

The Islamic Cultural Unconscious in the Dreams of a Contemporary Muslim Man

Michael Vannoy Adams

Abstract

Three spiritual dreams of a contemporary Muslim man who arrived in New York City the day before September 11, 2001—"9/11"—are analyzed in the context of the Islamic cultural unconscious and the Middle Eastern cultural complex (an obedience, submission, or humility complex). Islamic submission to God (Allah) is contrasted with Jungian dialogue and negotiation with the unconscious.

Keywords

Islam, Jungian psychology, cultural unconscious, cultural complexes, spiritual dreams, submission complex, humility complex, active imagination, Allah, Muhammad, Quran, Kaba.

One of the most vitally important topics in "Jungian Studies" is the psychological analysis of different cultures—and of cultural differences. I have previously argued that psychoanalysts need to become "culturally knowledgeable." I have emphasized that "the acquisition of sufficient cultural knowledge demands the most serious and meticulous study of specific cultures" (Adams, 2001, p. 138). I have also noted that one of the most dynamic contemporary disciplines is "Cultural Studies" but that psychoanalysts, including Jungian psychoanalysts, have remained "more or less inattentive" to culture (Adams, 2004, p. 134).

I have a special interest in the "cultural unconscious." Joseph L. Henderson introduced that term into Jungian discourse (1990). Henderson defined the cultural unconscious as a dimension between the collective unconscious and the personal unconscious. That definition dissatisfied me, for what is cultural is obviously collective. Subsequently, I redefined the cultural unconscious as a dimension of the collective unconscious (Adams, 1996, pp. 46–7; Adams, 2001, pp. 106–7; Adams, 2004, pp. 155–6). By that redefinition, the collective unconscious includes two dimensions. In addition to a dimension that comprises archetypes and archetypal images, the

*Michael Vannoy Adams is a Jungian psychoanalyst in New York City. He is a clinical associate professor at the New York University Postdoctoral Program in Psychotherapy and Psychoanalysis and a faculty member at the Jungian Psychoanalytic Association. His most recent book, *The Fantasy Principle: Psychoanalysis of the Imagination*, received a 2005 *Gradiva Award* from the National Association for the Advancement of Psychoanalysis. This paper was presented at the International Academic Conference of Analytical Psychology and Jungian Studies at Texas A&M University, July 8, 2005, and at the Blanton-Peale Institute in New York, September 21, 2005.*

collective unconscious includes a dimension that comprises stereotypes and stereotypical images—and this is what I mean by the cultural unconscious.

Among the stereotypes and stereotypical images in the cultural unconscious are what Samuel L. Kimbles and Thomas Singer call “cultural complexes” (Kimbles, 2000; Singer and Kimbles, 2004). As I define a cultural complex, it is a set of values about which a culture is especially emotionally sensitive. (I should perhaps emphasize that, as I employ the term “complex,” it has a strictly neutral, not a pejorative—and certainly not necessarily a pathological—connotation.)

One of the dominant cultural complexes is what I call the “Middle Eastern cultural complex.” This cultural complex is a function of the Jewish, Christian, and Islamic traditions. Although there are important differences between these traditions, there are also important similarities. Among these similarities is a set of values about which these traditions are especially emotionally sensitive. What constitutes this set of values is a belief in one God to whom believers are obedient (in the Jewish and Christian traditions) or submissive (in the Islamic tradition). Obedience or submission to one God is the basis of the Middle Eastern cultural complex.

I also have a special interest in what I call the “Islamic cultural unconscious.” I have delivered presentations on that topic in New York, London, Atlanta, Pittsburgh, Buffalo, and Fort Lauderdale. At the New School in New York, I teach a course with the title “Psychoanalyzing Jewish, Christian, and Islamic Mythology.” Students in that course analyze psychologically the *Tanakh*, the New Testament, and the Quran. While I was a psychoanalyst in training in New York, there were courses in the Jewish, Christian, Greek, Hindu, Buddhist, and other traditions but no course in the Islamic tradition. The omission of Islam seemed to me symptomatic. In relation to Islam, Jungians were not culturally knowledgeable but culturally ignorant or culturally negligent.

