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DREAMTIME

M A G A Z I N E



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My Dreams About God

Nori Muster



For reasons I do not fully understand, I'm a prolific dreamer. Starting in my twenties, and continuing into my thirties and forties, I recorded dreams nearly every morning. I still record dreams, but not at the same rate.

When I turned sixty, I decided it was time to do something with the dream journal. I needed academic guidance, so I searched the Internet and found researchers from IASD. Dr. Michael Schredl introduced me to Prof. G. William Domhoff, and then I met Dr. Kelly Bulkeley. Dr. Bulkeley encouraged me to join IASD, which I did in 2017.

Prof. Domhoff said if I decide to type the journal, type everything, and type it the way it is, even my incorrect punctuation. I typed all the notebooks between 2018 and 2021. The only thing I fixed was my spelling, to make the transcript easier to search.

As if keeping a 42-year dream journal isn't unusual enough, I started it when I was a Hare Krishna devotee. I met the Hare Krishnas my last year of college, 1977-78, and moved into their Los Angeles temple the day after graduation. Then I stayed ten years.

The group's official name is ISKCON, the International Society for Krishna Consciousness. ISKCON bases its philosophy on the Hindu religion, and reveres Krishna as the supreme deity. During those years, I recorded a total of 119 dreams about Krishna. Since Krishna has multiple incarnations and names, 54 of those dreams also mention Krishna by other names. I recorded 1,369 dreams in ISKCON, so my Krishna dreams comprise 8.7% of all dreams.

I find 8.7% significant considering Krishna is an ethereal being. Compare that to my main dream characters: father (183 dreams), mother (95), brother (74), four lifelong friends (23 to 61 dreams each), and people from ISKCO: my husband (303), boss (115), co-worker (40), guru (121), and guru's secretary (25). These statistics show Krishna was a major component of my internal life.

Dreams About God Research

At the IASD conference in 2018, Dr. Bulkeley led a research panel called "Dreams About God."¹ He presented the dreams of Lucrecia, a martyr in the Spanish Inquisition, and I presented my dreams about Krishna. Dr. Shanee Stepakoff presented her dreams that illustrate 22 attributes of god. The attributes include god as a comforting presence, the one who hears and answers our prayers, who is mysterious, all-knowing, and compassionate; one who carries us forward, the source of life energy, a fearsome, awe-inspiring force, and a loving spirit who receives our gratitude.

After the presentation, I asked Dr. Stepakoff for permission to replicate her study and publish the list of attributes on my website.² In my study, I found my dreams of god did not run the full spectrum of 22 attributes. This may reflect my less developed religious background. While Dr. Stepakoff grew up in her religion, my parents were atheist/agnostic. My only experience with religion was in ISKCON.

Of my 119 Krishna dreams, I identified 31 (26%) about Krishna's attributes. Roughly 20% were continuous with my



ISKCON Deities, by Rajesh Thangella, licensed under CC BY 3.0, Wikipedia "Radha-Krishna" page (cropped)

daytime life, and the rest were inscrutable. My attributes of god dreams fit in four categories: God's love, protection, gradual revelation, and fearsome side.

Attributes of God (31 dreams)

- My loving exchanges with Krishna (18)
- Krishna's protection (6)
- Gradual revelation of god's mysteries (5)
- Krishna's strict, fearsome side (2)

Dreams of God's Love

In ISKCON, they taught us the deities, the name of Krishna, and Krishna were "non-different." In other words, Krishna is in his spiritual world, he is in his name, and he is the deity. Thus, standing before the deity of Krishna in the temple is the same as standing face-to-face with god. I used to sew flower garlands for the deities, pray to them, and spend hours meditating in their presence. My feelings of love carried over into my dreams.

February 26, 1979 (unabridged): *Last night I dreamed that Dwarkadisa danced with us – Rukmini opened & closed the deity doors.*

In this dream, Dwarkadisa, the Krishna deity at the Los Angeles temple steps down off the altar to dance with us.

May 28, 1982 (abridged): *Last night I had a dream that I was on a vacation and was making a garland for Lord Caitanya – swimming in a pool gathering flowers.*

Lord Chaitanya (or Caitanya) is a Sixteenth Century saint from Bengal. ISKCON followers worship Chaitanya as the most recent incarnation of Krishna.

April 20, 1982 (abridged): . . . *I dreamed I saw Lord Jagannatha and His arms were opened wide like he was trying or wanting to embrace someone. . . .*

The Jagannatha deity originated in Orissa, and Jagannatha/Krishna is usually depicted with his sister Subhadra, and brother Balaram. These were my favorite deities, and 27 (23%) of my Krishna dreams were about Jagannatha deities.

