

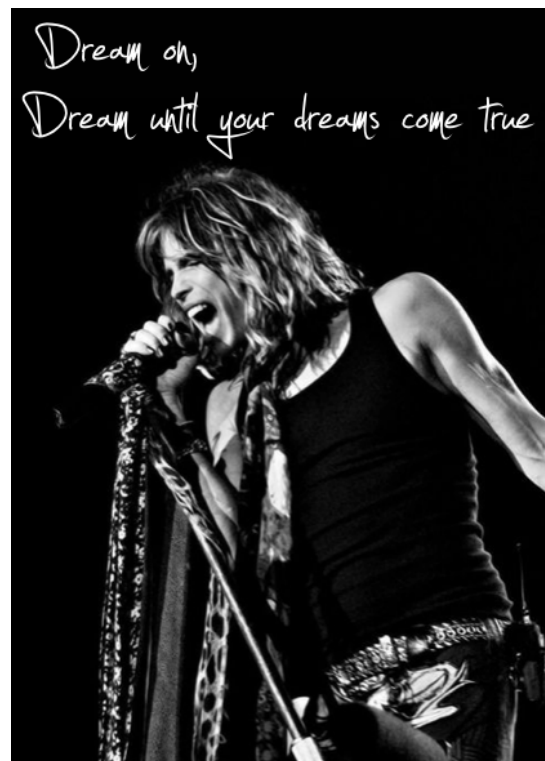
HADRACHA CHOVERET

**BNEI
AKIVA**
UNITED KINGDOM



BNEI AKIVA'S WEEKLY EDUCATIONAL HANDBOOK FOR MADRICHIM

Vayeishev. Dream on



Concrete Concepts.

1. We make our own dreams.
2. Yosef interprets dreams based on drawing from and reading into his own experiences.
3. We have the power to realise our dreams – if we choose to use it!

Bnei Akiva Svivot 5783· Madrichim Pack

Dear Madrichim,

This week's choveret is about dreaming. I hope to combine perception, philosophy, Tanakh and Zionism in this one, so let's see if it works. It gets a bit deep, so bear with me hear and let's push our intellectual faculties together. Please do ask me any questions you want about this topic! Additionally, the Discussion Points are quite scarce, so please feel free to discuss any parts you want to!

As this is your last week with the chanichim, make sure to wish them a Chanukka Sameach and that you look forward to seeing each and every one of them next year (even if you don't)!

Remember we're here to support you in whatever way we can! Rafi can be contacted at svivot@bauk.org or 0208 209 1319 ext. 4, and I can be contacted at chinuch@bauk.org or 0208 209 1319 ext. 5.

BVCLTVA,

Ben

P.S. For those who like the cover art, Yngwie and Dio did it WAY better:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H7KTRpmeTdM>

Week 9· Dream On

The Recurrence of Dreams·

Dreams seem to keep popping up all the time lately (especially if you're the Rambam, because then all interactions involving an angel are also dreams). Let's recount some key ones from this part of *Bereishit*:

- 📖 Ya'akov's dream of the ladder
- 📖 Yosef's dream of the grain
- 📖 Yosef's dream of the sun, moon and the stars
- 📖 The butler's dream of the grapevine
- 📖 The baker's dream of the birds pecking at the bread
- 📖 Pharaoh's dream of the thin cows and fat cows
- 📖 Pharaoh's dream of the thin ears of grain and fat ears of grain

What is behind these dreams? Why are dreams significant? How do we realise them? All excellent questions. Let's take a deeper dive into the dreamworld...

What is the Dreamland?

This is what the Internet, repository of all knowledge, has to say about the scientific side of things:

Dream study is popular with scientists exploring the mind-brain problem. Some "propose to reduce aspects of dream phenomenology to neurobiology." [27] But current science cannot specify dream physiology in detail.



So given that this is a messy topic that spills over into the problem of perception and consciousness, and because I said I would tone down the deep stuff in the *chovrot*, let's simply say that the jury is still out on this in the scientific community.

