
The Typical Dreams of Jordanian College Students

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In this chapter we look at dream patterns of college students from four countries based on their answers to the typical dreams questionnaire (TDQ).¹ Developed for use in a study of the dream patterns of Japanese and U.S. college students in the 1950s and recently extended with a study of Canadian college students, the TDQ is a very simple social scientific research tool consisting of a series of yes-or-no questions regarding various types of dreaming experience and content. When large groups of people provide answers to the TDQ, a number of fascinating patterns emerge that bear directly on the claims of both religious and psychological theorists. Although limited by the impersonal nature of the data, the TDQ findings provide a basic empirical test for hypotheses about dreaming. Furthermore, they illuminate significant themes that may not be obvious from other methodological perspectives.

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We report the results of a TDQ study involving 326 college students in contemporary Jordan, comparing them to the findings of the earlier research on Canadian, U.S., and Japanese college students. We do not assume that the Jordanian findings reflect Muslim dream traditions or that the U.S. and Canadian findings reflect Christian dream traditions. Our purpose is not to define the fixed parameters of Muslim or Christian dreaming experience, but to begin exploring the multidimensional contours of dreaming in a contemporary Arab Muslim context. Our specific goals in this chapter are to add new data to the study of panhuman patterns of dreaming that appear in *all* traditions and to illuminate the images, motifs, and thematic qualities that appear from the perspective of currently available evidence to distinguish the dream experiences of Islamic communities from those of other religious and cultural groups.

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The Jordanian Context

A small country with a population of approximately six million, Jordan is composed primarily of Sunni Muslims with a Christian minority of about 6 percent. A large percentage of the Jordanian population is of Palestinian descent, with other minuscule percentages of Circassians and Armenians. The official name of the country is the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, and its governmental form is a constitutional monarchy. It is bounded by Syria, Israel, Saudi Arabia, and Iraq—a region of considerable tension and violent conflict in the summer of 2005, when the TDQ survey was administered. The official religion in Jordan is Islam, and the country is regarded as modern, friendly, and reasonable by Western governments. Indeed, its rule is often criticized by Muslim fundamentalists as too secular, with no strict laws enforced to follow the Shari'a code of moral conduct (such as women wearing the veil). The population in Jordan ranges from the secular and nonpracticing to the very devout, as evidenced by people's public manner of dressing and behaving.

Participants in this study (279 female, 47 male; 326 total) were enrolled in introductory courses at the Department of Education at the University of Jordan in Amman, the capital city. As a mixed gender public university, the sample could be seen as covering the range of socioeconomic classes in the country. More than thirty-three thousand students attend the university, mostly from Jordan itself, with around 10 percent foreign students. The questionnaires were administered at the beginning of the class before regular instruction began. There was a question sheet and a separate answer sheet with numbered boxes corresponding to the items. On top of the answer sheet, the participants filled out their name, gender, age, and occupation. The question sheet included a sentence assuring the participants' anonymity. The official language of Jordan is Arabic, so the questionnaire was administered in that language. Fifty-five items matched those on the TDQ used by Tore Nielsen et al. with Canadian students, with five items added that reflect chapter author Lana Nasser's interest in jinn-related experiences (see chapter 11). The additional items included dreaming of wearing wedding clothes, of a war, of giving birth, of spousal disloyalty, and of jinn or shaytan (Satan). The TDQ questionnaires used in both the previous studies included a final set of questions asking for the most recurring items in dreams, the first remembered item, the average number of dreams and nightmares each month, and other dreams not mentioned in the preceding items. These, too, were included in the Jordanian TDQ.

Frequencies of Typical Dreams

Table 16.1 lists the total frequencies of the TDQ responses from the 326 Jordanian students (47 males, 279 females) and the corresponding frequencies reported from the 1,181 Canadian students in 2003 (341 males, 840 females), the 250 U.S. (134 males, 116 females), and the 223 Japanese students in 1958 (132 males, 91 females). All are ranked from highest to lowest number of yes answers.

