

HALACHICALLY SPEAKING

Volume 14 Issue 4



{ TOPIC }

Bothersome Dreams (*Hatavas Chalom*)



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Bothersome Dreams (*Hatavas Chalom*)

The Torah¹ and Nach² are full of cases where dreams took place. The topic of dreams is discussed at length in the last chapter of *Maseches Brachos* as well as in many *sefarim*.

We will NOT deal with what dreams are and what they mean. Rather, our discussion will relate to how someone should act after he had a bad or bothersome dream. Many people have nightmares. Should they bother them? Does it make a difference in today's society that we hear so much bothersome news which has an effect on our dreams? Is there a way to nullify the dream? All these and other issues will be addressed in the article below.

Dreams – Some Sources

The Gemara³ says that one will not dream about something he did not think about during the day.

Dreaming is said to be one-sixtieth of prophecy.⁴

A good person is shown bad dreams, and a bad person is shown good dreams.⁵

1. Refer to *Bereishis* 28:12-15, 31:10-13, 31:24, 37:5, 40:5-22, 41:1-8, 46:2, 50:18; *Bamidbar* 22:8.

2. *Shoftim* 7:10-15, *Melachim I* 3:5-15; *Daniel* 2.

3. *Maseches Brachos* 55b.

4. *Ibid.* 57b.

5. *Ibid.* 55b. Refer to *Maharsha*, *Maseches Brachos* 55b.

איך ללמוד להקדים"ה בעולמו אלא יד אמות של הלכה בלבד.... (ברכות ח')



כל השנה הלכות בכל יום מובטח להשתדל בו עולם הפא... (נדדה עני)

If one goes to bed happy he is shown a good dream.⁶

It is impossible for a dream not to have things which are not meaningless.⁷

A good dream may not come true for at least twenty-two years. This is derived from the dreams of Yosef Hatzaddik which did not develop for twenty-two years.⁸

The Gemara⁹ says that dreams have no meaning.¹⁰ Elsewhere, the Gemara¹¹ indicates that dreams are relevant. Much has been written to understand the apparent conflicting sources.¹²

Bothersome Dreams

The Gemara¹³ says that if someone is shown a bothersome dream¹⁴ and he is upset about it, he should go in front of three people and have it explained and say a specific *nusach* (see below).¹⁵

The three people should be good friends¹⁶ (even

6. *Maseches Shabbos* 30b; *Magen Avraham* 220:1.

7. *Maseches Brachos* 55a. Refer to *Maharsha*, *Maseches Brachos* 55a.

8. *Maseches Brachos* 55b. Refer to *Rashi* "m'Yosef"; *Sifsei Chachamim*, *Bereishis* 45:26.

9. *Maseches Brachos* 55b; *Shulchan Aruch*, C.M. 255:9.

10. *Zecharyah* 10:2. Refer to *Maseches Gittin* 52a; *Horayos* 13b.

11. *Maseches Nedarim* 8a; *Shulchan Aruch*, Y.D. 334:35. See *Ran*, *Maseches Nedarim* 8a "nidhu," *Tosafos* "tzorech."

12. Refer to *Maharsha*, *Maseches Brachos* 55b; *Tashbeitz* 2:128; *Yalkut Yosef* 220, footnote 2; *Siach Tefillah* page 196; *Techumin* 5, pages 403-409; *B'tzel Hachachmah* 3:108:9.

13. *Maseches Brachos* 55b.

14. This is even if it is not a bad dream (*Pri Megadim*, *Eishel Avraham* 1; *Mishnah Berurah* 1). Refer to *Avnei Yashpei* 4:34:6. Also see *Pshat V'iyun* on *Maseches Brachos* page 189:500.

15. *Rosh*, *Maseches Brachos* 9:5; *Tur* 220; *Shulchan Aruch* 220:1. The Rambam did not bring down this halachah or the halachah of saying the *nusach* during *birkas kohanim* (see later on). However, he does bring down the halachah of fasting for a bad dream on Shabbos (*Rambam*, *Hilchos Ta'anis* 1:12). It is possible that the Rambam feels one should not be concerned about having bothersome dreams. See *Techumin* 5, page 413, footnote 22.

16. *Shulchan Aruch* 220:1; *Levush* 1.