Islam purports to subsume and supersede all previous revelations—among them, the Jewish and Christian revelations. From this perspective, the Quran is the final revelation, the last word on the subject, and Muhammad is the final prophet of that revelation. “Islam” means “submission.” To be a Muslim is, by definition, to be submissive to God. In this sense, there is, in the Islamic cultural unconscious, a “submission complex” (just as there is in the Jewish cultural unconscious and the Christian cultural unconscious an “obedience complex”). I do not mean to suggest that Muslims are necessarily more submissive than other persons. I do, however, maintain that a set of values about which a culture is especially sensitive may—and often does—exert an unconscious influence on persons. A cultural prohibition may function, for example, as a personal inhibition.

In this sense, the submission complex in the Islamic cultural unconscious has important consequences for Muslims. It problematizes individuation. For Muslims, the concern is that individuation may be an inflation of the ego, which may be an association or equation with God. For the ego to be inflated and associated or equated with God (and not submitted to God) is the sin of *shirk*, which, Rafiq Zakaria (1991) notes, is “as grave a sin as *kufr*, or the denial of the existence of God” (p. 7). The dreams of a contemporary Muslim man demonstrate just how problematic the Islamic submission complex may be for individuation.

In 2003, a young Muslim man, 32 years old, came to me for Jungian psychoanalysis. I shall call him by the name “Nizar,” which in Arabic means “vision.”

This is a pseudonym that he chose. As Nizar experienced his identity, there was “a war between two parts of what I am.” One part was the “Arab-Islamic part.” He had once rejected that part but now accepted it. The other part was the “Western part.” He was “good at amalgamating identities”—for example, he spoke North African Arabic, Eastern Arabic, Turkish, Hebrew, French, and English—but he felt “a lot of division in my being.”

Nizar was in no sense provincial. He had a cosmopolitan perspective. He now lived in America—but he had previously lived in Africa, Europe, Asia, and the Middle East. Erik H. Erikson says that all individuals, as members of a nation, class, caste, sex, or “race,” have identities that “at the very minimum comprise *what one is never not*.” This “never not” identity is the basis for the possibility of a transcendent, human identity. “What one is never not,” Erikson (1969) says, “establishes the life space within which one may hope to become uniquely and affirmatively what one is—and then to transcend that uniqueness by way of a more inclusive humanity” (p. 266). In just this way, Nizar was never not a Muslim. Islam was an essential aspect of his identity. Nizar also, however, aspired to a more inclusive humanity—and a more inclusive spirituality. He had a special interest in comparative religion. Nizar had seriously studied both Christianity and Judaism. At one time, he had even considered conversion to Judaism. He had also seriously studied Sufism. Nizar quoted Ibn Arabi with approval: “My heart has become a monastery for Christian monks, a tabernacle for the Torah, a Kaba for the pilgrims, an idol for the polytheists. My only religion is love.”

Nizar had been living in Jerusalem and working for an international organization in the relief efforts for Palestinians in Gaza. He had moved to New York because he had wanted “to be where who you are or where you come from doesn’t matter” and because he had wanted “to forget the Arab-Israeli conflict and the conflict between the West and Islam.” Nizar had wanted “to extract myself from that state of conflict,” but, he said, “ironically, synchronistically, I ended up in the very heart of it.” He had arrived in New York the day before September 11, 2001—“9/11.”

While living in Jerusalem, Nizar had been in therapy for two years with a Jewish-Israeli therapist. “I had two extremely impressive dreams,” he said, “but my therapist couldn’t find an interpretation.” The reason, he said, was that “the importance of spirituality for me was not understood by that therapist as a real part of my being.” Nizar had come to me because he knew that, by reputation, Jungian psychoanalysis respects the importance of spirituality. I asked him if he had also come to me because he knew that I have a special interest in the psychological analysis of Islam. No, Nizar said, he had no idea. While living in Jerusalem, he had begun to read Jung. *Memories, Dreams, Reflections* had impressed him—especially the affirmation that “inner life was almost more important than outer life.”

What I propose to do is to interpret three of Nizar’s dreams in the context of the Islamic cultural unconscious. All three dreams are spiritual dreams. Most of the dreams that Nizar recounted to me were not spiritual dreams, but a considerable number were—more than the three that I shall interpret—and they were disproportionately frequent in comparison with the number of spiritual dreams that other persons in analysis with me have recounted. The first two dreams that I shall interpret are those for which Nizar’s Jewish-Israeli therapist had been unable to find an interpretation because the therapist had been unable to understand the

importance of spirituality as a real part of his being. Nizar told me the two dreams in the first session of analysis with me.

