

The Phenomenon of Light in Lucid Dreams: Personal Observations

George Gillespie

Department of Oriental Studies

University of Pennsylvania

All visual images in a dream consist of light. We do not, as when awake, see objects onto which light shines from elsewhere making them visible. In dreams, whether we see a 'source' of light, such as a lamp, or 'reflected' light making an object visible, we are experiencing only images made of light. At any moment, there is only what is sensed. There is nothing out of view.

Even in ordinary dreams we see some areas of light brighter than others, but lucid dreams, that is dreams in which I know I am dreaming, include or lead to experiences of light not found in ordinary dreams. In my experience these fall into four categories: areas of bright light; disks of light; patterns of light; and fullness of light.

Areas of Bright Light

Occasionally a particular section of the dream environment is exceptionally bright. It has been a crack of light in the darkness or a bright section in a field through which birds were running. Until I got used to the phenomenon, my common reaction to seeing a bright light off to the side was that I was waking up and seeing the light of my room. But it never proved to be the light of my room. More than once the light appeared as though in the left corner of my left eye.

While passing a stone wall on which the carvings look Babylonian, I realized I was dreaming. Then, remembering my plan, I began to concentrate my attention on the entrance to a room ahead of me. There was a bright light to my left. I wondered at first whether I was waking up, but then recalled that it need not mean that. The light seemed to be coming from a stairway going down. It disturbed my concentration. I shut my eyes a little, blurring my vision, but the light was still visible. So I walked forward and then no longer had the light in view.

Disks of Light

A disk of light can be any size, appearing like anything from a star to a large moon. It gives the appearance of three dimensional sphere. It is a clear light through which nothing is seen. It is not an overwhelming light like the sun. Its perimeter is well defined, as is a burning light bulb's. It looks like a source of light, though nothing around it has its light shine upon it. It seems to be more of a gap in the environment than a part of it. However, I tend to interpret it according to its context. Once I saw it as a small hole in the wall through which a light shone. I was going to look through the hole, but do not

remember doing

I have more commonly seen the disk of light in darkness. In a dream I stepped down into a bright yellow basement. I realized I was dreaming. As was my practice, I closed my eyes to concentrate in darkness. I was still aware of standing on the floor. As I concentrated, I rose up and remained with no non-body dream environment. To the left of my area of concentration appeared a ball of light. I began to feel I was spinning, although my area of concentration and the light next to it remained still before me to the end. Although I knew it to be the light, it did not occur to me to change my concentration to the light. The light was as though about ten inches from me, about four inches in diameter, and about three or four inches to the left of my area of concentration. That was only appearance. No such distances were involved.

Patterns of Light

Sometimes I experience lights in patterns, colors and movements, often accompanied by feeling swift movements of my dreamed body. Only the patterns are visible. There are no other images. Once I saw a cluster of six or seven brilliant suns with rays spreading in all directions. In another dream I was continually tossed as I saw a multitude of colors in constant change. I remember one sudden movement back from light, during which it seemed I was seeing the light through ice. Through the ice, the light dispersed in a pattern of colors and quickly changed as I moved.

Fullness of Light

The fullness of light is light that fills my vision. There are no outer edges to it, nor areas of darkness. The light is extraordinarily bright, like the sun, though it is not difficult to look at. It normally appears from above my dreamed head looking like the sun and remains high before me. As it fills my vision with light, I no longer discern the sun's circumference. As I watch it I feel varying degrees of devotion and

In my first experience I was in front of my childhood home demonstrating high jumps and flying. While in the air, I realized I was dreaming. I descended and it became a fall. I remembered that I could fall in a dream without fear. Without expecting to land on the ground, I just stopped falling. Then I flew again. I closed my eyes and remained aware of my body floating. I became aware of a bright light to my left. I remembered that a light does not need to mean I am waking up. I was suddenly surrounded by light. I felt that I was floating in light. I felt prayerful and called 'Father,' meaning God. I remained for some time in an attitude of worship, then woke up.

The experience has happened most often after closing my eyes in a dream or in a context in which I see nothing because I am looking into the sky or am floating in the air. Once it happened while I dreamed it was night and I was seeing only darkness. Twice it

happened during active visual dream experiences. In both cases I was in the center of a significant room. In one the sun came from above me as I danced in the middle of a large room, empty except for three statues at one end.

In the other, I realized I was dreaming as I entered the room. I tried to recall what I had planned to do, but I was too interested in the dream to think of something else. In the back of the room a number of Christian tea garden laborers of Assam were waiting. We were glad to see each other. Still realizing it was a dream, I suggested we sing "Amazing Grace." We all then heartily sang the hymn in English. I directed them with my hand. I knew it didn't matter whether I led them correctly or not. I had no trouble remembering the words, since it was rote memory. I noticed that the movement of their mouths was not well coordinated with the articulation of the hymn's words. We sang only the first verse. As I thought of what to do next I noticed the light above me like a brilliant sun. Nothing else could then be seen. I knew it was the light. I shouted a couple of times, "God is love." Gradually I felt lifted up a little. The light remained the same. This was a true worship experience lasting for some time.

The light is seen as dreams are seen. It covers as much visual area as I have when awake. It is only an assumption that the light extends beyond the bounds of sight. There is only the light that I see; it cannot surround me. When I feel that I am standing on the ground, it is only my assumption that the light extends in all directions and stops at the ground. When I feel that I am, floating in light, there is only the light that I see and the feeling of floating. I do not have a dream body, so to speak, which can be surrounded by light. There is only that much of a dreamed body as I experience. The fullness of light, having no form, is not an image of anything. It is light, not an image of light.

In the fullness of light, I am "aware" of God's presence. I do not think of the light itself as God. My awareness, my joy and devotional feelings are dream phenomena. We often "know" things in a dream-- that we are in Hong Kong, that the children have arrived, or that there is an exam tomorrow-- though these things may not really be so. In such a way I "know" that God is present in the light. In a dream, we also have feelings (fear, humor, awe) unaccounted for by reality or by what is experienced in the dream. In such a way I feel real devotion and real joy of unknown cause. Though this experience can be seen in terms of dreaming, this does little to explain it or even to negate the reality of the experience of God.. And though devotional feelings happen as feelings happen in dreams, I am consciously worshipping and enjoying God in the fullness of light to a greater degree than ever happens while awake.

There are experiences that have some resemblance to the fullness of light, but which I do not consider to be so. At times, all is light, but without the brilliance of the sun, and without uncontrollable devotion and intense joy. This often happens after thinking of light. Sometimes I feel I am in the presence of the light, but upon awakening recall no

full light. Twice I saw the sun, but with an object in front of it, once an airplane, and once an unfamiliar symbol.

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