

PUMPKINS

<i>Talmud Bavli Berakhot 56b</i>	תלמוד בבלי ברכות נו:
The Sages teach: One who sees a reed [<i>kaneh</i>] in a dream should expect wisdom, as it is stated: "Get [<i>kene</i>] wisdom" (Proverbs 4:7). One who sees several reeds [<i>kanim</i>] should expect understanding, as it said: "Yea, with all your acquisitions [<i>kinyanekha</i>] acquire understanding" (Proverbs 4:7). Rabbi Zeira said: Pumpkin [<i>kara</i>], heart of palm [<i>kura</i>], wax [<i>kira</i>], and reed [<i>kanya</i>], are all advantageous when one dreams about them. It was taught in a <i>baraita</i> : A pumpkin is only shown in a dream to one who fears Heaven with all his might, because pumpkins [<i>delu'im</i>] are interpreted as an acronym for <i>dalu einai lamarom</i> , "My eyes were raised on high" (Isaiah 38:14).	תנו רבנן: הרוֹאֶה קִנֵּה בְחֵלֹם — יִצְפֶּה לְחִכְמָה, שְׁנֵאֲמַר: "קִנֵּה חִכְמָה". קִנִּים — יִצְפֶּה לְבִינָה, שְׁנֵאֲמַר: "וּבְכָל קִנְיָנְךָ קִנֵּה בִינָה". אָמַר רַבִּי זֵירָא: קָרָא, קוּרָא, קִירָא, קִנְיָא — כּוֹלֵהוּ מֵעַלּוּ לְחִלְמָא. מִנְיָא: אִין מִרְאִין דְּלוּעִין אַלְא לְמִי שֶׁהוּא יָרָא שְׁמַיִם בְּכָל פְּחוּ

- Why do you think pumpkins were given such a weighty symbol in Jewish dream interpretation?
- Have you ever dreamt about a pumpkin? What do you think it meant?

<i>Kitzur Shulchan Aruch 134:14</i>	קיצור שלחן ערוך קל"ד:י"ד
It is forbidden to carve out the verse "You must live in <i>sukkot</i> " etc. or any other verse on a pumpkin or similar fruit as a <i>sukkah</i> decoration, because it will subsequently be degraded, and besides, it is forbidden to write a verse needlessly.	אָסוּר לְחַקוֹק פֶּסוּק בְּסִפּוֹת תְּשֻׁבוֹת וְגו' אוֹ שָׂאָר פֶּסוּק עַל דְּלַעַת וְכִיּוֹצֵא בָּהּ לְגוֹי סִפָּה, מִשּׁוּם דְּיָבוֹא אַחֵר כָּךְ לִידֵי בִזְיוֹן. וְעוֹד, דְּאָסוּר לְכַתֵּב פֶּסוּק שְׁלֵא לְצַרְךָ.

- What does this source tell you about the weight of writing verses of Torah?
- Why do you think words are so weighty (i.e. Hold so much meaning) in Judaism?

DEMONS

Talmud Bavli Berakhot 6a

One who seeks to know that the demons exist should place fine ashes around his bed, and in the morning the demons' footprints appear like chickens' footprints, in the ash. One who seeks to see them should take the afterbirth of a firstborn female black cat, born to a firstborn female black cat, burn it in the fire, grind it and place it in his eyes, and he will see them. He must then place the ashes in an iron tube sealed with an iron seal lest the demons steal it from him, and then seal the opening so he will not be harmed. Rav Beivai bar Abaye performed this procedure, saw the demons, and was harmed. The Sages prayed for mercy on his behalf, and he was healed.

- Does this text remind you of other texts you've seen in different cultural contexts? Why or how?
- Based on this text how might you describe or draw a demon as it is understood in Judaism? Get creative!

Talmud Bavli Kiddushin 29b

Abaye heard that Rav Aḥa bar Ya'akov was coming. There was a certain demon in the study hall of Abaye, which was so powerful that when two people would enter they would be harmed, even during the day. Abaye said to the people of the town: Do not give Rav Aḥa bar Ya'akov lodging [*ushpiza*] so that he will be forced to spend the night in the study hall. Since Rav Aḥa bar Ya'akov is a righteous man, perhaps a miracle will occur on his behalf, and he will kill the demon. Rav Aḥa found no place to spend the night, and he entered and spent the night in that study hall of the Sages. The demon appeared to him like a serpent with seven heads. Rav Aḥa bar Ya'akov began to pray, and with every bow that he bowed one of the demon's heads fell off, until it eventually died. The next day Rav Aḥa said to the townspeople: If a miracle had not occurred, you would have placed me in danger.

- How would you describe the relationship between prayer and the supernatural in Judaism?
- In your opinion or experience does the supernatural intersect with Divinity?

GHOSTS

Samuel I 28:3-14

This is a ghost story from the book of Prophets in the TaNaKh.

Now Samuel had died, and all Israel made lament for him; and he was buried in his own town of Ramah. And [King] Saul had forbidden [use of] ghosts and familiar spirits in the land. The Philistines mustered and they marched to Shunem and encamped; and Saul gathered all Israel, and they encamped at Gilboa. When Saul saw the Philistine force, his heart trembled with fear. And Saul inquired of God, but God did not answer him, either by dreams or by Urim or by prophets. Then, Saul said to his courtiers, "Find me a woman who consults ghosts, so that I can go to her and inquire through her." And his courtiers told him that there was a woman in En-dor who consulted ghosts. Saul disguised himself; he put on different clothes and set out with two men. They came to the woman by night, and he said, "Please divine for me by a ghost. Bring up for me the one I shall name to you." But the woman answered him, "You know what Saul has done, how he has banned [the use of] ghosts and familiar spirits in the land. So why are you laying a trap for me, to get me killed?" Saul swore to her by God: "As God lives, you won't get into trouble over this." At that, the woman asked, "Whom shall I bring up for you?" He answered, "Bring up Samuel for me."

Then the woman recognized Samuel, and she shrieked loudly, and said to Saul, "Why have you deceived me? You are Saul!" The king answered her, "Don't be afraid. What do you see?" And the woman said to Saul, "I see a divine being coming up from the earth." "What does he look like?" he asked her. "It is an old man coming up," she said, "and he is wrapped in a robe." Then Saul knew that it was Samuel; and he bowed low in homage with his face to the ground.

- Why do you think King Saul placed a decree against the use of "ghosts and familiar spirits in the land"?
- Why do you think King Saul sought out "a woman who consults ghosts" after he forbid other people from doing that?