

## **Desperately Seeking Altered States of Consciousness**

When we study cults and terrorist organizations, one of the common features is that people who join these groups enter an altered state of consciousness to access an alternative perspective on reality and a different identity state. While entering these states temporarily to do constructive inner work on the personality and to make spiritual progress is a benign and productive use of these alternative states of awareness, many people seek to remain in these states and live their lives, as if these other states were the only reality.

Today's webinar will explore this seemingly innate drive to enter an altered state of awareness, and uncover personal motivations, and examine group agendas for encouraging people to enter these states.

### **Why Do People Seek Out ASC?**

We can consider some of the reasons why people seek out altered states of consciousness (ASC):

1. They seek to escape painful emotions of shame, misery, unworthiness, and self-hatred, and ASC enable them to re-identify with a part that is whole, good, pure, and unencumbered by the bad feelings of the past
2. ASC can help them reduce stress and promote relaxation
3. ASC can help them compensate for perceived human weaknesses and vulnerabilities: ASC can make them feel powerful when they feel powerless; omniscient when they feel don't have the answers; and omnipresent, when they are very cognizant of their human limitations and feelings
4. ASC can be a way to help with fear of dying, as they lead to states that appear deathless and immortal

5. Some ASC are inherently pleasurable, even ecstatic; people might seek to return to a state of ecstasy or bliss because it is sensed to be innately rewarding—we can speculate that ASC may be addictive for some individuals, in that they use it as a drug to leave behind all problems, and enter states of pleasure and oblivion
6. Spending time with others in ASC may create a sense of community and connectedness for those who feel isolated and lonely
7. Being in an ASC may give some individuals access to creative abilities and psychic gifts, so they seek out these states for their utilitarian value
8. People want to genuinely make spiritual progress and commune with God; they must enter ASC through prayer and meditation to do this

Of course, we know that our intrepid Mudrashram® students are only motivated by number 2, 7, and 8, and have no lingering traces of any of the other five reasons...

### **How People Enter an ASC**

There are a variety of ways that people enter an ASC, voluntarily or involuntarily.

- Use of alcohol or drugs (psychoactive substances)
- Brain entrainment methods using binaural beats, biofeedback, frequency modulation, and photic stimulation
- Group trance induction methods, such as dancing, singing, music, chanting, or worship ceremonies
- Individual trance induction methods, for example, hypnosis and autohypnosis, or breathing techniques
- Noetic methods that move or direct attention, like meditation

- Group suggestion–instilling forums, such as sermons, satsang, preaching, or religious “teaching”
- Experience of life–threatening and terrifying situations; here you commonly must enter an altered state of consciousness to survive. Situations that bring about this state include torture, hostage incidents, natural catastrophes, abuse and molestation in primary relationships, war, and outbreaks of random violence or terrorism. These incidents lead many people to states of hyper–vigilance, paranoia, and post–traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).
- Immersion in subtle energy, such as spontaneous kundalini awakening, or Light Immersion (Shaktipat)

Many groups use some type of trance–induction method, coupled with active suggestion given while someone is in that ASC. There are a wide variety of suggestions that can be given in this state; some are benign, some are constructive, and some are harmful.

**Benign suggestions** are an important part of spiritual guidance. They include:

1. **Inner orientation** – these suggestions show you where your attention, attentional principle, spirit, or Soul is, in inner space
2. **Identification of spiritual essences or forms** – these suggestions point out to your attention—your attentional principle, spirit, or Soul; or your vehicles of consciousness or selected nuclei of identity
3. **Identification of discrete landmarks on the Path** – these suggestions guide you to discern demarcations of Subplanes, Planes, or Divisions of the Great Continuum of Consciousness

4. **Identification of immortal and manifested forms of spiritual Masters** – these suggestions introduce you to different Initiates, who may be part of your own, or other spiritual traditions; these may be forms on the higher Planes, or a guide form that appears to the attentional principle or the spirit
5. **Source identification** – these suggestions show you the origin of vehicles of consciousness, nuclei of identity, spirit, and Soul.
6. **Identification of correspondences to spark intuitive understanding and discernment** – these suggestions shed light on archetypes on parallel Planes that expand the Soul's understanding of symbolic and esoteric concepts
7. **Identification of the parameters of consciousness** – these suggestions introduce you to the Axis of Being; your ensouling entities that dwell in higher Octaves of Being; and point out to you the Ray of Divine Life that animates your Soul (Alaya)

