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An Introduction to Dream Magics

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Exploring the possibilities of Dream Magic is a powerful and effective way of breaking away from linear consciousness and allowing magic into your life. Prospective magicians may even be identified by virtue of the content of their dreams, and it is not unusual for people to meet their mentors in dreams. We tend to think of dreams as a very personal aspect of our experience, so it is sometimes disconcerting when someone that we know appears in our dreams. In dreams, historical time is abolished, and distance is no object. We may witness events from the past, future, or alternative presents. Dreams are a useful starting point for entering the innerworlds. It can be useful to induce prophetic dreams, or meetings with spirits so that you can discuss a particular problem. A friend of mine who makes incense and perfumes reports that she occasionally dreams of a unique smell, which on waking, she can then analyse and manufacture. The magical artist Austin Osman Spare wrote that he would sometimes awake to find himself standing in front of a finished picture, having drawn it in his sleep. Dreams can bring new ideas, revelations, and many shades of magical experiences. Having some practical experience in Dream Magic can be an aid to developing the techniques of so-called Astral Magic.

The Language of Dreams

I find, reading through my dream-diary, that there seem to be different types, or grades, of dreaming. Some dreams appear to be meaningless - unrelated to other areas of my life. Some may seem to be somehow related to things that have happened to me. For example, the night before I wrote this paragraph, the last thing I did before going to bed was listen to an audio comedy tape. I dreamt that I was a comedian travelling between gigs. Other dreams may have a different quality - an internal consistency which makes them more memorable. Some dreams may contain imagery or events which relate to your magical work. It is generally taken as a 'good sign' of progress if you start to dream about your magical practice.

The language of dream is not always clear - it is often cryptic and personal. The significance of your dreams becomes very much a matter of personal judgement. You will find, over time, that the 'message' of some dreams will be very clear, whilst you will intuitively recognise that some are clearly meaningless. Others however, may not be so clear-cut, and may require further interpretation. There are many books which attempt to provide general 'interpretations' for dreams, but overall, it is more effective if you learn to understand and interpret your own personal dream-imagery. If a dream seems ambiguous yet significant, you could, for example, turn to your tarot cards or another form of oracle for 'clues'.

Basic Approaches To Dream Control

It is remarkably easy to make the content of dreams conform to expectation. People who are undergoing Freudian analysis tend to have 'Freudian' dreams, whilst people who are undergoing Jungian psychotherapy will tend to experience 'Jungian' dreams. You might choose to begin experimenting with

Dream Control by setting a 'theme' for your dreams - such as a particular subject, location, or person. There are several different approaches to intentionally guiding dream content.

Dream Control Using Sigils

Firstly, prior to sleep, perform a relaxation exercise and clearly formulate the Statement of Intent with regard to your dream-experience. For example, "It is my will to dream of my father." Once this is done, you can allow your mind to 'wander' until you fall asleep.

Alternatively, you could try visualising a scene or image as you fall asleep. This need not be a strong visualisation, just the subject of attention as you fall asleep.

A third way of willing dream-content is to use a graphic or mantric sigil. Whatever technique you use, remember that the point is not to impose your will into your dreams, but to be relaxed at the same time as formulating your intention.

Dreamscaping

This is a basic technique for inducing the repetition and extension of a dream-fragment. You simply write down what you can recall of a dream and then, the next time you lie down to sleep, imagine yourself to be re-experiencing that dream. I have found that it does help if you are tired, and can slip into the half-dream, half-aware state when all kinds of sensory images - voices, faces, places etc., seem to whirl around you. Again, on awakening, you record any fragments you can remember, and use them to extend what you dreamt about previously.

Over time, this approach can enable you to generate your own dream landscapes - which can be used in a similar way to astral temples.

Dream Telepathy

The possibility of transmission of telepathic information into dreams has been the subject of a good deal of parapsychological research, usually in the form that a "sender" attempts to project some kind of information to a dreamer. However, it can happen that you will have a dream about someone in a particular situation, which they do experience.

