OUT OF THE DARKNESS
From Turmoil to Transformation

Includes in-depth interview with ECKHART TOLLE
OUT OF THE DARKNESS
CONTENTS

Introduction vii

Part I: The Transformational Power of Turmoil

1 Temporary Transcendence 3
2 Growth through Suffering 17
3 The Point of Transformation 39
4 Sudden Transformation:
   Illness and Disability 61
5 Sudden Transformation:
   Addiction and Desolation 79
6 Spiritual Teachers 95

Part II: Death: The Great Awakener

7 The Paradox of Death 123
8 Returning from Death 139
9 Sudden Encounters with Death 157

Part III: The Shifters

10 A Higher State of Being 179
11 The Power of Detachment 203
12 Breaking Free 227

Notes 241
Bibliography 249
Acknowledgements 258
Further Information 259
Index 261
This is a book about a miracle: the miracle of how psychological turmoil and suffering can bring about spiritual transformation.

Imagine reaching a point where you’ve lost everything, perhaps as a result of serious illness, depression or addiction. You’ve lost your career, your spouse or family, your hopes for the future and your self-esteem, and you’re so desperate that you don’t feel as though you can go on any more. You feel as if you’ve been completely broken and reduced to nothing.

Or perhaps it’s an encounter with death: imagine that you’ve been told you have a disease such as cancer and may only have a certain amount of time left to live. Everything which has brought you happiness seems to have been taken away. Everything you’ve worked so hard to build up and everything you’ve imagined will be in your future dissolves into nothing. There seems to be nothing in front of you except pain, loss and death.

But then a shift occurs inside you. Something gives way; an old self dies and a new one is born. Suddenly you feel a sense of lightness and freedom, as if ties have been cut and weights have been lifted. The world seems a different place, with a new sense of meaning, harmony and beauty. Past and future no longer have any meaning and the worries which filled your mind before no longer matter. All that does
OUT OF THE DARKNESS

matter is the shining ‘is-ness’ you can see around you and the glorious present that you’re living through.

And this isn’t just a temporary change. The initial intensity of the experience may fade after a few days, but you’re never the same again. You’re filled with a permanent sense of well-being and a new appreciation for life. You never take anything for granted ever again – you’re permanently aware of the value of life itself, of your friends and family, of the beauty of the world, of your health and freedom. You find yourself no longer trying as hard to make things happen; instead you’re content to relax and let events unfold. Your mind is permanently free of worry and anxiety, and rather than spending your life chasing after status, success and wealth, you spend your time trying to help other people or to further your own spiritual development.

This might seem like a fantasy. And it’s true that, in most cases, psychological turmoil doesn’t have any positive effects. Often we just feel pain, which we want to end as soon as possible. For many people, the process of dying is just full of anguish and sorrow, unredeemed by any sense of freedom or well-being. But for others, intense turmoil is a kind of ‘spiritual alchemy’, transforming the ‘base metal’ of suffering into the ‘gold’ of intense well-being and freedom.

In this book you’ll encounter many remarkable people who have undergone this shift: a 60-year-old man who was spiritually reborn after almost dying of a heart attack; a recovering alcoholic who shifted to a permanent state of enlightenment after hitting ‘rock bottom’ and losing everything; a middle-aged woman who gained powerful spiritual insights through becoming ill with cancer; and a man who became paralysed after falling from a bridge onto a riverbed, struggled for months with pain and despair, then underwent a spiritual rebirth and now lives in a state of permanent bliss.
I became aware of this phenomenon while I was doing the research for my last book, *Waking from Sleep*. While collecting examples of awakening experiences, I came across people who said they had ‘woken up’ after periods of intense turmoil in their lives. Moreover, these people hadn’t just had an awakening *experience*, but had woken up *permanently*. They had never fallen back to sleep. They had a permanent heightened awareness, a sense of connection to nature or the cosmos as a whole, a sense of meaning and purpose, and a permanent inner well-being, free of worry or anxiety. They had attained what the psychologist Abraham Maslow called ‘self-actualization’ – the highest level of personal development, when a person is completely integrated and perceives reality at its fullest intensity.

