be a subtle one. Events of the waking state often influence the dream world, provided they have a sufficient repercussion on the mind or the vital. Formations and activities of the dream planes can project something of themselves or of their influence into the waking physical state, though they seldom reproduce themselves with any exactness there. It is only
if the dream consciousness is very highly developed that one can usually see things there that are afterwards confirmed by thoughts, speech or actions of people or events in the physical world.

It is a very small number of dreams that can be so explained [as arising from external causes]1 and in many cases the explanation is quite arbitrary or cannot be proved. A much larger number of dreams arise from subconscious impressions of the past without any stimulus from outside. These are the dreams from the subconscious which are the bulk of those remembered by people who live in the external mind mostly. There are also the dreams that are renderings of vital movements and tendencies habitual to the nature, personal formations of the vital plane. But when one begins to live within then the dreams are often transcriptions of one’s experiences on the vital plane and beyond that there is a large field of symbolic and other dreams which have nothing to do with memory. Of course it has been proved that a very long and circumstantial dream can happen in a second or two, so that objection to Bergson’s statement does not stand. But there are also prophetic dreams and many others. Memory holds together the experiences but it is absurd to identify consciousness (even in the restricted European idea of consciousness) with memory. This theory of memory is part of Bergson’s fundamental idea that Time is everything. As for spirituelle, in Europe mostly no distinction is made between the spiritual and the mental or vital.

Dream-Experiences

Yes, certainly, dream-experiences can have a great value in them and convey truths that are not so easy to get in the waking state.

1 The correspondent, who had just read Henri Bergson’s L’energie spirituelle, asked whether Bergson is right that many dreams are brought about by external causes. He also noted that Bergson seems to consider all consciousness as memory. Finally he wondered why Bergson used the word “spirituelle” in the title of the book since there was hardly anything about “spirit” in it. — Ed.
When you practise Yoga, the consciousness opens and you become aware — especially in sleep — of things, scenes, beings, happenings of other (not physical) worlds and yourself in sleep go there and act there. Very often these things have an importance for the sadhana. So you need not regret seeing all this when you sleep or meditate.

But in no case should you fear. The fact that you were able to destroy the beings that fought with you (these were beings of a hostile vital world) is very good, for it shows that in your vital nature somewhere there is strength and courage. Moreover, using the Mother’s name and having her protection, you should fear nothing.

They are dreams of the mental and higher vital planes in which things happen with another rhythm than here and freer forms, but some of them are formative of things and events here — not that they are fulfilled exactly like prophecies, but they create forces for fulfilment.

The dreams are experiences on the vital plane, actual contacts with myself and the Mother in your inner being, not symbolic though they may have symbolic elements, but expressing relations, influences or mutual workings of our consciousness with yours. The second dream has symbolic elements. The ladder is of course a symbol of an ascent from one stage to another. The snake indicates an energy, sometimes a good one, more often a bad one (vital or hostile). It may be that the energy was quiescent and therefore not alarming, but by touching it to see how it was it awoke and you found it was something not safe to handle. There is no clear indication what this energy was. These dream-experiences do not depend on the waking thoughts as do ordinary subconscious dreams which are dreams only and not experiences. They have a life, a structure, an arrangement and forms and meanings of their own; but they are often connected with the inner condition and experiences or movements of the
sadhana. It is not clear whether the flower incident was symbolic or only something that happened on the inner plane. It might have been possible to say if it had been indicated what flower it actually was that you had given.

* These experiences are normal when the inner consciousness is growing and becoming more and more the natural seat of the being — it is the spontaneous intuitive knowledge of this inner consciousness which is becoming prominent in place of the ordinary reliance of the external mind on sense data and external happenings. It is indeed the being as a whole that becomes conscious — the substance of consciousness that becomes aware of things, not an outer instrumental part.

In the sleep part of the consciousness goes out to other planes of being and sees and experiences things there. It is quite possible for the witness consciousness to follow these happenings which usually transmit themselves in a coherent transcription to the sleeping part of the consciousness — the latter receives them and they appear as clear significant dreams as opposed to the incoherent dreams of the subconscient. Or else the witness consciousness may feel itself there watching the happenings as well as here. This will probably develop after a while.

