



Sicha
Shabbaton in the Mountains
August 10-13, 2017 at Wildacres Retreat

DREAMS: IMAGE AND IMAGINATION

Welcome to the 2017 Sicha Shabbaton in the Mountains! These mountains, where heaven and earth touch, are the perfect environment for exploring dreams and their place in thoughtful, creative Jewish life. My introduction to the topic and the texts is bound up in a dream of my own.

Early in September, 1980, I woke from a conversation with my late grandpa, Jacob. We had stood in green surroundings—distantly familiar. I had never seen him in a dream, nor heard his voice. Happy new year, he said. I loved that Polish-accented English. His words were not as plentiful and mine, but each was carefully chosen. Happy new year, I replied; and I cried. Don't cry, he said. I'll be with you for 13 years.

Anticipating our first child's birth, I had made 2 birth announcements: One, for "Ariele Hanna;" the other, for "Jacob Aaron." I kept safe the hand-calligraphed announcement of "Jacob Aaron." A name that has been spoken and written takes on a life of its own. Perhaps only silence protects the fullest potential of a name or a dream. But Rav Hisda taught: a dream uninterpreted is like a letter unread. Words provide the necessary traction of place and time.

Another Talmudic sage taught: All dreams follow the mouth. But whose mouth? That of the dreamer? Does the interpreter shape meaning, or reveal it? Joseph did not interpret his own dreams. He spoke them into a living threat for his brothers, and into fearful confusion for his father. Nor did Joseph claim to be an interpreter of dreams. Holding the dreams of the butler, the baker, and the Pharaoh loosely in the palm of his hand, he allowed those dream-sails to be filled with God's breath.

One commentator taught that—in its silence—Pharaoh deeply knew the heart of his dreams. Certainly, his professional interpreters proffered meanings. But not one of those interpretations played his innermost strings. Joseph spoke that which Pharaoh realized he had known all along.

I was certain that I knew the heart of my dream. But in speaking, I changed it; keeping its shadow in the shadows. I'll be with you for 13 years, became: I will be with you—a promise that God made to Jacob, among others. Jacob was a name that summoned dreams and angels. Some of grandpa's family called him Jack, or Jake. But I was quick to remind all "nick-namers" that our child, born that June, would be Jacob. I proudly told the story of my dream, modifying the ending until the day of Jacob's bar mitzvah. Thirteen years after the dream, my hands resting on Jacob's head for a blessing, I saw the shadow in a full light. I had kept Jacob with me for 13 years. From that day on, I would not interfere with how Jacob might be called and or to what names he might answer. Do all dreams follow the mouth? The moment? Do they follow the image guarded for many years?

A dream image is potent even after 22 years, says the Talmud. Joseph was 17 when he dreamed of his brother's sheaves bowing to his own. He was 30 when he showed Pharaoh the meaning of his dream. After 7 years of plenty and 2 years of famine—22 years in all—Joseph's brothers bowed before him and the dreamer reentered his dream.

During our time together, we'll keep a few things in mind: The dream is inside us. We are inside the dream. We make the dream in our image. The dream-image makes us who we are. Dreams are sacred texts to be read carefully. Sacred texts are dreams to be dreamed again and again.

Rabbi Steve Sager

The Bible's First Dream

וַיַּעֲשֵׂה מֶלֶךְ אֶבְרָהָם אָרֶץ הַנֶּגֶב וַיַּשֵּׁב بֵּין קָדְשׁוֹ וַיַּגְרֵר בְּגָרָר. וַיֹּאמֶר אֶבְרָהָם אֶל שָׂרָה אֲשֶׁתָּו אֲחֹתִי הָוָא וַיַּשְׁלַח אֶבְיָמֶלֶךְ מֶלֶךְ גְּרָר וַיַּקְרֵחַ אֶת שָׂרָה. וַיָּבֹא אֱלֹהִים אֶל אֶבְיָמֶלֶךְ בְּחִלּוֹם הַלִּילָה וַיֹּאמֶר לוֹ הַנָּקֵד מִתְּעַל הָאָשָׁה אֲשֶׁר לְקַחְתָּ וְהָוָא בָּעֵלָת בָּעֵל. וְאֶבְיָמֶלֶךְ לֹא קָרַב אֶלְيָה וַיֹּאמֶר הִי הַגּוֹי גַּם צְדִיק תְּמָהָרָג. הַלָּא הִיא אָמֵר לִי אֲחֹתִי הָוָא וְהִיא גַּם הָוָא אֲמְרָה אֲחִי הָוָא בְּתָם לְבָבִי וּבְנַקְיָון כְּפִי עֲשִׂיתִי זֹאת. וַיֹּאמֶר אֶלְיוֹ בְּחִלּוֹם גַּם אַנְכִי יַדְעַתִּי כִּי בְּתָם לְבָבֶךָ עֲשִׂיתָ זֹאת וְאַחֲשָׂד גַּם אַנְכִי אָוַתְךָ מְחַטְּטוֹ לִי עַל כֵּן לֹא נִתְתִּיךְ לְנַגְעָא אֶלְيָה. וְעַתָּה הַשֵּׁב אֶשְׁתָּה אֲיַשׁ כִּי נִבְיאָה הָוָא וַיַּתְפְּלִל בְּעֵדָךְ וְחַיָּה וְאָס אַיִּנְךָ מְשִׁיב בְּעֵדָךְ כִּי מָוֹת פָּמוֹת אַתָּה וְכָל אֲשֶׁר לְךָ. וַיַּשְׁפַּס אֶבְיָמֶלֶךְ בְּבָקָר וַיִּקְרָא לְכָל עֲבָדָיו וַיֹּדַבֵּר אֶת כָּל הַדָּבָרִים הָאֶלְהָה בְּאַזְנֵיָהּ וַיִּירְאָו הָאָנָשִׁים מִאָד.

Abraham journeyed from there to the region of the Negev and settled between Kadesh and Shur. While he was sojourning in Gerar, Abraham said of Sarah his wife, she is my sister." So King Abimelech of Gerar had Sarah brought to him. But God came to Abimelech in a dream by night and said to him, "You are to die because of the woman that you have taken, for she is a married woman." Now Abimelech had not approached her. He said "O Lord, will You slay people even though innocent? He himself said to me, 'She is my sister!' And she also said, 'He is my brother.' When I did his, my heart was blameless and my hands were clean." And God said to him in the dream, "I knew that you did this with a blameless heart, and so I kept you from sinning against Me. That was why I did not let you touch her. Therefore, restore the man's wife—since he is a prophet, he will intercede for you—to save your life. If you fail to restore her, know that you shall die, you and all that are yours." Early next morning, Abimelech called his servants and told them all that had happened; and the men were greatly frightened. (Genesis 20:1-8).



Jacob's Dream: Connecting Earth And Heaven

וַיֵּצֵא יַעֲקֹב מִבְּאָר שָׂבָע וַיָּלֶךְ חֲרֵנָה: יָא וַיַּפְּגַע בַּמְּקוֹם וַיְלֹא שָׁם כִּיְבָא הַשְׁמֵשׁ וַיָּקֹחַ מִאָבִנִי הַמְּקוֹם וַיִּשְׁם מְרַאשְׁתִּיו וַיִּשְׁכַּב בַּמְּקוֹם הַהוּא: יְבָ וַיִּחְלֹם וַיָּהָנֵן סַלְטָמָן מִאָב אֶרְצָה וַרְאֵשׁוֹ מִגְּעַן הַשְׁמִינִיה וַיָּהָנֵן מְלָאכִי אֶלְהִים עָלָיִם וַיַּרְאֵם בָּו: יְגַ וַיָּהָנֵן יְהוָה נָאָב עַלְיוֹ וַיֹּאמֶר אָנָּי יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים אָבִיךְ וְאֱלֹהִי יִצְחָק הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר אַתָּה שָׁכַב עַלְיָה לְזַה אַתְּנָה וְלִזְרָעָךְ: יְד וְחַיָּה זְרַעַךְ בַּעֲפָר הָאָרֶץ וַיִּפְרַצְתָּ יְמָה וְקָדְמָה וְצָפְנָה וְנֶגְבָּה וְנֶבֶרֶכְוּ בְּזַה כָּלְמִשְׁפָּלָת הָאָדָמָה וְבְזַרְעָךְ: טֹו וַיָּהָנֵן אָנָכִי עַמְךָ וְשִׁמְרָתִיךְ בְּכָל אַשְׁר-תָּלָךְ וְהַשְׁבָּתִיךְ אֶל-הָאָדָמָה הַזֹּאת בַּיּוֹם אַעֲזַבְתָּךְ עַד אֲשֶׁר אִסְּעָשִׂיתִי אֶת אַשְׁר-דִּבְרָתִי לְךָ: טֹז וַיִּקְרַא יַעֲקֹב מִשְׁנָתוֹ וַיֹּאמֶר אָכְנוּ יְשַׁׁׁשְׁ יְהוָה בַּמְּקוֹם הַזֶּה וְאָנָכִי לֹא יָדַעַתִּי: יְזֹ וַיִּקְרַא וַיֹּאמֶר מִה-נֹּזֶר אֶת-מְקוֹם הַזֶּה אֵין זֶה כִּי אִסְּבִּית אֱלֹהִים וְזֶה שַׁעַר הַשָּׁמְמִים: יְח וַיִּשְׁפַּט יַעֲקֹב בַּבְּקָר וַיָּקַח אֶת-הָאָבָן אֲשֶׁר-שָׁם מְרַאשְׁתִּיו וַיִּשְׁם אֶתְהָ מַצְבָּה וַיַּצְקַח שְׁמָנוֹ עַל רָאֵשָׁה: יְט וַיִּקְרַא אֶת-שִׁם-הַמְּקוֹם הַהוּא בֵּית-אָל וְאַיִלָּם לֹז שִׁמְשָׁה עִיר לְרָאֵשָׁה:

Jacob left Beer-sheba and set out for Haran. He came upon a certain place and stopped there for the night, for the sun had set. Taking one of the stones of that place, he put it under his head and

lay down in that place. He had a dream; a stairway was set on the ground and its top reached to the sky, and angels of God were going up and down on it. And the Lord was standing beside him and He said, “I am the Lord, God of your father Abraham and the God of Isaac: the ground on which you are lying I will assign to you and to your offspring. Your descendants shall be as the dust of the earth; you shall spread out to the west and to the east, to the north and to the south. All the families of the earth shall bless themselves by you and your descendants. Remember, I am with you: I will protect you wherever you go and will bring you back to this land. I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you.” Jacob awoke from his sleep and said, “Surely the Lord is present in this place, and I did not know it!” Shaken, he said, “How awesome is this place! This is none other than the abode of God, and that is the gateway to heaven.” Early in the morning, Jacob took the stone that he had put under his head and set it up as a pillar and poured oil on the top of it. He named the site Bethel; but previously the name of the city had been Luz. (Genesis 28:10-19)



Jacob Called The Place, ‘Beit-El’

וַיֹּאמֶר יַעֲקֹב לִפְקוּדָם 'בֵּית-אֵל'.
 וְהַמָּקוֹם לִיעֲקֹב קָרָא 'יִשְׂרָאֵל'.
 הַז, יַעֲקֹב, שֶׁאָל לְבֵב הַמָּקוֹם מַעֲפִיל וְעוֹלָה עַל גְּבֵי הַסָּלָם.
 הַז, הַמָּקוֹם, שְׁבַעֲשָׂלָם גּוֹלֵשׁ וַיּוֹרֶד לוֹ, וַיָּבֹא אֶל עַינֵּי יַעֲקֹב בְּשַׁעַת
 שְׁחָלָם.

Jacob called the Place, ‘Beit-El’.

And the Place called Jacob, ‘Yisrael’.

O, Jacob, who rises and climbs the ladder to the heart of the Place.

O, Place, who by that ladder slides and descends to him, and entered Jacob’s eyes when he dreamed.

Rivka Miriam

Translated by Rabbi Steven Sager



Joseph's Dreams: Message And Memory

וַיִּשְׁבַּע יַעֲקֹב בָּאָרֶץ מִגּוֹרֵי אָבִיו בָּאָרֶץ כְּנָעַן. אֶלְهָ תַּלְדוֹת יַעֲקֹב יוֹסֵף בֶּן שְׁבָע עֶשֶׂרֶת שָׁנָה הִיא רֹאָה אֶת אָחִיו בְּצָאן וְהָוָא נָעַר אֶת בְּנֵי בְּלָהָה וְאֶת בְּנֵי זְלָפָה נְשִׁי אָבִיו וַיַּבְאֵא יוֹסֵף אֶת דְּבָתָם רַעַה אֶל אֲבִיהֶם. וַיַּשְׁרַׁאֵל אֶחָב אֶת יוֹסֵף מִכֶּל בֶּנְיוֹ כִּי בֶּן זָקְוִנִּים הוּא לוֹ וַעֲשָׂה לוֹ כְּתָנָת פְּסִים. וַיַּרְאָו אָחִיו כִּי אֶתְוֹ אֶחָב אֲבִיהֶם מִכֶּל אָחִיו וַיַּשְׁנָאוּ אֶתְוֹ וְלֹא יָכְלוּ דָבָר לְשָׁלָם.