Once I began to seek out people who had undergone this transformation, I was amazed at how easily they came to me. Some people replied to a note I put on my website, but others I found by accident – a colleague, one of my students, a friend of a friend, a person I got to know on a course. There was nothing unusual about any of them. Most ‘shifters’ (as I decided to term them, based on the fact that they had undergone a psychological shift) were fairly ‘ordinary’ people with normal jobs and families – for example, an architect, an IT developer, a TV writer, a marketing manager, the manager of a heating and plumbing business, the manager of a launderette. Very few of them had known anything about spiritual experiences or spiritual traditions beforehand. (As a result, most of them found it difficult to understand what had happened to them at first.)

I came across so many examples of this transformation that I began to realize that it was much more common than I’d thought. I interviewed 33 shifters in the end, but could easily have spoken to more. People continued to contact me, offering their own experiences of transformation triggered
by suffering, but at some point I had to decide that I had enough material. (I’ve kept the details of all the others who contacted me and plan to interview them at a later date and to include their experiences on a database.)

Some shifters had never talked about their transformation, or had tried to but only met with incomprehension. With this in mind, I’m sure that there are thousands of other people out there who have undergone this experience but never shared it with anyone for fear of being seen as ‘weird’. If you’re one of them, don’t hesitate to contact me through my website (see Further Information section).

One purpose of this book is simply to tell the shifters’ amazing stories, based on the interviews they gave me. We begin by looking at how psychological turmoil can trigger temporary awakening experiences, then look at permanent transformation through different types of suffering and turmoil in turn, including illness, disability, loss, addiction and general stress, depression and upheaval. All of these can have the same transformative effect. The source of the psychological turmoil doesn’t seem to be so significant. As long as it’s very intense and occurs over a long period, any type of turmoil can lead to permanent awakening.

We will see that some shifters go on to be spiritual teachers. Many modern spiritual teachers, such as Eckhart Tolle, Catherine Ingram and Russel Williams (all of whom I interviewed for this book), have experienced a sudden and dramatic spiritual awakening after a long period of turmoil.

Following this, in the second part of the book, we look specifically at how an encounter with death can bring about this transformation. This can happen through a sudden event, such as a heart attack or a car crash, or, more frequently, when a person learns that they have a chronic illness, such as cancer, and may only have a certain amount of time left to live.
Introduction

Many people who encounter death in this way experience a spiritual awakening. Even if they know for certain that they're going to die, they experience a powerful sense of well-being. Rather than feeling anxious or bitter – although they may go through an initial stage of this – they accept death and feel a miraculous sense of wholeness and freedom and the glory of living fully in the present. This is such a common response to encounters with death that I have called this section of the book 'Death: The Great Awakener'.

In the third part of the book, I look into the question of why these experiences occur. Why does suffering have this amazing transformational power? And why do some people undergo this shift while others who experience a similar degree of turmoil or trauma do not?

We will see that one of the most important factors is letting go, or detachment. Throughout history, spiritual traditions and teachers have emphasized the importance of becoming psychologically free of attachment to possessions, ambitions and regrets, or to ideas of our own status, success or importance. To some extent, spiritual development is a process of becoming more detached in this way and more self-sufficient and inwardly whole. And it seems that suffering and turmoil can spontaneously generate this state.

Finally, in the last chapter of the book, we look at what this means in terms of our own lives. Do we really need to endure suffering or come close to death to become free, or is there a different route we can take? I will suggest that we can all attain a similar state of awakening without putting ourselves through intense suffering.

For me personally, one of the biggest effects of this book has been to make me realize how common the phenomenon of
enlightenment – or permanent wakefulness – actually is. We tend to think of it as something esoteric which only happens to ‘special’ people – to mystics and gurus, spiritual seekers in India or Tibet. But in actual fact, it’s something which happens in everyday life to ‘ordinary’ people. From my own experience, I would say that it’s quite likely that there is an ‘awakened’ person – probably someone whose awakening was triggered by turmoil – amongst your circle of family, friends, acquaintances and colleagues. Perhaps you’re even such a person yourself.

Writing this book has been a massively rewarding experience. It’s been a privilege to interview so many amazing, courageous people, who have overcome such massive difficulties and emerged in a new, higher state of being. After every interview I felt inspired for days, filled with a sense of well-being and an awareness of the almost infinite capacity of human beings to transcend suffering and transform themselves. Those feelings returned later, when I transcribed and reread the interviews. I still have them now, when I read the stories – and I hope you will too.
PART I

THE

TRANSFORMATIONAL

POWER OF TURMOIL
Twenty years ago an acquaintance of mine called Tracy was devastated when her partner, the father of her two-year-old daughter, left her suddenly. She arrived home one day to find that he’d taken his money and some of his possessions; he called later that day to say that he was staying with a friend and would call round the following day for a chat. But the next day he called to say that he was abroad and wouldn’t be coming back. He said that neither Tracy nor their daughter would ever see him again and that they would be better off without him.

