6537 - Dreams and Dream Interpretation

the question

I have a book titled “Dream Interpretation In Islam” by Ibn Sirin. I want more details about Islamic dream interpretation.

Summary of answer

Interpretation of dreams in Islam falls into various categories: 1- Dreams may be interpreted in light of the Quran, 2- or in light of the Sunnah, 3- or by means of the proverbs, 4- or by names and metaphors, 5- or in terms of opposites. For more, please see the detailed answer.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Significance of dreams in Islam

1- True dreams are a part of prophethood, as it was reported that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: “True dreams are one of the forty-six parts of prophethood.” (al-Bukhari, 6472; Muslim, 4201)

2- Dreams marked the onset of Revelation. (Al-Bukhari, 3; Muslim, 231)

3- The truthfulness of the dream is related to the sincerity of the dreamer. Those who have the most truthful dreams are those who are the most truthful in speech. (Muslim, 4200)

4- Towards the end of time, hardly any dreams will be untrue. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: “That will be because the prophethood and its effects will be so far away in time, so the believers will be given some compensation in the form of dreams which will bring them some good news or will help them to be patient and steadfast in their faith.” (al-Bukhari,

6499; Muslim, 4200)

The same may be said of the miracles which appeared after the time of the Sahabah. This did not happen during their time because they did not need them, due to their strong faith, but the people who came after them needed them (the miracles) because their faith was weak.

Types of dreams in Islam

5- Dreams are of three types : Rahmani (those that come from Allah), nafsani (psychological, they come from within a person) and shaytani (those that come from the Shaytan). The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: “Dreams are of three types: a dream from Allah, a dream which causes distress and which comes from the Shaytan, and a dream which comes from what a person thinks about when he is awake, and he sees it when he is asleep.” (al-Bukhari, 6499; Muslim, 4200)

Dreams of the Prophets

6- The dreams of the Prophets are wahy (revelation) for they are protected from the Shaytan. The Ummah is agreed upon this. This is why Ibrahim set out to fulfill the command of Allah to sacrifice his son Isma’il when he saw that in a dream; may peace be upon them both.

7- The dreams of people other than the prophets are to be examined in the light of the clear Wahy [i.e., the Quran and Sunnah]. If they are in accordance with the Quran and Sunnah, all well and good; otherwise, they should not be acted upon. This is a very serious matter indeed, for many of the innovators among the Sufis and others have gone astray because of this.

What you should do to have true dreams

8- Whoever wants to have true dreams should strive to speak honestly, eat halal food, adhere to the commandments of shari’ah, avoid that which Allah and His Messenger (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) have forbidden, sleep in a state of complete purity facing the Qiblah, and remember Allah until he feels his eyelids drooping. If he does all this, then his dreams can hardly

be untrue.

9- The most truthful of dreams are those that are seen at the time of suhoor [just before dawn], for this is the time when Allaah descends and when mercy and forgiveness are close. It is also the time when the devils are quiet, unlike the time of darkness just after sunset, when the devils and devilish souls spread out. (See *Madaarij al-Saalikeen*, 1/50-52)

Types of dreams according to Ibn Hajar

Al-Hafiz ibn Hajar said:

10- All dreams are either of two types:

1- True dreams: These are the dreams of the prophets and of the righteous people who follow them. They may also happen to other people, but this is very rare, such as the dream of the kafir king which was interpreted for him by Yusuf (peace be upon him). True dreams are those which come true in real life as they were seen in the dream.

2- Mixed up false dreams, which warn of something. These are of different types:

Types of mixed up false dreams

1- Games of the Shaytan to make a person distressed, such as when he sees his head cut off and he is following it, or he sees himself falling into a crisis and cannot find anyone to save him from it, and so on.

2- When he sees some of the angels telling him to do something forbidden, or other things that cannot possibly make sense.

3- When he sees something that happens to him in real life, or he wishes it would happen, and he sees it very realistically in his dream; or he sees what usually happens to him when he is awake or what reflects his mood. These dreams usually speak of the future or the present, rarely of the past. (See Fath al-Bari, 12/352-354)

11- Abu Sa’id al-Khudri (may Allah be pleased with him) said: the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: “If any one of you sees a dream that he likes, this is from Allah, so let him praise Allah for it and talk about it to others. If he sees other than that, a dream that he dislikes, this is from the Shaytan, so let him seek refuge with Allah from its evil and not mention it to anyone, for it will not harm him.”