Dream 1

I'm in an ancient city in south Lebanon—Tyre. There are ancient ruins. There's a swimming pool, very long, just next to the ocean on my left. The swimming pool is dry; there's no water in it. I'm walking in the swimming pool. It's marble or stone. On each side of the swimming pool are statues of gods. The statues are looking behind me at the sun. I'm walking forward, the sun behind me, very shining. The sky is blue. Although my back is to the sun, I can still see it. I'm impressed, surprised that I can see the sun while it's behind me. I'm impressed that all the idols are looking at the sun.

The ancient city of Tyre in Phoenicia (now a city by the Arabic name of Sur in south Lebanon) was a seaport famous for commerce. Tyre was also a city that Isaiah, Amos, and Joel prophesied God would destroy (Graves and Patai, 1989, p. 52). The ancient ruins in Nizar's dream may, in this sense, be an allusion to this prophetic destruction. In the *Tanakh*, God strikes down and destroys the king of Tyre. God says to the king of Tyre:

By your far-flung commerce
 You were filled with lawlessness
 And you sinned.
 So I have struck you down . . .
 And I have destroyed you. (*Tanakh*: Ezekiel 28:16)

The sin of the king (and the city) of Tyre was an emphasis on commercial values—that is, material values rather than spiritual values.

In Nizar's dream, there is a swimming pool next to the ocean. James Hillman (1979) notes that many psychotherapists interpret "bodies of water in dreams" as the unconscious. Among these bodies of water, he specifically mentions both "swimming pools" and "oceans" (p. 18). In Nizar's dream, there is no water in the swimming pool. Nizar is not swimming in a pool full of water but walking in a pool empty of water—that is, he is walking in what was once wet, or unconscious, but is now dry, or conscious.

On each side of the swimming pool are statues of gods. In Islam, statues of gods are idols, and idolatry is a sin. So also in Islam is polytheism a sin, and in this dream there are statues of many gods, not just one God. Although Nizar calls the statues idols, he does not respond to them as if he considers them examples of the sins of idolatry and polytheism. Nizar simply observes that the statues are looking behind him at the sun. "The sun," Jung says, is an image of "the daylight psyche, consciousness" (CW 14, p. 357). Although the sun is behind Nizar, he can still see it. Jung says: "We have no eyes behind us; consequently 'behind' is the region of the unseen, the unconscious" (CW 12, p. 48). It is as if Nizar has "eyes in the back of his head." He sees the sun not with the body's eye but with the mind's eye—or the imagination's eye. The dream emphasizes the difference between per-

ception and vision. It indicates that Nizar has a special capacity to see the region of the unseen, the unconscious, and, with “the benefit of hindsight” to see the sun, the daylight psyche, consciousness—that is, that he has an exceptional aptitude for consciousness. In this sense, hindsight is insight.

Jung says that the basic function of most dreams is compensatory. What dreams compensate are the partial, prejudicial, and—at the extreme—defective attitudes of the ego. In Islam, the “spiritually correct” attitude of the ego is humble. Muhammad is the epitome of this attitude. “Before God,” Zakaria (1991) says, “Muhammad always humbled himself” (p. 7). The difficulty for Nizar was how to remain humble before God and simultaneously to acknowledge just how exceptional an aptitude he had for consciousness. From a Jungian perspective, Nizar’s dream indicated that the attitude of his ego was excessively humble. Nizar knew that he had a special capacity for consciousness, but he could not or would not acknowledge that capacity because to do so would be, from the perspective of the Islamic cultural unconscious, to commit the sin of *shirk*. Nizar’s concern was that he would commit a sin that would be to develop an attitude that would be an inflation of his ego. In this respect, Nizar’s dream effectively compensated his “humility complex,” and enabled him eventually to acknowledge just how exceptional an aptitude he had for consciousness.