Tracy felt a massive sense of betrayal, together with a terrible sense of loss and separation. She couldn’t believe that the man she loved could be so ruthless and cruel. And now that she was a single mother, she felt marginalized and isolated, the scorn of ‘respectable’ society. On a practical level, she didn’t know how she was going to cope. She was a student, her partner had cleared out their bank account and she had a mortgage to pay. She became so anxious that
she developed an eating disorder: she started to binge eat, making herself sick afterwards.

After a few weeks, the anxiety and turmoil built up to the point where she started to feel suicidal. One evening, when her daughter was staying with her parents, she found a bottle of sleeping tablets and emptied them into the palm of her hand. Her desire to kill herself was almost overpowering, but every time she moved to take the tablets, the image of her daughter rose up inside her mind and stopped her. She cried for what seemed like hours and eventually fell asleep.

Two or three hours later she woke up in the dark and everything felt completely different. The mental torment had disappeared, for no apparent reason. It had been replaced by a profound sense of peace and well-being. As Tracy described it, ‘I felt the most intense love and peace and knew that all was well. Even though it was night, the room was illuminated with light and energy. This light was beautiful and vibrant. It was the most beautiful feeling I’ve ever had. I felt such peace.’

The experience probably only lasted for a few minutes before she fell asleep again. But when she woke up in the morning, the feeling of dread had disappeared from her stomach and she felt able to cope again: ‘I looked around and thought about all the good things in my life and the future. I felt more positive and resilient.’

**AWAKENING EXPERIENCES**

There are three different types of spiritual alchemy and this is an example of the first type: when turmoil and trauma give rise to temporary ‘awakening experiences’. (The two other types, which we’ll examine a little later, are when turmoil
and trauma give rise to gradual but permanent change and when they give rise to sudden and dramatic transformation.)

From time to time, most of us have experiences when our normal vision of the world is transformed. It could be at the moment of waking up in the morning, while running or swimming, after meditating or doing yoga, or after having sex, but all of a sudden the world seems more real and beautiful than normal. The trees and fields, even the houses and other buildings, seem somehow alive and connected to each other, as if they're the expression of a force or energy. You might feel that you're a part of this energy too, rather than separate from your surroundings. And you might feel completely different inside, filled with tremendous serenity or ecstasy and a sense that you have somehow become someone else – a deeper and truer self.

These are what I call ‘awakening experiences’. Sometimes they can occur spontaneously, but usually they are induced by different situations and activities. As I showed in my book *Waking from Sleep*, they can occur as a result of physiological changes which disrupt the normal homoeostasis of our bodies and brain. This is why, throughout history, people have used sleep deprivation, fasting, self-inflicted pain and drugs as ‘spiritual technologies’ to transcend the limits of normal consciousness.

In addition, awakening experiences can occur as a consequence of what I call an ‘intensification and stilling of life-energy’. This can happen when we meditate, listen to music, walk in the countryside or just relax. We're removed from the normal energy-draining activities and stimuli of everyday life, and the normal thought-chatter of our mind becomes quiet. New energy floods through our being, intensifying our perceptions and creating a sense of well-being. Our ego boundary becomes softer, so that we are no longer separate and incomplete.
Most paradoxically, however, as Tracy’s experience shows, awakening experiences are often induced by states of despair or mental turmoil. Paradoxically, great suffering often gives rise to experiences of great joy and liberation.

In 1969, the biologist Alister Hardy established a Religious Experience Research Unit at Oxford University and began to collect examples of religious or spiritual experiences from members of the public. When he began to analyse the experiences, he found that the most common trigger of them was not – as might be expected – prayer or nature, but ‘depression and despair’. He found that 18 per cent of the experiences were apparently triggered by depression and despair, compared to 13 per cent by prayer or meditation and 12 per cent by natural beauty.¹

I’ve been collecting examples of awakening experiences myself for almost 15 years, and have found a similar pattern to Hardy. Even now, I’m still surprised at how frequently people send me reports of intense experiences of bliss, harmony and oneness which come to them in the midst of mental turmoil.