Let's look instead at the approach of the Rambam, still very much tied to the philosophy of perception.

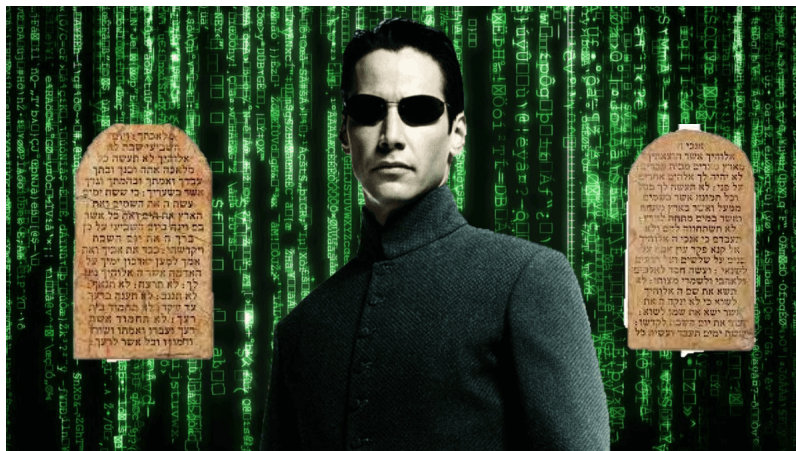


The Gemara states: "אֶחָד מִשְׁשִׁים לְנִבְיָאָה" — אחד a dream is one sixtieth of prophecy" – Berakhot 57b

What is prophecy, and what is dreaming? Obviously they are related to each other, otherwise the Gemara would not have compared them. According to Rambam, prophecy is not a magical phenomenon; it's a natural event that occurs when you clear your mind and imaginative faculty of distracting misplaced physical drives. By necessity, when your mind is clear in that sense, you are thinking along an intellectual plane and able to connect to the Divine intellect, which is the *ruach hakodesh*. Prophecy is just an extension of this, which is God speaking to you in that state.

Rambam (Guide II:36) explains that when sleeping, your mind is free to wander without the physical constraints of spacetime. Kind of like being in The Matrix (he doesn't make that direct reference) – you know how in dreams you can run but never fast enough? Or hours can pass in the space of minutes? So, to the extent that you have freed your mind from the shackles of conventional reality, you can apprehend Divine truth and align your intellect with

God; just like in the Matrix: to the extent you apply apophysis to your mode of thought and deconstruct reality around you, you can manipulate The Matrix.



Does this make Neo Moshe Rabbeinu?!

You are the Dreamer.



"I could have been a dreamer" – Dio, 1987

Thus the images our brain produces while we're asleep (i.e. our emergent consciousness) are strongly linked to our life experiences and thought processes we undertake. Consider also the following Gemara:

מַעֲשֵׂה בְּחֶסֶד אֶחָד... שָׁמַע שְׁתֵּי רוּחוֹת שֶׁמְסַפְּרוֹת זֶה לָזֶה. אָמְרָה חֶדָּא לַחֲבֵרְתָּהּ: חֲבֵרְתִּי, בּוֹאִי וְנִשְׁוֹט בְּעוֹלָם, וְנִשְׁמַע מֵאַחֲוֵי הַפְּרָגוֹד מַה פּוֹרְעָנוֹת בָּא לְעוֹלָם? אָמְרָה לָהּ חֲבֵרְתָּהּ: אֵינִי יְכוּלָּה, שֶׁאֲנִי קְבוּרָה בְּמַחְצֶלֶת שֶׁל קָנִים.

THERE IS A STORY OF A PIOUS MAN [WHO WENT TO A CEMETERY]... HE HEARD TWO 'SPIRITS' TALKING TO EACH OTHER. ONE SAID TO ITS FRIEND, 'YO G, LET'S DITCH THIS CROWD AND SPLIT, SO THAT WE CAN HEAR FROM 'BEHIND THE CURTAIN' WHAT BAD THINGS ARE ON THE WAY.' ITS COMPATRIOT REPLIED, 'I CANNOT, FOR I AM BURIED IN A REED MAT.'