At the end of the sixth session, Nizar remarked that it was necessary “to keep humble before the grace and the gift that we embody.” I then asked, provocatively, “Where did you get that bright idea?” In the seventh session, Nizar said that he had been “appalled” that I could even suggest that humility might not, in all circumstances, be a virtue—that it might even be, in some circumstances, a vice. He then acknowledged that he had difficulty “listening to that voice that tells you, ‘You have something special.’” He said, “It’s a voice that I refused to listen to till now.” The story of Nizar’s whole life had been, he said, “a struggle to be ordinary.” Now, however, he was realizing that “it’s no shame to be extraordinary.” He said, “I like the phrase to be ‘out of the ordinary.’” A friend had told him that she considered him exceptional. “For the first time,” he said, “I didn’t blush.” He was now “switching from the struggle to be ordinary to an effort to accept my sensitive, serious insight into many things.”

Dream 2

My father is next to me. There are four birds that are killed and cut into pieces. Suddenly, they’re resurrected. A pigeon comes to my hand. Then it’s as if the sun is just in front of my face. Such a light! It’s very realistic. I wake up shocked by the beauty of the light.

In this dream, Nizar’s father is next to him (that is, his father complex is next to his ego). His father had been a devout Muslim. One of Nizar’s happiest memories was of returning home from school as a child and spending time with his father, who would tell him stories from the Quran. Those stories, he said, “give you faith that in spite of all the betrayals, pain, suffering, and helplessness that you inevitably experience in life, you can emerge out of it with strength and dignity—that somehow your humanity has been resurrected.” When his father died,

a Sufi grand master led the procession to the cemetery, "with easily 1,000 people following." Nizar had spent the last two nights of his father's life praying with him the 99 names, or attributes, of God. He described his father as a man who was "so humble." His father, he said, "had avoided everything that could inflate his ego." That is, Nizar's "humility complex" was a function of his father complex.

One of the basic principles of Islamic dream interpretation is to identify any correspondences between a dream and a specific passage from the Quran. As Marcia Hermansen (2001) says, references to the Quran in dreams "legitimate the interpretations." Hermansen also notes that "the actual content of the dreams could contain recitation from the Qur'an" (p. 78). Nizar's dream includes a direct reference to the Quran. The dream paraphrases a specific passage in which God demonstrates resurrection:

Behold! Abraham said: "My Lord! Show me how Thou givest life to the dead." He [Allah] said: "Dost thou not then believe?" He [Abraham] said: "Yea! but to satisfy my own heart." He [Allah] said: "Take four birds; tie them (cut them into pieces), then put a portion of them on every hill, and call to them: They will come to thee (flying) with speed. Then know that Allah is Exalted in Power, Wise." (*Holy Qur'an*: Sura 2: 260)

In Nizar's dream, as in the Quran, four birds are cut into pieces and then resurrected. The passage from the Quran demonstrates the power of God to perform the impossible, which is to give life to the dead. In this context, Nizar's dream is about possibility. It indicates that even the impossible is possible.

In Nizar's dream, a pigeon comes to his hand. An Islamic dream dictionary says, "If a bird flies into one's hand in a dream, it means glad tidings" (Al-Akili, p. 39). Similarly, it says, "Seeing a pigeon in a dream means glad tidings. It is also said that God Almighty will accept the prayers of one who sees pigeons in his dream" (Al-Akili, pp. 328–9). Presumably, the pigeon that comes to Nizar's hand is one of the four birds that were cut into pieces and then resurrected. After the pigeon comes to his hand, it is as if the sun is just in front of his face. The sun, Nizar exclaims, is such a light. "Light," Jung says, "always refers to consciousness" (CW 12, p. 186). In this sense, light is an image of the possibility of "enlightenment." The sun, which in the first dream was behind Nizar, is in the second dream in front of him. He now faces the sun, and the beauty of the light shocks him awake—that is, into consciousness. In his dream, Nizar becomes "enlightened." Nizar said that the meaning of his dream was "quite clear to him." His dream "was forecasting the process of individuation."

Dream 3

I'm making the ritual circumambulation around the Kaba. I'm alone, the only one. At one point, I wonder whether my circumambulations are done in the right direction, counterclockwise. Yes, they are. At another point, at the southeast corner of the Kaba, I stop, totally overwhelmed by emotion. I'm crying, weeping—*deeply*—the kind you rarely have because the emotions are

so strong, so powerful. I'm reciting the ritual words for the circumambulation: "Oh, God, to you. Oh, God, to you. Indeed, the grace and the praise are to you along with the kingdom."