The large gender imbalance in the Jordanian TDQs constrains any conclusions that might be drawn regarding Jordanian men. Also restricting the comparison and interpretation of these findings is the dramatic difference in the historical, cultural, and linguistic environments of the four national groups. We do not know how the students were influenced by social conventions regarding the communication of dream experiences, nor can we tell which types of dreams family, friends, and teachers encouraged them to report or reject.

Given these limitations, it is even more remarkable how consistent the findings are across the four groups. Focusing for a moment on the six dream types most frequently reported in each sample (see figure 16.1), we find a high degree of phenomenological concurrence.

All four groups reported a high percentage of dreams of school, falling, and other kinds of misfortune (arriving late, trying again and again, verge of falling). This is far more overlap than one would expect if the TDQ were not accurately conveying the students' honest answers about their dream experiences. Our confidence is further strengthened by the congruence between these TDQ findings and the research literature on content analysis, nightmares, and threat simulation theory.² The high proportion of dreams of school naturally reflects the primary waking-world concerns of the participants, all of whom are full-time university students, as would be predicted by the continuity theory of dreaming, which says that dreams accurately reflect the most important concerns, emotions, and relationships in a person's waking life. The predominance of negative, emotionally unpleasant types of dreams matches the findings of researchers who have identified similar tendencies among most other populations toward frequent nightmares of aggression, misfortune, fear, and helplessness. The types of threats represented in these highly frequent dreams are potentially real dangers in the individual's waking world, in line with what we would expect from the theory that dreams function (in part) to simulate, and thus to prepare people for, possible threats in waking life, whether in the contemporary world or in the ancestral environment of our human predecessors.

<i>Jordanians, 2005</i>	<i>Americans, 1958</i>
1. School, teachers, studying	1. Falling
2. Falling	2. Being attacked
3. Being frozen with fright	3. Trying again and again
4. Failing an examination	4. School, teachers, studying
5. Arriving too late	5. Sexual experience
6. Snakes	6. Arriving too late
<i>Canadians, 2002</i>	<i>Japanese, 1958</i>
1. Being chased or pursued	1. Being attacked
2. Sexual experience	2. Trying again and again
3. Falling	3. Being frozen with fright
4. School, teachers, studying	4. School, teachers, studying
5. Arriving too late	5. Falling
6. Being on the verge of falling	6. Sexual experience

FIGURE 16.1 Most Frequent Types of Dream by National Group

All the groups other than the Jordanians included dreams of sexual experience and being chased or pursued in their top six. Only the Jordanian list mentions dreams of snakes and failing an exam. The snakes figure can be misleading, however, because the Jordanian percentages are roughly the same or lower than the snake dream frequencies of the U.S. and Japanese groups (the Canadian percentage is quite low in comparison to the other three, perhaps because relatively few snakes are native to Canada).

Overall, the percentage of total Jordanian yes answers is somewhat lower than for the other student populations, even though the relative rankings of each type are generally the same in all four groups—everyone dreams a lot about school, falling, and frustration, and very few dream about (for example) being turned into an object or animal. What emerges here is a rough but empirically discernible portrait of dream patterns across the boundaries of culture, language, and religion.

Gender and the Jinn

To analyze in further detail the distinctive characteristics of the Jordanian sample, we investigated two specific dimensions of the TDQ results: gender, and yes answers to the final question about dreams of the jinn or shaytan.