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relatives¹⁷). The *Drishah*¹⁸ explains that the dream follows the interpretation, and if one uses people who dislike him, they may interpret the dream in a bad manner. Therefore, only those who love you are taken. In addition, when they say the *nusach* they are *davening* for the dreamer, and *davening* by friends is more effective.¹⁹

Some base this concept on the Gemara²⁰ that if one sees his friend drowning in the river he must save him. So too, when one's friend has a bad or bothersome dream and he asks him to be part of the group which says the *nusach* of *hatavas chalom*, he should do so.²¹

Hatavas chalom is permitted on Shabbos.²² However, it does not seem to be practiced.²³

What to Think About

When one is standing before the three people he should think about the dream he had.²⁴

Woman

We do not find any reference for a woman to do this ceremony. Nevertheless, if she wishes she may stand in front of three women and say the *nusach*.²⁵ If she does not understand the words, she may say it in a language she understands.²⁶

17. *Teshuvos V'hanhagos* 2:256.

18. 220:1.

19. *Avnei Yashpei* 4:34:1.

20. *Maseches Sanhedrin* 73a.

21. *Machatzis Hashekel* 220. See *Mishnah Berurah* 3.

22. *Mishnah Berurah* 220:3.

23. *Kaf Hachaim* 220:8.

24. *Magen Avraham* 220:1; *Elyah Rabbah* 1; *Kaf Hachaim* 2; *Chessed Lalafim* 1.

25. *Siach Tefillah* page 198:9. Refer to *Avnei Yashpei* 4:34:1.

26. *Kaf Hachaim* 220:13.

איך על להקב"ה בעולמו אלא י
אמות של הלכה בלבד... (ברכות ח)

However, her husband can represent her. He should stand in front of three people on her behalf, or recite the customary *nusach* during *duchaning*.²⁷

Don't Worry – Have Fear of Hashem

The Aruch Hashulchan²⁸ says that instead of doing *hatavas chalom*, one should increase in *teshuvah*, *tzedakah*, and good deeds. In addition, the main focus is to increase one's fear of Hashem. By doing this, one will not be frightened by a bothersome dream he may have had.

Fasting Even on Shabbos

Shabbos is supposed to be enjoyable and one is not meant to fast on Shabbos. Nevertheless, the Gemara²⁹ states that fasting for a (bad) dream³⁰ is like fire which destroys straw³¹ (together with repentance³²), and this is even permitted on Shabbos.³³ This is brought in halachah as well.³⁴ Some maintain that fasting is permitted on Shabbos since the dream is bothersome and is a possible danger.³⁵ However,

27. *Piskei Teshuvos* 220, footnote 22.

28. 220:4.

29. *Maseches Shabbos* 11a.

30. See *Shulchan Aruch* 288:5 and *Mishnah Berurah* 10 about which dreams qualify for fasting on Shabbos. Refer to *Tzitz Eliezer* 13:36.

31. *Maseches Ta'anis* 12b; *Shulchan Aruch* 220:2; *Levush* 220:2. See *Drishah* 220:2; *Kaf Hachaim* 21.

32. *Magen Avraham* 3; *Elyah Rabbah* 3; *Sefer Chassidim* 226; *Mishnah Berurah* 6. Refer to *Mishnah Berurah* 288:7.

33. *Shulchan Aruch* 220:2, 288:4; *Levush* 220:2; *Yechaveh Da'as* 4:24. Refer to *Magen Avraham* 4 if ten people are fasting on Shabbos. If one has a bad dream on a fast day he does not have to fast two days, just the fast day (*Biur Halachah* 288). See *Magen Avraham* 288:3; *Mishnah Berurah* 288:8.

34. *Rosh*, *Maseches Brachos* 9:5; *Beis Yosef* 220; *Shulchan Aruch* 288:4. Refer to *Shulchan Aruch* 288:5 and *Mishnah Berurah* 15 which mention that fasting on Shabbos these days is limited. Also see *Birchei Yosef* 288:3.

35. *Ohr Zarua* 407. Refer to *Avnei Yashpei* 4:34:2.

