

world—but they have their kingdom which is not of this world but of the Eternal, and with the Eternal: where two of the blessed life are together, there is Christ the third. Those are the riches that they have in this world. And although those who have opposed me have greatly hindered me, they have not suspected what has lain in my pen;—I have kept my mouth closed, that the storm and the thunderbolt should not strike me to earth. Thereby I have brought it forward till this day and have not troubled myself about them, but have held companionship with the common people of whom they are ashamed and have myself therefore been despised. This has been my preparation for this work.”¹⁷

THE TALMUD ON DREAMS.

BY JULIUS J. PRICE.

THE human mind has at all times sought to arrive at some explanation of what on the surface appears mysterious or wonderful. Man through the centuries of his development has endeavored to account for these strange phenomena of his sleeping hours that we call dreams.¹ The suspension of the will-power clothes the ideas with reality; and, as a result, one man acts many parts.² The phenomenon of dreams has not only occupied the minds of the superstitious, but it has engaged the careful attention and earnest study of the scientist³ as well as the scholar,⁴ by reason of its points of contact⁵ with other mental conditions.⁶ A scientific study of dreams proves that there is a similitude between the suspension of the higher mental activities known as the dreaming state, and the instinctive state of human development observed in the lower orders of human and animal life.

But though these phenomena might seem to the average man of to-day to be but a “state of mind,”⁷ yet we find that even such

¹⁷ Sudhoff, *Versuch* etc., Vol. II, pp. 406-408.

¹ Plutarch, *De placitis philosophorum*, V, 2, pp. 904f.

² Xenophon, *Cyrop.*, VIII, 21; cf. also Cicero, *De divin.*, I, 30-63.

³ Aristotle, *De insomniis*, II.

⁴ Æschylus, *Prom.*, 485f.

⁵ Hesiod, *Theog.*, 211; also Euripides, *Iph. Taur.*, 1262.

⁶ Maimonides however regarded dreams as a form of prophecy; see *Guide of the Perplexed*, tr. by M. Friedländer, p. 240.

⁷ Cf. *Odyssey*, XIX, 562f. tr. by Butcher and Lang.

a cyclopedic work as the Talmud has endeavored to give an explanation of the observed facts. Let us then briefly see what the Rabbis have to say on the subject.

In one passage we find that the Rabbis are of the opinion that we dream at night what we think in the daytime. Rabbi Jonathan said:⁸ "It is the thoughts of his heart during the day which appear to a man in a dream; for it is said: 'As for thee, O King, thy thoughts come into thy mind upon thy bed' (Dan. ii. 29)." Rava observed: "It must be so; for they never show to a man a golden tree or an elephant passing through the eye of a needle," inasmuch as man never thinks of these.

The expression, "thoughts of his heart," sounds like an anticipation of the Freudian theory of "wish-fulfilment." Is Professor Freud acquainted with this interpretation of dreams in the Talmud, and, if so, may he not possibly have been unconsciously influenced thereby?

A further utterance of the kind we have referred to is to be found in several other passages of the Talmud, one of which reads as follows:⁹ "Cæsar said to Rabbi Joshua ben Chananyah [who is supposed to have been a contemporary of Trajan]: 'You say that you are exceedingly wise; tell me what I shall see in my dream.' He replied: 'You shall dream that the Persians will make you work for them, spoil you, and make you tend cattle with a golden crosier.' He thought of it the whole day and saw it at night." The Talmud has still another passage, as proof of the above, in the following: "Shevur, the king of Persia [perhaps this is none other than Sapor¹⁰ who took Valerian prisoner], once said to Samuel the Babylonian: 'You say that you are exceedingly wise; tell me what I shall see in my dreams?'"¹¹ He replied: 'You shall see the Romans come and take you prisoner and compel you to grind date-kernels with golden grinders.' He thought of it the whole day and saw it at night."

