



TRADITIONAL MARTINIST ORDER

ORATORY SECTION

THIRD DEGREE



LESSON THREE

"It is not the head which is necessary to advance in Truth; it is the heart."



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CONCURRENCE

From a mystical point of view, dreams are the language of the soul to the extent that they use that means to send us special messages, which are usually related to our internal life. In concurrence with this idea, we invite you to read a quotation from a book entitled *The Symbolism of Dreams*, published in 1814.

In the dream, and already in that delusional state that most of the time precedes sleep, the soul speaks an entirely different language than it normally does. Some natural objects, some properties of things, suddenly designate people; conversely, a specific quality or action comes in the form of people. As long as the soul speaks that language, its ideas unusually surrender to a different law of association. Also, that new pattern of ideas is undeniably established in a quicker, more mysterious and shorter way than it is in waking states, when we think more by using our words. With a small number of images curiously organized and conceived either quickly, and successively, or simultaneously in a single moment, we express in a short period in that language, more things than we could, for hours together, with words. We learn during a short-sleep dream, often more things than could occur for whole hours in ordinary language, and without a real gap, in an innately coherent context, but which obviously is altogether particular and uncommon.

Gotthilf Heinrich Schubert (1780-1860)



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DREAMS I (Throughout the Ages)

Dear Martinist:

I greet you before the Luminaries of the Traditional Martinist Order!

The time has now come to reflect on a new theme: dreams. Throughout history, dreams have fascinated people and have led to many questions. The ancients considered dreams as divine messages indicating the future or serving as guides on the individual as well as the collective plane. Dreams were also credited with having the power to heal. Today, we will see the place that they occupied in the great religious and mystical traditions of the past, and then we will talk about the resurgence that they had in Western Civilization, at the beginning of the twentieth century. In the following discourses, we will continue this study and see how we can use our dreams as tools for mystical realization.

The writings of Ancient Egypt quite often make reference to dreams. In the British Museum, for example, is a papyrus dating from the Twelfth Dynasty containing the story of more than two hundred dreams, accompanied by their interpretations. Many stelae also report such stories. The one placed between the paws of the Sphinx, on the Giza plateau, reports a famous dream that the pharaoh Thutmosis IV experienced when he was still a young prince, as he was sleeping in its shadow. The Sphinx spoke to him in his dream and asked him to free it from the sand, so that it could recover its full splendor and become again the glorious symbol of the land of the pharaohs. Continuing, the Sphinx announced that Thutmosis IV would succeed his father on the throne of Egypt.

According to the wisdom of Egypt: *"The Divine created dreams to indicate the path to us when we cannot see the future."* This explains why the Egyptians used them primarily for divinatory means. They believed that sleep was like a temporary death, and that the soul then became free from the body allowing it to contact divinities through dreams. Some temples were devoted to oniromancy. People slept there to seek divine inspiration, the knowledge of the future, healing, or to break an evil spell. Depending on the cases, deities were invoked such as Serapis, the god of inspiration; Isis, the great goddess; Imhotep, the healing god; or Bes, the protector god against evil demons. The analysis of dreams fell to priest-readers, as the interpretation of dream symbols was part of the sacerdotal function.

The Old Testament also accords great importance to dreams, where they usually fulfilled a prophetic function. As expressions of Divine Will, they announce future events about the dreamer or the entire community. Some have an initiatory nature. For example,



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Jacob's dream in which *"... he saw a stairway resting on the earth, with its top reaching to heaven, and the angels of God were ascending and descending on it"* (Genesis, Chapter 28:12). can be interpreted as an initiation into the invisible world. It also has the function of announcing news, since in this dream God reveals to Jacob his mission and the importance of his descendants.

Another familiar biblical dream is that of the pharaoh who saw seven lean cows eating seven fat cows, and seven full and ripe ears of corn swallowed by seven meager and scorched ears of corn. According to the Bible, Joseph explained to the Pharaoh that his dream predicted seven years of abundance followed by seven lean years, and that it would be wise to make provisions during the good years (Genesis, Chapter 41). Again, it is the prophetic meaning that first becomes apparent. That being said, the evocation of the number seven and the juxtaposition of the contraries can give rise to a more mystical interpretation. Thus, a dream can very well have both a divinatory and a symbolic nature.

The ancient Greeks thought that the soul left the body during sleep and returned to the world of divinities, where it could solicit their help, their inspiration, their protection, etc. This idea, which we find in the Orphic Mysteries, was probably borrowed from the Egyptian Mysteries. It was perpetuated in the schools founded by Pythagoras and Plato, and then in the Mysteries of Delphi and Eleusis. Plato thought that dreams allowed the soul to rise to the world of Ideas, the source of all truth. His disciple Aristotle instead saw in dreams the soul's response to stimuli that are exercised upon the body during sleep. According to Aristotle, *"...we think that we are crossing a fire and feeling an extreme heat when there is only a truly insignificant warming up of this or that limb."*

In the second century CE, Artemidorus of Daldis established himself in Greece as the uncontested master of dream interpretation. Instead of approaching dreams from a theoretical point of view, he studied them in an experimental manner. He is the author of *The Interpretation of Dreams*, a masterpiece in which he analyzes more than three thousand dreams, while taking into consideration the personality of the dreamers. We should note that he used the terms "idle fancy" and "dream" to express different meanings, which is interesting for Martinists. For him, idle fancies reflected the physical and psychological state of an individual, whereas dreams had a spiritual origin and served to instruct us on this topic. He worked to interpret the latter, dreams. The ancient Greeks of Antiquity ascribed therapeutic virtues to dreams. In the temple of Asclepius, God of medicine, rituals were performed in order to obtain healing dreams.