(Narrated by al-Bukhari, 6584, and Muslim, 5862).

Abu Qatadah said: the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: “Good dreams come from Allah, and (bad) dreams come from Shaytan. Whoever sees something that he dislikes, let him spit to his left three times and seek refuge with Allah from the Shaytan, for it will not harm him.” (Narrated by al-Bukhari, 6594, and Muslim, 5862). The “spitting” referred to here is a soft, dry spitting with no saliva ejected.

It was reported from Jabir (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Alaah be upon him) said: “If any one of you sees a dream that he dislikes, let him spit to his left three times, and seek refuge with Allah from the Shaytan three times, and turn over from the side on which he was sleeping.” (Narrated by Muslim, 5864)

What you should do if you experience good dreams

Ibn Hajar said: to sum up what has been said about good dreams, we may say three things:

1. A person should praise Allah for the good dream
2. He should feel happy about it
3. He should talk about it to those whom he loves but not to those whom he dislikes.

What you should do if you experience bad dreams

To sum up what has been said about bad dreams , we may say four things:

1. He should seek refuge with Allah from the evil of the dream
2. He should seek refuge with Allah from the evil of the Shaytan

3. He should spit to his left three times when he wakes up
4. He should not mention it to anyone at all.
5. In al-Bukhari, Bab al-Qayd fi'l-Manam, a fifth thing was narrated from Abu Hurayrah, which is to pray. The wording of the report is: whoever sees something he dislikes (in a dream) should not tell anyone about it; rather he should get up and pray. This was reported as a Mawsul report by Imam Muslim in his Sahih.
6. Muslim added a sixth thing, which is to turn over from the side on which one was lying.

In conclusion, there are six things to do, the four mentioned above, plus praying two rak'ahs, for example, and turning over from the side on which one was lying to lie on one's back, for example. (See Fath al-Bari, 12/370)

12- According to a hadith narrated from Abu Razin by al-Tirmidhi, he should not tell anybody about bad dreams except a very close friend who loves him very much, or who is very wise. According to another report, he should not talk about it except to one who is wise or one who is dear to him. According to another report, he should not tell of his dream except to a scholar or one who will give sincere advice. Al-Qadi Abu Bakr ibn al-'Arabi said: as for the scholar, he will interpret it in a good way for him as much as he can, and the one who will give him sincere advice will teach him something that will be of benefit to him and will help him to do that. The one who is wise is the one who knows how to interpret it and will tell him only that which will help him, otherwise he will keep quiet. The one who is dear, if he knows something good he will say it, and if he does not know or he is in doubt, he will keep quiet. (See Fath al-Bari, 12/369)

Dream interpretation

13- Imam al-Baghawi said:

"Know that the interpretation of dreams falls into various categories. Dreams may be interpreted in the light of the Quran or in the light of the Sunnah, or by means of the proverbs that are current among people, or by names and metaphors, or in terms of opposites." (Sharh al-Sunnah, 12/220)

He gave examples of this, such as:

1- Interpretation in the light of the Quran: such as a rope meaning a covenant, because Allah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“And hold fast, all of you together, to the Rope of Allah…” [Al 'Imran 3:103]

2- Interpretation in the light of the Sunnah: such as the crow representing an immoral man (fasiq), because the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) called it such.

3- Interpretation by means of proverbs: such as digging a hole meaning a plot, because people say “Whoever digs a hole will fall in it.”

4- Interpretation by means of names: such as seeing a man called Rashid meaning wisdom.

5- Interpretation by means of opposites : such as fear meaning safety, because Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“And He will surely give them in exchange a safe security after their fear” [al-Nur 24:55]

14- As for the book “Interpretation of Dreams” that is attributed to Ibn Sirin, many researchers doubt that it can be attributed to him at all, so we cannot be certain that this book was written by this prominent scholar.

And Allah knows best.