Now Jacob dwelled in the land of his fathers' sojourning, the land of Canaan. These are the generations of Jacob: Joseph, seventeen years old, was shepherding the sheep with his brothers; assisting the sons of Bilhah and Zilpah, his father's wives. And Joseph would bring bad reports of them to their father. Now Israel loved Joseph more than his other sons because he was a child of his old age; and he made him an ornamented coat. His brothers saw that their father loved him more than the other brothers and they hated him, unable even to speak civilly to him.

וַיַּחֲלֹם יוֹסֵף חֲלוֹם וַיֹּגֶד לְאָחִיו וַיֹּסְפוּ עוֹד שָׁנָה אֶתְוֹ. וַיֹּאמֶר אֲלֵיכֶם שְׁמַעוּ נָא מִתְּפָלוּמָה הַזָּה אֲשֶׁר חָלָמָתִי. וַהֲנֵה אֲנַחֲנוּ מַאֲלָמִים אֶלְמִים בַּתּוֹךְ הַשְׁדָה וְהַהֵּה קַמָּה אֲלָמָתִי וְגַם נָצְבָה וַהֲנֵה תַּסְבִּינה אֲלָמָותִיכֶם וַתְּשַׁתְּחַנוּן לְאֲלָמָתִי. וַיֹּאמְרוּ לוֹ אָחִיו הַמְּלָךְ תִּמְלָךְ עָלֵינוּ אָם מִשּׁוֹל תִּמְשָׁל בָּנוּ וַיֹּסְפוּ עוֹד שָׁנָה אֶתְוֹ עַל חָלוֹמוֹתֵינוּ וְעַל דְּבָרֵינוּ. וַיַּחֲלֹם עוֹד חֲלוֹם אַחֲר וַיֹּסְפֵּר אֶתְוֹ לְאָחִיו וַיֹּאמֶר הֲנֵה חָלָמָתִי חֲלוֹם עוֹד וַהֲנֵה הַשְׁמֶשׁ וְהַיּוֹרֶם וְאֶחָד עַשֶּׂר פּוֹכְבִּים מִשְׁתְּחִוִּים לִי. וַיֹּסְפֵּר אֶל אָבִיו וְאֶל אָחִיו וַיַּגְעַר בּוֹ אָבִיו וַיֹּאמֶר לוֹ מָה הַחֲלוֹם הַזָּה אֲשֶׁר חָלָמָת הַבָּא נָבֹא אָנָּי וְאַפְּךָ וְאָחִיךָ לְהַשְׁפְּתָה תַּקְרַב אֶרְצָה. וַיַּקְנָאוּ בּוֹ אָחִיו וְאָבִיו שִׁמְרָא תַּחַת הַדָּבָר.

Then Joseph dreamed a dream and told his brothers who hated him even more. He said to them: Listen to the dream that I dreamed. Look! we are binding sheaves in the middle of the field and, look! My sheaf rose and stood upright while your sheaves leaned over and bowed to my sheaf. His brothers said to him: Do you really plan to rule over us? To govern us? And they hated him even more because of his dreams and on account of his words. Then he dreamed another dream and he told that one to his brothers, saying: Look! I dreamed another dream, and, look! the sun and the moon and eleven stars were bowing to me. Then he related it to his father and his brothers together. His father rebuked him, saying: What is this dream that you have dreamed? Shall I and your mother as well as your brothers bow to the ground before you?! Now his brothers were jealous of him; but his father kept the matter in mind.

(Genesis 37:1-11)



ויבאו בני ישראל לשבר בתוך הארץ כי היה הרעב בארץ בגען. ו יוסף הוא השליט על הארץ והוא המושbir לכל עם הארץ ויבאו אחיו יוסף וישתנו לו אפיקים ארץ. וירא יוסף את אחיו ויכירם ויתנבר אליויהם וידבר אנטם קשות ויאמר אליהם מאיו באתם ויאמרו מארץ בגען לשבר אכל. ויבר יוסף את אחיו והם לא הכרחו. ויזכר יוסף את החלומות אשר חלים להם...

The sons of Israel came to buy food among all of the others who came because there was famine in the land of Canaan. Now Joseph was the vizier over the land, in charge of allocating to each one; and Joseph's brothers came and bowed low to the ground before him. Joseph saw his brothers and recognized them, but he made himself unrecognizable to them. And he spoke with them harshly, saying to them: Where are you from. And they replied: From the land of Canaan in order to buy food. Joseph recognized his brothers, but they did not recognize him. And Joseph remembered the dreams that he dreamed concerning them...

(Genesis 42:5-9)

After Joseph's Disappearance

אחרי העלמו של יוסף, על הרצפה מצא יעקב
חלום נסף של הנער, שלא פענח.
הבמכוון החליכו הנה יוסף, מ Kapoor
לפני שאלאו אחיו הרועים נשלח-
או שמקביס סימן או רמז
נשר החלום, נשמט, אנה?
רכוס וחתום באגרת מדבקה
הוא מרטיט לו עטה בכך יעקב-
מן פה בדיק, זאת לא ישכח,
נהגה לרעד תחת ידו גם בטנה מקהה של רחל
בטרם רחמה העקר נפתח.

After Joseph's disappearance, on the floor Jacob found another of the boy's dreams that had not been solved.

Did Joseph mean to toss it here, folded
before he was sent to his shepherding brothers-
or from the pocket of the blood-stained coat
like a sign or clue
did the dream fall, slip, float?
Folded and sealed like a stamped letter
it quivers now in Jacob's palm-
just like, this he will never forget,
the flat belly of Rachel shuddered under his hand
before her barren womb opened.

Rivka Miriam

Translated by Rabbi Steven Sager



The Cupbearer and The Baker: Two Dreams that Are One

וַיְהִי אַחֲרֵי מִזְבְּרִים הָאֶלְهָ חִטָּאוֹ מִשְׁקָה מֶלֶךְ מִצְרָיִם וְהַאֲפָה לְאֶדְנִיָּהֶם לְמֶלֶךְ מִצְרָיִם. וַיַּקְצֹבֵר פְּרֻעָה עַל שְׁנִי סְרִיסִיו עַל שְׁרַבְּשָׁקִים וְעַל שְׁרַבְּאָוֹפִים. וַיִּתְּנוּ אֲתָם בָּמִשְׁמָר בַּיּוֹם שְׁרַבְּבָחִים אֶל בֵּית הַסְּהָר מִקּוֹם אֲשֶׁר יוֹסֵף אָסֹור שֶׁם. וַיַּפְקֹד שְׁרַבְּבָחִים אֶת יוֹסֵף אֲתָם וַיִּשְׂרֹת אֲתָם.

Sometime later, the cupbearer and the baker of the king of Egypt gave offense to their lord the king of Egypt. Pharaoh was angry with his two courtiers, the chief cupbearer and the chief baker, and put them in custody, in the house of the chief steward, in the same prison house where Joseph was confined. The chief steward assigned Joseph to them, and he attended them.

וַיְהִי יָמִים בָּמִשְׁמָר. וַיַּחֲלִמוּ חֲלוֹם שְׁנִיָּהֶם אִישׁ חִלְמָוּ בְּלִילָה אֶחָד אִישׁ בָּפְתַּרְזָן חִלְמָוּ הַמִּשְׁקָה וְהַאֲפָה אֲשֶׁר לְמֶלֶךְ מִצְרָיִם אֲשֶׁר אָסֹורִים בְּבֵית הַסְּהָר. וַיָּבֹא אֲלֵיכֶם יוֹסֵף בַּבְּקָר וַיַּרְא אֲתָם וְהַגָּם זָוָפִים. וַיִּשְׁאַל אֶת סְרִיסִי פְּרֻעָה אֲשֶׁר אָתָּה בָּמִשְׁמָר בַּיּוֹם אֲדָנָיו לְאָמַר מִדְעָה פְּנִיכֶם רָעִים הַיּוּם. וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֲלֵיכֶם חֲלוֹם חִלְמָנוּ וַיִּפְתַּר אֵין אָתָּה וַיֹּאמַר אֲלֵיכֶם יוֹסֵף הַלֹּא לְאֱלֹהִים פְּתַרְנוּנִים סְפָרוֹ נָא לִי.

When they had been in custody for some time, both of them—the cupbearer and the baker of the king of Egypt, who were confined in the prison—dreamed in the same night, each his own dream and each dream with its own meaning. When Joseph came to them in the morning, he saw that they were distraught. He asked Pharaoh's courtiers, who were with him in custody in his master's house, saying, "Why do you appear downcast today?" And they said to him, "We had dreams, and there is no one to interpret them." So Joseph said to them, "Surely God can interpret! Tell me [your dreams]."

וַיַּסְפֵּר שְׁרַבְּבָחִים אֶת חִלְמָוּ לְיוֹסֵף וַיֹּאמֶר לוֹ בְּחִלְומֵי וְהַגָּה גַּפְנוּ לִפְנֵי. וּבַגְּפֹן שֶׁלְשָׁה שְׁרִיגִים וְהֵיא כְּפֹרֶחת עַלְתָּה נֶצֶח הַבְּשִׁילוֹ אֲשֶׁר לְתִתְּנִיחַ עֲנָבִים. וּכְסָעֵד פְּרֻעָה בִּזְדִּי וְאַקְחֵ אֶת הַעֲנָבִים וְאַשְׁחַט אֲתָם אֶל כֹּזֶס פְּרֻעָה וְאַתָּה אֶת הַפּוֹס עַל כֹּס פְּרֻעָה. וַיֹּאמֶר לוֹ יוֹסֵף זֶה פְּתַרְנוּ שֶׁלְשָׁת הַשְּׁרִיגִים שֶׁלְשָׁת יָמִים הֵם. בָּעוֹד שֶׁלְשָׁת יָמִים יָשָׁא פְּרֻעָה אֶת רָאשֵׁךְ וְהַשִּׁיבֵךְ עַל כֹּנִיחַ וְנִמְתַּח כֹּס פְּרֻעָה בַּיּוֹם כְּמַשְׁפַּט הַרְאָשׁוֹן אֲשֶׁר הִיָּת מִשְׁקָה. כִּי אִם זָכַרְתָּנִי אֶתְךָ פָּאַשְׁר יִתְּבַּךְ וְעַשְׂיַת נָא עַמְּדִי חֶסֶד וְחַזְפָּתָנִי אֶל פְּרֻעָה וְהַזִּכְאָתָנִי מִן הַבֵּית הַזֶּה. כִּי גַּנְבְּתִּי מִאָרֶץ הָעָבָרִים וְגַם פָּה לֹא עֲשִׂיתִי מְאוֹמָה כִּי שְׁמוֹ אָתִי בָּבּוּר.

Then the chief cupbearer told his dream to Joseph. He said to him, "In my dream, there was a vine in front of me. On the vine were three branches. It had barely budded, when out came its blossoms and its clusters ripened into grapes. Pharaoh's cup was in my hand, and I took the grapes, pressed them into Pharaoh's cup, and placed the cup in Pharaoh's hand." Joseph said to him, "This is its interpretation: The three branches are three days. In three days Pharaoh will pardon you and restore you to your post; you will place Pharaoh's cup in his hand, as was your custom formerly when you

were his cupbearer. But think of me when all is well with you again, and do me the kindness of mentioning me to Pharaoh, so as to free me from this place. For in truth, I was kidnapped from the land of the Hebrews; nor have I done anything here that they should have put me in the dungeon."

וַיַּרְא שֶׁר הָאֹפִים כִּי טוֹב פָּטָר וַיֹּאמֶר אֶל יוֹסֵף אָנִי בְּחַלוּמִי וְהַנֶּה שֶׁלֶשֶׁת סְלִילִי חָרִי עַל רָאשִׁי. וּבְסֵל הָעֶלְיוֹן מִכֶּל מִאַכְלָ פְּרֻעָה מְעֻשָּׂה אָפָה וְהַעֲזָר אַכְלָ אַתֶּם מִן הַסֵּל מִעַל רָאשִׁי. גַּעַן יוֹסֵף וַיֹּאמֶר זוּה פָּטָרנוּ שֶׁלֶשֶׁת הַסֵּלִים שֶׁלֶשֶׁת יָמִים הֵם. בָּעוֹד שֶׁלֶשֶׁת יָמִים יְשָׁא פְּרֻעָה אֶת רָאשֵׁךְ מִעַל רָאשִׁיךְ וְתַלְהָ אֶזְתָּךְ עַל עַצְמָתֶךָ וְאַכְלָ הַעֲזָר אַת בְּשָׁרֶךָ מִעַל רָאשִׁיךְ. וַיְהִי בַּיּוֹם הַשְׁלִישִׁי יוֹם הַלְּדֹת אֶת פְּרֻעָה וַיַּעֲשֶׂה מִשְׁתָּה לְכָל עֲבָדָיו וַיִּשְׁאַל אֶת רָאשֵׁ שֶׁר הַמְּשִׁקִּים וְאֶת רָאשֵׁ שֶׁר הָאֹפִים בַּתּוֹךְ עֲבָדָיו. וַיִּשְׁבַּע אֶת שֶׁר הַמְּשִׁקִּים עַל מִשְׁקָחוֹ וַיִּתְּנוּ הַכּוֹס עַל כֶּף פְּרֻעָה. וְאֶת שֶׁר הָאֹפִים תַּלְהָ פָּטָר לָהֶם יוֹסֵף. וְלֹא זָכַר שֶׁר הַמְּשִׁקִּים אָת יוֹסֵף וַיַּשְׁבַּחַהוּ.