Even what seem to be fairly minor episodes of turmoil can give rise to awakening experiences. Here, for example, a student of mine described an experience she had at the age of 15, one summer when she was on holiday in Wales. While walking back from the beach late at night, she had a massive row with her mother that left her feeling angry and frustrated. The problem they’d been arguing about seemed insoluble. As she described it:

*Instead of walking back along the road with my mother and sister, I separated myself by walking along the beach, parallel to the road they were on... Suddenly I felt that a great peace had settled inside me. Something magnificent had happened. I felt as if nothing would*
ever upset me again. The world was wonderful. I have spent my life searching for the feeling again because I know it’s there.

Similarly, a woman described to me how, as a 17-year-old girl, she was distraught after splitting up with her boyfriend. She felt overwhelmed by life and cried for hours, begging for someone to help her (although she didn’t know who). And, as with Tracy at the beginning of this chapter, when she woke up the next morning, she was filled with a peace and contentment she’d never known before:

I was extremely happy and felt a great love for all things. It was a very strong feeling, the strength of which I have never felt before or since. It was a very sharp contrast to the despair I had felt the previous night. I felt as though I was filled with love and compassion. My bedroom looked brighter and sharper and I remember touching things in my room whilst feeling a huge feeling of connectedness. I was conscious of not wanting the feeling to go away. But unfortunately it didn’t last long.

**INTENSE AND PROLONGED SUFFERING**

Like the two experiences above, for some people awakening experiences can occur after fairly short periods of turmoil – a few minutes or hours, or perhaps a few days. For others, however, an awakening experience may come after years of very intense turmoil. And perhaps because the turmoil that produced them is more intense, these experiences tend to be more intense.

For example, a correspondent called Emma told me how, at the age of 20, she was suffering from serious
depression, which was partly the result of her upbringing by an emotionally abusive mother. She became so depressed that she felt suicidal and was hospitalized for several weeks. At one point in hospital, when she hadn’t spoken to anybody for four days, she picked up a marble that was lying on her bedside cabinet and started playing with it with her hands, watching it closely. All of a sudden, it was as if the familiar world melted away, to be replaced by a vision of beauty and perfection:

*I saw reality as simply this perfect one-ness. I felt suddenly removed from everything that was personal. Everything seemed just right. The marble seemed a reflection of the universe. All my ‘problems’ and my suffering suddenly seemed meaningless, ridiculous, simply a misunderstanding of my true nature and everything around me. There was a feeling of acceptance and oneness. It was a moment of enlightenment. The euphoria and inexplicable rush of ‘knowledge and understanding’ (it was like suddenly gaining access to a whole new comprehension of what we call ‘reality’) following this episode lasted for days.*

Although the experience wore off, in a sense it has never left her. It made her aware of a spiritual dimension whose existence she had never suspected and awakened a lifelong interest in self-development. ‘In some ways,’ she told me, ‘I have spent the 25 years since exploring what it meant and how I could perhaps go back there.’

Similarly, a woman called Jill described to me how, over a seven-year period, her whole life broke down. Everything seemed to be stripped away from her:

*I had studied for a degree, but my career collapsed; I suffered from infertility problems; my partner was an*
alcoholic. I became severely depressed and separated from my friends. Every day I would be in tears and suicide was often in my thoughts. However, I couldn’t bring myself to do it, for the sake of my family and dogs, all of whom needed me.

Then one night it happened. The void rolled out completely, the world disappeared and my consciousness expanded into an infinite timeless consciousness which was me, although everyone else at the same time. When I came back to my body, I realized that life was all a dream and not ‘real’. I was terrified, although laughing and crying at the same time at this great cosmic ‘joke’. I knew what had happened was the pure truth, beyond any question.

Everything shone with a light. I looked at my dog and saw myself looking back and again laughed and cried at the same time. A massive energy pervaded my body, which I couldn’t seem to contain.