TABLE 16.1					
Typical Dream Questionnaire Frequencies (in percentages)					
Jordanian Rank	Type	Jordanian Total	Canadian Total	American Total	Japan Total
1	School, teacher, studying	80.4	67.1	71.2	86.1
2	Falling	69.3	73.8	82.8	74.4
3	Frozen with fright	63.8	40.7	58.0	87.0
4	Failing an exam	62.0	45.0	38.8	41.3
5	Arriving late	54.0	59.5	63.6	48.9
6	Snakes	52.5	22.1	48.8	49.8
7	Verge of falling	52.1	57.7	46.8	45.3
8	Trying again and again	49.4	53.5	71.2	87.0
9	Being chased	47.9	81.5	77.2	91.0
10	Finding money	47.9	25.7	56.0	25.6
11	Dead → alive	46.3	38.4	46.0	57.4
12	Delicious foods	44.8	30.7	61.6	68.2
13	Insects, spiders	42.3	33.8	y	y
14	War	37.4	x	x	x
15	Smothered	36.5	24.2	44.4	33.2
16	Alive → dead	35.9	54.1	57.2	42.2
17	Half-awake, paralyzed	31.0	27.2	y	y
18	Teeth falling out	28.8	18.8	20.8	16.1
19	Losing control of vehicle	28.5	32.0	y	y
20	Giving birth	27.9	x	x	x
21	Earthquakes	26.7	10.8	y	y
22	Wedding clothes	26.7	x	x	x
23	Superior knowledge	26.7	24.4	25.6	25.1
24	Flying	25.5	48.3	33.6	45.7
25	Sexual experience	25.2	76.5	66.4	68.2
26	Being tied, paralyzed	24.2	21.4	30.4	20.6
27	Seeing a face very close	24.5	23.5	y	y
28	Being killed	23.3	34.5	y	y
29	Seeing oneself dead	22.7	23.8	42.8	17.5
30	Physical attack	23.0	42.4	y	y
(continued)					

Table 16.1 Typical Dream Questionnaire Frequencies (in percentages) (*continued*)

<i>Jordanian Rank</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Jordanian Total</i>	<i>Canadian Total</i>	<i>American Total</i>	<i>Japan Total</i>
31	Vivid presence in room	21.8	48.3	y	y
32	Swimming	22.1	34.3	52.0	52.5
33	Jinn or Shaitan	22.4	x	x	x
34	Seeing oneself in mirror	20.6	15.9	12.4	11.7
35	Wild violent beasts	20.6	15.9	30.0	42.2
36	Fire	19.0	27.3	40.8	65.9
37	Floods, tidal wave	18.9	12.4	y	y
38	Inappropriately dressed	18.4	32.5	46.0	23.3
39	Being nude	16.0	32.6	y	y
40	Being at a movie	16.0	16.9	y	y
41	Being a child	15.6	36.7	y	y
42	Cheating	15.0	x	x	x
43	Angel	12.9	12.4	y	y
44	Tornadoes, wind	12.6	17.7	y	y
45	Magical powers	12.6	24.9	y	y
46	Discovering a new room	12.6	32.3	y	y
47	Encountering God	12.0	11.2	y	y
48	Killing someone	12.0	24.3	25.6	27.8
49	Being locked up	11.7	24.0	56.4	43.5
50	Travel to another planet	10.1	12.3	y	y
51	Seeing an extraterrestrial	8.0	9.5	y	y
52	Seeing a plane crash	7.4	12.8	y	y
53	Toilet embarrassment	7.4	19.2	y	y
54	Lunatics	6.7	20.0	25.6	13.5
55	Seeing a UFO	6.1	7.7	y	y
56	Abortion	5.5	5.1	y	y
57	Being the opposite sex	4.6	11.9	y	y
58	Being an object	2.1	3.5	y	y
59	Being an animal	2.1	8.0	y	y
60	Part-human creatures	1.2	16.8	14.8	15.7
x = asked only of Jordanian students y = asked only of Jordanian and Canadian students					

TABLE 16.2			
Dream Types Significantly Higher for Jordanian Females Than for Jordanian Males			
Type	F	M	P
School, teachers, studying	84.2	57.4	<.001
Being frozen with fright	67.0	44.7	.003
Arriving too late	56.6	38.3	.015
Giving birth	30.1	14.9	.020
Snakes	54.8	38.3	.026
Being on the verge of falling	54.5	38.3	.029