When the chief baker saw how favorably he had interpreted, he said to Joseph, "In my dream, similarly, there were three openwork baskets on my head. In the uppermost basket were all kinds of food for Pharaoh that a baker prepares; and the birds were eating it out of the basket above my head." Joseph answered,

"This is its interpretation: The three baskets are three days. In three days Pharaoh will lift off your head and impale you upon a pole; and the birds will pick off your flesh." On the third day—his birthday—Pharaoh made a banquet for all his officials, and he singled out his chief cupbearer and his chief baker from among his officials. He restored the chief cupbearer to his cup bearing, and he placed the cup in Pharaoh's hand; but the chief baker he impaled—just as Joseph had interpreted to them. Yet the chief cupbearer did not think of Joseph; he forgot him.

(Genesis 40:1-23)



Pharaoh's Dreams

וַיְהִי מִקְץ שְׁנַתִּים יָמִים וַיַּרְא פְּרַעַה חֲלֵם וַיַּהַגֵּה עַמְּדָה עַל הַיָּאָר. וַיַּהַגֵּה מִן הַיָּאָר עַל-תְּשִׁבּוֹת יְפוּתָה מִרְאָה וְבְרִיאָת בָּשָׂר וְתְּרַפְּעָנָה בָּאָחָיו. וַיַּהַגֵּה שְׁבַע פְּרֹתָה אֲלָמָרִים מִן הַיָּאָר רָעוֹת מִרְאָה וְדַקּוֹת בָּשָׂר וְתְּעַמְּדָנָה אֲכַל הַפְּרֹתָה עַל שְׁפַת הַיָּאָר. וְתַאכְלֵנָה הַפְּרֹתָה רָעוֹת מִרְאָה וְדַקּוֹת הַבָּשָׂר אֲכַל הַפְּרֹתָה עַל יְפַת הַמִּرְאָה וְהַבְּרִיאָת וַיַּיַּקְרֵב פְּרַעַה.

After two years' time, Pharaoh dreamed that he was standing by the Nile, when out of the Nile there came up seven cows, handsome and sturdy, and they grazed in the reed grass. But presently, seven other cows came up from the Nile close behind them, ugly and gaunt, and stood beside the cows on the bank of the Nile; and the ugly gaunt cows ate up the seven handsome sturdy cows. And Pharaoh awoke.



וַיַּיְשַׁן וַיַּחַלֵּם שְׁנִית וַיַּהַגֵּה שְׁבַע שְׁבָلִים עַל-זֶה בְּקָנָה אֶחָד בְּרִיאָת וְטוּבָת. וַיַּהַגֵּה שְׁבַע שְׁבָלִים דָקּוֹת וְשְׁדוּפּוֹת קָדִים צְמָחוֹת אֲחָרֵיכוּ. וְתִיבְלַעַנָּה הַשְּׁבָלִים הַדָּקּוֹת אֲכַל שְׁבַע הַשְּׁבָלִים הַבְּרִיאָות וְהַמְּלָאוֹת וַיַּיַּקְרֵב פְּרַעַה וַיַּהַגֵּה חֲלוֹם.

He fell asleep and dreamed a second time: Seven ears of grain, solid and healthy, grew on a single stalk. But close behind them sprouted seven ears, thin and scorched by the east wind. And the thin ears swallowed up the seven solid and full ears. Then Pharaoh awoke: it was a dream!

וַיַּהַי בְּבָקָר וְתְּפִעָם רִיחוֹ וַיַּשְׁלַח וַיַּקְרֵא אֶת כָל מִרְטְּפֵי מִצְרָיִם וְאֶת כָל חֲכֹמִים וְאֶת כָל חֲכֹמִים וַיִּסְפַּר פְּרַעַה לָהֶם אֶת חֲלוֹמוֹ וְאֵין פֹתֵר אֹתָם לִפְרַעַה.

Next morning, his spirit was agitated and he sent for all the magicians of Egypt, and all its wise men; and Pharaoh told them his dreams, but none could interpret them for Pharaoh.

וַיֹּאמֶר שֶׁר הַמְשִׁקִים אֲתָּה פַּרְעָה לְאָמֵר אֶת חֲטָאתִי אָנִי מִזְכִּיר הַיּוֹם. פַּרְעָה קָצַף עַל עַבְדָיו וַיַּתֵּן אֶתְיוֹ בַּמְשִׁמֶר בֵּית שֶׁר הַטְבָחִים אֲתִי וְאֶת שֶׁר הַאֲוֹפִים. וַיַּחֲלִמָה חֲלוֹם בְּלִילָה אֶחָד אָנִי וְהוּא אִישׁ כְּפִתְרוֹן חַלְמָנוֹ חַלְמָנוֹ. וְשֶׁם אָתָנוֹ נִעַר עֲבָרִי עַבְדָלְשֶׁר הַטְבָחִים וַיַּסְפֵר לוֹ וַיַּפְתַּר לְנוֹ אֶת חַלְמָתֵינוֹ אִישׁ כְּחַלְמָנוֹ פִתְרָן. וַיְהִי פָאֵשׁ פִתְרָן לְנוֹ כֹּה הִיא אֶתְיוֹ הַשִּׁיבָעָל פָנִי וְאֶתְיוֹ תָלָה.

The chief cupbearer then spoke up and said to Pharaoh, “I must make mention today of my offenses. Once Pharaoh was angry with his servants, and placed me in custody in the house of the chief steward, together with the chief baker. We had dreams the same night, he and I, each of us a dream with a meaning of its own. A Hebrew youth was there with us, a servant of the chief steward; and when we told him our dreams, he interpreted them for us, telling each of the meaning of his dream. And as he interpreted for us, so it came to pass; I was restored to my post, and the other was impaled.”

וַיִּשְׁלַח פַּרְעָה וַיַּקְרֵא אֶת יוֹסֵף וַיַּרְאֵצָהוּ מִן הַבּוֹר וַיַּגְלֵח וַיַּמְלַךְ שְׁמַלְתָיו וַיַּבְאֵל פַּרְעָה. וַיֹּאמֶר פַּרְעָה אֶל יוֹסֵף חֲלוֹם חַלְמָתִי וַיַּפְתַּר אֵין אֶתְיוֹ וְאָנִי שְׁמַעְתִּי עַלְיִיךְ לְאָמֵר תְּשִׁמְעָל חֲלוֹם לַפְתַּר אֶתְיוֹ. וַיַּעֲנוּ יוֹסֵף אֶת פַּרְעָה לְאָמֵר בְּלֹעְדִי אֱלֹהִים יַעֲנֵה אֶת שְׁלוֹם פַּרְעָה.

Thereupon Pharaoh sent for Joseph, and he was rushed from the dungeon. He had his hair cut and changed his clothes, and he appeared before Pharaoh. And Pharaoh said to Joseph, “I have had a dream, but no one can interpret it. Now I have heard it said of you that for you to hear a dream is to tell its meaning.” Joseph answered Pharaoh, saying, “Not I! God will see to Pharaoh’s welfare.”

וַיֹּאמֶר פַּרְעָה אֶל יוֹסֵף בְּחַלְמֵי הַנִּגְיָן עָמֵד עַל שְׁפַת הַיָּאָר. וַהֲנֵה מִן הַיָּאָר עַלְתָה שְׁבַע פְרֹזּוֹת בְּרִיאוֹת בָּשָׂר וַיְפַת תָּאָר וַתְּרַעֵנָה בָּאָחָוּ. וַהֲנֵה שְׁבַע פְרֹזּוֹת אַחֲרוֹת עַלְוֹת אַחֲרֵיהָן דְלֹוֹת וַרְעוֹת תָאָר מָאָד וַרְקֹות בָּשָׂר לֹא רָאִיתִי כְּהַנָּה בְּכָל אֶרֶץ מִצְרָיִם לְרָעָ. וַתְּאַכְלֵנָה הַפְרֹזּוֹת הַרְקֹות וַהֲרֹעוֹת אֶת שְׁבַע הַפְרֹזּוֹת הַרְאָשָׁנוֹת הַבְּרִיאָת. וַתְּבָאֵנָה אֶל קְרֵבָנָה וְלֹא נָזַע כִּי בָאָוֶל קְרֵבָנָה וְמְרָאֵיהָן רָע בְּאָשָׁר בְּתִחְלָה וְאֵיקָז. וְאָרָא בְּחַלְמֵי וַהֲנֵה שְׁבַע שְׁבָלִים עַלְתָה בְּקָנָה אֶחָד מְלָאת וְתִבְבֹּתָה. וַהֲנֵה שְׁבַע שְׁבָלִים צְנֻמוֹת דְקֹות שְׁדֹפוֹת קְדִים צְמַחוֹת אַחֲרֵיכֶם. וַתִּבְלַעַן הַשְּׁבָלִים הַדְקֹות אֶת שְׁבַע הַשְּׁבָלִים הַטִּבּוֹת וַיֹּאמֶר אֶל הַחֲרִטְמִים וְאֵין מָגִיד לִי.

Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, “In my dream, I was standing on the bank of the Nile, when out of the Nile came up seven sturdy and well-formed cows and grazed in the reed grass. Presently there followed them seven other cows, scrawny, ill-formed, and emaciated—never had I seen their likes for ugliness in all the land of Egypt! And the seven lean and ugly cows ate up the first seven cows, the sturdy ones; but when they had consumed them, one could not tell that they had consumed them, for they looked just as bad as before. And I awoke. In my other dream, I saw seven ears of grain,

full and healthy, growing on a single stalk; but right behind them sprouted seven ears, shriveled, thin, and scorched by the east wind. And the thin ears swallowed the seven healthy ears. I have told my magicians, but none has an explanation for me.”

ויאמר יוסף אל פרעה חלום פרעה אחד הוא את האלים עשה הגיד לפראעה. שבע פרות הטריות שבע שנים הינה ושבע השבטים הטריות שבע שנים הינה חלום אחד הוא. ושבע הפרות המרכות והרעות העלות אחריהן שבע שנים הינה ושבע השבטים הרקמות שדיפות הקדים יהיו שבע שנים רעב. הוא הדבר אשר דברתי אל פרעה אשר האלים עשה הראה את פרעה. הינה שבע שנים באית שבע גדול בכל ארץ מצרים. וקמו שבע שנים רעב אחריהן ונשכח כל השבע בארץ מצרים וכלה הרעב את הארץ. ולא יזדע השבע בארץ מפני הרעב והוא אחורי כו כי קבד הוא מאי. ועל השנות אל פרעה פעםיים כי נכו הדבר מעם האלים לעשתו



And Joseph said to Pharaoh, “Pharaoh’s dreams are one and the same: God has told Pharaoh what He is about to do. The seven healthy cows are seven years, and the seven healthy ears are seven years; it is the same dream. The seven lean and ugly cows that followed are seven years, as are also the seven empty ears scorched by the east wind; they are seven years of famine. It is just as I have told Pharaoh: God has revealed to Pharaoh what He is about to do. Immediately ahead are seven years of great abundance in all the land of Egypt. After them will come seven years of famine, and all the abundance in the land of Egypt will be forgotten. As the land is ravaged by famine, no trace of the abundance will be left in the land because of the famine thereafter, for it will be very severe. As for Pharaoh having the same dream twice, it means that the matter has been determined by God, and that God will soon carry it out.” (Genesis 41:1-32)

A Dream's Meaning Deeply Known

"וַיֹּסֶף פְּרָעָה לְהַם אֶת חָלוֹמוֹ וְאֵין פּוֹתֵר אֹתָם לְפְרָעָה" (בראשית מא:ח). פּוֹתְרִים הִיוּ אֹתָם, אָבֶל לֹא לְפְרָעָה. שֶׁלֹּא הִיה קֹלְוֹ נִכְנָס בְּאַזְנֵיו, וְלֹא הִיה לוֹ קֹרֶת רְוֵם בְּפִתְרוֹנָם, שֶׁהִיוּ אֹמְרִים שְׁבַע בְּנֹות אַתָּה מוֹלִיד וּשְׁבַע בְּנֹות אַתָּה קוֹבֵר.

And Pharaoh told them his dreams, but none could interpret them for Pharaoh (Genesis 41:8).



