

Every time I heard Osho talk on the subject of dreams he seemed dismissive of them on all levels – perhaps it was because of that reason, I only dreamt of him twice to my knowledge. The first time it was when I was contemplating taking sannyas. I was on the deck of a ship with one of my few sannyasin friends at the time, Ninad. It was a sunny day and the sea calm. Then to our astonishment Osho could be seen walking across the water towards us, a mischievous smile on his face. 'It's true!' I yelled, leaping to my feet. 'He *is* enlightened!' Yet Ninad was slightly put out. 'I can't believe he'd do anything as tacky as walk on water,' he grumbled.

If it were possible to have a Zen dream, as paradoxical as it sounds, then that was one, and part of what compelled me to eventually take the leap.

The second dream was after Osho left his body. He simply appeared to me in the dream and said, 'Your task is to invent two new lying-down meditations.'

And that was it. I had no idea what he meant specifically. Like most of us I was familiar with the 112 meditations dictated to Parvati by Shiva, easily condensed down to 108 of course, and loved each one even for their poetry. As a writer, this was what struck me initially. Just pick any one, and allow the words to wash over you: *Gracious one, play. The universe is an empty shell wherein your mind frolics infinitely.* The sublime elegance of the words even survive the translation wonderfully.

As a meditator, it was like being in a sweet shop – so many amazing treats from which to choose! However, as many seeking 'their' meditation discover when reading through, one in particular usually leaps out, and that is the one to stay with. For me it was: *When in worldly activity, keep attention between two breaths, and so practising, in a few days be born anew.*

Another extraordinary thing about these meditations was that they covered everything. All other meditations can be considered derivations from these. What could I, an ordinary messed-up schmuck, with so much learning and education rattling around uselessly in his head, do to add to these extraordinary techniques?

Then soon after that dream, something new began in my life. I started taking siestas. I know now there is a secondary sleep cycle to our main one, where we should take naps in the afternoon in order to de-stress. We ignore this circadian rhythm at our peril. British-born as I was, it was not part of my culture and

upbringing, yet it felt natural to do so. These naps became a part of my life, and I would feel deprived when I didn't have them.

Then over the next few years they started to evolve.

I found I wouldn't actually go to sleep. Instead I would plummet into unknown depths, a timelessness. A re-energising would happen so that I would return to everyday consciousness with a new vitality – and comprehension, for accompanying these plunges would be visions. Each time it was as if I would be shown another wonder of the universe, and then another, and then another. No wonder I've never been attracted to drugs. As I always felt, they're not necessary. The trick then, and remains now, was not to get too dazzled by the sights. What helped was recalling Osho warning about the dangers of being swept up, identified, with visions and hallucinations. To witness remains paramount. Emphasising this is that many of the visions were, basically...bollocks. Yet many aren't and have proven their mettle time and again, assisting me in various writing projects, therapy sessions for others, indications where to go etc.

It took a while, but I realised I *had* discovered a new meditation. To be really presumptive, not to say downright cheeky, if I could emulate Shiva's divine poetry I would summarise the meditation like this:

Lying down, deeply relaxed, fall within. Keep falling, then just before hitting the bottom depths, allow yourself to rise.

One of the joys of this technique is that it doesn't take long, in worldly time at least. I tell people I'm off for a siesta then re-emerge ten minutes later to their astonishment, completely refreshed. With others more open to meditation as a way of life, I say I'm off to do my 'shamanic meditation'. Then when I re-emerge they might ask, 'Did you get anything?', knowing of the accompanying visions.

Another joy is that it can be incorporated into sitting meditations, particularly if you're tired, when you can use the fatigue to propel you downwards. You may not be lying down but you can still *fall within*. The only danger is, as your brain rhythms slow down you may actually fall asleep, and have to put up with other people's comments later. Snoring is a dead giveaway.

So this meditation evolved organically and soon established itself as part of my deep infrastructure in daily life, as well as permeating my sleep, bringing a consciousness to it previously absent. But no second meditation seemed to be on the horizon.

In the meantime I was conducting extensive research into so-called paranormal fringes (I actually think they're quite 'normal'), and this led me to Gurdjieff and Ouspensky. As if to emphasise that I was on the right track I moved to near Lands End in Cornwall, in the neighbourhood of not only Buddhists, Sufis and pagans, but also Gurdjieffians. The next two years I also focused on writing my book 'Secrets', which I see now was a way of exploring these concepts, the heroine Samantha being like my avatar in the adventure.

One of the explorations was in the area of five dimensions. Put simply, we live in three dimensions of space and the fourth of linear time. We utilise these dimensions every day. For example, when we arrange to meet someone we specify a place (three dimensions e.g. on a specific floor in a building) and a time (the fourth dimension e.g. Monday at 4pm). The fifth dimension is a transcendence of linear time, so that rather than a stream of past, present and future, we experience an oceanic time encompassing all these, and eternity.

In the research, I developed various techniques to facilitate five-dimensional awareness. One of these was that, when going on a journey to remove oneself from any concept of a beginning, middle and end: *it's all the same journey*. An analogy would be that whether you hold one end of a rope or the other, *or the middle of the rope, it is all the same rope*. This has enormous implications. For instance, the linear progression of birth to death becomes bogus, *it's all the same life*. Taken further, past and future lives become part of the oceanic picture, being neither past nor future.

On a scientific level there are even more startling implications, for most physics equations are time-based. This includes even formulae for gravity, which explains why near-death experiences (which are, for reasons I won't go into now, forays into five dimensions) report the ability to fly anywhere one wishes. Yogis and suchlike are able to tap into the five-dimensional aspect of gravity, and levitate. This is how Nijinsky could seemingly defy the laws of nature by hovering in mid-air.

