

# Sufi Dreaming

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(This Article appeared first in Dream Time, Winter 2005)

I would like to write about three night time experiences that happened to me in 1982/83. At that time, I was already working with dreams and had become interested in Sufism after reading Irina Tweedie's book, *The Chasm of Fire*.<sup>1</sup> Now, before I go into my experiences, I would like to introduce briefly this mystical tradition.

This particular Sufi tradition follows a branch of the Naqshbandiyya Mujadiddiyya, which had its source in the city of Bucharra along the silk road during the 12<sup>th</sup> – 14<sup>th</sup> centuries.<sup>2</sup> Central Asia has a rich spiritual and mystical inheritance because Zoroastrians, Buddhists, Manichaeists, Christians and Muslims lived and worked there. It was the time of heavy destruction by the hordes of Genghis Khan and also the brutal conquests of Timur the Lame, after which Central Asia became the guardian of high culture that later fertilized the renaissance in Europe. First the tradition was known under the name “Kwajagan” (the “masters of wisdom”). Later it was labelled after Kwaja Bahaudin Naqshband, a Persian name that refers to the profession and craft of Bahaudin, who was an engraver. The name Naqshband is important for understanding this order. The meaning of “naqsh” is “impression,” “band” is “to bind” (Persian is of Indo-European origin). According to this Sufi tradition, the binding impression is imprinted into the soul. The Naqshbandi are nicknamed the “Silent Sufis” because they do their spiritual practice in silence. The second name, Mujadiddiyya, means “reviver” and is traced back to a proponent of the Naqshbandi, Ahmad Sirhindi, who lived in Delhi and worked to revive the true Sufi approach after Sufism there had deteriorated to music and dancing.<sup>3</sup>

After reading Irina Tweedie's book I wrote the author, which lived in London. Her reply was very short and consisted mainly of her exact address. In the following night I had the first of three very impressive dreams:

## **Nov, 14, 1982, 8h. Destroyed foundation**

*I was together with friends in India. We lived in a part of a town on a slope that looked a bit like Jammu near Cashmere. In front of our hotel was a staircase. One day, I came back to the hotel when the others were about to leave it. I realized that a big curb was loose and was washed round by water. It did not look good and I did not trust the situation. Suddenly I realized that the staircase in front of the hotel was no longer founded in the ground and was hanging in the air. Everything began to move and shift because the ground was undermined and washed away by water. The whole town began to shake and to slide down the slope. I had to lift off in panic to escape the disaster. At first I crashed down together with the town but then I managed to fly over it and an unbelievable and tremendous roar started. I gained height and considerable speed and I*

*flew like an arrow above the town -- first down into the valley and then up the next hill. Everything became very intense and full of vibrant light and colours. My consciousness was crystal clear. I flew over a golden shrine towards the sky. It started raining from heavy clouds. I felt the heavy raindrops on my bare shoulders. From a considerable height I looked down over a Swiss landscape with mountains and lakes. Then everything began to fade. I could not hold the overwhelming state of being as I wished. The roar became quieter until it was silenced. I was fully awake. There was no experience of awakening.*



Overwhelmed by this dream, I again wrote Mrs. Tweedie and made an appointment to see her in London. I visited her for some days in December, shortly before Christmas. It was grey and cold in London, but the meeting left a lasting impression. During one of those nights, I had another dream:

### **Dec, 12, 1982 7h. Fight with the instincts**

*I lay in bed after a dream and did the heart meditation by concentrating in mental silence upon the heart region. I heard Mrs. Tweedie's voice, which said (in English): "Poor Christoph, I am still too dirty for you!" I continued the practice and suddenly the pulsing humming started again. Its centre was in the heart. I opened my eyes wide and expected to see Mrs. Tweedie. But instead I was in my bedroom at my parents' house, where I lived as a child. Everything glowed luminously. But somehow everything was a bit shifted in time. Opposite my bed was a wall covered with pictures of sexy pinup girls. At first I did not believe I was seeing properly, everything was a bit distorted and blurred. I looked around. The room was furnished differently than it used to be. Near the window was a big, strange tape recorder. On the bedside table was an old radio I used to have when I was sick as a child. I felt the surface of it with my finger. It was very real and solid, therefore I was not hallucinating. I left the bed and opened the door to the hallway. Everything was quite normal but I realized that I had not left my room but had left another room nearby instead. A big and strong pit-bull dog was outside and wanted to play with me. But the game quickly became violent. It tried to bite and swallow up my hand. I tried to shake it off and could distract him with a bone, but I did not manage to close the door and the dog could enter the room again and again. In the middle of this battle the pulsing dream began to fade out and I was awake.*



When I left London some days later, Mrs. Tweedie said goodbye and told me that I now know enough about this mystical tradition, and should decide whether I would engage in it seriously and whether I would come to London or not. She told me I should write her my decision, and also that I should journal my dreams and send her the important ones.