כל השווה הלכות בכל יום מובטח לו שהוא בן עולם הבא... (גדה עב)

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it is not common to fast on Shabbos.³⁶ This is especially so if it will take away from one's learning on Shabbos.³⁷ However, if one is really bothered by his dream he should fast.³⁸

There is no obligation to fast when having a bad dream.³⁹

One who fasts needs to do so on the day he had the bad dream.⁴⁰

The *hatavah* as well needs to be done on the same day.⁴¹ Some maintain that it should be done after Shacharis.⁴² If it was not done on that day, it still helps somewhat to do it on a different day.⁴³

Pregnant or nursing women should not fast for a bad dream.⁴⁴ Rather, they should redeem a bad dream by paying money to *tzedakah*.⁴⁵

One who did fast on Shabbos⁴⁶ needs to fast on Sunday as well,⁴⁷ since he did not fulfill his enjoyment of Shabbos.⁴⁸ Some maintain there is no requirement to fast on Sunday,

36. *Yechaveh Da'as* 4:24. See *Mishnas Yosef* 7:65; *Orchos Rabbeinu* 1, page 92:107.

37. *Avnei Yashpei* 4:34:3.

38. Opinion of Harav Elyashiv *zt"l* quoted in *Avnei Yashpei* 4:34:3.

39. *Magen Avraham* 3; *Mishnah Berurah* 7. See *V'darashta V'chakarta* 1:33.

40. *Shulchan Aruch* 220:2; *Levush* 2.

41. *Mishnah Berurah* 2; *Aruch Hashulchan* 7; *She'eilas Rav* page 91:9.

42. *Elyah Rabbah* 1; *Pri Megadim Eishel Avraham* 2; *Mishnah Berurah* 2; *Aruch Hashulchan* 5. Some suggest to do it even before Shacharis (*Aruch Hashulchan* 5). If done after Shacharis one says "leich echol b'simchah" if one is not fasting (*Pri Megadim* and *Mishnah Berurah* *ibid.*; *Sha'ar Hatzion* 5).

43. *Machatzis Hashekel* 220.

44. *Elyah Rabbah* 3; *Mishnah Berurah* 5.

45. *Elyah Rabbah* *ibid.*; *Pri Megadim, Eishel Avraham* 3; *Mishnah Berurah* *ibid.*

46. If one does so his bad decree of seventy years is ripped up (*Maseches Brachos* 31b). It is brought that Harav Chaim Brisker *zt"l* would fast on Shabbos a *ta'anis chalom* (*M'Peninei Harav* page 87). Refer to *Yagel Yaakov* page 32; *Orchos Rabbeinu* 1, page 288. In regard to Kiddush in this situation see *Taz* 288:3.

47. *Maseches Brachos* 31b; *Shulchan Aruch*, O.C. 288:4. See *Mishnah Berurah* 288:9 if Sunday is Chanukah or Purim.

48. *Rambam, Hilchos Ta'anis* 1:12; *Tur*, O.C. 220; *Shulchan Aruch*, O.C. 288:4; *Levush* 220:2.

but the practice is that it is required.⁴⁹ However, if one is weak and cannot fast two days in a row, he may fast any day of the week instead of Sunday.⁵⁰

Harav Yosef Ber Soloveitchik *zt"l* would explain that the reason for fasting on Sunday is not only because one did not eat on Shabbos and did not fulfill enjoyment on Shabbos. Rather, the fast on Shabbos is not considered fasting, since Shabbos is not a day to fast; therefore, one has to fast for the dream on Sunday.⁵¹

Not Worrying about Dreams

A dream after a fast day can be ignored, as it was caused by the weakness of the fast.⁵²

Based on this, if one has a lot of pain and then dreams a bad dream, one should not worry about it.⁵³

Today, we live in a world where we are constantly exposed to terrible stories of violence and suffering. Although it may not happen close to us, people do think about it, and this can cause frightening dreams. Therefore, one who dreams about such things these days does not have what to worry about since they are not true dreams.⁵⁴

When one eats to satiation before bed and has a bothersome dream he should not pay attention to the dream.⁵⁵

If one has thoughts during the day of something which

49. *Bach* 220.

50. *Shulchan Aruch*, O.C. 288:4; *Levush* 220:2.

51. *M'peninei Harav* page 86.

52. *Sha'ar Hatzion* 220:1.

53. *Ibid.*

54. *Piskei Teshuvah* 220:1.

55. *Aruch Hashulchan* 220:1, 8.