This is a high-intensity awakening experience, an experience of oneness with the spiritual ‘ground’ of the universe which is beyond time and space and is the source of everything which exists. And because it was so intense, Jill found it difficult to process. She knew nothing about spiritual traditions or practices and so didn’t understand it. She longed for it to happen again, but at the same time was afraid of it. She also felt isolated, because she felt she couldn’t explain it to anyone else. As she puts it, ‘When I tried to speak about it, everything seemed to be swallowed in a great silence. And even when I could elucidate something, no one seemed to understand. They thought I had cracked up.’ (We’ll find many similar examples of this incomprehension throughout this book.)
However, after the experience Jill’s life gradually became easier. She felt drawn to books about spirituality and eventually began to build up an intellectual framework to help her understand her experience. And over the last two years or so, she has started to have other, less intense spiritual experiences, especially when she’s out in nature and can sense what she describes as ‘something ancient and indescribable’.

Another example of an awakening experience which came after a long period of turmoil was given by a friend and ex-colleague of mine called David, who was a counsellor at a college where I once taught. He went through a long period of inner turmoil due to confusion about his sexuality. He was married with children, but had always felt sexually attracted to men. Finally he began to realize that he was denying his true self and that he had to come out. And inevitably, as he realized this, his marriage began to break down. However, this turmoil led to an experience of great peace:

_We were on a family holiday in Tunisia and went on an excursion down to the Sahara. We went on a camel ride across part of the desert and at the end of the day I sat on a sand dune watching the sunset. There were quite a few people around, but it was as if everyone else disappeared. Everything just ceased to be. I lost all sense of time. I lost myself. I had a feeling of being totally at one with nature and a massive sense of peace. I was a part of the scene. There was no ‘me’ any more. I was just sitting there watching the sun set over the desert, aware of the enormity of life, the power of nature, and I never wanted it to end._
PHYSICAL ILLNESS

These experiences can sometimes occur in the midst of physical suffering too. A recent student of mine, a middle-aged lady, told me how several years before she had been seriously ill and spent four months in hospital. A lot of the time she was so weak that she couldn’t get out of bed, and often felt depressed. However, occasionally this gave way to a powerful sense of serenity:

The first time I was ill, I was ill for six years and in hospital for four months. Even though I was very ill and in danger of dying, there were times when I didn’t feel afraid at all. At times I had a marvellous sense that all was well, that there was a force supporting me, that I was being cradled … I felt a marvellous sense of well-being. At the time I was religious, and I felt as though God was protecting me.

Another student told me how once she had broken her hip and been confined to a hospital bed for weeks, feeling frustrated and uncomfortable. One day she was lying there when:

Out of the middle of my forehead intense energy seemed to be flowing out of my third eye. I didn’t know if anyone could see it. When my mother came in I felt intense love for her, and it was the same for my friends and family. I felt such intense love and vulnerability. I felt connected to the universe, as if the source of everything was flowing through me.

I had a similar experience a few years ago, just a few months after the birth of our second child. It was a very stressful
time, mainly because our baby, Ted, was stubbornly refusing to sleep at night. I also had a heavier workload than normal at the college where I was teaching and a deadline looming for a new book.

All of this stress manifested itself in illness. One morning I woke up and felt as though my throat was wired shut. I couldn’t eat or drink and one side of my face had swollen up massively. At hospital, I was told I had quinsy, a complication of acute tonsillitis, and was given intravenous antibiotics, plus a saline drip. The infection had already spread to my neck and chest – which was bright red and swollen – and my bacterial count was very high and kept rising. I also kept getting weaker, until it was difficult to walk more than a few paces.

For the first few days I felt worried and depressed, partly because of the pain and discomfort and partly because it wasn’t clear whether the bacterial infection could be kept under control. It was the Christmas holidays and I felt sorry for myself, alone in a hospital bed when I should have been with my wife and children.

But slowly, as I began to adjust to the environment and accept my predicament, a sense of lightness and ease began to fill me. I began to feel a glowing energy inside me, as if I had made contact with a kind of reservoir of well-being which was normally too deep for me to have access to. I spent hours lying on the hospital bed, too weak to read or even watch television, but felt carefree and content. All of the things that had worried me at first – whether I’d have to take time off work, whether I’d be able to finish my book on time – seemed completely meaningless. All of my plans and ambitions for the future and my memories and concerns about the past became meaningless too. Life was pared down to the present moment, the bare fact of being alive at this very moment in this situation. Nothing beyond the moment had any meaning.
I had to have an operation under general anaesthetic, but didn’t feel at all worried. When I was lying down waiting to have the anaesthetic, I felt the kind of calmness and serenity that I normally only feel after a deep meditation. I completely accepted whatever was going to happen. I felt connected to something larger than myself, a kind of benevolent force which filled me with reassurance, a sense that ‘all was well’.