Talmud Bavli, Berakhot 18b

This is a whack story for many reasons. But let's just focus on one part – the 'spirit' who says that it can't leave, as it's buried in a reed mat. Why can't the spirit go out in a reed mat? Rav



Dessler explains that **the reality you experience in the next world is based on how you lived in this world**. The world to come is an emergent reality of this world, not some magical 72-virgins-style 'paradise'. This 'spirit' had lived its life in an excessively physical way, such that even after death, it doesn't want to go outside and be seen in something as unfashionable as a reed mat!

In a similar way, our dreams are the output of our minds based on **our own actions** in our waking hours. We make our own dreams. Or, on a deeper level, we perceive reality at the level to which we have grown to perceive it. So it should be no surprise that the internal reprojections of my perceived reality (i.e. my dreams) involve me proofreading an endless number of Shabbat Lashem articles, folding 50 cover letters,

stuffing an endless pile of printed Shabbat Lashems into a mass of unending envelopes... and then waking up screaming because I left in a grammatical error, packed the wrong number and stamped the wrong date on the envelope. But hey, that's just me!

Discussion point 1: Sit and think for a while. Can you see any way in which your way of living and thought processes have influenced the content and manner of your dreams?

One final point is required: to return to the role of the prophet. True, dreams are based on the imaginative faculty running free. But the prophet receives a message from God, free of his or her own projections, and yet **clothes** the message in a metaphor based on his or her own imaginative faculty. So for example, the prophecies of Yeshaya – who was a member of the royal family – are very regal and grand in their descriptions. Conversely, Yirmiya, who is scorned and imprisoned, understands and then gives over his prophecies in a very gritty manner, fitting his life experiences.

Will Any Dream Do?

Let's return to the immediate context: the dreams in *Bereishit*. Yosef has two dreams: the first utilises an agricultural metaphor, the second a celestial one. Now, the brothers hate Yosef after the first but they absolutely can't bear him after the second! Why?

Rabbi Silverman once suggested that the **format** of the dream is the key issue here. Yosef first dreams about grain – but who doesn't?! It's the middle of the Bronze Age and you're living in the fertile crescent! Many other characters dream about grain (=earthly matters).

But stars? That's serious now – Yosef is thinking in terms of more than just the physical realm. In *Bereishit*, the only people who think in those terms are the *avot* – Avraham is told to count the **stars**, Ya'akov sees a ladder the top of which is in **heaven** – and now Yosef sees himself as the chosen one continuing that line.



So not any dream will do. The dreams mean something specific, and their form and content is very important. This is why the butler dreams of vines, and the baker of bread. This is also how Yosef interprets Pharaoh's dreams.

Rabb Fohrman shows how Yosef read into his own life experiences to understand Pharaoh's dream. The way Pharaoh describes the cows is:

וְהָיָה מִן־הָיָאָר עֹלֹת שֶׁבַע פָּרוֹת בְּרִיאוֹת בָּשָׂר וַיֵּצֵא תֹאֵר וַתִּרְעֶינָה בָּאָחוּ:

'And behold, coming up out of the Nile seven cows of healthy flesh and beautiful of form, and they pastured in the marsh.'

וְהִנֵּה שִׁבְעַפְרוֹת אַחֲרוֹת עֹלוֹת אַחֲרֵיהֶן דְּלוֹת וְרָעוֹת תֹּאֵר מֵאֵד **וְרָקוֹת** בָּשָׂר לֹא־רֵאִיתִי כָהֵנָּה בְּכָל־
אֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם לְרַע:

'And behold, seven more cows were coming out after them, poorly and very bad of form, barely any flesh [lit. **thin** of flesh] on them – I never saw anything so bad in the whole of Egypt!'