Table 16.2 lists the type of dreams that the female Jordanian students reported significantly ($P < .05$) more often than the male students, and table 16.3 shows the dreams the males reported significantly more often than the females.³ Again, the number of male respondents is so small that any interpretations must be provisional and subject to further validation. That being said, a rather clear and distinct image of the dreaming experiences of the two genders can be discerned in these data. The women's most prevalent types of dreams tended in the direction of weakness, impotence, and constraint, while the men's dreams expressed a greater degree of power, flexibility, wide-ranging movement, and energetic action. The women's dreams revolved more around their current waking-world circumstances at school. The men did not dream as much about the here and now of school life; their dreaming imaginations appear to be more adventurous, less confined, and freer, even if their interactions led to danger (e.g., being killed). It is not surprising that the women reported more dreams of giving birth, but it is surprising that seven of the forty-seven male participants also reported dreams of giving birth. The higher proportion of snake dreams among the women could reflect the negative symbolism of snakes in Muslim culture (harkening back to Eve's temptation by the serpent, a story included in the Qur'an); it could also, following a psychoanalytic line of interpretation, reflect the women's unconscious perception of male phallic potency.

Most unexpected from our perspective was the higher frequency of jinn dreams among the Jordanian men. We predicted that women would dream more often than men of the jinn because women are commonly believed in Jordanian culture to be more open to the jinn realm, and more women than

TABLE 16.3
Dream Types Significantly Higher for Jordanian
Males Than for Jordanian Females

Type	F	M	P
Sexual experiences	21.9	44.7	.001
Flying	22.2	44.7	.002
Killing someone	9.7	25.5	.004
Seeing jinn or Shaytan	19.8	38.3	.006
Being an animal	11.1	8.5	.010
Having magical powers	10.8	23.4	.019
Being killed	21.1	36.2	.022
Swimming	20.1	34.0	.029
Being the opposite sex	3.6	10.6	.049

men are diagnosed with jinn possession. The opposite result of the TDQ gender analysis led us to focus more specifically on the characteristics of the men and women who reported yes to the jinn question as compared to the men and women who answered no to this TDQ item.

Table 16.4 compares yes-jinn participants to no-jinn participants, listing the types of dreams reported significantly (<.05) more often by one or the other group. As it turns out, there were major differences between these two subsamples in almost half (29) the TDQ questions, and in every case the yes-jinn people reported higher frequencies than the no-jinn people.⁴ Especially large differences appear with the dream types of “vividly sensing, but not necessarily seeing or hearing, a presence in the room” and “being half-awake and paralyzed in bed,” both of which seem to reflect disturbances in sleeping experience that might, in Western psychiatric language, be considered symptoms of a night terror or other kind of sleep disorder. Several other relatively high-frequency answers from the yes-jinn participants point in the same direction: falling, and being on the verge of falling; being tied and unable to move; being frozen with fright; being smothered and unable to breathe. A sense of heightened danger and threat appears in their large proportion of dreams of war, of being killed, of seeing oneself dead, of being chased, and of being physically attacked. At the same time, the yes-jinn people were much more likely to report dreams of tremendous force and extraordinary energy,

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TABLE 16.4
Dream Types of Yes-Jinn and No-Jinn Respondents Type

	Yes-Jinn	No-Jinn	P
Vividly sensing a presence in room	39.7	17.6	<.001
Being on the verge of falling	72.6	46.4	<.001
Being half awake and paralyzed in bed	50.7	26.1	<.001
Killing someone	24.7	8.0	<.001
Falling	83.6	64.8	.001
Being unable to move	39.7	20.3	.001
Being nude	28.8	12.3	.001
Seeing an angel	24.7	9.6	.001
War	52.1	33.3	.003
A person now dead as alive	60.3	42.1	.004
Being smothered, unable to breathe	50.7	32.6	.004
Flying	38.4	21.8	.004
Tornadoes or strong winds	23.3	10.0	.004
Fire	30.1	15.7	.006
Having magical powers	21.9	9.6	.006
Wild beasts	31.5	17.2	.007
Sexual experiences	37.0	22.2	.009
Being killed	34.2	20.3	.011
Swimming	31.5	19.2	.020
Trying again and again	60.3	46.0	.021
Seeing yourself as dead	32.9	20.7	.024
Encountering God	19.2	10.0	.030
Being inappropriately dressed	27.4	16.9	.035
Being physically attacked	31.5	20.7	.040
Being at a movie	23.3	13.8	.041
Being chased	57.5	45.2	.042
Being an animal	5.5	1.1	.043
Seeing a UFO	11.0	4.6	.046
Being frozen with fright	72.6	61.3	.049