In another instance we find that the Rabbis are of the opinion that it is not the dreams but the interpretation that we give of dreams that is really realized.¹² Thus Rabbi Beris related of the aged Rabbi Benaab that "one day he went to all the twenty-four interpreters at Jerusalem to tell them his dream. Each gave a different interpretation and each was fulfilled—which, says the

⁸ Berachoth, 55b.

⁹ Berachoth, 56a.

¹⁰ Meyer's *Ancient History*, Part II, p. 149, note 1.

¹¹ Berachoth, 56a.

¹² Cf. Apuleius, *Metam.*, IV, 910; *ibid.*, II, 125.

rabbi, confirms the saying that it is the interpretation and not the dream that is realized."¹³

The Rabbis give various interpretations of the phenomena supposed to have been seen in dreams. In one case I find that the Rabbis state: "If one dreams that he is excommunicated he requires ten men to absolve him."¹⁴ Another passage reads as follows: "Among the four wise men,¹⁵ he that seeth Rabbi Yochanan ben Nuri in a dream may hope to be a sin-eschewing man; if Rabbi Eleizer ben Azaryah, he may hope to be a great and rich man; if Rabbi Ishmael, he may hope to be a wise man; if Rabbi Akiba, let him apprehend misfortune."

The Rabbis also give an interpretation of the meaning of various animals seen in a dream. For example, we read: "He that seeth a goose¹⁶ in a dream may hope for wisdom; for it is said: 'Wisdom crieth in the streets' (Prov. i. 20) [and so does a goose]. עֵלְיָ אֲזַנְתִּי will be made the head of a seat of learning."¹⁷ At this Rabbi Ashi remarked: 'I had such a dream and was thus promoted.'

In another passage we read as follows: "If one sees a dog in a dream, let him when awake say: 'But against any of the children of Israel shall not a dog move his tongue' (Ex. xi. 7), before he is anticipated by the text: 'They are greedy dogs' (Is. lvi. 11). If he sees a lion in a dream let him when awake say: 'The lion hath roared, who will not fear?' (Amos iii. 8), before he is anticipated by the text: 'The lion is come up from his thicket' (Jer. iv. 7). If he sees a bullock in a dream, let him when awake say: 'His glory is like the firstling of his bullock' (Deut. xxxiii. 17), before he is anticipated by the text: 'If an ox gore a man' (Ex. xxi. 28)."¹⁸

In two cases we find that dreams¹⁹ accurately foretold events that were to occur in the lives of several of the Rabbis.²⁰ "Ben Damah, the son of Rabbi Ishmael's sister, said to his uncle: 'I have seen in a dream both my cheeks drop off.' The latter replied: 'Two Roman military bands have resolved to do thee mischief, but they died!' Bar Kappora said to Rabbi Judah-han-Nasi: 'I have seen in a dream my nose drop off.' The Rabbi replied: 'Some one's anger against thee has been subdued.' 'I have seen in a dream both my hands cut off.' He replied: 'Thou wilt be spared manual

¹³ Berachoth, 55b.

¹⁴ Nedarim, 8a.

¹⁵ Avoth d'Rav. Nathan, Chap. XLI.

¹⁶ Berachoth, 57a.

¹⁷ The words given in Hebrew are untranslatable, but their import can easily be ascertained by reference to a lexicon.

¹⁸ Berachoth, 56b.

¹⁹ Cf. Plutarch, *Vit. Pelop.*, XXI.

²⁰ Cf. Æschylus, *Eum.*, 104, and Pindar, *Frag.* 108 (Bergk).

labor.'"²¹ Another example is found in the following quotation: "Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakai saw in a dream, the night following the Day of Atonement, that his sister's son would lose one thousand seven hundred denars in the course of a year.²² He therefore asked them again and again for sums of money to be given to the poor, till, on the eve of the next Day of Atonement seventeen denars remained with them of the sum they were destined to lose.²³ On that very day the government of Cæsar demanded seventeen denars of them. Rabbi Yochanan told them that they need not fear lest more should be exacted from them. 'And how dost thou know it?' they asked.²⁴ He told them of his dream which had induced him to make them distribute the doomed money in charity. 'But why,' they asked, 'didst thou not tell us of it before?' 'I wanted you,' said he, 'to give the money from a pure motive.'"