The Torah is drawing something out here. Who in Yosef's life is 'yefat to'ar', 'beautiful of form', in contrast to someone who is 'rakkot'? Rachel and Leah! The pasuk recounts that **וְרַחֵל הָיְתָה יְפַת־תֹּאֵר** – the eyes of Leah were *rakkot*, tender, while Rachel was beautiful of form! (Yes the word is spelled with a *kaf* not a *kuf*, but that's because this is an instance of wordplay in Tanakh, not allusion. Two different literary techniques.) And where is the number seven in all this? Ya'akov had to work for **seven** years to marry both Rachel and Leah, and so the seven cows represent seven years! From there the rest is easy.

In other words, Yosef drew on his own experience to interpret the dreams based on how Pharaoh recounted them to him. The experience and intellectual and imaginative faculty of the dreamer and interpreter are key when it comes to the dreams.

'I'm Dreaming of a ~~White Christmas~~ Zionist Channukah'

Channuka is a festival that celebrates Jewish self-determination. As Rambam writes in the *halakhot* of Channuka:

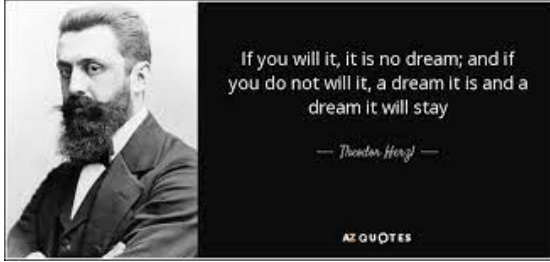
וַגְּבְרוּ בְּנֵי חֲשֹׁמֶנָּאִי הַכּוֹהֲנִים הַגְּדוֹלִים, וַהֲרִגוּם וְהוֹשִׁיעּוּ יִשְׂרָאֵל מִיָּדָם; וְהַעֲמִידוּ מֶלֶךְ מִן הַכּוֹהֲנִים, וְחִזְרָה מַלְכוּת לְיִשְׂרָאֵל יָתֵר עַל מַאֲתָיִם שָׁנָה--עַד הַחֲרָבָן הַשֵּׁנִי.

'And the sons of Hasmonean the high priests prevailed, and they killed them and saved Israel from them; and they established a king from the priests, and the kingship returned to Israel for more than 200 years, until the second destruction.'

So I won't harp on with the usual stuff – about how **even though** the kingship lasted barely 200 years, and it's **forbidden** to establish a king from the priests, and most of their kings were **wicked murderers** – nonetheless we still have a *mitzva* to say *hallel*, because I'm sure you've all heard that multiple times. Instead, I want to focus on how this was born out of a dream: the same dream that motivated hundreds of thousands of people to give up all the comforts of their homes and strive to build a state of Israel.

The Hasmoneans saw the lack of Jewish government – even though there were Jews in Israel – and did not see what was but instead saw what could be. But what makes them even more special is that they did not stand idly by, but actually took action to do something about it! This epitomises Herzl's famous saying:

IF YOU WILL IT, IT IS NO DREAM



The pioneers were pioneering because they took action to realise their dream. They saw the possibilities and took action to bring them into reality!

Back to Yosef again for a moment (really quickly, I promise): When the brothers come down and