Of course, the only way that you can find out whether a not a dream had telepathic content is to check out the person(s) concerned and find out if your dream has any meaning for them. Another possibility is to establish a telepathic link between yourself and another person by using smell. If two people use a particular fragrance or perfume, to the extent that the scent of it evokes the image or memory of the other person, then this can be used to create a dream-link. If the scent is inhaled prior to sleep, whilst relaxed and formulating an image of the other person, and a Statement of Intent for the dream, then it is possible that the other person can experience that smell in their dream, and be more receptive to telepathic experience. I have used this technique in a series of experiments, where a partner and I found that we could awaken each other during a pre-arranged hour of the night, by using scent as a telepathic signal 'booster'.

Shared Dreams

A shared dream is an event wherein two or more people experience the same dream, or elements of a similar dream. Alternatively, you might dream about yourself and another person in a dream, and find out later that they too dreamt about you with them, perhaps in a different context. Again, the only way to validate this is to inform the people concerned. Attempts to orchestrate group shared-dreams can be an interesting exercise, perhaps using a semi-structured pathworking to provide the basic setting which participants could later attempt to dream themselves to. Some experiments in shared dreaming, for example, focus on all participants attempting to meet each other in a commonly-known setting - which

may be a real place, or an imaginary one known to all taking part in the experiment.

Dreaming The Future

That dreams have the power to warn us of the future is an ancient idea, and precognitive dreams played an important role in ancient civilisations. On the basis of a dream, the destiny of a country or state could be shaped. Dreams about the future can be symbolic, distorted, or even highly detailed and clear, but it is often difficult, beforehand to distinguish the important elements of the dream. A few years ago, some friends of mine decided to undertake an experiment in dreaming the future. They planned a visit to a town that none of them had ever visited before, and then attempted to dream themselves there. One person kept seeing the recurrent image of a long-necked cat, but for the life of him couldn't figure out how this was relevant. When he actually visited the town, almost the first thing he saw, after getting out of the car, was an antique shop. In the window was a glazed model of a long-necked cat.

Lucid Dreaming

A basic definition of a lucid dream is that you know at the time that you are dreaming - as though you 'wake up' to awareness of the dream. The term 'lucid dream' was coined in 1913 by a Dutch psychiatrist, Frederik van Eeden. Surveys enquiring into the incidence of lucid dreams have found that more than 50% of people have at least one lucid dream in their lives. Lucid dreams are also distinguished from ordinary dreams in that, when you wake up, there is much more of a sense of continuity from the dream, to the waking state.

Approaches To Triggering Lucid Dreams

1. Incongruity

Lucid dreams can be triggered by the sudden recognition of incongruous imagery within a dream. For example, I once dreamed that I was in a house which I had not lived in for over a decade. The dream was perfect in every detail, except that when I looked down at my feet, I saw that I was wearing a pair of shoes that I did not possess at that time. This incongruity jarred me into realised that I was dreaming.

2. Mnemonic Induction of Lucid Dreaming (MILD)

This approach is done on waking in the early morning from a dream. After waking, try reading or walking around for a while, then lie down for sleep again. Imagine yourself asleep and dreaming - rehearse the elements of the dream which you have just had, and say to yourself "next time I dream this, I will remember that I am dreaming."

Lucidity can also be brought about by metaprogramming oneself so that if a particular image or scene appears, this will trigger lucidity, i.e. "I will become lucid whenever I see a yellow sphere floating towards me."

Also, it is not uncommon for people to become lucid in a dream when they realise that they have had the dream before, can remember how it develops, and do not want to re-experience it.

3. Lucid Awake-ness

A German psychologist, Paul Tholey, has suggested that if we are more 'lucid' when awake, then perhaps we will be more lucid during our dream-life. He suggests asking yourself many times throughout the day, "Am I dreaming or not?" I have not met anyone who has tried this method, but the sheer determination and persistence that constantly reminding yourself of this each day would take, could act as a form of self-programming.

4. Recognition of an Image

Recognition of an image or symbol appearing in dream that one has meditated upon can trigger lucidity. Carlos Castaneda's brujo Don Juan advises his student to learn to look at his hands in dream, and thereby achieve lucid consciousness of the dream.