* It is the condition of your consciousness I spoke of — the more conscious you become, the more you will be able to have dreams worth having.

**Remembering Dreams**

Everybody spends the night dreaming — only most of the dreams and even the fact of having dreamed are forgotten. Also most dreams are incoherent. It is only when one becomes more conscious in sleep by sadhana, that the dreams become coherent.

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When the sleep is more awake, so to say, then one has dreams of all kinds; when there is no such awareness of dreams, it is because the sleep of the body is more deep,—the dreams are there but the body consciousness does not note them or remember that it had them.

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The consciousness goes into another plane of existence during sleep and, as the physical consciousness is not connected with or takes no part in the experience there, when it returns, nothing is remembered.

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The subconscious remains in the body during sleep. The being really goes out into different planes of consciousness, but its experiences are not kept in the memory, because the recording consciousness is too submerged to carry the record to the waking mind.

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On coming to the waking consciousness the night experiences are often lost or else fade from the physical memory in a short time, unless they are immediately fixed and recorded before rising.

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Most people move most in the vital in sleep because it is the nearest to the physical and easiest to remain. One does enter the higher planes but either the transit there is brief or one does not remember. For in returning to the waking consciousness it is again through the lower vital and subtle physical that one passes and as these are the last dreams they are more easily remembered. The other dreams are remembered only if (1) they are strongly impressed on the recording consciousness, (2) one wakes immediately after one of them, (3) one has learned to be conscious in sleep, i.e. follows consciously the passage from plane to plane. Some train themselves to remember by remaining
without moving when they wake and following back the thread of the dreams.

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It [remembering one's dreams] depends on the connection between the two states of consciousness at the time of waking. Usually there is a turnover of the consciousness in which the dream state disappears more or less abruptly, effacing the fugitive impression made by the dream events (or rather their transcription) on the physical sheath. If the waking is more composed (less abrupt) or, if the impression is very strong, then the memory remains at least of the last dream. In the last case one may remember the dream for a long time, but usually after getting up the dream memories fade away. Those who want to remember their dreams sometimes make a practice of lying quiet and tracing backwards, recovering the dreams one by one. When the dream state is very light, one can remember more dreams than when it is heavy.

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There is a change or reversal of the consciousness that takes place [on waking up], and the dream-consciousness in disappearing takes away its scenes and experiences with it. This can sometimes be avoided by not coming out abruptly into the waking state or getting up quickly, but remaining quiet for a time to see if the memory remains or comes back. Otherwise the physical memory has to be taught to remember.

Understanding the Meaning of Dreams

Unless they are really significant dreams it is a waste of time [to study them].

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Yes, these are symbolic dreams, but the exact meaning varies with the mind and condition of the one who sees them.
That [dream] is evidently unlike many others a symbol dream on
the vital plane. But it is difficult to interpret these vital symbolic
dreams unless they offer their own clue — they are a sort of
hieroglyph in their forms. Once one gets the clue some of them
can be very significant — others of course are rather trivial.

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No; all dreams are not true. Even of those which have some truth
in them, may have to be interpreted rightly before you can know
what is true in them. There are others that are true — they are
experiences that you have in other planes or worlds into which
you go when you are asleep. As for the bad dreams, you should
not allow them to upset you, but reject them as untrue.

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How do you say that vital dreams have no link or reason? They
have their own coherence, only the physical mind cannot always
get at the clue by following which the coherence would unroll
itself. For that matter the sequences of physical existence are
coherent to us only because we are accustomed to it and our
reason has made up a meaning out of it. But subject it to the view
of a different consciousness and it becomes an incoherent phan-
tasimagoria. That’s how the Mayavadin or Schopenhauer would
speak of it, the former say deliberately that dream-sequences and
life-sequences stand on the same footing, only they have another
structure. Each is real and consequent to itself — though neither,
they would say, is real or consequent in very truth.

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The physical mind (or else the subconscient) almost always in-
terferes in dreams and gives its own version. It is only when
there is a clear experience on the mental or vital plane that it
does not try to intervene.

