

1. The Flow Of Blessing

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Sexual Purity

Foundation of the Jewish Nation It is no secret that in these times of the "birth pains of Mashiach," our nation is facing great challenges and dangers. The rebirth of the nation in Israel, with all of its wondrous victories and achievements, seems to have stumbled off track.

During the recent Disengagement or "Hitnatkut," the Government of Israel evacuated and razed flourishing Jewish communities in Gush Katif and the Shomron. In the process, cherished portions of the Holy Land, promised by G-d to the Jews, were given over to an enemy set upon the destruction of Israel. Yet, from the north and from the south, rocket attacks and terrorism continue with a greater wrath, threatening all of the country.

In addition, for several years now, governmental budget cutbacks to yeshivot and other Torah institutions have put the Torah world in difficult straits. Concurrently, the Jewish identity of the State is being threatened by the foreign, non-Jewish ideologies that reign rampant in the Israeli media, the Israeli Supreme Court, the Israel Ministry of Education, and the Knesset.

Additionally, an obsession with Western Culture has brought a plague of sexual immodesty to the streets of the Holy Land. Given all of these discouraging factors, it is not surprising that immigration to Israel is down to a trickle, motivated largely by growing outbreaks of anti-Semitism around the world.

To growing numbers of people in Israel, it is obvious that salvation will not come from the Israeli political system, nor from new elections, nor political demonstrations and the like. While we have faith that the long-awaited redemption will surely come, the present situation compels us to do a thorough heshbon nefesh, an inner accounting, to discover what we can do to stop our nation's spiritual decline.

Thus, with so many tribulations hovering over Am Yisrael (the Nation of Israel) and Eretz Yisrael (the Land of Israel,) it behooves us to explore the inner spiritual factors that disrupt the flow of Divine blessing to the People of Israel and in doing so, to correct what has gone wrong.

For some time now, the elder Sages of the Kabbalah in Israel have warned that, to a large measure, a root cause of the tribulations we are facing is the sexual immorality rampant in our Land. Fashions imported from Europe and America have brought a plague of immodesty to our streets. In addition, it is impossible to approach a newsstand without being confronted with the photos of sexy models on magazine covers. Our great Jewish Sages have repeatedly warned that looking at immodestly dressed women and forbidden images stains the Jewish soul with a terrible pollution (Taharat HaKodesh, Chapter 3; Laws of "shuva" of the Rambam, 4:4.) This troublesome state is multiplied by the lewdness on television and in the movies, and by the pornography of the Internet, may G-d save us.

Worse yet, during the wave of Aliyah from Russia, we brought to our Holy Land literally thousands of gentile women who are working as prostitutes around the clock.

Time and again, the holy Zohar explains that in committing sexual transgressions, the Jewish People violate the Brit (covenant) between our forefather, Avraham, and G-d. This Brit is the Holy Covenant upon which the Nation of Israel was founded. The Zohar makes clear that this Holy Covenant involves not only the rite of circumcision, but also safeguarding the holiness of Jewish sexual life as well. It is this safeguarding of sexual purity, called Shmirat HaBrit, that insures our attachment to the Holy Land. As the Zohar reveals, this Brit of sexual purity is the channel that brings the flow of G-d's blessings to Am Yisrael.

Needless to say, if this decline in sexual norms is damaging the material and spiritual state of the Jewish People in the Holy Land, how much greater the damage to the Jewish People in the impure lands of the Diaspora, where sexual immorality reigns in all of its destructive force! The growing rate of assimilation outside of Israel bears witness to this.

What is true for the Jewish nation as a whole is also true for the individual. As the Zohar emphasizes, sexual transgressions, in whatever form they take, bring a wide gamut of sufferings and tragedies in their wake. When a person's connection to G-d has been damaged because of sexual wrongdoing, the flow of Divine blessing normally directed to him is stunted. This is bound to cause problems with health, livelihood, children, married life, and spiritual fulfillment.

The Baal HaTanya explains that while all transgressions blemish the spiritual channel which brings Divine blessing to the world, transgressions incurring excision, like the wasting of semen, cause the most damage (Igeret HaT'shuva, Ch.6.) This is true for single and married people alike.

In the holy book, "Reshit Chochmah," it is explained that the ten tribes of Israel violated all of the commandments in the Torah, but exile was only decreed upon them when they transgressed the laws of proper sexual conduct (See the Gate of Kedusha.)

Referring to the sexual decline of his time, the prophet Yishayahu declares, "Your sins have made a separation between you and your G-d," (Yishayahu, 59:1-2.)

This study, Secret of The Brit - Torah, Kabbalah, and Sex, proposes that by understanding the vital importance of sexual purity as set forth in the Torah, and as repeatedly explained in the Zohar, we can help repair what we have blemished, and restore the flow of Divine blessing to ourselves, to our nation, and to our Land.