The operation was successful and the antibiotics began to work on the infection. After two weeks, I was sent home, and the sense of well-being continued over the three weeks it took me to recover fully. And as I realized that I was returning to full health, I also felt a new gratitude and appreciation for my health – for the automatic physiological processes and the energy levels I normally took for granted. It seemed like a miracle just to be alive in a healthy, well-functioning body with enough energy to play with my children, to write, to talk to my wife and friends and meet the tasks of my daily life.

It’s true that illness brings a disruption to our normal physiological functioning, so that these experiences could be interpreted as the result of homoeostasis disruption. However, as I noted in *Waking from Sleep*, it’s quite rare for illness to generate awakening experiences, probably because when we’re ill we’re so low on energy and all the energy we do have is channelled into healing ourselves. (Although there are exceptions, such as temporal lobe epilepsy, when seizures are often preceded by intense spiritual and religious feelings.) It’s probable that the main factor here isn’t the physical suffering itself, but the psychological effects of being ill.

**LETTING GO**

Experiences like these don’t seem to make any sense. How can people who are severely depressed or anxious slip so...
easily into joy and freedom? How is it possible to move from the deepest turmoil to the highest ecstasy in a moment?

When awakening experiences are induced by meditation or relaxation, they seem to occur in an organic way, but here there’s an abrupt shift to a completely different state, one which is almost the polar opposite. Perhaps this is why people sometimes interpret these experiences as being given by the grace of God, especially when they seem to come in response to prayer. The shift from despair to joy seems so abrupt that it seems logical to believe that a higher power – God – has intervened.

However, I don’t believe that it’s necessary to invoke God as an explanation. I’m going to save a full explanation of these experiences until the final section of this book, but here it’s useful to look at how the process of detachment works. Often, when we’re depressed or confused and go through major upheaval and turmoil, it’s because our psychological attachments are broken. The beliefs, hopes, status, success or roles we depend on for our well-being and security have been taken away from us, leaving us feeling broken and empty.

You can see this quite clearly in illness. If you’re in a hospital bed for weeks, everything in your life is taken from you. You can’t play the roles that normally give you a sense of identity – such as your professional role or your role as a husband or mother – and you lose the status that you normally gain through your job or your social position. At the same time, you might have to let go of your hopes and ambitions, now that you’re not in position to try to realize them. And if you’re in danger of dying, you have to face the prospect of your life itself being taken from you too. In addition to any physical pain you might be feeling, this can cause a lot of psychological pain. (Both of my students who had awakening experiences while they were in hospital
Temporary Transcendence

experienced this, describing how they felt frustrated and depressed, and I experienced the same when I was ill in hospital too.)

These attachments are the scaffolding that supports the ego – we use them to reinforce our fragile sense of self. And so, when they are broken, the ego breaks down too, in the same way that a fragile building collapses when it’s not supported any more. But if we let go and accept our predicament, this state can transform from one of desolation to liberation. Rather than a breakdown, you have what might be called a break-up – a temporary shift to a higher level of being and a glimpse of the higher self that seems to exist inside us all the time as potential.

Awakening experiences often have long-term effects. Like the woman who argued with her mother on her way back from the beach as a 15-year-old girl, or Emma, people often feel inspired by them for the rest of their lives. They may make us aware of a dimension of reality whose existence we never suspected and awaken an urge for spiritual development, as happened to Jill after her high-intensity awakening experience. Tracy responded in a similar way: she started to read about Buddhism and spirituality and learned to meditate.

Nevertheless, one of the characteristics of awakening experiences is that they are temporary. They last for a certain amount of time – anything from a few seconds to a few days – but then fade away. The ego manages to re-form, like a boxer who picks himself up again after being knocked down. The structure of the normal psyche may fade away, but the ‘mould’ that holds that structure in place is still there, so the psyche grows back into it.

However, we’re now going to look at a second type of spiritual alchemy where this doesn’t happen. Over a long period of time, turmoil and trauma can ‘chisel away’ at
our normal psyche in such a forceful way that once it has dissolved away, it is never able to reform itself – and the individual experiences a permanent state of wakefulness.