

Dreams; What do They Mean?

By Rabbi Yehudah ben Shomeyr

For as long as I can remember dreams always fascinated me. Even though I hated and feared nightmares they intrigued me too. For years now I keep a dream journal. By now I can pretty much tell which is a typical dream, where you just dream to dream for no apparent particular reason, it's just your mind running on auto-pilot while your asleep; to late night pizza dreams, those weird and macabre dreams that aren't really nightmares, but they're not nice either and makes little sense; to prophetic dreams where I feel God is trying to tell me something, to dreams with a demonic infusion in an attempt to confuse or intimidate me. Doesn't matter to me, I write them all down. Except of course those sexual dreams, I always talk them over with my wife then let them go. I don't want someone to find my dream journal long after I'm gone and think I was some crazy religious perv!

I believe dreams are very important and experts say that people who have insomnia or do not sleep well or do not dream are at high risk for physical, emotional, mental and spiritual problems. Sleep and dreaming has got to be more than just "recharging your batteries", you spend approximately a third of your life asleep. Let's say you live to be 75, you will have slept through 25 years of your life; and dreams make up about 20% of our sleeping life! In an average lifetime one may have up to 1000,000 dreams. It is said that some cultures deem the dream world more of a reality than the waking world.

Dreams were important to and in the life of the Patriarchs, and as a result has an impact on who we are as a people today; remember Moses' dream of the Egyptian Bondage and Joseph and the Pharaoh and their dreams?

There are 4 stages of sleep:

1. **Beta**: You're awake
2. **Alpha**: You are relaxed and drifting between being awake and sleep and you may enter what's called REM (Rapid Eye Movement) stage. REM = Dreams.
3. **Theta**: You are asleep and in deep REM.
4. **Delta**: You are in the deepest level of sleep, too deep for dreaming. Oddly enough sleep walking occurs during this time too. This is why it is dangerous to wake someone in this state because being jolted from a Delta

sleep one is confused and frightened and their reaction can be unpredictable and harmful to themselves or others.

You wake up in the reverse order. So people who have intense dreams and feel that they dreamt all night and didn't get any sleep, may in fact not have truly slept in got the rest in the Delta stage of sleep.

Because mammals and warm blooded creatures have the same or similar sleep pattern, animals dream! Except you pet snake, frog, fish or spider.

I don't know if there is a connection or not, but just as there are five books of Torah, there are five types of dreams. Now any given dream can be one or a mixture of several dream types.

1. **Release Dreams**: These typically are dreams that deal with stuff you can't, are too busy to, or refuse to deal with in your waking life; such as fears, frustrations, insecurities etc. Sometimes these culminate into the universal dream that something evil is chasing you. More times than not what is chasing you is things you refuse to face and deal with when you are awake. Face your "demons" and these types of dreams will subside or cease all together.
2. **Wish Dreams**: Not to be confused with prophetic dreams. We may dream of a promotion at work and think it is prophetic and really it's a deep seated wish of ours. Wish dreams are usually what we imagine and fantasize about. No matter how religious you may be many sexual dreams are just fleshly wish dreams, so don't think you are evil or sinned because you actually didn't "do" anything and this is just your sinful nature coming to the surface in your dream life. Acknowledge it as such and perhaps pray a continual refining of yourself so as to purge even these secret things from your being, the things you don't even realize you desire until you dream it.
3. **Prophetic Dreams**: As a rule of thumb, but there are always exceptions to the rule. A prophetic dream is usually in color and sequential. If you have a prophetic dream and you just "don't get it", write it down and pray for clarity when you sleep, take your dream to a trusted religious leader or mature friend and soon the answer will come. If not table it and when G-d wants you to know more He'll give you another dream like it or the same one with more information or picking up where you left off.

4. **Astral Dreams**: This is where a deceased loved one visits you in a dream.
This could be
- a. An angel. Allow me to elaborate.

Unknown to many readers of the Brit Chadasha (New Testament), this passage reveals a long held Jewish believe about the death, and ones guardian angel.

Acts 12

1Now about that time Herod the king stretched forth his hands to vex certain of the church.

2And he killed James the brother of John with the sword.

3And because he saw it pleased the Jews, he proceeded further to take Peter also. (Then were the days of unleavened bread.)

4And when he had apprehended him, he put him in prison, and delivered him to four quaternions of soldiers to keep him; intending after Passover to bring him forth to the people.

5Peter therefore was kept in prison: but prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him.

6And when Herod would have brought him forth, the same night Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains: and the keepers before the door kept the prison.

7And, behold, the angel of the Lord came upon him, and a light shined in the prison: and he smote Peter on the side, and raised him up, saying, Arise up quickly. And his chains fell off from his hands.

8And the angel said unto him, Gird thyself, and bind on thy sandals. And so he did. And he saith unto him, Cast thy garment about thee, and follow me.

9And he went out, and followed him; and wist not that it was true which was done by the angel; but thought he saw a vision.

10When they were past the first and the second ward, they came unto the iron gate that leadeth unto the city; which opened to them of his own accord: and they went out, and passed on through one street; and forthwith the angel departed from him.

11And when Peter was come to himself, he said, Now I know of a surety, that the LORD hath sent his angel, and hath delivered me out of the hand of Herod, and from all the expectation of the people of the Jews.

12And when he had considered the thing, he came to the house of Mary the mother of John, whose surname was Mark; where many were gathered together praying.

13And as Peter knocked at the door of the gate, a damsel came to hearken, named Rhoda.

