

# Orchos HaAmud

Weekly Presentation Highlighting an Amud of the Week



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## BERACHOS 55B

BY RABBI AVIGDOR BERENSTEIN

“When Shmuel had a bad dream, he would say [quoting Zecharia 10:2] ‘dreams speak falsehood’. When he had a good dream, he would say, ‘Do dreams speak falsehood? It is written (Bamidbar 12:6) ‘in a dream I speak to him’. Rava asked this as a contradiction between these two *psukim*. The answer is that dreams that come through an angel are true; dreams that come through a demon speak falsehood.” (based on *Brochos* 55b)

The *Gemara* speaks at length about a variety of dreams and their interpretations, and about how truthful they may be. It also mentions the concept of *hatovas chalom* – rectifying a dream – for someone who had a bad dream and is gloomy. This question is relevant to this day. Many people want to know whether they should take dreams seriously and act accordingly, since it may be the kind of dream that “in a dream I speak to him”, or whether to ignore it, assuming that it is a dream of those “dreams speak falsehood”.

In *Shulchan Aruch*, the entire *Orach Chaim Siman* 220 deals with how to rectify a bad dream and the laws of fasting for it. In *Siman* 288 it says that fasting for a bad dream on *Shabbos* is permitted, but that some say that nowadays one should not fast on *Shabbos* because we do not know which dreams are good or bad. In many other places in *Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim*, other details of this fast are clarified, such as on which days one may fast.

Also, *Shulchan Aruch Yoreh Deah Siman* 344:35 says that if one dreams that he was *menudeh* – ostracized – then he must suspect that he was ostracized in Heaven and seek to have it annulled.

However regarding nowadays, Rav Chaim Kanievsky *ztz"l* writes (in his soon-to-be published *Kunteres Hazichronos Siman* 14:24) that he heard that the *Chazon Ish* was lenient not to fast for a bad dream because generally, we cannot assume that a dream is meaningful since we cannot consider ourselves worthy of receiving Heavenly messages. Since fasting is uncomfortable and adversely affects one’s learning, one should not fast for the unlikely possibility that his dream is meaningful. The *Chazon Ish* himself writes (*Kovetz Igros* Vol. II *Siman* 149) that he paid no attention to his bad dreams. Similarly, *Orchos Rabeinu* (Vol. I p.130) writes that the *Chazon Ish* did not do *hatovas chalom* or even say the *Ribono Shel Olam* prayer by *Bircas Cohanim* because he held that nowadays, all dreams are products of one’s thoughts and may be disregarded.

Someone asked what to do about a dream for which the *Yaabetz* says to fast even on *Shabbos*, and the *Chazon Ish* advised him to say the *Ribono Shel Olam* prayer by *Bircas Cohanim*. (*Kovetz Igros* loc. cit.) Rav Chaim Kanievsky *ztz"l* also did not fast when he had a bad dream. (*Dalet Amos Shel Halacha* p. 305) Once, when I asked him about the law of fasting for a bad

dream, he replied, “Do you think that Heaven reveals things to you?” This was his opinion, that nowadays, the chances that a dream is meaningful are very slim.

Regarding dreams that the *Shulchan Aruch (Orach Chaim Siman* 288) says warrant fasting even on *Shabbos*, the *Chazon Ish* ruled (*Maaseh Ish* Vol. I p. 160) that although really one need not fast nowadays that dreams come from one’s thoughts and nerves, since the *Shulchan Aruch* says this law, one should observe it. Therefore, on a weekday, one should fast, but never on *Shabbos*.

Rav Chaim Kanievsky *ztz"l* related (*Derech Sicha* Vol. I p. 176) that someone asked the Steipler *ztz"l* how we can say that dreams speak falsehood if he once dreamed that his brother passed away and it later turned out that his brother had passed away on that night? The Steipler replied that it does not mean that dreams cannot be true, just that they are unreliable, just as it is not impossible for a liar to sometimes tell the truth.

