

Halachik & Hashkafic guidance on MANY wet dreams

Posted by Torah292 - 30 Apr 2020 19:39

Hi,

You can read my first piece I posted about myself 18 months ago

here: <https://guardyoureyes.com/forum/19-Introduce-Yourself/336214-Halachic-permissibility-of-non-Jewish-environments>

I'm 23 (not married), working, living at home and have been having wet dreams (averaging ~ 3 times/week) since I was 17 or so. I don't watch porn and don't masturbate. It's become so common for me to have wet dreams (has happened on 2 Yom Kippurs, so many Shabbosim where I can't wash myself off) that I feel I've kind of dissociated myself from them to a certain extent.

I spent many many months tracking my wet dreams but I couldn't find a pattern to them. I get cautiously optimistic when I have a rare dry streak of more than a week, but this is easily followed by wet dreams on several consecutive nights (this can also happens when I lie down for a nap during the day).

My wet dreams seem to happen regardless of whether I think thoughts that could be considered remotely sexual in the evening. Some of my wet dreams involve sexual themes, in others all I can recall is just being under stress in a nightmare (I know that wet dreams is a way for the body to release stress). Often my dreams may include women that I was around - they aren't usually featured in a sexual way but they'd often be a character in the dream. A very common theme in my dreams involves me needing to urinate/urinating (not *actually* urinating but instead having a wet dream). Sometimes they happen without me dreaming of anything.

I always say the first 4 perakim of tehillim before I go to sleep, have been saying tikkun klali after wet dreams + mikvah every Friday for the past 4 years. I still have wet dreams when sleeping on my side. I just realised how I should be extra careful to keep cool at night (I always leave my window open but often don't get a draft, end up sleeping fully under my warm duvet. I've still had wet dreams even when in a cool environment) and have started to try to keep my feet outside of my duvet. I am the only one in my room but I don't think my parents will take very well for me to light a candle in the room.

I'd like clarification on a few points that have been on my (subconscious) mind for a few years:

Question 1: The Kitzur Shulchan Aruch (151;4) talks about avoiding certain foods such as fatty meat, milk, cheese, eggs, garlic or a 'drink that heats the body' (presumably this refers to a hot drink) in the evenings.

Question 1a): I try to avoid having a significant quantity of these foods in the evening but feel guilty about having them at all in the evenings (the wet dreams happen without them too). To what extent am I halachically *required* to avoid such foods and from how long before I sleep?

Question 2: The Gemara in Avoda Zara (around daf *chaf*) talks about how one needs to avoid thoughts by day that can lead to a wet dream. According to the Artscroll notes there, one is not allowed to even think thoughts that *could* lead to a wet dream.

Question 2a): Does this mean it's wrong for me to go out for a run in a park that will likely have exercising women? Lately I've tried to keep my runs to earlier in the day or when there's cloudy weather so there will be fewer people around, but nonetheless I know that I almost definitely will see and pay too much attention to women in the park, especially if they are dressed in exercise gear. Even if they are just stretching in the distance I find myself 'looking twice'.

Question 2b): I face a similar issue with reading books. I enjoy reading about psychology, sociology and start-up related-books. However, these books always tend to have at least minor sexual/gender references (which I find I'm too mindful of). Does this mean I shouldn't be reading such books? There's a part of me that feels that my subconscious concern of having wet dreams as well as my feelings of guilt of reading 'normal' books is actually part of what is causing the wet dreams in the first place. I face similar issues online. e.g. what to do when I want to learn something from a video and the speaker has a low neckline etc. or when I know I'll likely look at Youtube's sidebar of recommended videos knowing that there'll possibly be something within the realms of sexuality/gender. Or using LinkedIn and there's a part of me that overthinks what someone looks like.

My concern is that it's next to impossible to avoid situations where I'd likely think thoughts that *could* lead to a wet dream - this is especially as I seem to have a very low bar as to what could lead to a wet dream. I feel a sense of responsibility and guilt and an uncomfortable inner conflict around what I can/shouldn't do.

I wish there were better education about the practical application of these halachos - I have a feeling that a large percentage of frum boys & men who want to do the right thing and aren't struggling with porn or masturbation have questions about putting themselves in situations where they'd likely have thoughts that they aren't comfortable sharing.

Question 3) What is the correct way to wash myself off after I have a wet dream? I've seen how the Shulchan Aruch (https://www.sefaria.org/Shulchan_Arukh%2C_Even_HaEzer.23.4?ven=Sefaria_Community_Translation&lang=bi) says how one shouldn't touch anywhere below one's belly button - I've also seen how one shouldn't touch one's *eiver* when urinating when one is not married. What are the practical ramifications of this? 1) It's become so routine for me to wash myself off *all over* whilst applying soap with my hands that I don't get sexually affected by it. 2) I've had too many difficult experiences where after showering I find out that I didn't get all of the zera off - scrubbing myself with soap helps. How can I wash myself?