Various counsels are given by the Rabbis as to what is to be done in the case of a dream being forgotten or left uninterpreted. The following would take place when a dream was forgotten, according to the interpretation of Mar Zutra and Rabbi Ashi: "Whosoever has had a dream and cannot call it to mind, let him stand before the priests when they spread out their hands to bless the people, and say: 'Lord of the Universe, I am Thine and my dreams are Thine; I have dreamed a dream and know not what it is; whether I have dreamed about myself, whether my neighbors have dreamed about me, or whether I have dreamed about others; if the dreams be good, strengthen and confirm them, like the dreams of Joseph; if they require healing, heal them as the bitter waters were by Moses, as Miriam was healed of leprosy, Hezekiah of his illness, and the waters of Jericho by Elisha, and as Thou didst turn the curse of the wicked Balaam into a blessing, so turn all my dreams into good.'"²⁵ On the other hand, if a man had dreamed, and his dream was interpreted as of ill omen, the Rabbis prescribed as follows. Rabbi Chanan said: "A man should not despair of mercy, even when the master of dreams has told him that he should die to-morrow; for it is said: 'In the multitude of dreams, and many vanities and words, fear but God' (Eccles. v. 7)."²⁶

While the Rabbis at various times stated that dreams were of comparatively small significance, and in many cases that little atten-

²¹ Berachoth, 56b.

²² Cf. Plato, *Crito*, 44b; also Herodotus, III, 124, and Plutarch, *Cimon* XVIII, p. 490.

²³ Cf. *Iliad*, XXIII, 65; also *Odyssey*, IV, 796f, and XIX, 536f.

²⁴ Bava Bathra, 10a.

²⁵ Berachoth, 55b.

²⁶ Berachoth, 10b.

tion was to be paid to them, yet I have found one instance where the Rabbis urge the interpretation of dreams. For according to Rabbi Chisda a dream not interpreted is like a letter not read, [of no consequence, says Rashi, for all depends upon the interpretation]; if so, Joseph was guilty of deliberate murder. Rabbi Chisda further said: "Neither a good dream nor a bad dream is wholly realized"; again, "A bad dream is better than a good dream; for a bad dream is neutralized by the sadness it causes, and a good dream is realized by the joy it brings."²⁷

We see then that although some Rabbis regarded dreams as of no consequence, yet some,²⁸ on the other hand, were able to foretell future events²⁹ as well as ward off hardships that were to come upon them. Although dreams in general are made little of, yet people³⁰ from the earliest times³¹ to the present day have believed in them as something more than the result of a full stomach or a cherished thought.

DREAMS.

BY T. B. STORK.

APROPOS of Professor Freud's "Interpretation of Dreams," which for the last few years has called forth considerable discussion, I would like to call attention to a theory of dreams published some years ago, whether strictly new and original I know not, but which seems at least simpler and less open to the charge of being fantastic.

According to this view, dreams are what might be called blind perceptions; that is, they are the efforts of our perceptive faculty to form an intelligible perception with defective materials. An example will best illustrate the idea.

We are all familiar with the story of the dreamer who dreamed that he had enlisted in the army, was guilty of some grave offense for which he was condemned to death, and was just about to be

²⁷ *Berachoth*, 55a.

²⁸ Cf. Pausanias, IX, xxxix, 5f, where we are told that the oracles of Trophonius and Æsculapius were dream-oracles where the sick slept, seeking means of cure, and where those who desired to know future events went to obtain it through dreams.

²⁹ Xenophon, writing about the retreat of the 10,000, states that he constantly depended on dreams. Cf. his *Hipparch.*, I, 1; also *Cyneget.*, I, 1f.

³⁰ Hippocrates, I, 633, *De insomniis*; cf. also Artemidorus, *Oneir.*, passim.

³¹ *Iliad*, II, 322f.