**Constructive suggestions** teach you something useful, give you sound counsel, help you overcome something that hinders your personal or spiritual growth, or train you in methods or techniques that enhance your personal skills, or bring about empowerment and transformation. They include:

1. **Education** – these suggestions impart specific knowledge necessary to function as an adult and to be cognizant of the world around you, train you in intellectual and vocational skills, promote critical thinking, and expose you to the wide variety of intellectual and artistic disciplines.

2. **Counseling** – these suggestions facilitate your decision-making without imposing an external demand or agenda, enabling you to make the optimal choices possible for you in your current situation in life.
3. **Psychotherapy and hypnotherapy** – these suggestions assist you to gain awareness of an issue that hinders your growth, interact with it, resolve inner conflicts, and integrate aspects your mind that have become split-off from your normal functioning.
4. **Affirmations and autohypnosis** – you introduce these suggestions to your mind to change your behavior and belief into more positive pattern that you intuit are best for you. These suggestions are self-selected, and are not imposed via any external agency.
5. **Insightive methods** – you use process meditation, reflective and receptive meditation, and other evocative techniques to gather information and guidance from your Soul’s wisdom.
6. **Coaching and mentoring** – you gain knowledge of specific methods that promote success, personal transformation, and attainment of your dreams. A coach or mentor provides feedback, guidance, and support to you, and holds you accountable for your agreements—so that you can reach your goals.
7. **Transformation and healing** – you give suggestions to yourself to activate the unfolding of your Soul’s spiritual potentials, to channel your Soul’s innate gifts and abilities, and to promote the inner alchemical processes of spiritual growth, purification of the unconscious mind, and healing.

**Harmful suggestions** enslave you; manipulate you; make you serve another person, or group's agenda; or shape you according to a moral or creedal system that is external to your own inner compass of truth. These include:

1. **Prescriptions for how you must behave in every detail of your life** – totalistic religious and political systems may dictate what you may do or not do in every instance of your life, and threaten those who violate these standards with imprisonment, torture, or death. In those groups that do not have an external enforcement mechanism in place—such as religious “guardians of the doctrine,” informants and spies, or soldiers and police—they may attempt to rigorously control behavior by instilling terror and shame.
2. **Sculpting of belief and morality** – while many individuals learn adaptive rules for living—through their parenting, education, and career—many more do not. Their morality may be re-shaped to justify crime and cruelty; their beliefs may come to reify a dogmatic and unyielding political or religious perspective. In cultic and terrorist groups, this sculpting of belief and morality may be totalistic—every belief or value that disagrees with approved doctrine may be uncovered and re-programmed.
3. **Instilling erroneous beliefs** – through information control and secrecy, groups may manipulate their followers into perceiving the world in a distorted way. Through brainwashing, deception, and outright lying, members of spiritual, religious, political, and terrorist groups may be led to believe false depictions about the world around them.

4. **Using coercion, intimidation, and terror to enslave others** – this can take the form of threats of violence to a person or to their family; it can include torture, harassment, bullying, and beatings. Most terrorist and criminal groups adopt these tactics to control others, and to frighten them into obedience and silence.
5. **Giving people suggestions while they are in a state of trance to control them** – when people enter a state of trance, they become highly suggestible. People can be led to identify with an essence of consciousness—e.g., spirit, nucleus of identity, or ensouling entity—and to remain continuously in this ASC. While they remain in this state, they construct a “false self” or “pseudo-personality,” and relate to others from this artificial identity state. Leaders of these groups can “program at will” the morality and beliefs of their followers—when they are in these ASC, they can be programmed how to vote, how to think, how to live, and how to believe.
6. **Hijacking devotion** – By carefully controlling the impressions that people receive about a celebrity, a political leader, or spiritual leader, people can be led to believe that these “special ones” are godlike, superhuman, infallible, and larger-than-life. Many individuals have been waylaid in cults of personality that form around celebrities, politicians, and leaders of spiritual groups.
7. **Teaching people methods that produce spiritual imbalance** – Through training people in methods that unfold spiritual essences outside the Axis of Being, spiritual teachers can initiate transformation that produces spiritual imbalance. This can lead some of their followers to experience kundalini emergency syndrome, personality dysfunction, and insanity.