Dreams of Krishna's Protection

I had four dreams about earthquakes where I turned to

Krishna for protection. Here's one example:

February 24, 1986, second dream (abridged): *Went to a movie . . . I was with one of the actresses and an earthquake happened - we hugged each other and prayed to Krishna to save us. . . .*

Earthquakes were commonplace in Los Angeles and I recorded 21 dreams about earthquakes. In some dreams, earthquakes may symbolize upheaval in the organization. I joined ISKCON just when their founder died, which left the organization reeling.

Here's another example of me calling for god's protection:

May 10, 1986, second dream (abridged): . . . *Ghosts attacked me but I said "Krishna" and they went away. Woke up and thought I heard neighbors fighting.*

Gradual Revelation of God's Mysteries

This dream shows my partial understanding of Krishna, even after eight years with the group:

March 12 or 13, 1986 (abridged): . . . *The train went under a tunnel then went off the track. The conductor roped it and pulled it back on. I was showing him my pictures of Krishna. He wanted to know what Krishna looked like. I didn't have an exact picture of Him, but came very close. . . .*

June 25, 1987 (unabridged): *Something about healing, touching Lord Jagannatha's face.*

This is an archetypal dream about touching the face of god, approaching god's mysteries.

Dreams of Krishna's Strict, Fearsome Side

I had a dream where Krishna threatened to kill me:

April 3, 1982, 6:30 a.m. (abridged): . . . *I was traveling with some people – kind of low-class people – and we stopped in this attic for the night. We weren't authorized to be there. . . . Krsna, dressed as a king, came in with his entourage and was going to kill us. But I jumped up and started to pray for him to spare us if we promised to leave. . . .*

I believe this encounter shows I felt like an unauthorized person traveling with "low-class people." In waking life I knew wearing a sari did not make me a Hindu. Along

with the chaos of the founder's death, "low-class people," including a criminal element, infiltrated the hierarchy. This caused further problems for the organization.

Epilogue

I left ISKCON at the end of 1988 feeling bitter, and spent years recovering. However, typing the journal in 2018, thirty years later, helped me finally come to terms with it. My daytime notations gave me a more accurate understanding of events, and my dreams allowed me to see the experience from a higher perspective.

Typing the journal moved me to rewrite my life story. My old story was: My parents' divorce wrecked my life at age fourteen; then I joined a cult after college and ruined the rest of my life.

My new story is: I had a tough time growing up, then after college I joined a colorful cult where I learned what not to

do. Then I went back to school for a master's degree. These experiences led me to find fulfillment and purpose in life.

If more collections of dreams about god come to light, it will be interesting to find out what they say about the attributes of god, and the dreamers' concept of god.

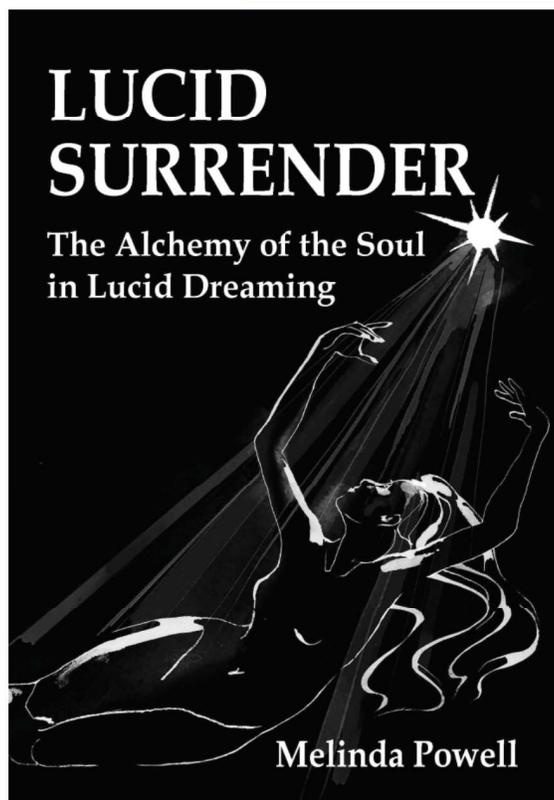
Notes

1. Dreams About God Research Panel, IASD conference, Scottsdale, July 19, 2018 audio recording: <https://surrealist.org/dreams>

2. Dr. Stepakoff's 22 attributes of god: <https://surrealist.org/dreams/study.html>

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A new book on Lucid Dreaming by Melinda Powell



"This new book is a gift to all those interested in the mysteries of dreaming, the depths of psychological and spiritual life, and the process of soul making."

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Rosemarie Anderson, PhD, author of *The Divine Feminine Tao Te Ching*

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