either their own (killing someone, flying, swimming, magic powers) or in the external world (fire, tornados, wild beasts). The yes-jinn participants were also more likely to dream of supernatural figures like angels, God, and dead people coming back to life. Although the jinn could be seen as positive or negative, the high frequency of negative dreams suggests they are experientially more related to the demonic than they are to the angelic. “Vividly sensing a presence in the room,” “sleep paralysis,” and not being able to breathe are all congruent with the widely accepted mythology of jinn as incubuslike figures coming to a person in sleep, sitting on his or her chest, dropping the dreamer from high altitudes, and generally trying to scare the person.

In tables 16.5 and 16.6 we push the analysis one step further and compare the female yes-jinn respondents to female no-jinn respondents, and the male yes-jinn to the male no-jinn.

The data in table 16.5 suggest that dream types that resemble sleep disorders predominate most clearly among the yes-jinn women. The remarkably high percentages of falling and verge-of-falling dream reports indicate that yes-jinn women are, compared to the women who do not dream of jinn, extremely susceptible to experiences of weakness and vulnerability. This interpretation is further supported by the other significant disparities

TABLE 16.5
Dream Types of Female Yes-Jinn and Female No-Jinn

Type	F Yes-Jinn	F No-Jinn	P
Falling	90.9	66.1	<.001
Being on the verge of falling	83.6	47.3	<.001
Being half awake and paralyzed in bed	52.7	25.9	<.001
Vividly sensing a presence in room	40.0	16.5	<.001
Being killed	38.2	17.0	.001
Being smothered, unable to breathe	56.4	33.9	.002
Killing someone	21.8	6.7	.002
War	52.7	31.7	.003
Seeing an angel	23.6	8.9	.004
Wild beasts	34.5	17.0	.005
Encountering God in some form	20.0	8.5	.017

TABLE 16.6

Dream Types of Male Yes-Jinn and Male No-Jinn

Type	M Yes-Jinn	M No-Jinn	P
Being frozen with fright	72.2	27.6	.003
Seeing a person now dead as alive	72.2	31.0	.007

involving threats to the dreamer’s well-being and aggressive interactions. That women who dream of jinn also dream somewhat more often of angels and God makes sense in terms of the broader Islamic cultural context, suggesting the yes-jinn women may have a more active, or at least more emotionally intense, relationship with Muslim religion than the no-jinn women. If we view the jinn as expressing aspects of the unconscious Jung described as the shadow, then perhaps these women, in behavior and thought, deviate more from societal norms than their no-jinn dreaming peers. The limitation, of course, is that we do not know anything else about their waking lives, nor do we know what criteria they used for defining jinn dreams.

In any case, it is noteworthy that Jordanians in all categories reported more dreams of jinn and shaytan than of angels and God, that is, more negative religious figures than positive figures. This appears congruent with the widely reported tendency to recall more negative dreams than positive ones.

The male yes-jinn versus no-jinn differences shown in table 16.6 are few but intriguing. The yes-jinn males reported far more dreams of being frozen with fright and of dead people appearing alive. The latter dream type reflects an obviously supernatural phenomenon that is closely related to traditional religious beliefs, while the former type borders on sleep pathology and correlates with the lore of jinn possession.⁵

Considering all these findings as a whole, the yes-jinn people can be characterized as *intensified dreamers* who experience a wider range of phenomena and more powerful forces (both positive and negative) than is found in the TDQs of the no-jinn respondents. This seems to be especially true among the yes-jinn females, who appear in this sample to be unusually troubled sleepers.