There were interpreters of the dreams, but none that spoke to Pharaoh. The pronouncements of the interpreters did not sound right to his ears, nor did he feel responsive to their interpretations. They said things like, you will father seven daughters and bury seven daughters. (Rashi on Genesis 41:8)

Solomon's Dream

וַיַּאֲהַב שֶׁלֹּמֶה אֶת ה' לְלֹכֶת בְּחִקּוֹת דָּוֹד אָבִיו רַק בְּבִמּוֹת הַוָּא מִזְבֵּחַ וַיְמִקְטֵּר. וַיַּלְךְ הַמֶּלֶךְ גַּבְעָוָה לִזְבֵּחַ שֶׁם כִּי הִיא הַבָּמָה הַגְּדוֹלָה אֲלֹף עֲלוֹת יָעַלְהָ שֶׁלֹּמֶה עַל הַמִּזְבֵּחַ הַהוּא. בַּגְּבֻעָוָן גַּרְאָה ה' אֶל שֶׁלֹּמֶה בְּמִלּוֹס הַלִּילָה וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים שָׁאַל מָה אַתָּה לְךָ. וַיֹּאמֶר שֶׁלֹּמֶה אַתָּה עֲשֵׂית עַם עֲבָדֶךָ דָּוֹד אָבִי חִסְדָּךְ גְּדוֹלָךְ לְפִנֵּיךְ בְּאַמְתָּה יְבָצְקָה וּבִיְשָׁרֶת לְבָב עַמְּךָ וַתִּשְׁמַר לוֹ אֶת הַחִסְדָּךְ הַגְּדוֹלָה הַזָּה וַתַּפְתַּן לוֹ בָּן יִשְׁבַּע עַל כִּסֵּאוֹ כִּי יוֹם הַזָּה. וַעֲתָה ה' אֱלֹהִים אַתָּה הַמֶּלֶךְ אֶת עֲבָדֶךָ פְּתַח תְּדָוֹר אָבִי וְאַנְכִי נָעַר קָטָן לֹא אָדָע צָאת וּבָא. וַעֲבָדֶךָ בְּתוֹךְ עַמְּךָ אֲשֶׁר בְּחִרְתָּךְ עַם רַב אֲשֶׁר לֹא יִפְנִיחַ וְלֹא יִסְפַּר מְרֻב. וַעֲתָה לְעַבְדֶּךָ לְבָב שְׁמַע לְשָׁפֹט אֶת עַמְּךָ לְהַבִּין בֵּין טֹב לְרֹעַ כִּי מַיִּוְכֵל לְשָׁפֹט אֶת עַמְּךָ הַכָּבֵד הַזָּה.

And Solomon, though he loved the Lord and followed the practices of his father David, also sacrificed and offered at the shrines. The king went to Gibeon to sacrifice there, for that was the largest shrine; on that altar Solomon presented a thousand burnt offerings. At Gibeon the Lord appeared to Solomon in a dream by night; and God said, “Ask, what shall I grant you?” Solomon said, “You dealt most graciously with Your servant my father David, because he walked before You in faithfulness and righteousness and in integrity of heart. You have continued this great kindness to him by giving him a son to occupy his throne, as is now the case. And now, O Lord my God, You have made your servant king in place of my father David; but I am a young lad, with no experience in leadership. Your servant finds himself in the midst of the people You have chosen, a people too numerous to be numbered or counted. Grant, then, Your servant an understanding mind to judge Your people, to distinguish between good and bad; for who can judge this vast people of Yours?”

וַיַּיְתֵּב הַדָּבָר בְּעֵינֵי ה' כִּי שָׁאַל שֶׁלֹּמֶה אֶת הַדָּבָר הַזָּה. וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים אֲלֵינוּ יְעַן אֲשֶׁר שָׁאַלְתָּךְ אֶת הַדָּבָר הַזָּה וְלֹא שָׁאַלְתָּךְ לְכָךְ יָמִים רַבִּים וְלֹא שָׁאַלְתָּךְ נַפְשׁ אֹוִיבְךָ וְשָׁאַלְתָּךְ לְכָךְ הַבִּין לְשָׁמַע מִשְׁפָט. הַנִּהְנִה עֲשֵׂיתִי כְּדָבָרִיךְ הַנִּהְנִה נִתְתַּי לְכָךְ לְבָב חָכָם וְנִבְזָן אֲשֶׁר קָמֹז לֹא הִנֵּה לְפִנֵּיךְ וְאַחֲרִיךְ לֹא יָקּוּם קָמֹז. וְגַם אֲשֶׁר לֹא שָׁאַלְתָּךְ נִתְתַּי לְכָךְ גַּם עַשְׂרֶן קָבּוֹד אֲשֶׁר לֹא הִנֵּה קָמֹז אִישׁ בְּמַלְכִים כָּל יִמְיָּיךְ. וְאַם תַּלְךְ בְּדָרְכֵי לְשִׁמְרָה חָקִי וְמִצּוּנִי כִּאֲשֶׁר הָלַךְ זָנוִיד אָבִיךְ וְהַאֲרְכָתִי אֶת יִמְיָּיךְ. וַיַּקְצֵן שֶׁלֹּמֶה וַיַּגְּנַה חָלּוֹם וַיַּבְזֹא יְרוֹשָׁלָם וַיַּעֲמֹד לִפְנֵי אָרוֹן בְּרִית ה' וַיַּעַל עֲלוֹת וַיַּעֲשֶׂה שְׁלָמִים וַיַּעֲשֶׂה מִשְׁפָּת לְכָל עַבְדָיו.

The Lord was pleased that Solomon had asked for this. And God said to him, “Because you asked for this—you did not ask for long life, you did not ask for riches, you did not ask for the life of your enemies, but you asked for discernment in dispensing justice—I now do as you have spoken. I grant you a wise and discerning mind; there has never been anyone like you before, nor will anyone like you arise again. And I also grant you what you did not ask for—both riches and glory all your life—the like of which no king has ever had. And I will further grant you long life, if you will walk in My ways and observe My laws and commandments, as did your father David.” Then Solomon awoke: it was a dream! He went to Jerusalem, stood before the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord, and sacrificed burnt offerings and presented offerings of well-being; and he made a banquet for all his courtiers. (1 Kings 3:3-15)

Tell Me My Dream And Its Meaning

In the second year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, Nebuchadnezzar had a dream; his spirit was agitated, yet he was overcome by sleep. The king ordered the magicians, exorcists, sorcerers, and Chaldeans to be summoned in order to tell the king what he had dreamed. They came and stood before the king, and the king said to them, “I have had a dream and I am full of anxiety to know what I have dreamed.” The Chaldeans spoke to the king in Aramaic, “O king, live forever! Relate the dream to your servants, and we will tell its meaning.” The king said in reply to the Chaldeans, “I hereby decree: if you will not make the dream and its meaning known to me, you shall be torn limb from limb and your houses confiscated. But if you tell the dream and its meaning, you shall receive from me gifts, presents, and great honor; therefore, tell me of the dream and its meaning.” Once again they answered, “Let the king relate the dream to his servants, and we will tell its meaning.” The king said in reply, “It is clear to me that you are playing for time, since you see that I have decreed that if you do not make the dream known to me, there is but one verdict for you. You have conspired to tell me something false and fraudulent until circumstances change; so relate the dream to me, and I will then know that you can tell its meaning.” The Chaldeans said in reply to the king, “There is no one on earth who can satisfy the king’s demand, for—great king or ruler—none has ever asked such a thing of any magician, exorcist, or Chaldean. The thing asked by the king is difficult; there is no one who can tell it to the king except the gods whose abode is not among mortals.” Whereupon the king flew into a violent rage, and gave an order to do away with the wise men of Babylon.

The decree condemning the wise men to death was issued. Daniel and his companions were about to be put to death when Daniel remonstrated with Arioch, the captain of the royal guard who had set out to put the wise men of Babylon to death. He spoke up and said to Arioch, the royal officer, “Why is the decree of the king so urgent?” Thereupon Arioch informed Daniel of the matter. So Daniel went to ask the king for time, that he might tell the meaning to the king. Then Daniel went to his house and informed his companions, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, of the matter, that they might implore the God of Heaven for help regarding this mystery, so that Daniel and his colleagues would not be put to death together with the other wise men of Babylon.

The mystery was revealed to Daniel in a night vision; then Daniel blessed the God of Heaven. Daniel spoke up and said:

Let the name of God be blessed forever and ever,
For wisdom and power are His.
He gives the wise their wisdom
And knowledge to those who know.
He reveals deep and hidden things,
Knows what is in the darkness,
And light dwells with him.

I acknowledge and praise You,
O God of my fathers,
You who have given me wisdom and power,
For now You have let me know what we asked of
You;
You have let us know what concerns the king.”

Thereupon Daniel went to Arioch, whom the king had appointed to do away with the wise men of Babylon; he came and aid to him as follows, “Do not do away with the wise men of Babylon; bring me to the king and I will tell the king the meaning!” So Arioch rushed Daniel into the king’s presence and said to him, “I have found among the exiles of Judah a man who can make the meaning known to the king!” The king said in reply to Daniel (who was called Belteshazzar) “Can you really make known to me the dream that I saw and its meaning?” Daniel answered the king

and said, “The mystery about which the king has inquired—wise men, exorcists, magicians, and diviners cannot tell to the king. But there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries, and He has made known to King Nebuchadnezzar what is to be at the end of days. This is your dream and the vision that entered your mind in bed: O king, the thoughts that came to your mind in your bed are about future events; He who reveals mysteries has let you know what is to happen. Not because my wisdom is greater than other creatures has this mystery been revealed to me, but in order that the meaning should be made known to the king, and that you may know the thoughts of your mind.

O king, as you looked on, there appeared a great statue. This statue, which was huge and its brightness surpassing, stood before you, and its appearance was awesome. The head of that statue was of fine gold; its breast and arms were of silver; its belly and thighs, of bronze; its legs were of iron, and its feet part iron and part clay. As you looked on, a stone was hewn out, not by hands, and struck the statue on its feet of iron and clay and crushed them. All at once, the iron, clay, bronze, silver, and gold were crushed, and became like chaff of the threshing floors of summer; a wind carried them off until no trace of them was left. But the stone that struck the statue became a great mountain and filled the whole earth.

Such was the dream, and we will now tell the king its meaning. You, O king—king of kings, to whom the God of Heaven has given kingdom, power, might, and glory: into whose hands He has given men, wild beasts, and the fowl of heaven, wherever they may dwell; and to whom He has given dominion over them all—you are the head of gold. But another kingdom will arise after you, inferior to yours; then yet a third kingdom, of bronze, which will rule over the whole earth. But the fourth kingdom will be as strong as iron; just as iron crushes and shatters everything—and, like iron that smashes—so will it crush and smash all these. You saw the feet and the toes, part potter’s clay and part iron; that means it will be a divided kingdom; it will have only some of the stability of iron, inasmuch as you saw iron mixed with common clay. And the toes were part iron and part clay; that [means] the kingdom will be in part strong and in part brittle. You saw iron mixed with common clay; that means: they shall intermingle with the offspring of men, but shall not hold together, just as iron does not mix with clay. And in the time of those kings, the God of Heaven will establish a kingdom that shall never be destroyed, a kingdom that shall not be transferred to another people. It will crush and wipe out all these kingdoms, but shall itself last forever—just as you saw how a stone was hewn from the mountain, not by hands, and crushed the iron, bronze, clay, silver, and gold. The great God has made known to the king what will happen in the future. The dream is sure and its interpretation reliable.”

Then King Nebuchadnezzar prostrated himself and paid homage to Daniel and ordered that a meal offering and pleasing offerings be made to him. The king said in reply to Daniel, “Truly your God must be the God of gods and the Lord of kings and the revealer of mysteries to have enabled you to reveal this mystery.” The king then elevated Daniel and gave him very many gifts, and made him governor of the whole province of Babylon and chief prefect of all the wise men of Babylon. (Daniel 2:1-48)

I, Nebuchadnezzar, was living serenely in my house, flourishing in my palace. I had a dream that frightened me, and my thoughts in bed and the vision of my mind alarmed me. I gave an order to bring all the wise men of Babylon before me to let me know the meaning of the dream. The magicians, exorcists, Chaldeans, and diviners came, and I related the dream to them, but they could not make its meaning known to me. Finally, Daniel, called Belteshazzar after the name of my god, in whom the spirit of the holy gods was, came to me, and I related the dream to him, [saying],

“Belteshazzar, chief magician, in whom I know the spirit of the holy gods to be, and whom no mystery baffles, tell me the meaning of my dream vision that I have seen in the visions of my mind in bed.

I saw a tree of great height in the midst of the earth;
The tree grew and became mighty;
Its top reached heaven,
And it was visible to the ends of the earth.
Its foliage was beautiful

And its fruit abundant;
There was food for all in it.
Beneath it the beasts of the field found shade,
And the birds of the sky dwelt on its branches;
All creatures fed upon it.

In the vision of my mind in bed, I looked and saw a holy Watcher coming down from heaven. He called loudly and said:

‘Hew down the tree, lop off its branches,
Strip off its foliage, scatter its fruit.
Let the beasts of the field flee from beneath it.
And the birds from its branches,
But leave the stump with its roots in the ground.
In fetters of iron and bronze
In the grass of the field,
Let him be drenched with the dew of heaven,
And share earth’s verdure with the beasts.