## **How to Avoid the Dark Side of ASC**

We advocate that you attempt to instill benign and helpful suggestions when you enter an ASC. Here are some general guidelines for safely entering and productively utilizing these states:

1. **Debrief** - When you enter an ASC—mine it for useful information, once you return to your normal awareness. Note (a) where did you go, (b) what essence or form of consciousness did you contact, (c) what guidance or information did you receive, (d) who ostensibly gave you that guidance or information [examine, is this a reliable source?], (e) what are the implications or consequences of acting or using this information or guidance, (f) did you achieve the objectives for this meditation, and (g) what about the information or guidance does or does not feel right.
2. **Verify** - if you are listening to a sermon, satsang, or a spiritual or political discourse, and claims or assertions are made, inquire on what basis are these claims or assertions are held to be true. If these are truths that you cannot now verify for yourself—but also cannot dismiss immediately as crackpot notions—you may wish to simply hold them as an unverified hypothesis, and *do not act on them*.
3. **Use methods that you can control** - Avoid using psychoactive drugs to produce an ASC, as they do not produce predictable results—they can damage your body and brain, and in some cases, lead to addiction. Wean yourself from methods that rely upon external psychotronic and biofeedback devices—learn instead to auto-control using self-hypnosis and meditation.

4. **Use your spiritual crap detector** – If the claims are too grandiose; the leader is too perfect; and if someone asks you to turn your mind and life over to someone else who is “infinitely wiser and so much more spiritually advanced than you,” or is alleged to be—by his or her tranced-out followers—as the new world “savior” or “messiah,” you have probably have encountered a cult. Excuse yourself, and get the heck out of there!
5. **Use the touchstone of your feelings** – does someone present their message in a way that makes you afraid, guilty, or ashamed; points out your failures, sins, or shortcomings; and evoke the memories of your pain, grief, and sorrow—then offers their program, path, religion, or political agenda as your answer or solution? While these individuals may indeed wish to help you and have potential solutions for you, whenever someone dips into your vulnerability, check in with your feelings. Is someone trying to manipulate you or coerce you? Check those who are this individual’s followers: do they seem sane and grounded, or do they seem to be in an ASC—overly excited, happy, and enthusiastic?
6. **Go into an ASC with a purpose** – Relaxation and sweet nepenthe are nice, but do something productive in each ASC. Work on your Self. Transform your Soul. Move your spirit further in the track of the Nada. Gain more intuitive knowledge from your Soul. Commune with God and your spiritual Master. Don’t float—swim.

7. **Examine suggestions that are given to you in guided meditations and discourses** – If you do guided meditations with a spiritual teacher or channel, notice what suggestions you have been given. Are you being programmed to look at the person, who is guiding you, as your savior or Master? Are you being told what to believe? How to act and how to live your life? Reflect on how that feels to you, and what might be the consequences of following these suggestions.
8. **Evaluate the outcome of any spiritual practices you are asked to perform** – Are these spiritual practices progressively producing the symptoms of imbalance, such as auric wobble, reverie, and fulcrum shift? You might be doing a practice that operates outside of your cutting edge of spirituality.



What are your motivations for entering an ASC?

What ways have you successfully used to enter an ASC? Which one of these methods gives you the best results?

Have you ever been subjected to any of the harmful suggestions while in an ASC? Have you worked these issues out, or do you continue to live with them? If so, what are you doing to cope?

What have you found helpful to avoid getting involved in cults, or being manipulated by those who wish to recruit you for their agenda?

Thank you for attending our webinar today!