The Kaba in Mecca is the holiest place in Islam. In Islamic tradition, Abraham and Ishmael built the Kaba. Later, the Kaba became a place of polytheism. It was surrounded by 360 idols. When Muhammad established Islam, he destroyed the idols and restored monotheism. At the southeast corner of the Kaba is the black stone. At least once in a life, all Muslims are supposed to perform the *hajj*, a pilgrimage to Mecca, where they circumambulate the Kaba and kiss the black stone. Nizar described the Kaba and the black stone as follows:

The Kaba is called the house of God. The southeast corner of the Kaba is where the black stone is located. My father used to tell me: "God sent that black stone from heaven to Abraham and Ishmael. It was a magic stone on which Abraham and Ishmael would stand, and it would lift them up (and down), so that they could build a very high Kaba." God sent the stone from heaven totally white. Human sins made it totally black. The black stone is where you have direct access to and contact with God. Imagine two million people going around that black stone, wanting to approach it to kiss it!

To at least some Muslims, the Kaba is not only an outer reality, a place in Mecca, but also an inner reality. "In Sufism, the Kaba is nothing else than the image of the self," Nizar said. "I asked a Sufi master what the meaning was, and he told me that the Kaba is an image of the perfect man, the archetype." Similarly, Nizar said, the black stone has not only a physical reality but also a psychic reality. "The black stone is the *lapis*, or philosopher's stone," he said. "It has an alchemical capacity for transformation." For Nizar, the Kaba and the black stone have not only an exoteric but also an esoteric meaning. In a discussion of the visionary dream in Islamic spirituality, Henry Corbin (1966) says, "What is called 'esoteric' (*batin*, interior realities), as opposed to 'exoteric' (*zahir*, exterior things), has given rise to forms of consciousness, to positions taken, which are only conceivable within the framework of a prophetic religion, that is, a religion essentially based on revelation—the Book—received from a prophet" (p. 382).

Nizar's grandfather had performed the pilgrimage to Mecca "by boat and camel." To perform the *hajj*, Nizar said, is to accomplish "a mystical journey." Nizar had asked a Sufi if he had ever performed the pilgrimage to Mecca. The Sufi had answered: "Do you think that Sufis go to Mecca without being invited by God? You must be invited by a vision or a dream." Nizar has not yet performed the outer *hajj*, the pilgrimage to the actual place in Mecca. In the dream, however, he performs an "inner *hajj*." He circumambulates the Kaba, and at the southeast corner, where the black stone is located, he has a profound experience. He cries, weeps—deeply. From a Jungian perspective, Nizar (the ego) has direct access to and contact with God (the unconscious). If the Kaba is, as Nizar says, the image of the self, the archetype of the perfect man, and if the black stone is the *lapis*, the philosopher's stone, which has an alchemical capacity for transformation, then

the strong, powerful emotions that he experiences in the dream indicate that the ego not only experiences direct access to and contact with the unconscious but also experiences the impact of the unconscious.

After his dream of the Kaba, Nizar decided to practice active imagination. He knew that active imagination was a Jungian method, but he also knew that it was an Islamic method. "I don't know whether you know the works of Henry Corbin," he said to me. "Corbin resurrected the classics of Iranian philosophy, and I'm reading his books." In *Creative Imagination in the Sufism of Ibn 'Arabi*, Corbin (1969) defines active imagination as "an effort to utilize the image and the Imagination for spiritual experience" (p. 6). To practice active imagination in this sense, Corbin says, is to access the images in the "*alam al-mithal*," an *imaginal* (not "imaginary") dimension, and to engage those "events, figures, presences directly" (p. 43). This dimension is what Corbin (1987) calls "the *mundus imaginalis*, the place of prophetic visions" (p. 231).