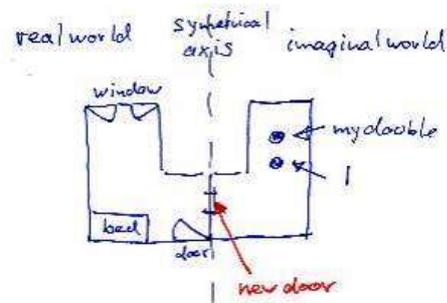
In these two dreams, which were distinguished from ordinary dreams by their quality of consciousness and their unbelievable energy, I was shown where I stood in the mystical transformation process I was undergoing: The first dream showed the destruction of my cultural foundation and conditioning (Freud's superego) by water, which I interpreted as emotions. Only after that could the heavenly grace touch me (heavy raindrops). The dream began in India, the home and source of the Naqshbandiyya Mujadiddiyya, and ended in Switzerland, my home.

The second dream concerned a painful clash with my greed, aggression and sexuality (Freud's id). The fight is bitter, the end is uncertain. This I had to face if I would engage the spiritual work seriously. A well balanced and contented human would not accept at all such a perspective of life. I did because I was deeply unhappy with my general situation and I was enough adventurous to commit myself to such a thing.

After some weeks I decided to go to London to become more deeply involved with the Naqshbandiyya Mujadiddiyya tradition. I had to introduce the idea to my parents, who were horrified because they were afraid of losing me to a sect, which they had read about in the papers. I was 27 then and had to insist on my chosen course, rather than succumb to their fears. The following night I had this dream:

*Feb, 9, 1983, 8h. The Double*

*Again in the dream I was in my bedroom at my parents' house and could not sleep. In the attic some animals were creeping around. I got up and left the room to see what was going on. But I could see nothing. When I returned to my bedroom my bed was gone. I was puzzled. Then I saw another entrance to another room which was situate symmetrically (see sketch). I went through that entrance and to my surprise I encountered myself, my double. I was completely shocked and did not know what to do. I was a bit afraid of a personality split and gave my double my hand as a sign of friendship and alliance. The double returned my handshake. His hand was firm and warm. We sat on the ground face to face and I looked at me (at him). My double did not look completely the*



*same as me. He had a stronger jaw, more hair, no bald forehead. His mouth was modulated strongly. He looked very strong, healthy and good. He was completely transparent and from within a fluorescent blue light began to glow. The dream, or the vision, because I was not asleep at all and remembered that I had turned over in my bed shortly before, was very real and in shiny colours. Again I sensed the pulsing humming.*

When I wrote Mrs. Tweedie this dream, she replied that the double would be my future Self. Many years later I came to know, to my astonishment, about a Sufi tradition in Persia, described by Henry Corbin<sup>4</sup>, which was based on the symbolism of light. It was probably influenced by older Zoroastrian traditions. In this tradition, the heavenly twin of light plays a key role. This impressive dream set the seal on my commitment. I had smelled the blood and could not give it up anymore. I prepared to move to London, quit my job and sold most of my belongings. In early summer 1983 I walked within 55 days from Zurich to London on foot.

These three dreams show what it can mean to somebody to be impressed and bound on the level of the soul. – Naqshband – Today, after 22 years and many more impressive dreams, I am still on my spiritual journey and the outcome is still uncertain.

For the interested reader I would like to mention that the tradition of the Naqshbandiyya Mujadidyya has a tradition to use dreams as signposts on the mystical path, because the work of the silent Sufis is done in secrecy within the soul. Not much outer guidance is available. For more details see the appendix of Llewellyn Vaughan-Lees book “The Signs of God”<sup>5</sup> or download it on:  
<http://traumring.info/english/vaughanreadsignsofgod.pdf>

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<sup>1</sup> Irina Tweedie: The chasm of fire, Element books, Tisbury Wiltshire, England 1979

<sup>2</sup> J. G. Bennett: The masters of wisdom, Turnstone books, London 1977

<sup>3</sup> see Annemarie Schimmel: Mystical Dimensions in Islam, The University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill 1975, chapter 7

<sup>4</sup> Henry Corbin: The man of light in the Iranian Sufism, Omega publication, NY, 1994

<sup>5</sup> Llewellyn Vaughan-Lee: The Signs of God, The Golden Sufi Center, Inverness CA

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