Additional Dream Reports

Of the 326 Jordanian students who answered the yes-or-no questions of the TDQ, 59 wrote an additional dream report at the end of the survey. These

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dreams, though very brief, offer a fascinating window into the personal dream experiences that embody and actualize the statistical patterns identified in the preceding sections. Very little interpretation is possible for these dreams given the lack of additional details about the individual's waking-life context. Nevertheless, we can easily recognize several clear connections between these personal dream narratives and the general findings of the TDQ. On the list, the dreamers are identified by gender and age, for example, F.20 indicates a twenty-year-old female.

1. F.17: I dreamt that I am seeing one of my relatives sitting on a chair and the chair broke.
2. F.18: I dreamt that I am seeing an important person, and that I am sitting with her telling her about myself.
3. F.20: I dreamt that I am in a house of worship wearing a ring.
4. F.20: I dreamt that I was throwing up.
5. F.20: I dream of all the people and courses at university, but I would be in school. Often I dream this dream.
6. F.20: I dreamt that an oil carrier destroyed the world, and everything died from its explosion.
7. M.24: I dreamt that I was someone [prominent] in the society I belong to. And I dreamt that I completed higher education: this dream has come to me while in my third year of university [currently].
8. F.20: I dreamt that our house is collapsing and we [the family] are in it.
9. F.20: I dreamt of engagement.
10. F.20: People getting into a car on which is written "Heaven's taxi."
11. F.18: I dreamt that a kind of creature that is not human is hitting me with his followers in the afternoon, and while no one is present.
12. F.18: That I am loved by everyone.
13. F.18: I dreamt that I traveled to India and did not return home.
14. F.19: I dreamt about a large turtle following me in a room.
15. F.18: I dreamt that I am dying and seeing my seat in hell—one time.
16. F.18: I dreamt that I am climbing stairs—more than once; this was during the beginning of my last year in high school [tawjihi].
17. M.22: I dreamt that I visited Mecca the blessed.
18. F.19: Always and a lot of dreams of the dead/deceased.
19. F.19: I dream that I am in the house of God [bayt allah al haram, the Ka'ab in Mecca]. I always dream of having superior abilities but that I will fail.
20. M.19: I dreamt that I married the girl that I love and put the wedding ring around her finger.
21. F.21: I dreamt of wearing an engagement dress.

22. F.20: Acquiring gold.
23. F.19: Finishing University and receiving my Masters degree.
24. F.22: I dreamt of wearing gold.
25. F.18: Finishing university study.
26. F.20: I dream of a particular person in dreams that resemble reality, but seldom do I remember the dream. The problem is that I have a little amount of dreams, but when I do, it is about this person.
27. F.17: Dreams that have no meaning, like dreams of toys or cartoons and the future. And a dream that is recurring: fireworks that light the sky with different colors.
28. F.20: I dream of performing the known religious rites [fasting, praying, etc.]. I dream of seeing persons and relatives.
29. F.19: I don't remember. I dream that I am in a house; in the dream, my house is big and spacious.
30. F.18: I dreamt that I am ascending and descending in my image, and that I am hanging suspended in the air until I wake up.
31. F.18: I dream of silver and accessories.
32. F.18: Imagining people that are close to me in the image of villains.
33. F.19: Visiting cemeteries.
34. F.18: I dreamt of crying intensely before the results of the final high school exam [*tawjihil*]; this was a good omen as I passed the exams.
35. F.18: Feeling that the day of judgment is happening, and of volcanic eruptions.
36. F.27: Dreaming of fish, sharks, jellyfish. Trying to turn on the light, but it NEVER works.
37. F.21: Bees, and giving birth to children.
38. F.20: Graduating from university with honors.
39. F.19: Making food and feeding people.
40. F.19: 1. That I am pregnant. 2. Seeing a lot of blood.
41. F.18: Seeing a bright/shining light in the sky.
42. F.20: I dreamt that I am drunk, that is that I am drinking alcohol, while I am happy—and a lot [of drinking]. I also dreamt that I am married to my brother.
43. M.23: Feeling a dizziness while sleeping.
44. M.19: Seeing the sky filled with ships, planes and transportation vehicles.
45. F.20: Rats chasing me, and I wake up from sleep screaming and scared.
46. F.18: Crying intensely in dreams.
47. F.18: Dreaming of prophets.
48. F.22: I dreamt that I was in heaven.
49. F.22: I dreamt that I returned to the country in which I was born, but in the same places that exist in the country I am now living in.

