EXPLORING THE DEPTHS *of* INDIAN KNOWLEDGE SYSTEMS

Ancient Insights for Contemporary Challenges



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The Four States of Consciousness: An Inquiry into Jāgrat, Svapna, Suṣupti, and Turīya in the Upaniṣadic and Vedāntic Tradition

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Abstract

This paper explores the concept of consciousness through the four states- Jāgrat (waking), Svapna (dream), Suṣupti (deep sleep), and Turīya (the fourth state) - as elucidated in the Upaniṣads and further interpreted in the Brahmasūtras and Advaita Vedānta tradition. By critically engaging with primary texts such as the Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad, Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad, and Śaṅkara's commentaries, the paper aims to examine the epistemological and metaphysical dimensions of these states. It concludes by suggesting the centrality of Turīya as the substratum of all experiential states and the key to understanding the nature of the Self (Ātman). The concept of the four states of consciousness—Jāgrat, Svapna, Suṣupti, and Turīya-reflects the depth of Indian Knowledge Systems, offering insights into self-awareness and