Let his mind be altered from that of a man,
And let him be given the mind of a beast,
And let seven seasons pass over him.
This sentence is decreed by the Watchers;
This verdict is commanded by the Holy Ones
So that all creatures may know
That the Most High is sovereign over the realm of man,
And he gives it to whom He wishes
And he may set over it even the lowest of men.’

“I, King Nebuchadnezzar, had this dream; now you, Belteshazzar, tell me its meaning, since all the wise men of my kingdom are not able to make its meaning known to me, but you are able, for the spirit of the holy gods is in you.”

Then Daniel, called Belteshazzar, was perplexed for a while, and alarmed by his thoughts. The king addressed him, “Let the dream and its meaning not alarm you.” Belteshazzar replied, “My lord, would that the dream were for your enemy and its meaning for your foe! The tree that you saw grow and become mighty, whose top reached heaven, which was visible throughout the earth, whose foliage was beautiful, whose fruit was so abundant that there was food for all in it, beneath which the beasts of the field dwelt, and in whose branches the birds of the sky lodged—it is you, O king, you who have grown and become mighty, whose greatness has grown to reach heaven, and whose dominion is to the end of the earth. The holy Watcher whom the king saw descend from heaven and say,

Hew down the tree and destroy it,
But leave the stump with its roots in the ground,
In fetters of iron and bronze
In the grass of the field,

Let him be drenched with the dew of heaven,
And share the lot of the beasts of the field
Until seven seasons pass over him—

This is its meaning, O king; it is the decree of the Most High which has overtaken my lord the king. You will be driven away from men and have your habitation with the beasts of the field. You will be fed grass like cattle, and be drenched with the dew of heaven; seven seasons will pass over you until you come to know that the Most High is sovereign over the realm of man, and He gives it to who He wishes. And the meaning of the command to leave the stump of the tree with its roots is that the kingdom will remain yours from the time you come to know that Heaven is sovereign. Therefore, O king, may my advice be acceptable to you: Redeem your sins by beneficence and your iniquities by generosity to the poor; then your serenity may be extended.”

All this befell King Nebuchadnezzar. Twelve months later, as he was walking on the roof of the royal palace at Babylon, the king exclaimed, "There is great Babylon, which I have built by my vast power to be a royal residence for the glory of my majesty!" The words were still on the king's lips, when a voice fell from heaven, "It has been decreed for you, O King Nebuchadnezzar: The kingdom has passed out of your hands. You are being driven away from men, and your habitation is to be with the beasts of the field. You are to be fed grass like cattle, and seven seasons will pass over you until you come to know that the Most High is sovereign over the realm of man and He gives it to whom He wishes." There and then the sentence was carried out upon



Nebuchadnezzar. He was driven away from men, he ate grass like cattle, and his body was drenched with the dew of heaven until his hair grew like eagle's [feathers] and his nails like [the talons of] birds.

When the time had passed, I, Nebuchadnezzar, lifted my eyes to heaven, and my reason was restored to me. I blessed the Most High, and praised and glorified the Ever-Living One,

Whose dominion is an everlasting dominion
And whose kingdom endures throughout the generations.
All the inhabitants of the earth are of no account.
He does as He wishes with the host of heaven,
And with the inhabitants of the earth.
There is none to stay His hand
Or say to Him, 'What have You done?'

There and then my reason was restored to me, and my majesty and splendor were restored to me for the glory of my kingdom. My companions and nobles sought me out, and I was reestablished over my kingdom, and added greatness was given me. So now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise, exalt, and glorify the King of Heaven, all of whose works are just and whose ways are right, and who is able to humble those who behave arrogantly."

(Daniel 4:1-34)

To Dream For Seventy Years

אמר רבי יוחנן: כל ימיו של אותו צדיק היה מצטער על מקרא זה: "שיר המעלות בשוב ה' את שיבת ציון היינו בחלמים" (מהלים ככו:א). אמר: מי איכה דנויים שבעין שני בחלמא? יומא חד הוה אזל באורחא, מציה להוה גברא דהוה נטע חרובא. אמר ליה: הא, עד פמה שני טעוי? אמר ליה: עד שני. אמר ליה: פשיטה לך דחיתת שבעון שני? אמר ליה הא [גברא]: עלמא בחרובא אשכחתי, כי היכי דשתלי לי אbehati, שתלי נמי לבראי. יתיב, קא בריך ריפטא, אתה ליה שינטא, נים. אהדרא ליה משונטא, איפסוי מעינא, ונים שבעון שני. כי קם מציה להוה גברא דהוה קא מלקט מיניהו. אמר ליה: את הוא דשתلتיה? אמר ליה: בר בריה אני. שמע מיניה דניימי שבעון שני.

Rabbi Yohanan said: Throughout his days that pious one [Honi HaMe'agel] wondered about a certain biblical verse: *A song of ascents. When the Lord restores the fortunes of Zion it will be as though we had been dreaming* (Psalms 126:1). Is there someone who has slept, dreaming for seventy years [the span of the Babylonian exile]? One day, he was walking down a path and he saw a man who was planting carob trees. Honi said: How many years until this tree bears fully? He replied: Up to seventy years. Honi asked: Do you think that you will live seventy years? The man said to him: I found the world with carob trees and since my forebears planted carob trees for me, I plant them for my children. Honi sat down to eat his meal, he became drowsy and he slept. A rock grew up around him and hid him, and he slept for seventy years. When he awoke, he saw a man who was harvesting from the carob tree. He said to him: Are you the one who planted it? He replied: I am that man's grandson. Therein Honi learned that he had slept for seventy years.

חزا לחמריה דאתילידא ליה רפבי רפבי. אזל לביתה אמר להו: בריה דחוני המעלג מי קיים? אמרו ליה: בריה ליתא. בר בריה איתא. אמר להו: אנה חוני המעלג. לא הימנו. אזל לבית המדרש, שמעינהו לרבענו דקאמרי: נהירנו שמעתתינו כבשני חוני המעלג. דבי הויעיל לבית מדרשא, כל קושיא דהו ליה לרבענו הוה מפרק להו. אמר להו: אנה ניהו, ולא הימנו, ולא עבדי ליה יקרה בדמבעי ליה. חלש דעתיה, בעי רחמי ומית. אמר רבא, היינו דאמרין אינשי: או חברותא או מיתותא!

He saw that his donkey had given birth to herds. He went to his house and said to them: Is the son of Honi HaMe'agel alive? They replied: Not his son, but his grandson is here. He said to them: I am Honi HaMe'agel. They did not believe him. He went to the bet midrash where he heard the rabbis saying: Every difficulty that confront the sages, Honi would have solved them. He said to them: I am he. They did not believe him, and did not treat him with the respect that he deserved. He became depressed, and he prayed and died. [In relation to this story] Rabba said: This is the common expression: Either companionship or death! (Babylonian Talmud Ta'anit 23a)

A Dream Uninterpreted Is Like A Letter Unread

ונאמר רב חסדא: חלמא דלא מפער אגרת דלא מקריא. ונאמר רב חסדא: לא חלמא טבא מקיים כוילה, ולא חלמא בישא מקיים כוילה. ונאמר רב חסדא: חלמא בישא עדיף מחלמא טבא. ונאמר רב חסדא: חלמא בישא עציבותה מסתיה. חלמא טבא-צדונית מסתיה.

Rav Hisda said: A dream not interpreted is like a letter not read. Rav Hisda also said: No good dream is entirely fulfilled, and no bad dream is entirely fulfilled. And Rav Hisda also said: A bad dream is preferable to a good dream. And Rav Hisda also said: The sadness of a bad dream is sufficient for it; the joy of a good dream is sufficient for it.

"הֲבָיא אֲשֶׁר אָתָּו חֲלוֹם יִסְפֶּר חֲלוֹם וְאֲשֶׁר דָבָרִי אֲמֹת מֵה לְתַבּוֹן אֶת בָּרְנָם הַיְיָ" (ירמיהו כג:כח). וכי מה ענינו בר ותבון אצל חלום? אלא אמר רבי יוחנן משום רבי שמעון בן יוחנן: כי שום שאי אפשר לביר בלא תבון לכך אי אפשר להחלום אלא דברים בטילים. אמר רבי ברקיה: חלום, אף על פי שמקצתו מתקיים כולם אינו מתקיים, מנא לו? מישוף, דכתיב: "הנה חלמתי חלום עוד והנה השם והירח ואחד עשר פוכבים משתחווים לי" (בראשית לו:ט). ומה היא שעתה אמיה לא הות.

Let the prophet who has a dream tell the dream; and let him who has received My word report My word faithfully! How can straw be compared to grain? says the Lord (Jeremiah 23:8). Now, what do straw and grain have to do with a dream? Rabbi Yohanan said in the name of Rabbi Shimon ben Yohai: Just as it is impossible to have wheat without straw, so is it impossible to have a dream without superfluous things. Rabbi Berechiah said: Where do we learn that with any dream even if part of it is fulfilled it will never be entirely fulfilled? From Joseph, as is written: *look! the sun and the moon and eleven stars were bowing to me* (Genesis 37:9). But at that time, his mother was no longer alive.

אמר רבי לוי: לעולים יצפה אדם לחלום טוב עד עשרים ושפתיים שנה. מנלו? מישוף, דכתיב: "אללה תלדות יעקב יוסף בן שבע עשרי שנה וגוז'" (בראשית לו:ב). וכ כתיב: "יוסף בן שלשים שנה וגוז'" (בראשית מא:מו). מן שבערין עד תלתין כמה חוי-תלת סרי, ושב דשבעה ותרתני דכפנא? הוא עשרים ושפתיים.

Rabbi Levi said: A person should await a good dream for twenty-two years. Where do we learn this? From Joseph, as is written: *These are the generations of Jacob: Joseph was seventeen years old* (Genesis 37:2). And it is written: *And Joseph was thirty years old when he entered the service of Pharaoh* (Genesis 41:46). From seventeen to thirty—how much? Thirteen years; include seven years of plenty and two of famine [at which time his brothers came], and so, twenty-two years.

אמיר ומר זיטרא ורב אשיה הו יתבי בהדי חדדי, אמר: כל חד וחד מנו ליקמא מלטנא דלא שמייע ליה לחבריה. פתח חד מיניהו ואמר: האי מאן דחزا חלמא ולא ידע מאן חزا, ליקום קמי ביהני בעידנא דפרסי ידייהו, וליקמא הci: רבונו של עולם, אני שלח וחלומוותי שלח, חלום חלמתי ואני יודע מה הוא, בין שחלמתי אני לעצמי ובין שחלמו לי חבירי ובין שחלמתי על אחרים. אם טובים הם, חזקם ואמיצם בחלומוותינו של יוסף, ואם ארכיכים רפואי, רפאים במי מריה על ידי משה רבינו, וכמריכים מארעטה, וכחזקיה מחליו, וכמי יריחו על ידי אלישע. וכשים שהפכת קלהות בלעם הרשע לברכה,

כִּי חָפֹץ כָּל חֲלוֹמוֹתִי עַל לְטוּבָה. וְמִסִּים בְּחִדֵּי כְּהַנִּי, דְּעַנִּי צְבֹרָא אָמֵן. וְאֵי לֹא, לִימָם חַכִּי: אָדִיר בְּמָרוֹם שָׂוֹן בְּגִבְרִיה, אָתָּה שְׁלוֹם וְשֶׁמֶךְ שְׁלוֹם. יְהִי רָצֹן מִלְּפָנָיךְ שְׁתְּשִׁים עַלְינוּ שְׁלוֹם.

Amemar, Mar Zutra, and Rav Ashi were once sitting together and they said: Let everyone relate something that the others have not heard. One of them began, saying: One who sees a dream but doesn't know what he saw should go before the priests at the time when they are spreading their hands in blessing, and he should say this: Master of the world, I am yours and my dreams are yours, I have dreamed a dream but I don't know what it is, whether I have dreamed about myself or whether my companions dreamed about me, or whether I dreamed about others. If they are good dreams strengthen them and assure them like the dreams of Joseph; if they need healing, heal them like the bitter waters of Marah were sweetened by Moses, our master; heal them like Miriam healed of her leprosy and Hezekiah from his illness, and like the waters of Jericho were sweetened by Elisha. Just as you turned the curse of the wicked Balaam into a blessing, so turn all of my dreams to good. And he should conclude his prayer along with the priests, just as the community responds, *amen*. And if not this, then let him say: Mighty on high, dwelling in power, You are peace and your name is peace. May it be Your will to grant us peace.