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Eastern thinkers also had an early interest in dreams. One was the Chinese philosopher, Chuang-Tzu known in particular for this famous dream, which he relates in this fashion: *"One night, I dreamt that I was a butterfly, flying here and there, happy about my faith. I suddenly woke up and I was Chuang-Tzu again. Who am I in reality? A butterfly dreaming that he is Chuang-Tzu, or Chuang-Tzu dreaming that he is a butterfly?"* Beyond its humorous aspect, the inquiry of this Taoist philosopher from the fourth century BCE challenges the reality of being. Indeed, it makes the dream a fundamental element of our existence and a source of profound reflection.

In Hinduism, dreams correspond to one of the four states of human consciousness: wakefulness, dreaming, dreamless sleep, and pure consciousness. Wakefulness allows the soul to experience the material world. Dreaming puts the soul in contact with the subtle world. Dreamless Sleep gives the soul access to an even higher plane. Pure consciousness corresponds to the state of *turiya*, where the union between the individual soul (*jiva-atman*) and the universal Soul (*Atman*) takes place. Whoever reaches this state experiences the Absolute (*Brahman*), which can be compared to Nirvana, or the state of Immanence.

Dreams occupy a minor place in Christianity. In contrast to the Old Testament, dreams are rarely mentioned in the New Testament. Only in the *Gospel according to Matthew*, are two of Joseph's dreams mentioned. In the first, the angel tells him: *"Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit"* (Matthew: 1:20). The second is a warning dream during which he was advised to flee to Egypt with Mary and Jesus, in order to escape the massacre of the newborn male children ordered by Herod (Matthew: 2:13). Even though there is little about dreams in the New Testament, they nevertheless had some importance during the early Christian Church. Thus John Chrysostom indicated that dreams could lead to spirituality. Justin Martyr saw in dreams a proof of the immortality of the soul and Clement of Alexandria invited the faithful *"...not to close the door to the wisdom of dreams."*

With time, Christian authorities became resistant to the study of dreams, because they feared that their interpretation would overshadow that of the Holy Scriptures reserved for the church leaders. Those teachers indeed considered that the time for revelations had ended with the writings of the New Testament and that it was no longer useful to attribute a prophetic value to dreams, as had been done in the Old Testament. In the fifth century however, Augustine of Hippo thought that we could have inspired dreams that could prevent us from making many mistakes in the conduct of our lives. The Church would eventually condemn the practice of oniromancy or dream interpretation.



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In Islam, dreams have a crucial importance. Mohammed said that “dreams are part of the Prophecy,” and the Qu’ran specifies that dreams constitute its forty-sixth part. The interpretation of dreams actually appears many times in this Sacred Book. In particular, we learn from the Qu’ran that the mission of the Prophet was revealed to him through a dream in which the Archangel Gabriel appeared to him. It is also during a dream that he was transported from Mecca to Jerusalem on a mare named al-Buraq. This nocturnal journey made such an impression on him that he declared Jerusalem to be a Holy City, as were Mecca and Medina. In a general manner, the Islamic tradition has always placed oniromancy in a place of honor. Many texts are dedicated to it, among which, *The Interpretation of Dreams*, written by Ibn Sirin in the seventh century, is a true summary of spiritual knowledge on this topic.

In the Kabbalah, dreams are presented as a means of accessing the divine plane. Isaac of Acre, a disciple of Abraham Abulafia, an eminent Kabbalist of the thirteenth century, made reference to dreams in a text entitled *Book of the Doors of Justice*. An anonymous letter attributed to Maimonides, also talks of dream activity and presents dreams as a state of consciousness that allows us to glimpse the Mysteries of Creation. The same idea is found in the *Sefer ha-Meshvi*, a kabbalistic book written in Spain in the fifteenth century. This anonymous work comprises diverse dream techniques. One of them explains how to proceed in order for the Divine and the angels to reveal themselves to us in our dreams. For the Kabbalists following this philosophy, dreaming allows entrance into a world where meeting the Divine is possible. According to them, this meeting always occurs by the intermediary of the angelical power of Elijah.

It is probable that because of his Spanish origin, Martinès de Pasqually knew the dream practices to which we have just referred. What is certain is that he thought that the Divine could gratify us with beneficial dreams. According to Pasqually, such dreams occur by the intermediary of the Good Companion Spirit, the angel continuously watching over us. He recommended to his disciples a certain practice, having as its goal the encouragement of dreams and thus the reception of divine inspiration.