At the encouragement of a mentor of mine (she's not aware of my wet dreams), I've been seeing a therapist for the past 6 months. None of my family know about my wet dreams nor about my therapy. The main reason I'm in therapy is because I'm overly reserved around my family and tend to struggle to just 'let go' and 'be myself' around other people - no doubt the fact that I've been having and hiding my wet dreams for so long plays a role in all this.

Question 4) I'm also concerned as to whether my experiences are indicative of a medical issue and whether I should be 'disclosing' anything when I'm ready to date. (I dated a few people before I started therapy but have been 'taking a break' whilst in therapy). Are there any recommended reading resources on dating beyond this page <https://guardyoureyes.com/questions-and-answers/item/dating-advice?>

I'd appreciate both Halachik and Hashkafic guidance on the above and any other thoughts that may help me and others silently searching for answers. I don't feel comfortable speaking with a Rav about this so I'd appreciate clarification from the GYE community.

Thank you.

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Re: Halachik & Hashkafic guidance on MANY wet dreams
Posted by hopeseeker - 30 Apr 2020 23:04

Sounds to me more like a possible medical issue, though I'm no expert. Have you consulted with your doc?

Kol hakavod for everything you have been trying! You are an inspiration.

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Re: Halachik & Hashkafic guidance on MANY wet dreams
Posted by Torah292 - 30 Apr 2020 23:24

Thank you @hopeseeker

I actually have a phone call scheduled with my doctor for tomorrow...

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Re: Halachik & Hashkafic guidance on MANY wet dreams
Posted by ColinColin - 01 May 2020 02:55

The connection to the perceived need to urinate is something to ask your doctor.

I wish I could be of more use but I have not heard of this frequency of wet dreams, nor of them seemingly happening regardless of what diligent steps you take to avoid them.

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Re: Halachik & Hashkafic guidance on MANY wet dreams
Posted by Singularity - 01 May 2020 07:54

IF ONLY MY PROBLEMS WERE WITH WET DREAMS!!! :(

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Re: Halachik & Hashkafic guidance on MANY wet dreams
Posted by Torah292 - 01 May 2020 17:45

Thank you.

So I spoke with my doctor today. I had mentioned how I tend to need to urinate more than most people and how urinating is a common theme of my wet dreams. I forgot to push him too much on whether there's a connection. He was very confident that there is no medical issue with my wet dreams and how I'm just on a very extreme end of a normal range with my frequency of wet dreams.

I didn't mention that I have some other anxieties relating to urinating - e.g. if I'm under even a little bit of time pressure or quite stressed then I can struggle to urinate; there have been many times that I've been on trips with family and have been forced to hold in my urine in extreme pain. Too many of these experiences mean that it's quite a sensitive topic and perhaps on a subconscious level I'm too often monitoring when I can take my next bathroom break which may be why urinating is a common theme in my dreams (which in turn may explain the wet dreams) (this whole paragraph is something that's only dawned upon me as I'm writing this post!).

I asked him whether there's a connection between wet dreams and anxiety - he thinks there isn't.

Another thing that I feel guilty about is reading articles that I know I shouldn't, in the name of research around wet dreams, sexual problems and frequent-urination issues.

I'd really appreciate Halachik and Hashkafic advice - any suggestions of whom to turn to other than a Rav who knows me?

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Re: Halachik & Hashkafic guidance on MANY wet dreams
Posted by Singularity - 03 May 2020 03:56

No idea.

Doesn't the gemorah in Yoma say that if you had a wet dream and survived the year, then you're guaranteed olam haba? Well, are you alive still? Then great!

In yeshiva all I complained to my rebbe about was my wet dreams. I forgot to mention to him

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Re: Halachik & Hashkafic guidance on MANY wet dreams
Posted by Torah292 - 14 May 2020 18:17

I'd really appreciate Halachik and Hashkafic advice on all this - any suggestions of whom to turn to other than a Rav who knows me?

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Re: Halachik & Hashkafic guidance on MANY wet dreams
Posted by Singularity - 15 May 2020 03:56

that I was fantasizing, stimulating myself and enjoying all the sights, most of the time...
...a Rav who doesn't know you?

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Re: Halachik & Hashkafic guidance on MANY wet dreams
Posted by badaba - 22 May 2020 04:13

Do you know what most of us would give to have wet dreams be our biggest problem...

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Re: Halachik & Hashkafic guidance on MANY wet dreams
Posted by greenland55 - 22 May 2020 16:01

Yeah it's rough to have those concerns, hard to sleep anywhere outside own bedroom. Don't have any halakhik guidance but maybe you can give the medical establishment another shot: if you are having tangible issues with this and it is causing real problems for you, a doctor doesn't actually get to tell you that you have no problems. Why not go to some other doctor, be super pushy and confident that your interests are legitimate, and try to get referred to a urologist since urination seems to be a big part of this (urologists do a lot of stuff related to this for men, since everything goes out the same way). Also, maybe other fitness habits could be helpful for this, maybe start lifting or intermittent fasting (which is also a great way to not rush through davening, since you know that no matter how long you daven, you won't get to eat right after).

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