



*Prayer and Dreams:*

*Why we pray like Miss Universe*

*Spring Regional Convention 2012*

*May 11<sup>th</sup> -13<sup>th</sup>*



# A Word About Dreams...

We all have dreams.

We don't only have dreams when we sleep — we have dreams for our lives. We have visions and goals for our future.

The common denominator between all types of dreams is that **RIGHT NOW THEY AREN'T REAL**. There is often a big gap between dreams and reality.

Some people look at the gap between their dreams and reality and assume that there is nothing that can be done to bridge it. Others assume it is only a matter of time before they make their dreams *into* reality.

Let's take a look at these two approaches and see if they can shed any light on Tefilla (Jewish prayer).



A quick look at the tefilla "Shemona Esrei" will make the connection between tefilla and dreams pretty clear...



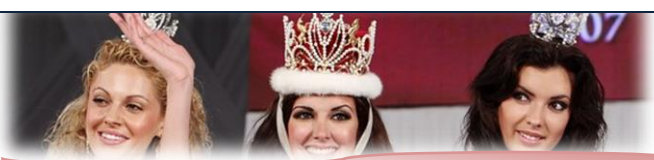
TEFILLA IS ALL ABOUT  
A "DREAM-WORLD"  
WHERE EVIL IS  
ERADICATED, THE  
RIGHTEOUS PREVAIL,  
AND ILLNESS IS CURED!

...there's a problem. No offense to G-d or anything, but isn't this dream a little TOO much of a dream? This isn't realistic at all! Why should we say this *every single day* (three times a day no less!) when this dream is more like a *delusion*?!

**BUT...**

In short, why do we pray like Miss Universe contestants?!

THIS BRINGS US TO THE "JUST A DREAM" PHENOMENON...



WE WANT WORLD PEACE!!!!



*Have you ever had a dream that was simply amazing?*

Finally got the new iPad you want? Or those gorgeous boots you can't live without? Maybe you got a game-winning hit in the bottom of the ninth? Or got into the college of your dreams?

You probably woke up excited and then, with a slow sinking feeling, realized. . .

**H**ave you ever had a dream that was gripping and terrifying?

Chased by scary dogs, or evil scientists? Hunted down by aliens ready to lobotomize your brain? Maybe it involved a serial killer? Or perhaps being kidnapped?

You probably woke up in a cold sweat, with your heart pounding and — relieved - said to yourself. . .

# IT WAS JUST A DREAM!

**However...**

We can all agree that sometimes a dream is more than *just* a dream; let's look at the following illustration. . .



On the morning of August 28, 1963  
in the King household....



Hey Coretta! You won't believe this AMAZING dream I had!



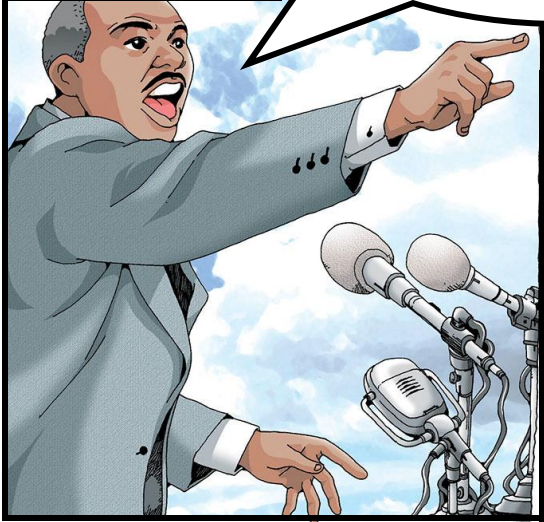
That's nice dear - but didn't you promise to take out the garbage this morning?



Oh. Right. Well, I guess it was just a dream anyway...

Well folks... this is awkward... but, I uh... well, I *had* a dream... well...nah, it was *just* a dream - let's, uh, let's talk about something else...

Later that day....



Clearly, some dreams SHOULD be taken seriously; in fact...

**...The Talmud (Berachot 57b) states that all dreams are made up of one sixtieth prophecy.**

*What in the world does that mean???*

*R' Eliyahu Dessler explains that even our strangest dreams are meant to help us understand ourselves better. If you're always beating people up in your dreams it says something about you! Even when you dream about flying in outerspace (feel free to fill in your own weird dreams here) it lets you know **SOMETHING** about yourself. A person's dreams say a lot about who they really are!*

*He says that the only reason dreams are so strange — filled with 59/60<sup>th</sup>'s of "junkmail" — is to give us the choice to **NOT** believe them if we don't want to. If we choose to, however, we can learn a lot about ourselves from our dreams!*

**The Bottom Line: Dreams are SO MUCH MORE than JUST DREAMS - they tell us about our true selves!**



If the dreams we have when we sleep are 1/60<sup>th</sup> helpful at teaching us how we can improve ourselves, how much more so do our life dreams - our goals and aspirations - say about who we really are and how we can improve?



For example, if your dream in life is to be a fireman, you *could* sit around just thinking about being a fireman - occasionally getting caught by parents and friends playing fireman dress-up in your room and/or spraying your house with your parent's hose pretending to be putting out a raging fire. That would be one way of "living" your dream (while at the same time living in your parent's basement for the rest of your life...).

Alternatively, you could use your dream as a roadmap to help you move forward! List all the obstacles that stand in your way and, one by one, peel them away until you've reached your goal. This way you'll always know how far you still have to go to get there.

For example, if you know that one of the skills you need to be a fireman is sliding down a firepole, then spend time mastering fire-pole sliding skills.

Then move on to the next step.



**Don't just dream your dreams - use them to help measure how far away you are from reaching your goals! That's the point of dreams!**



**This brings us back to tefilla:**

*It's true that the "dream" of tefilla is NOT reality, . . .*



**THERE IS DISEASE.**

**THERE ARE EVIL  
PEOPLE.**

**GOOD PEOPLE DO  
SUFFER.**

*. . . but NO dreams are reality! That's not their point!*

**DREAMS GIVE US A COMPASS  
TO HELP GUIDE US IN  
CHANGING OUR REALITY INTO A  
MORE IDEAL ONE; TEFILLA  
GIVES US A WORLD-CHANGING  
DREAM TO WORK TOWARDS  
STEP BY STEP!**

**THAT'S WHY WE PRAY SO  
OFTEN – TO MAKE SURE THAT  
WE REMIND OURSELVES HOW  
MUCH FURTHER WE NEED TO  
GO TO REACH OUR GOALS!**





This leads us to the most important question. . .


It's really nice that G-d and the Rabbis want us to spend our lives working towards achieving world peace and whatever — but what if I just want to be a doctor?! What if I just want to be lawyer or a teacher or a stay-at-home mom?!

# What About My Own Dreams?!

So here's the kicker:

Tefilla doesn't outline a list of new goals for you to use to replace your old ones with. Rather, it gives you a DIRECTION in which to take your own PERSONAL GOALS.

**Let's take a look at some of the "dreams" of tefilla:**

- 
- *Bring wisdom to the world*
  - *Bring healing to the world*
  - *Bring success and well-being to the Jewish people*
  - *Eradicating evil*
  - *Bring justice to the world*

Can you see how becoming a doctor, teacher, lawyer or stay-at-home mom could help you to take some of these "dreams" and make them into reality?

**Discuss:**

**What are your dreams for yourself? How might reaching your dreams help you to make the lofty "dreams" of tefilla into reality?**