14And when she knew Peter's voice, she opened not the gate for gladness, but ran in, and told how Peter stood before the gate.

15And they said unto her, Thou art mad. But she constantly affirmed that it was even so. Then said they, It is his angel.

16But Peter continued knocking: and when they had opened the door, and saw him, they were astonished.

The people prayed for Kefa's (Peter's) release, I suppose they kind of prayed with a lack of faith for when their prayers were answered and Kefa shows up at the door Rhoda thinks that who is standing before her is not Kefa's "ghost" but his angel (v.15). Hmmmm, how odd. Have you ever noticed that before? Well, according to Jewish belief, we are signed two angels, one is a tov (good) angel, the other a rah (bad) or fallen angel. Both work in conjunction with the Yetzar Tov and the Yetzer Hara (the Good Inclination and the Bad Inclination). It is believed that our angels take on our appearance and upon death they may appear to people looking like us. Tradition instructs us to call out are you Tov or Rah (Good or Bad)? This is to determine if this is the good or bad angel. Because at death the soul either went to Sheol to the compartment of Abraham's Bosom, if we were righteous or to the compartment of Gehenna, a place of fire and torment (Luke 16:19-31).

If this is more than a Jewish tradition or legend, this would explain much paranormal phenomenon such as certain episodes of ghosts, de javu, evil twins and sightings of doppelgangers.

- b. It could be a demonic entity or even yourself conjuring it up. Especially if the loved one doesn't seem themselves, as if they are evil, angry or zombified. Demons can also attack you in your sleep. This is what has been recorded throughout history and various cultures as incubus, the old woman sitting on your chest, aliens, etc. If you are a believer and pray for protection at night and pray the bedtime shema you should have no worries. If you are attacked it is

for some greater purpose in your walk, and to rid yourself of harm from the attackers all you have to do is command them to leave in the name and authority of Yeshua Messiah.

- c. It could actually be a deceased loved one whom God allowed to deliver a message to you.

You may wonder if we can actually go out of our body when we sleep, as most of you probably thought an astral dream was. I believe so. There are so many stories of people asleep and seeing a waking friend at home and when confronted by the dreamer, the event happened just as it did in the “dream”.

In Judaism it is said that when we sleep the righteous ascend to the heavens and angels minister to them, which could be a type of phenomenon where you see a dead loved one in your dream but it's really their angel. The wicked are said to descend to be tormented by real demons and those of their own creation.

Sometimes we can be so busy with what we think is important in our waking, secular, human lives that we shut God out and through dreams may be the only way God can have our undivided attention!

5. Problem Solving Dreams: This is where an answer to a problem comes to you in a dream. Where you racked your brain trying to figure something out in the waking hours your sub-conscious takes over at night. It's like allowing a computer to run a complex math algorithm and alert you when it has completed the task. Many inventors, scientists and leaders have said to have found solutions to problems in their dreams. This is what it means when someone says “Sleep on it.”

Albert Einstein came up with the theory of relativity because of a dream. Thomas Edison was inspired to create the light bulb because of a dream. The inventor of the sewing machine solved a problem he had with it on account of a dream. Neil Bohr developed his theory about the movement of electrons from a dream he had had.

In Judaism when someone has a disturbing or confounding dream they hold a dream court among family, friends and religious authorities called, Hatavat Chalom, transforming a bad dream into a good one. Make sure those involved in this process keep this all confidential.

Here is the formula:

Gather those involved together and tell them:

“I have had a good dream.”

Here you proceed to tell them the “bad” dream which you just called “good”.

They should say to you:

“It is a good dream! May G-d transform it so it will be better.”

It is appropriate at this time for everyone to weigh in on the possible interpretation of the dream.

Then everyone says together:

“You turn my mourning into dancing; You turn their mourning into joy; You turn curses into blessings.”

Then they should say:

“G-d has rescued my soul; Those God rescue will return singing; And the people rescued Jonathan.

Peace, peace, to those far and near; Peace, peace, to you and to all who help you; Peace, peace unto you, peace unto your house, and peace on all that you have.”

Together you can say:

“May God turn all our dreams to good ones, and may we help make our good dreams come true.”

Even if the “bad” dream has a dire warning we call it “good” because God doesn’t have to warn anyone about anything.

I suggest people buy a note pad and pen to record dreams upon waking because experts say that we forget dreams 10 minutes upon waking, that is because on average the last two hours of sleep is when you dream. Later write your impressions of the dream. Then buy journal and transfer the dream and interpretation to it. If you have no interpretation to give, leave a blank page for when one comes.

Look for metaphors, idioms, allegories and archetypes in the dream to help with the possible interpretation to it. Pay attention to places, colors, words, phrases, symbols, surroundings and people in your dreams, thoughts within the dream, feelings, smells and impressions within the dream. They are all very important to the interpretation. Also, ask yourself what does they symbols in your dream mean to you. Some symbols are not universal. For example; some people love ferrets and think they are cute and adorable. Others fear them. So depending on who you are will determine what a certain symbol means in the interpretation of your dream.

Pray for insight, run your dream and interpretations past trusted mature family members, friends and religious leaders for further insight and possible confirmation of the dreams interpretation. It is a very serious matter who you tell your dream to, for who you tell it to have power to influence its interpretation and outcome. Enemies may use the occult to attack you if they know the content of your dreams. Just as words on a document or in court have power over you, it is similar with dreams. When the right interpretation comes along you will know, that you know, that you know within your spirit that it is right.

Nighty Night, Sleep Tight, Pleasant Dreams.

-- Rabbi Yehudah