In 1814, the great German thinker Gotthilf Heinrich Schubert published a book entitled *The Symbolology of Dreams*. This book is very interesting for Martinists, because its author was an avid reader of the writings of Louis-Claude de Saint-Martin. It is in fact Schubert who translated *The Spirit of Things* into German. In his book on the symbolology of dreams, Schubert stated that oniric language is different than ordinary language in the sense



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that it is constituted of hieroglyphic images. According to Schubert, this language is close to the language that Humanity used before the Fall, when Humanity lived in the Divine Immensity beside the Creator. In addition, he considered dreaming as a natural activity of the soul, and therefore had a spiritual approach to it.

In the nineteenth century, following discoveries made in the previous century by Franz Anton Mesmer and the Marquis de Puységur on magnetic sleep, a new science called psychology appeared. From this period until the beginning of the twentieth century, those interested in dreams were mostly psychologists searching for elements that would allow the understanding of the various processes of consciousness, as well as psychiatrists interested in hypnosis and phenomena linked to the lower states of the psyche. All these saw in dreams a lower mental activity. The discoveries of Sigmund Freud, the famous Austrian neurologist, would radically change this point of view. Through the practice of hypnosis, he noted that it is impossible to reduce the psyche to the conscious mind.

Freud's observations and studies led him to believe that human consciousness contains a part of something unknown that he called "the unconscious." According to Freud, the unconscious is the receptacle of our emotive repressions. By extension, he thought that dream activity permits the satisfaction of desires repressed in the waking state, and renders them acceptable to the censorship that is exercised in the consciousness of the sleeper. Beginning with the principle that the unconscious uses other modes of expression than conscious thought, he was also convinced that the understanding of these modes is the major key with which to approach the interpretation of dreams, which according to Freud is: "*...the royal road to a knowledge of the unconscious activities of the mind.*" Thus, in 1899 he published *The Interpretation of Dreams*, an important work in which he explains that deciphering dreams is a particularly effective way to understand the most secret and most determinative aspects of the human psyche.

By affirming that the dream is a source of information about the unconscious, Sigmund Freud rescued from oblivion a phenomenon whose value had seemed lost forever. However, his approach to dream activity was somewhat restrictive if not materialistic. As you will see in the next monograph, other seekers later conferred upon dreams a more spiritual dimension.

May you ever dwell in the Eternal Light of Divine Wisdom!



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PRACTICAL APPLICATION

Brothers and Sisters, as it was made clear in today's monograph, Martinès de Pasqually recommended to his disciples a practice that allowed them to have inspiring dreams. This practice was founded on a prayer to say before falling asleep. Here is the text:

At this time, everything sleeps in the nature of material and corporal beings.... I will soon sleep myself.... It is in this time of silence and rest that at times You deign to manifest Yourself to humanity by the ministry of Your divine intelligences. How happy I would be, O my sole good, if You would grant me this favor, of instructing me and enlightening me through the voice of my Guardian Spirit. Send me a salutary dream that demonstrates for me the communication of the powerful operations that it accomplishes for me. When I awaken, may I retain a living impression, which can become the power and rule of my conduct through the day to come. If you permit, O Eternal, may I attain this! Amen.

In the coming days, we suggest that just before you fall asleep, say this prayer and note the effects produced during sleep and upon awakening. The ideal would be to memorize the prayer demonstrating your inner conviction.

SUMMARY

After carefully studying this monograph, read the following summary. It contains the major points that you may want to reflect and meditate on during the coming days. If you have trouble understanding one of the points, return to the explanations given in the monograph. Immerse yourself in learning the points covered in this summary before proceeding with the study of the next monograph.

- Throughout history, dreams have fascinated us and have led to many questions. The ancients considered dreams as divine messages indicating the future, or serving as guides, on the individual as well as the collective plane.
- The Egyptians thought that sleep was like a temporary death and that the soul left the body, allowing it to contact divinities through dreams.
- The Old Testament also accorded great importance to dreams, where they usually had a prophetic function.
- Plato thought that dreams allowed the soul to rise to the world of Ideas, the source of all truth. His disciple Aristotle instead saw in dreams the soul's response to stimuli that are exercised upon the body during sleep.
- Eastern thinkers also had an early interest in dreams, such as the Chinese philosopher Chuang-Tzu.
- In Hinduism, dreams correspond to one of the four states of human consciousness: wakefulness, dreaming, dreamless sleep, and pure consciousness.
- Dreams occupy a minor place in Christianity. In contrast to the Old Testament, dreams are rarely mentioned in the New Testament.
- Dreams have a crucial importance in Islam. Dream interpretation appears many times in the Qu'ran.
- In the Kabbalah, dreams are presented as a means to access the Divine Plane. For the Kabbalists, dreaming allows one to enter a world where meeting the Divine is possible.
- Martinès de Pasqually thought that beneficial dreams occur via the intermediary of the Good Companion Spirit, the angel continuously watching over us. He recommended to his disciples a particular practice, which had the goal of encouraging dreams and thus the reception of divine inspiration.
- Freud was convinced that the interpretation of dreams constitutes *"the royal road leading to the knowledge of the unconscious."*

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