50. F.20: Seeing the torture of judgment day. Seeing the prophets.
51. F.19: Escaping and running, and there is someone and a car following me and I can't escape or save myself from it.
52. F.20: I dream of small things that get bigger suddenly and vice versa.
53. F.20: A dream of the person one loves or wishes to see often. I dreamt that I was surprised to find myself at school or university with no shoes on.
54. F.18: I dreamt that I was crying deeply due to my mother's death; but in reality she is not dead—God protect her.
55. F.21: I always dream that I am wearing the special clothes for prayer, or there would be other people wearing the prayer clothes.
56. F.19: I often dream of dogs chasing me, to the degree that I am scared of them in reality even without dreams, even from far away I am afraid of them, I do not like them.
57. F.26: The wedding of a male or female relative. Dreams of monkeys which assault/attack my family and siblings.
58. M.38: I dream about those around me from family and acquaintances; they are teasing me in an aggravating manner—and constantly.
59. M.21: Without describing dreams, I was of those who deal with the Shay-tan, but God guided me. I know that God is the god of hearts [unclear writing]. If you think, you reach [the goal], but choose the path with your mind and God will make you understand.

Many of these dream reports illustrate the basic idea that dreaming is continuous with people's primary emotional and relational concerns in waking life. School, exams, and graduation are prominent themes, accurately reflecting the waking-world circumstances of the dreamers. Life cycle issues are also prevalent in these narratives. Birth, marriage, and death appear in several reports, which is consistent with findings from other empirical approaches to dream content and developmental life stages.⁶ Jordanian students, despite living in a radically different cultural context from that of Western Europeans and North Americans, seem to experience the same basic types of dreams rooted in the same realities of ordinary human existence. The primary difference regards the prominence of explicitly religious themes in the Jordanian additional dreams. These include positive references to religion (praying, being in heaven, seeing the prophets) as well as negative references (facing the Day of Judgment, being in hell). We do not know if these religious dreams were consistent with the individuals' waking-life piety, but the general importance of dreaming in Islamic tradition would certainly have the effect of encouraging observant Muslims to pay extra attention to dreams with those kinds of images, feelings, and powers. Only in Islamic communities would we expect to hear reports of dreams of making

the pilgrimage to Mecca or encountering shaytan. As the preceding chapters of this book have shown, such distinctively Islamic dream themes have played a powerful role in the tradition since its founding, and according to the results of our Jordanian TDQ study such dream themes are still present and impactful in Muslims' lives today.

Perhaps the religiously charged dreams of Muslims are, at a deeper level, ultimately related to the mystical dreams of Christians, Buddhists, and members of other spiritual traditions. The present findings cannot speak to that possibility, but the question is worth pursuing.

Aside from dreams that are typical of student life, two other distinct categories emerged which might be worthy of future exploration. The first category involved weddings, engagements, and wearing jewelry (silver or gold). There is a high importance placed on marriage in Jordanian culture, and since most of the research participants were within the marrying age, these dreams are not surprising and clearly affirm the cultural value placed on marriage. The second category is concerned with the religious images of heaven, hell, the prophets, and performing religious activities or being in houses of worship. Do these dreams reflect the true religious sentiments of the individual, or are they incorporations of messages they have been taught by external sources? Are the relatively young and well-educated participants in this study more or less religious than other groups of Jordanians? How would Jordanians compare with other people living within the Arabic-Islamic world in regard to the religious dimensions of their dreams? Here, we believe, is an opportunity for tremendously important new research to be pursued.