For Nizar, the Kaba in his dream was just such an image. Once a day, he would reimagine his dream of the Kaba. He would circumambulate the Kaba seven times and recite the ritual words. Then he would kiss the black stone. He would focus on the Kaba as if he was above it. From above, he would see the circumambulation and see the Kaba as the center of the circle. He practiced active imagination, he said, "with all my being." He would cry. He would pray. He would "talk to the self"—not just submit to it but even (he laughed) "negotiate with it." He said: "What I'm practicing is something that I knew, but only now do I experience the deep meaning of it." Nizar said that active imagination, "dialogue with—let me call it 'God,' or the 'universal unconscious,' I don't know what to say, is amazingly great." He had "never experienced anything like it." It was, he said, "emotionally like what I experienced with my dream of the Kaba." The experience was "really, really intense." Nizar said, laughing, "I don't know how I made it till now without it."

From a Jungian perspective, an effective relation between the ego and the unconscious is not submission but dialogue and negotiation. Jung acknowledges one exception to this rule. He says that "in situations where there are insoluble conflicts of duty" the ego "must submit to a decision and surrender unconditionally" to the unconscious (CW 9ii, p. 45). Only in such extreme situations is it imperative for the ego to submit to the unconscious.

In *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, Jung (1963) recounts a dream that exhibits a cultural style that is Islamic. This is what I call the "Millimeter to Spare Dream." In the dream, Jung and his father enter a house that has a room that is a replica of the council hall of Sultan Akbar, the Muslim emperor of Mughal India. In that room, Jung's father prays in the Islamic style. "Then he knelt down and touched his forehead to the floor," Jung says. "I imitated him, likewise kneeling, with great emotion. For some reason I could not bring my forehead quite down to the floor—there was perhaps a millimeter to spare" (p. 219). Jung interprets the dream to mean that "things awaited me, hidden in the unconscious." He says: "I had to submit to this fate, and ought really to have touched my forehead to the floor, so that my submission would be complete. But something prevented me from doing so entirely, and kept me just a millimeter away. Something in me was saying, 'All very well, but not entirely.'" What was this something that prevented Jung from complete

submission? “Man always,” he says, “has some mental reservation, even in the face of divine decrees. Otherwise, where would be his freedom?” (Jung, 1963, p. 220).

To submit to God without any mental reservation is for the ego not to engage in free, critical conversation with the unconscious. In this respect, to practice prayer—or active imagination—is for the ego to exercise the freedom not to accept the opinions of the unconscious as dictates but to assess those opinions and either accept or reject them. The purpose of Jungian psychoanalysis is not for the ego to capitulate, or surrender unconditionally, to the opinions of the unconscious but to relate to them effectively—that is, freely, critically—through dialogue and negotiation. Prostration of the ego before the unconscious may be the Islamic style, but it is not the Jungian style. Dialogue or negotiation with God (or the unconscious) is very different from submission to God.

Initially, it was difficult for Nizar to engage the unconscious in dialogue and negotiation, because to be a Muslim is, by definition, to be submissive. Eventually, however, like Jung, he was able mentally to reserve “a millimeter to spare,” the *sine qua non*, the necessary and sufficient condition for a free, critical dialogue and negotiation between the ego and the unconscious in active imagination.

There is an important precedent in Islam for dialogue and negotiation with God. When Muhammad journeys in one night (*isra*) from the Kaba in Mecca to the Al-Aqsa mosque in Jerusalem and then ascends (*miraj*) from the Dome of the Rock to paradise and the presence of Allah, Allah lays the duty of a certain number of prayers a day on Muhammad and all Muslims. As Muhammad descends from paradise, he encounters Moses. Moses asks Muhammad how many prayers Allah has laid on him and all Muslims. Muhammad says fifty. Moses then says: “Prayer is a weighty matter and your people are weak, so go back to the Lord and ask him to reduce the number for you and your community” (Ibn Hisham, 1978, p. 186). Muhammad returns to Allah, who subtracts ten prayers. Again and again, Moses tells Muhammad to ask Allah to reduce the number. When Muhammad tells Moses that there remain “only five prayers for the whole day and night,” Moses once again tells him to ask Allah to subtract more prayers, but Muhammad refuses. Muhammad says, “I replied that I had been back to my Lord and asked him to reduce the number until I was ashamed, and I would not do it again” (p. 187). This example demonstrates that in Islam dialogue and negotiation with God is not only possible but also permissible by a precedent that Muhammad establishes. In this instance, Allah does not insist on immediate and utter submission but, with mercy on all Muslims, acquiesces to the appeals of Muhammad. Moses tells Muhammad that Muslims are too weak to pray fifty, forty, thirty, twenty, ten, or even five times a day, and, again and again, until Allah finally reduces the number of prayers to only five, Muhammad engages Allah in dialogue and negotiation. In short, Allah is not unamenable to suasion.