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I am not sure that it is advisable to tell these dreams to others
— as a rule, the movements of the sadhana should be kept to
oneself, because by speaking of them to others there is likely to be a dispersion of their force and perhaps a calling in of other atmospheres by the mental or vital reaction of the people to whom you tell them. It is only to very fit persons that one can safely speak about them. I don’t think these dreams could be made into a book because they need a special knowledge to understand them and this knowledge is not common. For yourself you can do it, but perhaps it would be better to wait a little before you do it.

The Meaning of Some Dreams

It is a symbolic dream. The flower-rain is the descent of something from the supramental or else from the higher realms of consciousness—the lake is a formation of it in the consciousness, the steamer symbolises a new movement of the Yoga which Sri Aurobindo is bringing down. The Mother’s descent with the diamond light is the sanction of the Supreme Power to the movement, the Peacock being the Bird of Victory.

* The dreams are very significant and show a great progress in the inner being. The first dream means that to call the Mother is not enough; by that the immediate difficulty is dispelled, but the full victory which will prevent any return of the attack is not won; for that you must cease to be helpless before the attack, you must be able to fight and repel it (of course with the Mother’s Force near whether manifest or veiled and supporting you). At present you have got so far that you can sometimes repel it with your safety pin, that is, by a small action supported by the peace behind; but the strength, confidence, courage to leap on the attacking force and drive it out (hands and feet) is not yet there.

In the second dream the servant is the outer physical consciousness while you are your own inner being. The inner being awakes in the darkness of the physical obscurity but is not troubled. It knows and writes the mantra of the Truth and Light and
that brings the beginning of the white Light, the highest True Light in the darkness which once begun is sure to increase.

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The strings you saw me pulling down [in a dream] are the lines of consciousness which can connect the personal being with the Divine Truth; they are above out of reach, I am bringing them down into the human mind, life and body. You can see only a part of them because they reach into the heights far above the human mind, and you see only a little of what is brought down because they go into all parts of the Nature down to the subconscient of which the ordinary mind can see very little. That is the meaning of the dream.

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The meaning of the dream is not very difficult to discover. Our house here represents the higher consciousness in which we live and from which its light must come to you. Between you and it there is what the old books call a lid — represented by the blinds of the windows — created by the mind and the ordinary consciousness. This lid is changed to glass which means that between you and the higher consciousness there is left only a transparent lid (probably the higher mind which is the first stage of the higher consciousness) and through that the light can come to you in your own Adhar. It is a kind of promise or prospect held out to you in answer to your prayer.

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The three grey-white birds must be your mental, vital and physical consciousness, partly enlightened by the inner Peace etc., therefore white, but still not quite released from the old nature, so grey — the dull movement is due to the obscuration by the old nature. But still they fly towards the right which is the dynamic side in women, the side of action and effectuation and this movement releases into flight the psychic in all its luminousness and purity. That seems to be the significance.

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The dreams of the lower regions of the consciousness — the lower vital, the physical consciousness or the sheer subconscious — have always or almost always a double character. For there are two parts of the consciousness concerned — one that remains attached to the body but in a passive unsupported subconscious condition not capable of coherent and ordered experience and another that goes out into various planes and worlds of consciousness, has experiences there, moves among their scenes and beings and events, sees symbolic figures, scenes, happenings etc. The experiences of the two mix together often and make a double texture.

The quiescent part is subject during sleep to impressions from outside which it distorts into dream-figures or else, more freely, to impressions arising from the subconscious — sometimes impressions of the day or from the waking environment, sometimes impressions from the past, sometimes things hereditary or even imprecise impressions left from past lives which come up under some obscure or secret impulsion. When one practises Yoga, the more superficial impressions, those which are in a sort accidental or occasional, outside touches, the day’s memories etc., do not, after a time, play so active a part as in the sleep of ordinary people; but the others aggrandise their scope and increase. These subconscious emergences are by no means, however obscure or trivial they may seem, always without any use for Yoga. They can indicate things with which the subconscious is burdened and from which it has to be freed, binding memories of the vital and of the cells which have to be dismissed, forms, embedded notions, tendencies, habitual movements which it is no longer good to harbour, seeds of the past which have to be pulled out so that their undesirable fruit may no longer recur. For in the lower obscurer part of our being we are creatures of habit of nature and fixed past formations and complexes — as they are termed by a current Western psychology, — and these things have to be got rid of if we are not to be bound to our past selves, if there is to be a true and complete liberation and transformation of the external being. If one can learn to detect and understand the indications
of these dreams when they come up and act upon what they show us to be still there in the obscure bed of our nature, it can be a great help for the successful change of what seems to be the most obscure and trivial and yet the most sticky and intractable part of the nature.