A woman once stayed overnight in a house in Jerusalem and dreamed that a man approached her and said that he had lived in that house fifty years earlier, that he had been killed in the war in 1948, and that no one had said *Kaddish* for him. He asked her to help him in this matter. When she napped by day, the dream was repeated. Although initially she was skeptical, a longtime neighbor confirmed the facts, and that the deceased had had no sons, only daughters. She contacted his family, and one son-in-law accompanied her to ask Rav Chaim Kanievsky *ztz"l* what to do. After asking them several other questions, he replied (*Derech Sicha* Vol. I p. 177) that they should hire someone to say *Kaddish* for him.

On the other hand, a man appeared to his son in a dream and told him that he owed money to a publisher who had printed his *sefer*. When the son spoke to the publisher, he was told that his father owed nothing. In this case, Rav Chaim *ztz"l* told him (*Derech Sicha* Vol. I p. 178) not to

worry, because dreams are usually meaningless. The most one must do is to investigate, if possible, and since they had done that, there was no reason to be concerned.

Rav Chaim *ztz"l* added that some time before, a *yungerman* had told him that his father had appeared to him in a dream and told him that he owed a certain person money. When the son went to pay his father’s debt, the lender was shocked, and asked him how he knew about it. He then told the lender about his dream. Rav Chaim *ztz"l* explained this, saying that generally, there is no substance to dreams, but apparently, this deceased father had been very meticulous in his lifetime regarding monetary matters and paying debts, so he was granted permission in Heaven to inform his son about his outstanding loan.

On this same subject, Rav Moshe Mordechai Shulsinger *ztz"l* related (*Pninei Rabeinu Hagriz* p. 90) that once, the Steipler *ztz"l* spoke at length about the topics of dreams mentioned in our *Gemara* and about *hatovas chalom*, and someone mentioned the custom of the Brisker Rav *ztz"l*. It is said that he made *hatovas chalom* very often; some say that he tried to do it almost every day.

The Steipler responded that the Brisker Rav *ztz"l* was not afraid of the dream or of what might happen, because he feared nothing but *Hashem*, the Torah, and *halacha*. He made *hatovas chalom* because he was afraid of the words of the *Gemara*, meaning, the *Gemara* says that one who is gloomy because of a bad dream should make *hatovas chalom*, so we see from the *Gemara* that there is reason to feel gloomy, which shows that the dream may portend ill, so one should make *hatovas chalom*. Therefore, the Brisker Rav was afraid that any of his many dreams might be one of the dreams that the *Gemara* says is a reason to feel gloomy, and by not making *hatovas chalom*, he would not be fulfilling the obligation set down by the *Gemara*. That was his only fear, but he surely was not afraid of the dreams.

*Amud HaYomi recently began its 1st cycle through Shas with Masechta Brachos! This historic initiative will enable deeper comprehension of Shas. Additionally, there are optional monthly bechinot with stipends, which affords one a much greater opportunity to be koneh Shas through Dirshu’s proven retention and accountability methods.*

### UPCOMING AMUD HAYOMI LIMUD SCHEDULE

DAF HAYOMI	AMUD HAYOMI	DATE	תאריך	יום
בבא קמא פו	ברכות נד.	1/28/24	יח שבט	א
בבא קמא פח	ברכות נד.	1/29/24	יט שבט	ב
בבא קמא פט	ברכות נה.	1/30/24	כ שבט	ג
בבא קמא צ	ברכות נה.	1/31/24	כא שבט	ד
בבא קמא צא	ברכות נו.	2/1/24	כב שבט	ה
בבא קמא צב	ברכות נו.	2/2/24	כג שבט	ו
בבא קמא צג	ברכות נו.	2/3/24	כד שבט	שבת
בבא קמא צד	ברכות נו.	2/4/24	כה שבט	א
בבא קמא צה	ברכות נח.	2/5/24	כו שבט	ב
בבא קמא צו	ברכות נח.	2/6/24	כז שבט	ג
בבא קמא צז	ברכות נט.	2/7/24	כח שבט	ד
בבא קמא צח	ברכות נט.	2/8/24	כט שבט	ה
בבא קמא צט	ברכות ס.	2/9/24	ל שבט	ו
בבא קמא ק	ברכות ס.	2/10/24	א אדר א	שבת