כל השנה הלכות בכל יום מובטח לו שהוא בן עולם הבא... (תדה עב)



is bothersome, and he dreams about it at night, there is no need to worry about it.⁵⁶

One way to avoid bad dreams at night is to recite *birkas hamapil* before going to bed.⁵⁷

Nusach during Birkas Kohanim

Another method to annul the bad dream is to recite the customary *nusach* when the *kohanim* are *duchaning*.⁵⁸ Some explain that a dream is one-sixtieth of prophecy, and there are sixty letters in the *brachos* of *birkas kohanim*.⁵⁹ Others say that is a time of “*ratzon*,” so it is fitting to say a *tefillah* regarding the dream.⁶⁰ Some compare this to the rule that an item can be nullified when it is mixed with sixty times its volume. *Birkas kohanim* is a prophecy, which has the power to nullify the bothersome dream.⁶¹

In *Chutz L’Aretz* where they *duchan* only on Yom Tov, it is said when the *kohanim* sing the words of *birkas kohanim*. In Eretz Yisrael, however, they *duchan* daily and the *kohanim* do not sing the words, so it is said when the *kohanim* say the words.⁶² It is only said by someone who dreamt the night before, not the entire *tzibbur*.⁶³

The *poskim*⁶⁴ say since we only have *birkas kohanim* on the *shalosh regalim*, one may say the *tefillah* of *Ribono Shel Olam*

56. Ibid. 220:1.

57. *Al Pi HaTorah on Bereishis* page 423, footnote 225; *Divrei Chalomos* (Schwartz) page 142. Others say if one dreams a lot of bad dreams he should check his *mezuzos* (*Divrei Chalomos* [Schwartz] page 142).

58. *Maseches Brachos* 55b; *Rosh, Maseches Brachos* 9:5; *Meiri, Maseches Brachos* 55b; *Shulchan Aruch* 130:1; *Aruch Hashulchan* 220:5. See *Orchos Rabbeinu* 1, page 91.

59. Refer to *Midrash Talpilot* 8. See *Noam Elimelech, Parshas Terumah*.

60. *Tosafos, Maseches Sotah* 39b “*im*.”

61. *Toras Chaim, Maseches Bava Kamma* 55a “*haroeh*.”

62. *Siach Tefillah* page 197.

63. *Nesias Kapayim K’halachah* page 202, footnote 7.

64. *Taz* 130:3; *Shulchan Aruch Harav* 1; *Mishnah Berurah* 1; *Aruch Hashulchan* 3.

איך ללמוד להגיד את המעשרים של הלכה בלבד... (ברכות ח)

כל השנה הלכות בכל יום מובטח להשתחוץ לו שהוא בן עולם הבא... (תדה עב)

even if he does not know if he had a dream. If one knows that he had a bad dream then he does the *hatavah* mentioned above.⁶⁵

The *tefillah* is said when the *kohanim* are saying *v'yishmirecha, vichuneka, and shalom*.⁶⁶ Some say the *Yehi Ratzon* by *shalom* instead.⁶⁷ The *Mishnah Berurah*⁶⁸ says that one should not say the *Yehi Ratzon* but the custom is to recite it.⁶⁹ When Yom Tov falls out on Shabbos, the *minhag* is not to recite either the *Ribono Shel Olam* nor the *Yehi Ratzon*.⁷⁰

There is a discussion whether a *kohen* may say the *nusach* as well.⁷¹

Nusach to Say

The *nusach* of what to say when mentioning the bothersome dream in front of three people is printed in *siddurim*. The custom is to say חלמא טבא חזאי seven times.⁷²

65. *Aruch Hashulchan* 130:1.

66. *Rema* 128:45.

67. Based on the Arizal.

68. 130:5.

69. Harav Yisroel Belsky *zt"l*.

70. *Magen Avraham* 130:1; *Mishnah Berurah* 4; *Aruch Hashulchan* 7. See *Teshuvos V'hanhagos* 2:104 which discusses some who have the custom to recite it on Shabbos and Yom Tov.

71. Refer to *Rivevos Ephraim* 6, page 62:4; *Chashukei Chemed, Maseches Yoma* pages 186-187.

72. *Beis Yosef* 220; *Prisha* 3; *Bach* 220; *Levush* 1; *Magen Avraham* 2; *Elyah Rabbah* 2, 4. See *Al Pi HaTorah* on *Bereishis* page 421, footnote 214.