The other, the active part of our consciousness does not remain in the inert and sleeping physical consciousness, but goes out into other planes of existence. For the most part with most people it is some part of the vital, lower or higher, that goes out into the corresponding vital planes, and the experiences it has there are transcribed in the physical consciousness or brought back to it and these transcriptions or these reports are what we call dreams or experiences on the vital plane. The reports, if one may so call them, are the memories of the outgoing part which it brings back to the physical — but it is not easy to retain them in the memory after waking. For there is a crossing of a border, a bridge or a gulf and the turning over of the consciousness, what was put behind by sleep coming in front, what was in front in sleep going behind and in this transition, in this reversing process, the report or memory which can by very vivid and complete is usually lost or only some last experience or a fragment of it lingers and even that is apt to fade away in a very short time. Especially if one wakes abruptly or under pressure or rises immediately without waiting to retain the dream-experience, it is apt to disappear at once and altogether. One can train oneself however to remember one’s dreams so that the material is ready to hand for interpretation and use, if they are of a nature to demand interpretation or lend themselves to use. But also, apart from these reports, there is the transcription or translation into the terms of the physical consciousness. For there is a thread that connects the outgoing and the instaying consciousnesses and along this thread messages can be sent either from here to the wandering part, most often for calling it back, but also for other purposes or from the wanderer signalling or transmitting his experiences, as it were, to the body in the measure in which it can receive them. Unfortunately the terms of this transcription are usually supplied by the quiescent and very ill-ordered
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consciousness that remains in the body, terms belonging to its own normal life and range, and therefore the transcription is often trivial, confused, perplexing, tiresomely null in its terms even when the experience itself is vivid, significant, coherent and full of interest. But as the dream consciousness in sleep develops, the outgoing part can increase its hold, and either manipulate the terms supplied to it from the physical being so as to express directly and vividly or else in significant symbols its own characteristic consciousness and experience or else it can impose its own terms, figures, scenes with more or less modification on the recipient consciousness in the body. In the end the consciousness can become so trained that even for dreams on the vital plane the difference between dreams and visions and experiences disappears or at most one can distinguish between dream-visions and dream-experiences and visions and experiences in a state of willed and perfectly self-conscious concentration. Even the dreams of the lower vital and the subtle physical become entirely vivid, real, coherent, significant and expressive of a truth that one can at once recognise. The dream-experiences of the highest vital, the psychic and the mental or still higher planes have always this character, because when they can get through they impose themselves more than those of the lower vital realms and are less subject to distortion or mixture by the physical subconscious.

In the lower vital dreams, before this development comes, there is usually a mixture or a double texture. This has two disadvantages, first that the scheme used, the terms, the figures are so trivial and uninteresting that one easily misses any significance there can be behind them and, secondly, that the interpretation also becomes often very doubtful or hard to seize. And when as often happens, there is a symbology of the lower vital using the terms of the normal external consciousness, its system which is quite clear and convincing to the lower vital itself, can seem very absurd, incoherent and unintelligible to the physical mind. For the lower vital uses the happenings, scenes, figures, persons of the physical life, but in defiance of the order and logic of the physical world and even without any reference to it, it fits
them into a quite different significance-scheme of its own for its own purpose. One has then to seek for a clue in some especially significant figure or detail, and if one cannot find it or cannot catch the clue when it is there, then one remains perplexed or doubtful or simply blank about the meaning of the dream; if it is found, it can often light up all the night and put them into a sufficient coherence.