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As a project in the cross-cultural comparison of dream experience, our study has produced fairly simple and straightforward results. The 2005 Jordanian students reported an overall pattern of typical dream frequencies remarkably similar to the 2002 Canadian students and the 1958 U.S. and Japanese students. Our study is not the final word on the subject, but these TDQ studies are providing additional evidence of a shared substrate of human dreaming—an evolved capacity of the brain-mind system with strongly recurrent features that are manifested and actualized in different forms in different cultures and religions

The lower reporting of sex dreams among the Jordanians should not be surprising; at least two factors are likely involved. First is the higher degree of restriction on the cultural/public expression of sexuality in Jordan. Second is the possibility of internal censorship in Freud's sense of the term, that

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is, Jordanians shying away from their own sexual feelings, desires, dreams, et cetera. The low reporting among Jordanians on chasing dreams is perplexing, given the dangerous regional neighborhood in which they live. Children in Jordan play chasing games like children all over the world, but that theme does not carry into the dreams of the Jordanian students as it does in the other three groups. Perhaps there is something in the Muslim religious context that enables them to minimize such nightmarish dreams.

The high frequency of falling dreams among the Jordanian yes-jinn women is interesting in light of a linguistic fact: in Arabic one of the words used to describe failing an exam comes from the same root as "falling," which also refers to a "fallen" person—usually meaning "immodest." Jordanian culture is more communally interconnected than is the case in most Western countries, and for women especially the danger of "falling" in the eyes of society is a real and urgent concern. As inheritors of Arabic and Islamic traditions, Jordanians place great importance on sexual propriety, chastity, and honor; a fall in a woman's reputation can destroy her chances of marriage. The female yes-jinn dreamers seemed to feel especially close to that kind of dangerous loss of control, volition, and gravitational support. Our speculation (which we hope to substantiate in future research) is that these TDQ findings shed new light on a significant portion of the Jordanian population, female and male, who have either experienced jinn possession or are vulnerable to a major possession experience. In particular, we believe strong feelings of guilt about taboo sexual encounters and desires (adultery, homosexuality, premarital romance) are responsible for triggering many if not all jinn possessions, although sexual repression does not fully explain the ultimate meaning and long-term impact of these dreams on the individual dreamers.

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NOTES

1. See Richard M. Griffith, Otoy Miyagi, and Akira Tago, "The Universality of Typical Dreams: Japanese vs. Americans," *American Anthropologist* 60 (1958): 1173–1180. Tore Nielsen, Anthony Zadra, Valerie Simard, Sebastian Saucier, Philippe Stenstrom, Carlyle Smith, and Don Kuiken, "The Typical Dreams of Canadian University Students," *Dreaming* 13 (2003): 211–235.
2. G. William Domhoff, *Finding Meaning in Dreams: A Quantitative Approach* (New York: Plenum, 1996); Ernest Hartmann, *The Nightmare: The Psychology and Biology*

of *Terrifying Dreams* (New York: Basic Books, 1984); Antti Revonsuo, "The Reinterpretation of Dreams: An Evolutionary Hypothesis of the Function of Dreaming," *Behavioral and Brain Sciences* 23 (2000): 877–901.

3. The P statistic (Pearson's coefficient) expresses how likely it is that a statistical difference is the result of chance. If P is less than .05, there is a 95 percent probability that the differences are real and not arbitrary. This .05 figure is the commonly accepted threshold for defining statistical significance.
4. Among a large number of correlations, odds are that at least a few will appear to show significant differences. This is a multiple testing problem that can lead to false positives, and it can be controlled by more sophisticated statistical methods than we use in this chapter. However, we are confident the results we present regarding yes-jinn versus no-jinn dreamers are far more significant and robust than mere chance would predict.
5. These findings are restricted by the same multiple testing problem described in note 4.
6. Robert L. Van de Castle, *Our Dreaming Mind* (New York: Ballantine, 1994); David Foulkes, *Children's Dreaming and the Development of Consciousness* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1999).