שְׁמוֹאֵל בַּיּוֹתְרָה חִזִּי חֲלָמָא בַּיּוֹתָא אָמֵר: "וְעַלְמֹתַ הַשּׂוֹא יְדַבֵּרוּ" (זְכַרְיָה י:ב). בַּיּוֹתָה חִזִּי חֲלָמָא טָבָא אָמֵר: וְכִי הַחֲלוֹמוֹת הַשּׂוֹא יְדַבֵּרוּ וְכַתִּיב: "בְּחֲלוֹם אַזְבֵּר בּוֹ" (בְּמִדְבָּר יב:ו). רְבָא רְמִי: כַּתִּיב: "בְּחֲלוֹם אַזְבֵּר בּוֹ", וְכַתִּיב: "וְעַלְמֹתַ הַשּׂוֹא יְדַבֵּרוּ" (זְכַרְיָה י:ב)!! לֹא קָשִׁיא. בָּאָן, עַל יְדֵי מְלָאָךְ. בָּאָן, עַל יְדֵי שָׁדָּ.

Shemuel, whenever he saw a bad dream, would say: *And dreams speak lies* (Zechariah 10:2). Whenever he saw a good dream, he would read the verse as: *Do dreams speak lies?* After all, it is written: *I [God] will speak with him in a dream* (Numbers 12:6). Rava pointed to a contradiction: It is written: *I will speak with him in a dream* (Numbers 12:6), and it is also written: *And dreams speak lies* (Zechariah 10:2)!! But there is no difficulty. In the first case, it is dream given by an angel. In the second case, given by a demon.

אָמֵר רַבִּי בִּינָה בֶּן זְבַדָּא אָמֵר רַבִּי עֲקִיבָא, אָמֵר רַבִּי פַנְדָּה, אָמֵר רַבִּי נָחוּם, אָמֵר רַבִּי בַּיּוֹתָרִים מְשׁוּם זָקָן אַחֲד. וְמַנּוּ? רַבִּי בְּנָאָה: עֲשָׂרִים וָאֶרְבַּע פָּוֹתְרִי חֲלוֹמוֹת הָיוּ בְּיְרוּשָׁלָם. פָּעָם אָחֵת חֲלָמַתִּי חֲלוֹם וְקָלְבָתִי אֶצְלָ פּוֹלָם, וְמֵה שְׁפָתָר לִי זֶה לֹא פָתָר לִי זֶה. וְכָלָם נִתְקִיָּמוּ בַּיּוֹתָם מַה שֶּׁאָמַר: כָּל הַחֲלוֹמוֹת הַזּוֹלָכִים אַחֲרַ הַפֶּה. אַטוֹ? כָּל הַחֲלוֹמוֹת הַזּוֹלָכִים אַחֲרַ הַפֶּה, קָרָא הַוָּא?! אֵין, וְכָרְבִּי אַלְעָזָר, דָאָמֵר רַבִּי אַלְעָזָר: מִנּוּ שֶׁל הַחֲלוֹמוֹת הַזּוֹלָכִים אַחֲרַ הַפֶּה? שֶׁאָמַר: "וַיְהִי בְּאֹשֶׁר פָּתָר לְנוּ כָּוֹ הִיא" (בראשית מא:יג).

Said Rabbi Binyah bar Zavda, said Rabbi Akiba, said Rabbi Pandah, said Rav Nahum, said Rabbi Birayim in the name of a certain elder. And who was this elder? It was Rabbi Bena'ah: There were twenty-four dream interpreters in Jerusalem. Once, I dreamed a dream and went to each of them, and that which one interpreted another did not. Yet each interpretation came true for me fulfilling the saying: All dreams follow the mouth. Really? Is, *all dreams follow the mouth* in the Torah?! Yes, and it is according to Rabbi Eleazar, for Rabbi Eleazar said: From what biblical source is it derived that all dreams follow the mouth? As it is written [concerning Joseph interpreting the dreams of Pharaoh's cupbearer and the baker]: *And as he interpreted for us, so it came to pass* (Genesis 41:13). (Babylonian Talmud Berachot 55b)

The Stream Of Dreaming And Life On Its Banks

אמר רבי יוחנן: השכבים ונפל לו פסוק לתוך פיו, הרי זו נביואה קטנה. ואמר רבי יוחנן: שלשה חלומות מתקיימים: חלום של שחרית, וחלום שחלם חבירו, וחלום שנפטר בתוך חלום. ויש אומר: אף חלום שנשנה, שנאמר: "על השנות מהלום, וגוי" (שמות מא: לב).

Said Rabbi Yohanan: When one awakens and a verse pops into the mind, this is a small prophecy. Rabbi Yohanan also said: Three dreams are fulfilled: A morning dream, a dream that a friend dreamed about you, and a dream explained within a dream. And one teacher says: Also, a dream that has been repeated, as it says: *As for Pharaoh having the same dream twice, it means that the matter has been determined by God, and that God will soon carry it out.* (Genesis 41:1-32)

אמר רבי שמואל בר נחמני אמר רבי יונתן: אין מראין לו לאדם אלא מהרהוריו לבו, שנאמר: "אנת מלך רעיוןך על משקבך סליך" (דניאל ב: כט). ואיבעית איימת מהכא: "ורעיוןך לבך תנדע" (דניאל ב: ל). דלא מזו ליה לאין לא דקלא דרבבא, ולא פילא דעיל בקופא דמפתא.

Said Rabbi Shemuel bar Nahmani citing Rabbi Yonatan: One is only shown that which comes from his heart's ruminations, as it is said: *This is your dream and the vision that entered your mind in bed* (Daniel 2:29). Or, if you prefer, take justification from here: *That you may know the thoughts of your mind* (Daniel 2:30). For a person is never shown a golden palm tree or an elephant passing through the eye of a needle. (Babylonian Talmud Berachot 55b)



Bar Hadaya: The Cost Of Dreams

בר הָדָיָה מִפְשָׁר חָלָמִי הַזֶּה. מִאֵן דִּיחָב לֵיהּ אֲגָרָא, מִפְשָׁר לֵיהּ לְמַעְלִיוֹתָא, וּמִאֵן דָּלָא יְהִיב לֵיהּ אֲגָרָא, מִפְשָׁר לֵיהּ לְגַרְיעָוֹתָא. אֲבָבֵי וּרְבָא חָזוּ חָלָמָא. אֲבָבֵי יְהִב לֵיהּ אֲגָרָא וּרְבָא לֹא יְהִיב לֵיהּ. אָמָרִי לֵיהּ: אַקְרִינוּ בְּחָלָמָיו: "שָׁוֹרֵךְ טָבּוֹת בְּעִינֵיכֶם וְלֹא תִאכְלִ מִמְנוּ וְגַוְוי", (דְּבָרִים כח:לא). לְרָבָא אָמָר לֵיהּ: פְּסָד עַסְקָד וְלֹא אָהָנִי לְךָ לְמִיכְלָל מַעֲזָבָא דְלָבָד. לְאֲבָבֵי אָמָר לֵיהּ: מְרֻנוֹת עַסְקָד וְלֹא אָהָנִי לְךָ לְמִיכְלָל מַחְזָ�א דְלָבָד.

Bar Hadaya was a dream interpreter. To one who paid him he would give a favorable interpretation and to one who did not pay him he gave an unfavorable interpretation. Abaye and Rava each had a dream. Abaye gave him a zuz and Rava did not give him anything. They said to him, in our dream, they had us read the verse: *Your ox shall be slaughtered before your eyes, but you shall not eat of it* (Deuteronomy 28:31). To Rava he said: Your business will be a failure, and you will be so grieved that you will have no appetite to eat. To Abaye he said: Your business will prosper and you will not be able to eat from sheer joy.

אָמָרִי לֵיהּ: אַקְרִינוּ: "בְּנִים וּבָנֹות תֹּזְלִיד וְלֹא יְהִי לְךָ כִּי יַלְכוּ בְּשָׁבֵי" (דְּבָרִים כח:מא). לְרָבָא אָמָר לֵיהּ: כְּבִישׁוֹתֵיהֶה. לְאֲבָבֵי אָמָר לֵיהּ: בְּנָךְ וּבָנָתָךְ גְּפִישֵׁי, וּמִנִּסְבָּו בְּנָתָךְ לְעַלְמָא, וּמִדְמִין בְּאָפָךְ כְּדָקָא אַזְלָו בְּשָׁבֵיהֶה.

They then said to him, they had us read the verse: *Though you beget sons and daughters, they shall not remain with you, for they shall go into captivity* (Deuteronomy 28:41). To Rava he interpreted it in its literal unfavorable sense. To Abaye he said: You have numerous sons and daughters and your daughters will be married and go away; and it will seem to you as if they have gone into captivity.

אַקְרִינוּ: "בְּנִיךְ וּבָנֹותֵיכֶךָ נְתָנִים לְעַם אַחֲרֵי" (דְּבָרִים כח:לב). לְאֲבָבֵי אָמָר לֵיהּ: בְּנָךְ וּבָנָתָךְ גְּפִישֵׁין, אַתְּ אָמְרָת לְקָרִיבֶךָ, וַהֲיָא אָמְרָה לְקָרִיבֶךָ, דְּחוּי כְּעַם אַחֲרֵי. לְרָבָא אָמָר לֵיהּ: דְּבִיתְתָּהוּ שְׁכִיבָא, וְאַתָּה בְּנִיהֶה וּבָנָתָךְ לִידֵי אִיתָתָא אַחֲרִיתֵי, דְּאָמָר רָבָא אָמָר רַבִּי יְרַמִּיהֶה בֶּרֶר אָבָא אָמָר רַבָּ: מַאֲи דְּכַתִּיב: "בְּנִיךְ וּבָנֹותֵיכֶךָ נְתָנִים לְעַם אַחֲרֵי" (דְּבָרִים כח:לב) זו אֲשֶׁת הָאָב.

They said to him, they had us read the verse: *Your sons and daughters shall be delivered to another people while you look on; and your eyes shall strain for them constantly, but you shall be helpless* (Deuteronomy 28:32). To Abaye he said: You have numerous sons and daughters; you will want your daughters to marry your relatives, and your wife will want them to marry her relatives, and she will force you to marry them to her relatives which will be like giving them to another people. To Rava he said: Your wife will die, and her sons and daughters will come under the sway of another wife. For Rava had already said in the name of Rabbi Jeremiah ben Abba, reporting Rav:

What is the meaning of the verse: Your sons and daughters shall be given to another people? This refers to a step-mother.

אָקָרֵינוּ בְּחַלְמַיִן : "לֹא אָכַל בְּשָׂמְחָה לְחַמְדָה" (קהלת ט:ז). לְאַבִּי אָמַר לֵיהּ : מְרוּוח עַסְקָד וְאֲכָלָת וְשִׁתָּת וְקָרִית פְּסֹוקָא מְחַדּוּה דְּלָבָה. לְרַבָּא אָמַר לֵיהּ : פְּסָד עַסְקָד טְבָחָת וְלֹא אֲכָלָת וְשִׁתָּת וְקָרִית לְפָכוֹתִי פְּחַדְךָ.

They said, in our dream they had us read the verse: *Go, eat your bread in gladness, and drink your wine in joy* (Ecclesiastes 9:7). To Abaye he said: Your business will prosper, and you will eat and drink, and recite this verse out of the joy of your heart. To Rava he said: Your business will fail, you will slaughter cattle and not eat or drink and you will read Scripture to allay your anxiety

אָקָרֵינוּ : "זָרָע רֵב תֹּזְאֵי הַשְׁדָה וְמַעַט תָּאַסֵּף כִּי יָכְסַלְנוּ הַאֲרָבָה" (דברים כח:לח). לְאַבִּי אָמַר לֵיהּ מְרִישֶׁה. לְרַבָּא אָמַר לֵיהּ מְסִיפָה.

They said to him, they had us read the verse: *You shall carry much seed into the field, and shall gather little in for the locusts will consume it* (Deuteronomy 28:38). To Abaye he interpreted from the first half of the verse; to Rava from the second half.

אָקָרֵינוּ : "זִיתִים יְהִיוּ לְךָ בְּכָל גִּבְוִילִיךְ וְשָׁמָנוּ לֹא תַּסּוּךְ כִּי יִשְׁלַׁ זִיתְּךָ" (דברים כח:מ). לְאַבִּי אָמַר לֵיהּ מְרִישֶׁה. לְרַבָּא אָמַר לֵיהּ מְסִיפָה.

They said to him, they had us read the verse: *Though you have olive trees throughout your territory, you shall have no oil for anointment, for your olives shall drop off* (Deuteronomy 28:40). To Abaye he interpreted from the first half of the verse; to Rava from the second half.

אָקָרֵינוּ : "וַיַּרְאֻוּ כָל עַמִּי הָאָרֶץ כִּי שֵׁם ה' נִקְרָא עַלְיכָם וַיַּרְאֻוּ מִמְּךָ" (דברים כח:י). לְאַבִּי אָמַר לֵיהּ : נִפְקַד לְךָ שֶׁמֶא דָרִישׁ מִתְיַבְּתָא הָוִית, אִמְתָּךְ נִפְלָת בְּעַלְמָא. לְרַבָּא אָמַר לֵיהּ : בַּיּוֹדֵינוּ דְמַלְכָא אַתְּבָר, וּמִתְפָּסֵת בְּגַנְגַּבִּי וְדִינַּי פּוֹלִי עַלְמָא קָל וְחוֹמָר מִינְךָ. לְמַחר אַתְּבָר בַּיּוֹדֵינוּ דְמַלְכָא, וְאַתְּוּ וּמִפְסִי לֵיהּ לְרַבָּא.

