



Dreaming—The Sacred Art: Incubating, Navigating, and Interpreting Sacred Dreams for Spiritual and Personal Growth

Lori Joan Swick

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“Spirit is always at work in dreams,” writes Lori Joan Swick, PhD, and human history is filled with dreamers who have encountered the sacred with results that have shaped our world. Both the Hebrew Bible and the Christian Gospels have their share of dreamers, and Muhammad’s night-journey dream is considered to be the foundation of the Islamic faith. The Buddha’s journey to enlightenment was marked by auspicious dreams, and for Hindus, all creation is the divine dream of Vishnu. Research on spiritual dreaming conducted for the American Psychological Association found that people remember their mystical dreams the best, and the data gathered shows that about 50 percent of the population has mystical dreams. Surprisingly, in the light of all this, Western religious scholars and academics have neglected the study of this fascinating sacred art—only the scholars and mystics of the East have a long history of studying dreams.

In *Dreaming—The Sacred Art*, Swick brings us a practical guide to accessing the gifts our dreams have for us, with techniques for incubating, navigating, and working with sacred dreams. The process will take time, she warns, but the rewards are well worth it, as dreamworkers experience improved metaphorical and imagistic thinking that can open up dimensions of experience the purely rational mind will never know. Sacred dreamers also experience expanded self-understanding and greater openness to reevaluating their assumptions about the nature of reality; their ability to make use of the guidance received in dreams increases, as does their empathy for others; creativity blossoms; and dreamworkers acquire a better understanding of how fluid the boundaries between body and mind really are. With sacred dreaming, one’s life becomes permeated with a magical and mystical quality.

Swick shows us how, even if our dreams do not shape empires, they can deepen our spiritual awareness, enhance self-healing, and make it possible to live in these tumultuous times with a deeper and more joyful awareness of our purpose for being here.

KRISTINE MORRIS (Fall 2014)

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