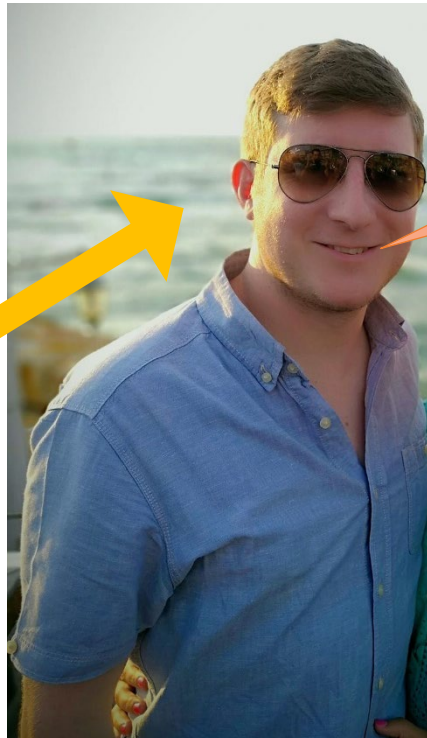
they bow to him, what's going through his head? Well according to Rashi, he's thinking 'Ah! The prophecy has come true as my brothers are bowing down to me.' But there's a slight problem with that – Binyamin isn't there! Hence Ramban has a different suggestion: he's thinking 'Ah! The prophecy is **not yet** true, and so I must send for Binyamin in order to realise it!' These are two huge differences in approach – Rashi's is the passive allowance of prophecy to take its course, whereas Ramban views it as a way to actively engage with the world in order to bring about what you saw as possible. The dream needs to be made real!

Discussion point 2: When have you taken action in your life to assure a particular outcome? Have there been times when you've thought something would come naturally, only to find that without your input you miss the opportunity?

Conclusion.

And so, let's take this all forward. Empower your *chanichim* to start realising their dreams! Help them to understand that their life and perception will influence the dreams they form and their approach to those dreams. Help them gain control over their lives and have them take their dreams in the direction of Torah Va'avodah! If they will it, IT IS NO DREAM!

**Adam
Waters**



Ask me about
'Chalom
VaLechem'!

Adam can be contacted at
operations@bauk.org, or on
02082091319 ext. 9

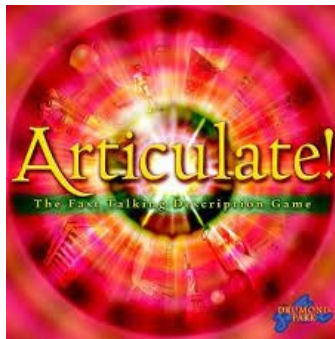
Peula Ideas

Games.

Dreaming – Get *madrachim* to send in their wackiest, wildest (ahem, appropriate) dreams to be read out to *chanichim*. They have to guess which *madrach/a* it came from! This can lead into a discussion with the *chanichim* – what about the *madrach/a* linked this dream to them? Is there a connection between our personalities and our dreams? (**Sammy Garfinkel, Madrich @ Mill Hill Sviva**)

Zionist dreams – Print out a picture of some old *yishuvim* and *kibbutzim*, and what they look like nowadays. Likewise print out some Israeli cities now vs. when they were first established. See if *chanichim* can match them up. Look at the difference between how some towns and cities turned out compared to others, despite starting the same way. It took vision and dreams to be able to do that!

Conscience – If you haven't played this yet, now is a great time. This is the one where two *chanichim* sit opposite each other and have to have a conversation, whilst two *chanichim* stand behind them as their inner thoughts and express what they're really thinking! Use this to talk about how what's going on under the surface-level perception gives a new spin on reality and what is taking place.



Articulate – with a twist – Get *chanichim* to describe a word to the other chans, but in two separate groups. Look at the way that one *chanich/a* describes a word, compared to another. This can springboard into a discussion about how our preconceptions and life experiences affect our articulation of ideas.



Random Games Corner

Over here each you'll find random games that we've compiled from the days of old. The titles are a bit weird and they're mostly just for fun but you never know when they might connect to an educational message!

Donut - Suspend a doughnut from a string and watch as they try to eat with no hands.

Dreidel - Spinning Sevivons/Dizzy Dreidels – Two competitors spin on the starting line for 30 seconds before racing each other to the opposite wall

Adman - Adman (a classic, with local variants and customs all over) – Sitting in a circle each position has a name, customarily along the lines of Adman, Superman, Spiderman, Batman, 1, 2, 3, etc. The final position is Shmerel. Each person must call someone who is not next to them and who did not just call them (Adman calling Spiderman, Spiderman calling 2, etc.) If someone is out, they become the Shmerel (everyone chants Shmerel! Shmerel!) and everyone moves up a seat. They take the name of the seat they are moving into. The aim is to be Adman. (Tenuous link to heroes and the Maccabees, maybe make Maccabee the first position.)