They said to him, they had us read the verse: *And all the people of the earth shall see that the Lord's name is proclaimed over you, and they shall stand in fear of you* (Deuteronomy 28:10). To Abaye he said: Your name will become famous as head of the college and you will be generally held in awe. To Rava he said: The King's treasury will be broken into and you will be arrested as a thief and everyone will draw an inference from you. The next day the King's treasury was broken into and they came and arrested Rava. (Babylonian Talmud Berachot 56a)

Do Not Harm The Dream-Snake

תְּנִי תִּפְנִי קְמִיה דָּרְבֵּ שְׁשָׁת: הַרְוֹאָה נָחָשׁ בְּחִלּוֹם: פְּרִנְסָתוֹ מִזְוְמָנָת לֹא. נָשְׁכוּ, נְכַפְּלָה פְּרִנְסָתוֹ. הַרְגּוּ, אֲבָדָה פְּרִנְסָתוֹ. אָמַר לֵיהֶ רְבָבָשָׁת: כֹּל שָׁפָן שְׁנַכְּפָלָה פְּרִנְסָתוֹ! וְלֹא הִיא. רְבָבָשָׁת הָוֹא דְּמָזָא חֲוֵיא בְּחִלּוֹמָה וְקַטְ�יה.

A teacher recited this tradition before Rav Sheshet: One who sees a snake in a dream, his livelihood is assured him. If the snake bites him, his livelihood is doubled. If he kills it, he loses his livelihood. Said Rav Sheshet: If he kills it, all the more so is his livelihood assured! But this is not so. Rav Sheshet taught this because he had dreamed a dream in which he killed a snake. (Babylonian Talmud Berachot 57a)

Timeless Advice: Do Not Harm The Snake

... a black snake comes into a dream, a great big black snake, and you can spend a whole hour of therapy with this black snake, talking about the devouring mother, talking about anxiety, about repressed sexuality.... But what remains after all the symbolic understanding is *what that snake is doing*, this crawling huge black snake that's sliding into your life. The moment you've caught the snake in an interpretation, you've lost the snake. You've stopped its living movement...

The interpretation settles the emotional quivering and mental uncertainty that came with the snake. In fact, the snake is no longer necessary; it has been successfully banished by interpretation. You, the dreamer, don't need the snake anymore and you then form the habit of not needing dreams anymore either, once they have been interpreted. Meaning replaces image; animal disappears into the human mind....

Once you've translated the great snake, you no longer need the image, and you let the image only say one thing, one word: [for example,] "Great Mother." then it disappears. You don't want that black snake really, anymore. You want to work on your mother complex... Now this still leaves the soul unanimated. That is, unalive. The images... have been turned into meanings.... (James Hillman, Dream Animals)

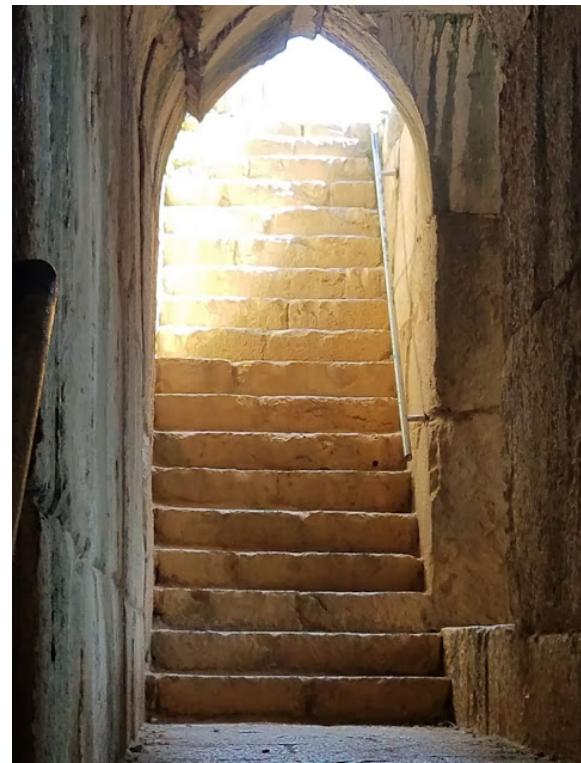


God Is Steps

אֱלֹהִים הוּא מִזְרָגוֹת שְׁעֹולֹת
 לְמִקְוָם שֶׁלֹּא קִים שֹׁיב, או שֶׁלֹּא קִים עָדִין
 הַמִּזְרָגוֹת הֵן אָמִונָתִי, הַמִּזְרָגוֹת אֲכִזְבָּתִי
 יַעֲקֹב אָבִינוּ יְדֻעַּת בְּחִלּוּמוֹ
 הַמְּלָאכִים רַק קָשְׁטוּ אֶת מַעַלּוֹת הַסֶּלֶם
 בָּמוֹ עַז אָשׁוּם מִקְשַׁט בְּחָג הַמּוֹלֵד
 וּשְׁיר הַמַּעַלּוֹת הוּא שִׁיר הַלֵּל
 לֹאֶל הַמִּזְרָגוֹת.

God is steps that ascend
 to a place that no longer exists, or that doesn't exist yet
 the steps are my faith, the steps are my disappointment
 Jacob our father knew this in his dream
 the angels only decorated the steps of the staircase
 like a fir tree decorated for Christmas
 and *The Song of Ascents* is a song of praise
 to God who is the steps.

Yehuda Amichai (Translated by Rabbi Steven Sager)



Will Jacob Dare To Live His Dream?

וַיַּחֲלֹם וַיַּגְןֶה סֶלֶם מִצְבָּא אָרֶץ וַיַּרְא שׁוֹמֵן הַשְׁמִימָה וַיַּגְןֶה מֶלֶךְיְיָהִים עַזְלִים וַיַּרְא דִּינִים בּוֹ (בראשית כט:יב). אמר רבי ברקיה בשם רבי חלבו ורבי שמויאל בנו יוסינה: מלמד שהראהו מקדוש ברוך הוא ליעקב אבינו שרה של בבל עולה ויורד, ושל מדי עולה ויורד, ושל יונו עולה ויורד, ושל אדם עולה ויורד. אמר לו מקדוש ברוך הוא ליעקב: יעקב למה אין אתה עולה? באotta שעה נתראה אבינו יעקב ואמר: בשם שישי לאלו ירידה, בך אני יש לי ירידה. אמר לו מקדוש ברוך הוא: אם אתה עולה איינו לך ירידה. ולא חאמין ולא עלה.



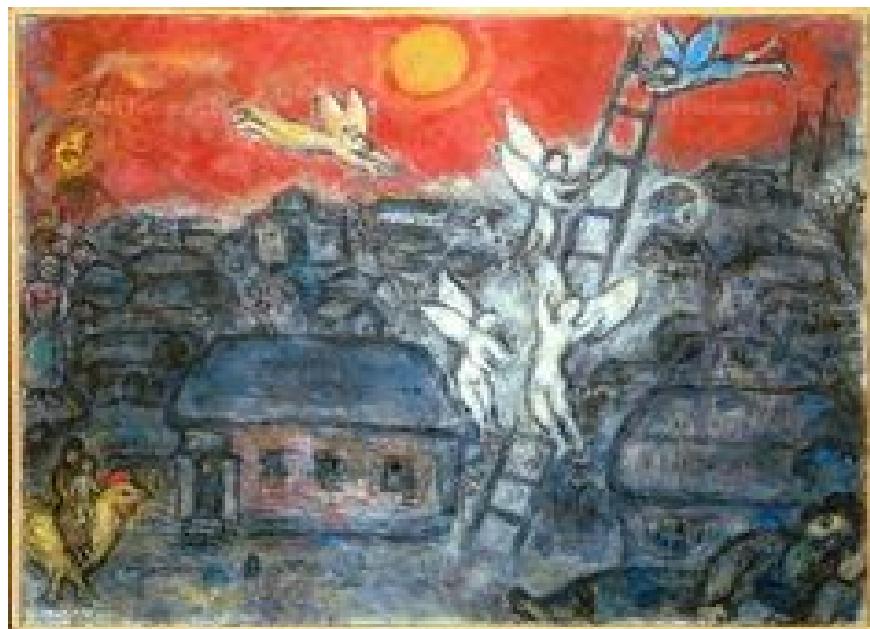
those have their descent, so will I have my descend. Said the blessed Holy One to him: If you ascend, you will have no descent. But Jacob did not believe him and he did not ascend. (Midrash Tanhuma VaYetzei 2)

He [Jacob] dreamed. Behold! a ladder set on the earth with its top reaching towards heaven; and, behold! angels of God ascending and descending upon it (Genesis 29:12). Said Rabbi Berechia in the name of Rabbi Helbo and Rabbi Shemuel ben Yoseinah: This teaches that the blessed Holy One showed Jacob, our ancestor, the guardian angel of Babylon ascending and descending, the angel of Media ascending and descending, the angel of Greece ascending and descending, and the angel of Rome ascending and descending. The blessed Holy One said to Jacob: Jacob, who don't you ascend? But just then, our ancestor, Jacob, became fearful and said: Just as

We Were Like Dreamers

א שיר הַמְּפַעַלּוֹת בְּשׁוֹב יְהוָה אֶת-שִׁבְתָּת צִיּוֹן הַיּוֹנוֹ בְּחַלְמִים : בְּאֹז יְמָלָא שְׁחֹזֶק פִּינּוֹ וְלְשׂוֹנְנוֹ רָגֶה אָז יְאַמְרוּ בְּגּוּם הַגְּדוּלָה יְהוָה לְעֹשֹׂת עִמָּאֶלָה : ג הַגְּדוּלָה יְהוָה לְעֹשֹׂת עָמָנוּ הַיּוֹנוֹ שְׁמָחִים : ד שְׁוֹבָה יְהוָה אֶת-שִׁבְתָּנוּ [שְׁבִיתָתָנוּ] בְּאַפִּיקִים בְּנֶגֶב : ה הַזְּרָעִים בְּדָמָעָה בְּרִגְעָה יַקְצְרוּ : ו הַלּוֹזֶה יַלְזֶה | וְכֹה נִשְׁא מִשְׁׁדָּה-גְּרָעָבָא אַיְצְבּוֹא בְּרִגְעָה נִשְׁא אַלְמַתְיוּ :

When the Lord restores the fortunes of Zion it will be as though we had been dreaming. Our mouths shall be filled with laughter, our tongues, with songs of joy. Then shall they say among the nations, “the Lord has done great things for them!” The Lord will do great things for us and we shall rejoice. Restore our fortunes, O Lord, like watercourses in the Negev. They who sow in tears shall reap with songs of joy. Though he goes along weeping, carrying the seed-bag, he shall come back with songs of joy, carrying his sheaves. (Psalm 126)



We Were Like Those Returning To A Dream

הַיּוֹנוֹ בְּחַזְוִרִים אֶל חָלוֹם
קוֹשְׁרִי נְטוּקִים אֶל שָׁלָם
שׁוֹבָעָלָה זָהָר עַל גָּגֹות יְרַשְׁלָם
שָׁמֶשׁ צָעִיר. וְאַם עָר וְאַם חֹלָם
סָלָם נָאָב, בּוֹ לְעֹלוֹת
חַתְרָה עִם שָׁלָם .

We were like those returning to a dream
knitting dislocations into a whole
again rising splendid over Jerusalem's roofs
a new sun. Whether waking or dreaming
a ladder stands on which to ascend
a whole people breaks through.

Amir Gilboa
translated by Rabbi Steven Sager

Dreams Of Rebbe Nahman Of Bratzlav

יום שני, כ"ד אייר תק"ע, באומין: ספר לי חלום שחלם לו באותו הלילה. וראה בחלום שהיית חתנה, והלך גם פון אל החתנה; והיה יודע שם החתן. והסביר וראה שם אדם מעולם הבא, הינו אדם מת. ויתפלא מאד ואמר בדעתו שלא אם יראו אותו העולם יהיה רعش גדול מאד. והיה יודע שם זהה המית גם פון. ואמר שהשמות אלו של החתן ושל המת אינם שמות שם עצם, רק הם שמות ממש שפרטווים כמו שמות הקדושים.

Monday, 24 Iyyar, 5570 [Monday, May 28 1810], in Uman: He [Rabbi Nahman] related a dream to me that he had dreamed the night before. In the dream, he saw that there was a wedding that he also attended; and he knew the name of the groom. He looked around and he saw a man from the next world, which is to say, he saw a dead man. He was quite astonished and he thought that if the wedding guests were to see the dead man, the world would become a great tumult. He found that he also knew the name of the dead man. And he said that the names of the groom and of the dead man were not fixed and proper nouns, but rather were essences that alluded to whatever they alluded to, like all holy names.

