

Lucid Dreams or Out-of-Body Experiences: A Personal Case

Father "X"

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I have just finished LaBerge's book, "Lucid Dreaming", and was gratified to learn that the lucid dreams of not a few people have similar characteristics of my own. These included: 1) the testing of gravity to reassure oneself that one is really awake in a dream (I usually do a somersault and find myself floating in the air like an astronaut in a weightless environment); 2) the varying degrees of lucidity, some so lucid that one fears that one will become "stuck" in this dream-world; 3) the frequent inability to read any written or printed matter; 4) the emotionally detached from the dream, prolonging it; 5) the experience of lucidity coming over one gradually or suddenly; and 6) the capacity for voluntary action in this dream-world.

My lucid dreams are tied up with another phenomena, that of the out-of-body experience. I would like to concentrate my remarks on LaBerge's chapter nine where he examines these experiences. Until I got to that chapter of his book, I had the impression that he was convinced that this dream-world we enter in our lucid dreams was totally the product of our subconscious minds, but in chapter nine he seems to be less sure of that conviction. I really hate to use that term, "out-of-body" experiences, because it turns so many people off, especially scientists, and understandably so. It raises the prospect of all sorts of metaphysical speculation- the whole mind-body question. But, unfortunately, that term is the only one I know of that adequately describes the sensations I feel when I have these experiences. Perhaps if more people realized that when a person has such an experience, it does not necessarily mean that he is still in the "here-now" conscious state, but that he may have entered another state of consciousness, perhaps the dream-state. This is what I believe happens to me when I have these out-of-body experiences. The only essential difference between these experiences and my lucid dreams is that I am totally conscious when I enter this other state of

1. Editors Note: Father "X" has asked me to withhold his name as he feels that his experiences, or at least the telling of them, might compromise his professional position.

consciousness, whereas my lucid dreams always begin with a non-lucid dream and then it becomes lucid. I realize how strange this may sound- how could someone who is totally conscious enter the dream state? All I know is that when the paralysis and vibrations come over me my vision is somewhat blurred but I am still aware of my surroundings. Then I am literally pulled out of my body and off I go.

Of course all this would not seem so strange if, as LaBerge seems to suggest in chapter nine, the dream- world possessed some sort of objective existence; if you

recall Van Eeden's article, he seemed to come to this conclusion also, and when Charles Tart reviewed Dr. Tholey's work in his magazine, "The Open Mind", Tholey also suggested that the dream-world seemed to possess an "inertia" and "lawfulness" all its own. As for myself, after having undergone hundreds of these experiences over a period of twelve years, the only reasonable conclusion I can come to is that the content of most of my experiences come from some source other than my subconscious. I am basing my opinion not so much on what I saw in these experiences but what I heard- the responses I received from these "dream-creatures" or "spirits" or whatever else we want to call them. Even though I am a Catholic monk, whenever I talk about my experiences I am not speaking from any religious point of view. I try to view my experiences in a totally objective light. As a matter of fact most of the "people" I have met in my experiences seem to have, if not an anti-religious attitude, certainly an irreligious one.

Another characteristic of my experiences which convinces me that this dream-world has some sort of objective existence is that I have never been able to transform the content of my experiences with my conscious mind. The individuals and environment in this world sometimes change dramatically but the changes do not appear to come from my mind.

I was particularly interested in LaBerge's description of the experience of the Indian physician and editor, Ram Narayana, as he tried to convince the creatures of his dream-world that they were his own creation. I too have succumbed to that temptation on a number of occasions. I usually ended up having a fight on my hands which abruptly ended the experience. One of these experiences comes quickly to mind even though it happened some years ago. It started out as a non-lucid dream which quickly became very lucid. I found myself walking down a very busy, bustling city street in what looked like a large metropolitan city at noon. As usual, with so many of my experiences, at first glance everything looked normal. All sorts of people walking to and fro, seemingly concerned only with their own personal affairs. The clothes and hairstyles and everything else about them looked more or less modern and normal. There was a lot of traffic in the streets and even a policeman directing it. Well, for some reason I was feeling very frustrated and angry so I decided to "let it all hang out." I walked out to the middle of the street and started shouting as loud as I could, "alright you people listen up, this is my dream and I want to know what in the hell is going on around here?" Well, if I had dropped a bomb I probably could not have gotten their attention any quicker- all at once everything stopped and I mean everything, everyone stopped dead in their tracks, turned and stared at me. Then they all began moving towards me in a very threatening way; I really thought that I had done it this time as I could feel the panic and fear sweeping over me. Frantically I began concentrating on my body lying in my bed (I have found this to be the quickest way to end an experience). For a few, very frightening seconds nothing happened. They were all getting very close. Finally, just before they reached me, I found myself back in my bed.

Finally, I'd like to relate an experience I had earlier this year, which is a good example of the puzzling nature of many of my experiences. They lead me to conclude that most of the

content of these experiences come from some source other than my own mind. What that other source is I will leave to others more qualified than myself to speculate on.

It began as a normal dream and quickly turned into a very lucid dream. Like so many of my experiences I found myself in an urban setting, standing on a city block, observing all sorts of people bustling about. As I continued to observe my surroundings, I saw that I was standing in front of a small building which looked like it might be a library or a museum. I decided to try my luck in there, so I walked up to the door, opened it, and entered. I had fairly good control of my body and my vision was very clear. I am always amazed at my sense of touch in these experiences. I can actually feel the objects I am touching. However, it is not a direct sense of touch- rather it feels like I am wearing heavy gloves on my hands. It seemed to be a library as there were rows of books stacked in shelves along the walls. I immediately noticed two middle-aged, oriental-looking men sitting on the floor with their backs leaning up against the bookshelves. They did not seem to be reading anything, just staring off into space. There were only about five or six other people in the place, and they were all clustered around a desk in the middle of the room where a pretty, blond-haired girl in her early twenties seemed to be checking out books. Since so many of my experiences are very short, some lasting only seconds, I thought that if I was going to get any useful information from this experience, I better start right away before the experience ended. I walked up to her desk, stood directly in front of her and just blurted out the first thing that came to my mind; "Are you people dead?" The girl behind the desk looked at me in a sort of wistful way and said, "Yes", and without my saying anything else she added this extraordinary statement, "but I am the only one around here who remembers dying." Before I could ask her anything else, the other people around the desk began pushing me back and started to act in a very threatening way towards me. Next thing I knew the experience ended and I was back in my bed.

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