Like Joseph’s two dreams of the sheaves and the sun, moon, and stars bowing down to him (*Tanakh*: Genesis 37:5–10; *Holy Qur’an*: Sura 12:4). Nizar’s first two dreams indicate just how special he is, just how exceptional an aptitude he has for consciousness. Joseph eventually became the pharaoh’s dream interpreter, or “psychoanalyst.” What will Nizar become? As a contemporary Muslim man, he aspires to participate in and contribute to an effort to revision how both Muslims and non-Muslims imagine Islam. The image that many Muslims and non-Muslims have of

Islam is a vulgar caricature. Nizar is acutely conscious of the fundamentalist Islam that, by a strict constructionist appeal to precedents that are conservative or even reactionary, frustrates sincere, serious efforts imaginatively to affirm a modernist Islam that would effectively address important issues. He is also conscious of the pervasive ignorance about Islam and bias against it in Western culture.

Currently, Nizar continues to work for an international organization, not in the Middle East but in Africa, where he witnesses genocidal atrocities so tragically, so traumatically inhumane as to defy description. His active imagination with his "inner Kaba" sustains him. Nizar is considering resigning from the international organization and moving to Europe to write a book. True to the pseudonym that he chose, he now has a "vision" that he wishes to share with others.

References

- Adams, M. V. (1996). *The multicultural imagination: "Race," color, and the unconscious*. London and New York: Routledge.
- _____. (2001). *The mythological unconscious*. New York and London: Karnac.
- _____. (2004). *The fantasy principle: Psychoanalysis of the imagination*. Hove and New York: Brunner-Routledge.
- Al-Akili, M. M. (1992). *Ibn Seerin's dictionary of dreams: According to Islamic inner traditions*. Philadelphia: Pearl Publishing House.
- Corbin, H. (1966). The visionary dream in Islamic spirituality. In G. E. von Grunebaum and R. Callois (Eds.), *The dream and human societies*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.
- _____. (1969). *Creative imagination in the Sufism of Ibn 'Arabi* (R. Manheim, Trans.), Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- _____. (1987). The theory of visionary knowledge in Islamic philosophy. *Temenos*, 8, 224–37.
- Erikson, E. H. (1969). *Gandhi's truth: On the origins of militant nonviolence*. New York: W. W. Norton.
- Graves, R. & Patai, R. (1989). *Hebrew myths*. New York: Anchor Books.
- Henderson, J. L. (1990). The cultural unconscious. In *Shadow and self: Selected papers in analytical psychology*. Wilmette, IL: Chiron Publications.
- Hermansen, M. (2001). Dreams and dreaming in Islam. In K. Bulkeley (Ed.), *Dreams: A reader on the religious, cultural, and psychological dimensions of dreaming*. New York: Palgrave.
- Hillman, J. (1979). *The dream and the underworld*. New York: Harper & Row.
- Holy Qur'an*. (1410 H.). Abdullah Yusuf Ali (Trans.). Madhinah: King Fahd Holy Qur'an Printing Complex.
- Ibn Hisham, Abd al-Malin. (1978). *The life of Muhammad: A translation of Ishaq's Sirat Rasul Allah*. Karachi: Oxford University Press.
- Jung, C. G. (1963). *Memories, dreams, reflections* (A. Jaffe, Ed.; R. & C. Winston, Trans.). New York: Pantheon Books.
- Kimbles, S. L. (2000). The cultural complex and the myth of invisibility. In T. Singer (Ed.), *The vision thing: Myth, politics and psyche in the world*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Singer, T., & Kimbles, S. L. (Eds.). (2004). *The cultural complex: Contemporary Jungian perspectives on psyche and society*. Hove and New York: Brunner-Routledge.
- Tanakh: The Holy Scriptures*. (1985). Philadelphia and Jerusalem: Jewish Publication Society.
- Zakaria, R. (1991). *Muhammad and the Quran*. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books.