אחר מכן ראו גם העולם את המת הנ"ל, ודברתי עמם: הלא זהו מת. ואמרו: אָפָּ-עַל-פִּי-כֵּן. ולא היה להם שום חדש בכלל. אחר מכן היטב בעיניו לילך שם לאיזה בית הכנסת באשר שפמשם היה טוב יותר להסתפל על מפטגה וסבבתי שם פזה, (והיה מורה באצבע איך היה מסביב). ובאתי אל הבית הכנסת, והיה מזמירים שם (הינו במקומות מחפה) להחטנו בזה הלשון: איין בחור אייז דער איין חטנו אייז דער - בחור אחד הוא זה חטנו אחד הוא זה. וגם ידעתי את הנגון, והיה נגון יפה, נגון של שמחה. והייתי מסתכל שם מון הבית הכנסת הנ"ל. אחר מכן גם שם לא היטב בעיניו, והלכתי לביתה. ובאתי לביתה ומצאתי שהחתן הוא שוכב על הארץ, ונערתني אותו ועוררתי אותו: הלא מזמירים לך כל פך וכי פנ"ל, ואתה שוכב פאן.

But then, everyone saw that dead man, so I spoke to the wedding crowd: You know, he's dead. And they said, So what? This was not strange for them at all. Then, the Rebbe said that it seemed like a good idea to go from there to a certain synagogue from which he could better see the wedding. "I got there by circling around like this (and he showed me with his finger how he circled about). Then I came to the synagogue, and they were singing (that is under the huppah): 'What a fine young man! What a fine bridegroom!' What's more, I knew the melody, a beautiful and joyful melody. And I continued to watch there, from that synagogue. After a while even that place didn't suit me, and I went home. When I arrived home I found that bridegroom lying on the floor, and I roused him and woke him: Look! They're singing so joyously to you over there and you're lying here?!"



וְהַדָּבָרִים סְתֻוּמִים מְאָד. וַאֲחַר כֵּד אָמַר רַבִּינוּ זָכָרוֹנוּ לִבְרָכה בְּעַצְמוֹ שֶׁהוּא פַּלְאָ, שֶׁשָּׁם הָיָי מִזְמְרִים לוֹ כֵּל כֵּד וְכָאן הוּא שׁוֹכֵב. וְהַדָּבָר סְתֻוּמִים וְנַעֲלִים מְאָד.) וְאָמַר שְׁבָחָלוֹם נִרְאָה לוֹ שְׁהַמִּקְוּם שֶׁשָּׁם בֵּית הַכְּנֶסֶת יִשְׁלַׁח לוֹ שֶׁם אַחֲר, וְהַמִּקְוּם שְׁחַלְךָ שֶׁם לְבִתְוֹ יִשְׁלַׁח לוֹ שֶׁם אַחֲר. (וְאָמַר שִׁידָע וְשִׁבָּח. וְאַנִּי מִסְפָּק אִם עַל הַגָּגָן הוּא אָמַר שִׁידָע וְשִׁבָּח אִם עַל אֶלְוּ הַשְׁמֹות שֶׁל הַמִּקְוּמוֹת אָמַר שִׁידָע וְשִׁבָּח. אָבֶל שְׁמֹות הַגָּיְל שֶׁל הַחַתָּן וְהַמִּתָּה אָמַר שֶׁהוּא יָדַע אֹתָם עַדְיוֹ.) וְאָמַר שִׁיַּשׁ עוֹד בָּזָה דָּבָרִים שְׁרָאָה בְּחָלוֹם הַגָּיְל.

(Now, these matters were very hidden. And later our master, of blessed memory, said himself that it was a wonder, that they were singing so mightily to him there while he was lying here. The matter was hidden and very mysterious.) And he said that in the dream it appeared to him that the place where the synagogue was had a different name, and that the place to which he returned home had a different name. (Then he said that knew it and forgot it. And I was uncertain whether it was the melody that he said he knew and forgot the melody, or the place names that he said that knew and forgot. But those names of the groom and of the dead man, he said that he still knew.) And he said that there were other things that he saw in that dream. (Hayyei Moharan)

We Were Like Dreamers

No one really knows what dreams are. Whether hallucinatory wish fulfillment, the voice of the collective unconscious of mankind, a random sorting of overloaded memory circuits or the mind's struggle to circumvent the formal law of contradiction [Norman O. Brown. *Life Against Death: The Psychoanalytical Meaning of History*: Middletown. Ct.: Wesleyan University Press. 1959). P.319], no one really knows what dreams are. But everyone dreams anyway. And we Jews, from Joseph to Daniel to Freud, have interpreted everyone's dreams but our own, which we nevertheless faithfully chant from a hand-written parchment scroll....

We seek a metaphor for Torah which will return her to us once again as an *Aytz Hayim* [a tree of life]. One which yields heightened self-awareness and God's word. One which preserves clarity but not at the expense of mystery. One whose playfulness does not dilute piety. One whose public objectivity tolerates personal intimacy. In a formal Rabbinic code word: a *Holy* text.

If a people can have a psyche and think of themselves as an organic being then surely a people should be able to dream as well. There should be a series of motifs and archetypes which keep reappearing and seem to each individual dreamer, as Jung suggested, to emanate from a source transcending themselves. God would be present in those dreams even as He spoke to and is within the people themselves. Pederson, in describing the Biblical mind—our mind of an earlier time—observes that while "...the dream is a communication from God to man... it does not clash with the psychological process. The dream is a communication from God because it is a direct outcome of reality itself" [J.Pedersen. Israel: Its Life and Culture. (London: Oxford University Press 1926) vol.1 p.135].

And this is how it goes. In each generation there are encounters with the Holy Ancient One of Old. Visioned and recorded almost as if unconsciously. And some of them, by reason of their terror or subtlety, were simply unrecorded. Fragments remembered the next morning at breakfast. Slid through the cracks. Finding their way to the dream-memory of the people. And then it happens that one of the people writes, sings, legislates, scolds, or simply remembers. Perhaps with some awareness of destiny or maybe just to earn a living. No matter. They are each organically part of us and instruments of the Word. And their collective bringing to our attention is the Great Dream.

Torah then might be understood as what has been saved for us of our collective memory. A remnant of the work of ten thousand censors. And several dozen poets, prophets and teachers. The last ones of whom may have been our parents. A kind of journal of forgotten, reworked and remembered holy moments too awesome to be simply described in everyday conscious language. It is all that remains of the most penetrating incursion of waking into the earth mother Jewish people darkness of what is not the spirit but only sleep. But the memory is still there set in our bodies by our parents or our choice, as in conversion.

Now this common dream is more than a mythic belief system: for it is part of our very being [cf. Joseph Campbell, The Hero With A thousand Faces. (Princeton New Jersey: Princeton University Press. 1949) p. 19]. And that is the job of a teacher. To guide a student deeper and deeper into the dream. Peeling away one layer after another. Until we remember that the voice speaking our dreams comes from within us and from without at the same time [cf. C.G. Jung, Psychology and Religion. (New Haven: Yale University Press. 1938) p.45)] Until we see at last that the story is

true. True because it is within us. It always was. It issues from us. It is ours... It is our dream. it is a Holy text. And this dream bears a remarkable similarity to time honored notions of Torah.

Both Torah and dream are first encountered as mystery and in the final interpretation remain mystery. For both are each inexhaustible and infinitely analyzable.

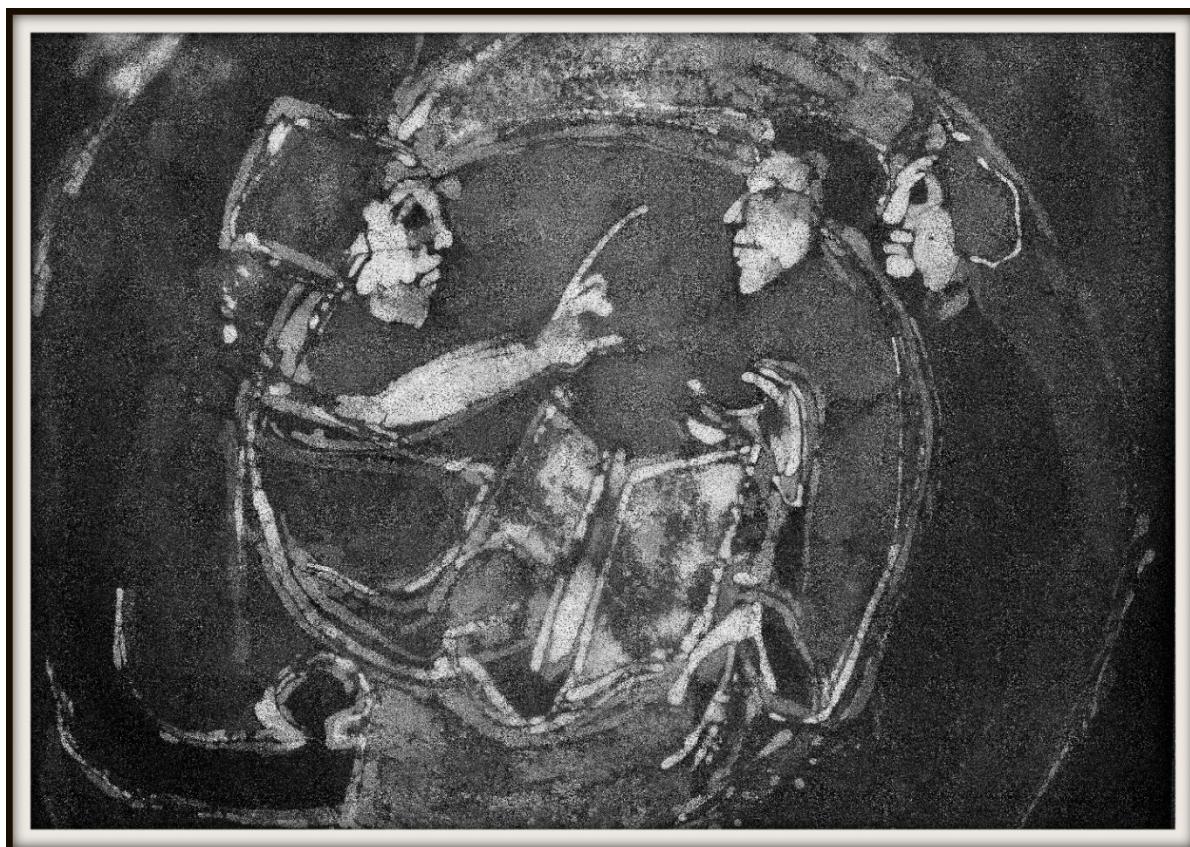
Both Torah and dream create their own internal logic and systems of space ad time. *Ayn mukdam v'ayn m'uhar ba-Torah*. There is no before or after in the Torah.

In both Torah and dream nothing is there by accident. The most trivial detail or the most nonsensical pun is there for a reason.

In both Torah and dream the story and the characters and even the very words and letters themselves are contorted, convoluted, condensed, inverted, rearranged and often out of place. But we do not dismiss such a dream.

Both Torah and dream are creations from the innermost depths of our collective and individual beings.... Both Torah and dream in moments of understanding seem to come from inside us.... And both Torah and dream share an ability to synthesize the external communal and public dimension of life with its internal, private and personal side...

(Rabbi Lawrence Kushner. Central Conference of American Rabbis Yearbook, Vol. 88, 1978)



Dream Catchers

These are among the dream images that catch the imagination of ancient sages. Be like Jacob wrestling with his angel through the night. Don't let such images loose in the morning until they offer a blessing...

What are your dream-catcher images that should be richly tended?

הַרְוָאָה One who sees a well
 הַרְוָאָה One who sees a river
 הַרְוָאָה One who sees a bird
 הַרְוָאָה One who sees a pot
 הַרְוָאָה One who sees grapes
 הַרְוָאָה One who sees a mountain
 הַרְוָאָה One who sees a horn
 הַרְוָאָה One who sees a dog
 הַרְוָאָה One who sees a lion
 הַרְוָאָה One who sees a reed
 הַרְוָאָה One who sees a pumpkin
 הַרְוָאָה One who sees an ox
 הַרְוָאָה One who sees a donkey
 הַרְוָאָה One who sees a cat
 הַרְוָאָה One who sees a white horse
 הַרְוָאָה One who sees a red horse
 הַרְוָאָה One who sees a camel
 הַרְוָאָה One who sees an elephant
 הַרְוָאָה One who sees wheat
 הַרְוָאָה One who sees barley
 הַרְוָאָה One who sees a fruit vine
 הַרְוָאָה One who sees a fig tree
 הַרְוָאָה One who sees pomegranates
 הַרְוָאָה One who sees olives
 הַרְוָאָה One who sees palm trees

הַרְוָאָה One who sees a palm branch
 הַרְוָאָה One who sees a goat
 הַרְוָאָה One who sees a citron
 הַרְוָאָה One who sees a goose
 הַרְוָאָה One who sees a rooster
 הַרְוָאָה One who sees a hen
 הַרְוָאָה One who sees eggs



NOTES