Creation Of A Dream-Tulpa

A 'tulpa' is a consciously-projected thought-form or servitor, which may perform a particular task for a magician or act as a general 'helper'. They are of a similar nature to Spirit Desire-Forms. A Dream Tulpa takes the form of a shadowy figure - Tibetan shamans, from whom the name derives, often projected these figures in the form of monks - whom you should gradually begin to embellish with features over time. For example, you could spend some minutes working with the Dream Tulpa each night. Your aim should be not so much to impose features onto the shadow-form - but to let them arise. For example, you might notice, the first time you do this, that the Tulpa is a man. Mentally note one or two features (write them down when you can) and leave it at that. The next night, you might find yourself deciding that the man wears heavy gold rings on his hands. The trick is to let the shape build up gradually, taking on more detail and its own 'life', until it spontaneously crosses over into your dream experience.

Knowing that you have dreamt about the Tulpa is itself, a great step forwards. If you can reach that stage, then you may consider working with the Tulpa consciously, in waking, semi-waking, and dream states. You could for example, ask the Tulpa to act as a 'trigger' to bring you to lucid awareness in dream, or to guide you in travelling to different realms in the lands of dream. It is important that you build up a relationship of trust and confidence with the Tulpa, that you recognise it as an individual entity, albeit one that you are responsible for.

Bridging The Conscious Divide

It can be rewarding to try and approach dreaming from a non-western point of view, such as that of the Australasian Aborigines. The Ancient Egyptians believed that sleep is a 'rehearsal' for death, and that the pathways through the lands of the dead could be mapped through dreaming. The Chippewa of Canada and the Northern United States believed that the origin of all their tribal skills, customs and values came from dreams or visions.

The Magical Applications Of Dream

Revelation & Oracle

The search for revelation of one kind or another - or for an answer to a pressing issue or problem, may often terminate in a dream. In 'primitive' societies, the course of an individuals' life may be drastically changed by a dream. In some Native American societies for example, the transgender role of Berdache (man-woman) was often confirmed through the interpretation of a candidates dreams.

Dream Incubation

This is a practice by which significant dreams are obtained by sleeping at a sacred site related to a particular cult or spirit. This practice features in many cultures, from Ancient Egypt to Tibet. By the 3rd Century A.D, it became popular in Greece to ask for physical healing through dream - the cult of Aesculapius became the most widespread cult of dream incubation. Pilgrims would, following purification rites and preparation (such as sacrifice, prayer etc.), sleep on the skins of sacrificial animals, surrounded by yellow snakes (a symbol of the god), in order that they might dream of the god Aesculapius - which was in itself a marvellous cure. Later, in Rome, the dream was no longer in itself a cure, but a source of medical advice.

Similarly, it is not uncommon for people having taken part in a magical ritual, to dream of it continuing. It has been reported that sleeping in the area where group ritual has been worked can facilitate this.

Seeking Answers Through Dream

Answers to specific questions or issues can be sought through dreams using, for example, a sigil of some kind. One is not however, guaranteed of an unambiguous answer.

Power Objects & Spirit Names

Personal Power objects may be obtained through dreaming. Symbols or images beheld in dream may be transferred into the waking world as talismans or fetishes. Such artifacts 'contain' the essence of the dream - perhaps a reminder of the heightened awareness experienced within it.

Also, spirits and other entities may name themselves in dreams. A friend of mine received his 'magical name' in a dream. Entities encountered in dreams could be given form - such as a drawing, poppet, or carving, and worked with on a conscious level.

These are just a few of the applications of Dream Magic, but there is enough here to make a start in exploring this fascinating area of magical work.

A Dream Magic Project

Over the next 3 months, experiment with the Dream Magic techniques discussed above. Try and aim for:

- a) Some success in having dreams in which imagery/events which you have 'programmed' (i.e. using a sigil or tulpa) appear.
- b) An increase in both frequency and depth of lucid dreaming.

Did you find that some techniques worked better than others? Did you discover a novel approach to Dream magic yourself? Have you found, in general, that there has been an increase in magical imagery appearing in your dreams?

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