The last three dreams described by you are of this character. The figures are supplied from the old social life in England,—though the place is not England; in the first, with some attempt at structure, in the others in a more haphazard inconsequent way; but so far as that goes, all seem trivial and unmeaning and, as one might say, not worth dreaming. The strong significant power and purposefulness and quite intelligible symbolism of the higher vital, the psychic or the mental dream-experiences is not there. But still there are in the first dream three *points de repère*, the railway-journey, the meeting with the father and mother, the communion, and these all are suggestive symbols. The railway-journey is *always* in vital dreams a symbol of a journey or progress of the inner being; here it is in the vital consciousness that some movement of progress is under way and it is in the course of it that you get down at a station, that is to say in some particular region of the lower vital where you meet your father and mother. A meeting of this kind by itself might simply be an actual encounter on the vital plane with some contact or interchange there,—for in the vital one can meet thus both those who have passed beyond and those who are still in the body. But once the presence of a symbolism is established, it is probable that the father and mother are also part of the symbolism and, as they very often do, represent what might be called the Purusha and Prakriti of that particular kingdom. If it is an actual encounter, it must be with some part of their vital selves which is in sympathy with or representative of this domain, not with the actual persons, not with their whole selves. But the assistant here is clearly not any earthly person, but a being of this world who embodies one of its characteristic forces, the zeal of a dogmatic and ritual religious traditionalism without any deeper
spirit or experience behind it; it is with this external ritualism that you clash in the dream, he insisting on the form, you careless of the form and admitting it only as a means for contact with the original spiritual truth behind it. That would justify our taking the whole thing as symbolism, representing a special lower vital world — one which plays a large part in moulding this external human life as it is now. It is a world of social forms, social and domestic feelings, social intercourse; whatever appearance of spiritual life there is, is traditional and formal: this is what you felt in the blessing of your father. The last part of the dream is more obscure — there is evidently a meaning in the luggage and the lost trunk, but the clue is insufficient; if one could catch it, it would probably explain why you got down at all in this province of the lower vital world instead of continuing your journey.

This is a very good example of the nature of these dreams and their indications and that is why I have dealt with it at a greater length than its importance seems to warrant. The other two are of the same world, but the third is ambiguous and in the second the clue is missing. The second, if taken as only an encounter with ordinary beings of the human world met on the vital plane seems merely absurd and trivial; but if the people represent forces or movements of this particular vital province, then some meaning is there — for I have always found that there is something which even the most casual or insignificant dreams of this kind are trying to indicate. If we take the two dreams together, the elderly lady would represent the interest certain beings in this kind of world take in some kind of pseudo-spiritual stuff of the lower occultist kind, e.g. Steiner’s anthroposophy — taken by her more as a fad than anything else, a fad which she imposes on her guests. That would explain her wanting to sit in the rain — for the rain is a symbol of a descent from some other consciousness, and it would explain also the remark of the guest who had been in India, that is to say in some hot-air province of this world where the contact with occultist spirituality or pseudo-spirituality could be had more abundantly than here! To the physical mind the working out of the imagery is absurd and
illogical, but this kind of dream cares only to get its symbols through and, not addressing itself to the mind, it disregards logical coherence. The whiskey would be the image of the dram drinking which this kind of occultism can be; along with the rain it would be the clue image.

This is how these dreams are built and the question at once arises, what is their utility and why should they with their triviality and incoherent symbolism and the obscurity and pettiness of the world to which they belong take so large a place. The answer is that it is here between the subconscient and the petty lower vital world that there is the hidden basis of a great part of man’s ordinary movements, especially the things that are hereditary, customary, imposed by education and surrounding and left strongly entrenched in the subconscious obscurity, even when suppressed and rejected and entirely contradicted by the mind and will and the higher vital: it is the field of the suppressed complexes of the Freudians, it is the basis of the herd mind, it is the support of all that is petty and obscure in the being and of many other undesirable things. In your dreams — even in your lower vital — you are out of sympathy with this world, irritated and ill at ease and yet there is something in the subconscient nature that is tied and constantly going there as soon as the waking mind and will are quiescent. So it is with all, for one has to go there for two reasons, first either to become acquainted with its movements and work them out in the subtle experience till they go out of the system by rejection or to clear them out by a conscious action or else to work upon this world and bring into it a real consciousness and a true Light.