So, with gravity now all over the place, a wild card as it were, one of the techniques I developed was to simply get people to change their world-view by walking on the ground as if it were a ceiling. By doing so, up becomes down, and vice versa.

This is a powerful technique but I still wouldn't call it a meditation, though it could lead to that. The mind is still an active driver here. All this time, I wasn't looking consciously for the second 'lying-down meditation' but an event essentially brought an awareness of it to me in such a way I couldn't ignore.

It was one of those times when nothing worldly, neither love nor money, seemed to be working out no matter what I tried. You know how it is, when the world just won't *behave*. Sitting silently every day helped but did nothing to truly assuage the feeling of being out of joint with everything. Even the ongoing shamanic meditations felt just supplementary – they were great in themselves, but nothing else was.

Living by the sea in Cornwall, one way I sometimes deal with being out of sorts is to go for a swim. It's an incredible gift to be able to do so within five minutes of my home. That is, when the water is not too cold. This time the weather was slowly improving when I was experiencing my crisis, and I was desperate to get into the waves. It was still early spring but with my summer wetsuit on, I felt I could manage it. There had been a storm the day before. This day, however, was calm. Later, a Cornish neighbour expressed her disdain at my ignorance: 'Didn't you know that the sea is still ferocious underneath, the day after a storm?' No, clearly I didn't.

There is a place I go to which only the locals tend to know about, a haven with beautifully flat rocky platforms jutting out over the sea on which one can rest, sit and meditate, or dive into the ocean. I spend a lot of time here, mostly alone though people, seals and dolphins occasionally turn up. This day I was entirely alone, and no one knew I was going here.

Despite the wetsuit, once I entered the waves, the chilling waters really went for my appendages. My hands and feet instantly became like icicles, and my head was clamped in a vice-like grip of freezing hands. Still, it felt great just to have done it. I managed less than ten minutes before the cold, and the restlessness of the waves, encouraged me to get out.

Then I hit a problem. The tide was coming in and the waves underneath were much stronger than I had anticipated. They seemed to have increased as well, now smashing upon the rocks with their immense power. Getting out wasn't going to be easy. In fact, it soon proved impossible. I kept getting thrown against the rocks and pulled off before managing to get a grip.

This carried on for a while and I was getting exhausted. It was me versus the ocean and clearly I was out-matched. I was now in the sea's grip and it was as if I were being played with, tossed against the rocks then pulled off, again and again, sometimes pulled deep under then thrown out over and over, only to repeat the process. It dawned on me that this was it, I was going to die.

It didn't seem such a bad thing. My life sucked, or so it seemed at this time, and perhaps everything really was over. Not a bad way to go.

Then the sea pulled me down under one more time. I didn't fight it, surrendering to what was happening. It took me deeper, I felt water going inside. Then, like a slingshot that had taken a greater pull, I was catapulted further onto the rocks, managed to find a grip, and clambered to safety.

I collapsed onto the rock. I was soon breathing normally but deeply. My feet and hands were bleeding a little, but the wetsuit had protected my torso. I seemed okay. More than okay. A gratitude for simply being alive had settled over me. Everything seemed great, not dramatically **wow!** great, just...perfect. This gratitude extended to the basic things I had brought: my water flask from America, the thick soft towel my sister had given me, the snorkel and mask found on a Bahamas beach, the trusty knapsack from my Italian friends... So much to be grateful for. My life was really all right. *Life* was really all right.

It had appeared that the sea was going to take my life, but what it had taken was my melancholy.

Then something else happened.

I was lying on my side on the rocky platform, gazing out to sea with my eyes half-closed, the sun shining down on me, the waves that a moment ago had seemed so ferocious now seeming so beautiful. I was a part of all of this.

And a realisation came.

Because of my perspective, lying down, the ocean was as if above, the sky below. Seen like this, notions like 'up and down', 'rising and falling', were being played with. Gravity had become a wild card, for I was lying on the roof of the world.

All my work on the fifth dimension had led to this. It's a technique anyone can use, and if I had to emulate Shiva again, this is how I would phrase it:

Eyes open, lie on one side as if on the roof of the world.

I've since experimented with deviations. As in the original 112, it can be adapted. For example: lie on one side for ten minutes, turn onto your back for ten more, then the other side. It can be used if bed-ridden, where the experience of people walking on the 'ceiling' around you can bring a smile to your lips no matter how ill you are. And I go for walks regularly now on the roof of the world, pools of water floating around me as I stare down into the infinite well of the sky.

It took twenty years, but I had accomplished what Osho had asked me to in the dream. Though to say 'I' is ridiculous, as I did nothing, and nothing was done.

At the most I could claim to have been a medium for these two meditations to present themselves, and for that I shall remain eternally grateful.

But are they really new?

Scouring through Shiva's instructions to Parvati, I find this:

At the point of sleep, when the sleep has not yet come and the external wakefulness vanishes, at this point Being is revealed.

This is familiar to many meditators, Osho talks about it, and it does seem very similar to the first one I describe. Certainly 'external wakefulness vanishes' and 'at this point Being is revealed' could describe what I have experienced, and continue to experience.

Then there is this:

When on a bed or a seat, let yourself become weightless, beyond mind.

This is very close to my 'anti-gravity meditation', at least in essence if not in form.

So are my two 'lying-down meditations' merely extensions of these two? Perhaps it's taken over twenty years to come full circle to this, in order to unearth something that was there all along. Somehow I don't mind at all.