SHABBAT CLUB

TYPE: Active Play outdoors or in a large room Two bases are needed The group is divided into two teams. Each team goes to opposite ends of the playing area. At each end a "base" (a chair or any other object) is placed and a center-line is decided upon to divide the playing area in half. The object of the game is for team A to get to team B's base or vice versa. However, once a member from either team crosses into the other team's area, he can be tagged, which "freezes" him in his place until he is "unfrozen" (tagged) by a member of his own team. The winning team is the first team to have one of its members reach the other team's base.

SHINUI – SHINUI

TYPE: Active Play in a circle The players are seated in a circle. One player is chosen to lead the game, and s/he removes his/her chair from the circle. The object is for the player to steal" a seat from another player, and sit in it. To do this, the leader uses three commands: Shinui Yemin- Everyone must shift one seat to the right. Shinui Smol- Everyone must shift one seat to the left. Shinui Shinui- Everyone must run to any other chair and sit in it (except the two chairs on either side of him/her). The leader can use any command to gain a seat. When s/he gets a seat, the player left without a seat becomes the new leader and play continues.

PYRAMID CHARADES

TYPE: Moderate Eight categories of things must be thought of beforehand (i.e. "The Sky is the Limit": Things which are in the sky - airplanes, clouds, the sun, kites, etc.) with 7 things in each category. Each list is written on cards and divided according to category. Two teams are chosen. Two players are chosen from each team. The first team chooses a category (the contents of which are hinted in the name of the category). One player receives the names of things in the categories and has 30 seconds to give clues to the second player, so that s/he can guess the things. The clues can describe the things in the category but cannot contain any part of the name of the things. One point is received for every thing guessed within 30 seconds. Then the second team picks another category and play continues. After each team has had three turns (six categories are provided) the seventh round goes to whichever team is behind, and the eighth round goes to the other team. Whichever team scores the most points, wins.

NAME THAT TUNE

TYPE: Quiet The group is divided into two (or three) teams. Each team selects one representative to play for them. The leader then tells them that he will hum up to seven notes from a song. The two players then bid for the amount of notes they need to guess the song. The bidding goes back and forth between the two players until one player bids the least amount of notes and the other is not willing to bid less. The leader then hums that number of notes; if the player guesses it, his team gets one point. If not, the other team gets one point. Play continues in this fashion until the first team gets X number of points. Hint: Between rounds switch team representatives to allow the most number of players to participate.

SEAT RACE

TYPE: Relay Each team sits in its own circle. At the signal, the first person stands up and runs around the circle once. When he sits down again, he tags the person to his left (see diagram #1). Then that person does the same thing and so on. The first team to have all of its players run around the circle once, wins. Variation #1: While each player runs around the circle, he also spins around at the same time (see diagram #2). Variation #2: Almost anything else can be used instead of running (i.e. walking, hopping, etc.)

THIS IS MY NOSE

TYPE: Shtick Play in a circle. The leader walks around the inside of the circle, stops in front of one player, and says: "This is my ____" (pointing to one part of his body while calling it the name of another part of his body). The player must respond (within ten seconds) with the opposite of what the leader did (pointing to the part of his body the leader said and calling it the name of the part of his body to which the leader had pointed). Example: Leader: "This is my nose" (pointing to his elbow). Player: "This is my elbow" (pointing to his nose). If the player responds correctly before the leader counts to ten, he is "in"; if not, he is "out." Play continues with the leader asking more players. The last X players "in" win. Hint: For large groups use more than one leader to quicken the pace. Variation: If the player can respond correctly within ten seconds, the player becomes the new leader.