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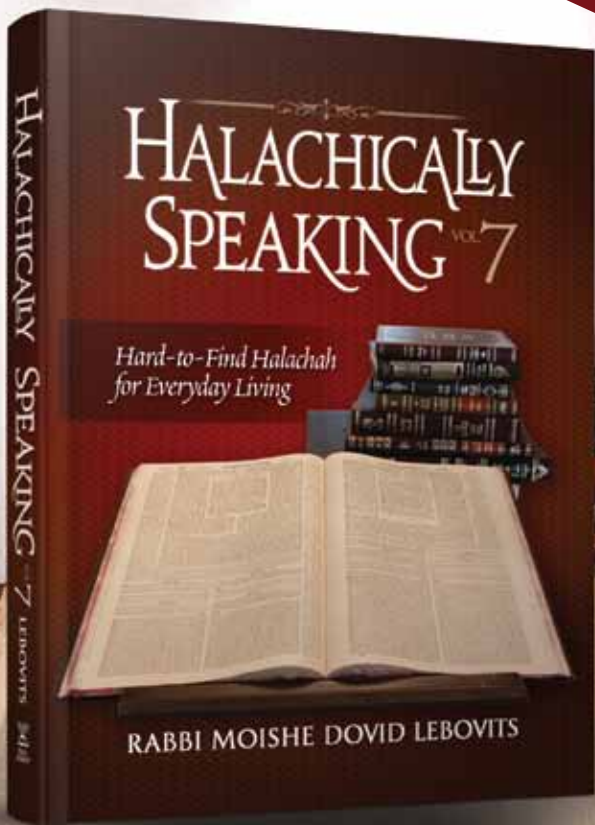
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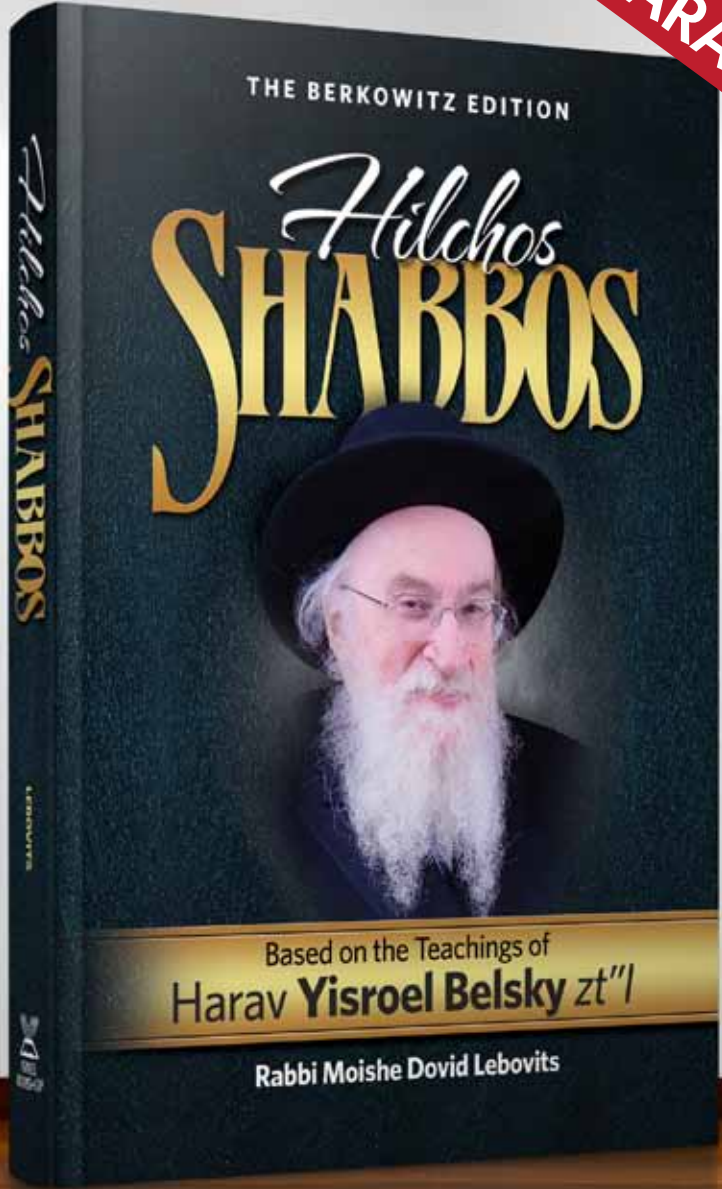


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