



# *The Hakuk Edition* **English Topics on the Daf**

*Dedicated l'refuah sheleima for Yaakov ben Victoria*

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**YEVAMOS DAF 93 IS DEDICATED:**

**לזיינ חיים מתתיהו בן אהרון מאיר**

## **Yevamos Daf 93**

### The Potency of Dreams in Halacha

On our daf we find an unusual way to decide a sheilah – a dream. Rav Yannai and Rav Chisda discuss a few options of what the dream signified; was Rav Yannai correct in what he did the day before?

A basic question that arises, though, is how can he pasken based on a dream? The Gemara in Gittin (52a) asserts that “dreams don’t make any difference,” since most of them are simply regurgitations of the events of the day and any interpretation you say for them can come true (Brachos 55-56). Why does our Gemara take the dream seriously, halachically?

The Tashbetz (Vol. 2:128) addresses this issue. In some places in Shas the Gemara takes dreams into account and in others it does not. What are the guidelines? If one dreamed that he was put in cherem (excommunicated), it needs hatara. On the other hand, in Sanhedrin 30a it dismisses a dream? He suggests that dreams may have meaning – but only to

the person who had the dream. That is why Chazal emphasize the importance of fasting after a bad dream, permitted even on Shabbos. Thus, the Gemara in Sanhedrin 30a says “the baal hachalom came;” meaning, the dreamer came to tell the man his dream. Since the relevant party didn’t dream it himself, it is not significant.

But the Tashbetz is not satisfied with this differentiation since the other Gemara states unequivocally that dreams are valueless. Rather, he elaborates, if they come on the heels of activities such as overeating or drinking, they are probably meaningless; otherwise they might have portent (see more details there). Additionally, it depends if it’s relevant to money matters, in which the rule is to leave it as it was, or if it relates to issurim. If one dreams he’s put into cherem, he should be machmir and get a hetter, just in case.

He cites the Gemara in Brachos (55b) that some dreams emanate from angelic sources and are true, while others come

from shedim (evil spirits) and are not. It is not always clear which is which, however. He reports that his Rebbi, the Rivash, obeyed a member of his community who said he had a dream that the whole town should fast beha"b (a series of three fasts, Monday/Thursday/Monday). But the rest of the people didn't cooperate, and the Rav himself regretted it. Why did he take him so seriously? The Tashbetz says it was because a man had once told the Rivash that he had a dream that the Rav's house burnt down, and the Rivash ignored it. Then his house burnt down...

In Teshuvos Shivas Tzion (Siman 52) he emphasizes that only one dream in a million is potent. Only if it resembles prophesy may it fall into the category of Chazal that "dreams are 1/60th of prophesy" and we must regard it seriously. What are prophesies? Messages about future events. Thus, only if the dream dictates some message for the future do we act on it. A dream about a cherem may hint to some future calamity about to befall the person, as in Heaven they already excommunicated him, chas v'sholom. Otherwise, dreams are irrelevant.

Another take on this issue is defined by the Ritva, that essentially one need be concerned over his dreams only if he feels frightened or bewildered by them. In that case, he should be worried that they may be messages from Heaven. He should do teshuvah and possibly fast. And as the Gemara stresses, it is best to do it that day, before the inspiration or fright wears off (Taanis 12b).

Rishonim argued if a neder (oath) made during a dream needs hatara. The Shulchan Aruch (Y.D. 210:2) first quotes the Rosh that you don't have to do anything about it, and then adds "some say" it needs hatara. Not only that, but usually three people suffice to annul an

neder, but here ten people are necessary, like a cherem in a dream. Why? Even a cherem doesn't need ten men to annul it, but a dream-cherem does. Since we treat it like a Heavenly verdict, we need a minyan to evoke the Shechina and overturn it. So too, a dream-neder might have such bearing.

Generally we pasken like the first opinion cited in the Shulchan Aruch, but here he concludes that one should follow the second. The Shach says the minhag is indeed to do hatara for them, and even women must be pardoned in this way. But the Taz upholds the authorities that it is not necessary; nedorim are valid only if one uttered them with intent! A dream is surely not really considered intention. It is only a chumra l'chatchila, and if a married woman dreamed, her husband may do hafora for her (see Y.D. 274). He ends off with a psak from the Maharal that it doesn't need hatara at all.

In our days, the Chazon Ish was not overly concerned about bad dreams. Even for himself, he wrote that the most he did was say the "Yehi ratzon" during Birchas Kohanim. They report that at times he told others to do hataras chalom, as is printed in some siddurs, but no more than that (Kovetz Igros Vol. 2:149; Maaseh Ish Vol. 3 pp. 164-5). Similarly, the son of the Kotzker Rebbe tells how his father dismissed petitioners' worries over their dreams, since our spiritual stature is much lower than in earlier generations. In those times, dreams may have been messages from Heaven, but our dreams are insignificant (Nachalas Avos p. 38).