Excerpts From The Zohar

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Secret of the Brit

Chapter 2 - Excerpts from the Zohar

Skip to a Chapter

- Book Introduction
- Chapter 1 - The Spiritual Blueprint
- Chapter 2 - Zohar Passages
- Chapter 3 - Guarding the Brit
- Chapter 4 - Rectify the Brit, Part I
- Chapter 5 - Rectify the Brit, Part II
- Chapter 6 - For Married Men Only
- Chapter 7 - Rebbe Nachman's Teachings

Excerpts From The Zohar

(Abridged For the Internet)

The teachings of the Zohar form the basis of the book, Secret of the Brit - Torah, Kabbalah, and Sex. For the purposes of this website, only a small portion of the Zohar’s teachings on the Brit have been included, listed chronologically according to the Torah portions in which they appear. Please note that the texts printed the full width of the page are explanations of the indented quotes from the Zohar.

A man who guards his sexual purity in this world is guarded from the torments of Gehinom (Hell) in the world to come.

Zohar, Bereshit 8a

Rav Hamnuna the Elder said this: “Do not let thy mouth cause thy flesh to sin,” (Kohelet, 5:5.) A man should not allow his mouth to utter words that may bring him to lustful thoughts, and thus cause his holy flesh, on which is stamped the holy Brit, to sin. For whoever does this is dragged into Gehinom. The one presiding over Gehinom is called Duma, and there are tens of thousands of angels of destruction with him. He stands at the door of Gehinom. But

all of those who have guarded the holy covenant of the Brit in this world, he is impotent to harm them.

This passage underscores the importance of sexual purity, owing to the fact that the place of the Brit on the body parallels the sefirah of Yesod, the spiritual channel that brings Divine goodness into the world (Malchut.)

Zohar, Bereshit 47b

“And G-d blessed the seventh day and sanctified it (oto,) (Bereshit 2:3.)” What did He sanctify? The same place of the sign of the Brit (the word oto also means “his sign”) as in, “and show me both it (oto) and His habitation,” (Shmuel 2, 15:25.) This is the place of all of the Divine illuminations. From here they go forth to the Community of Israel and grant her delicacies and the bread of everything good….And all of the Divine illuminations that descend from the upper worlds, they go forth from this place – and this is the meaning of “and sanctified it (oto,)” where oto refers to the sign of the Brit.

The following two passages explain that a man’s purity or impurity not only influence his spiritual state, they also directly influence the spiritual state of his children.

Zohar, Bereshit 54a

“And the man knew Eve his wife…” (Bereshit 4:1.)

Rabbi Abba explained, referring to the verse: “Who knows whether the spirit of man goes upwards, and the spirit of the beast goes downward to the earth?” (Kohelet, 3:21) He said, This verse has many facets, and so it is with all the words of the Torah - they all contain several understandings, and all of them are correct. So it is that all of the Torah can be explained in seventy ways, corresponding to seventy sides and seventy wings. So it is with every word of Torah. And everything that can be understood from each and every word, there are several different facets to all.

Therefore, when a man walks in the path of truth, he goes towards the right and draws upon himself an exalted, spirit of kedusha (holiness) from above. This spirit ascends with a holy desire to attach itself to the upper world and to cleave to an exalted kedusha that never leaves him.

When a man walks in the path of evil and strays from the way, he draws upon himself an impure spirit from the left side, which pollutes his being, as it says, You shall not make yourselves abominable with them …that you should be defiled by them, (Vayikra 11:43) implying that a person who comes to pollute himself is led further into defilement.

From this we can learn that when a man walks in the path of truth, and draws upon himself a spirit of kedusha (holiness) from Above and cleaves to it, he also draws a spirit of holiness on to the son he brings into the world, so that the child will be holy with the sanctity of his Master, as it is written, “Sanctify yourselves, and you shall be holy,” (Vayikra, 11:44.)

The Zohar teaches that the flood in the days of Noach came as punishment for the sin of wasting semen. This is learned from the use of the same word, “ra” in describing Yehuda’s son Er, who was stricken by G-d for spilling his semen in vain. This sin adds strength to the spirit of impurity and drives the Shechinah from the world.

Zohar, Bereshit 56a

“And the L-rd saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and all the desire of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all of the day,” (Bereshit, 6:5.)

Rabbi Yehuda quoted the verse, “For thou art not a G-d who has pleasure in wickedness, nor shall evil (ra) dwell with Thee,” (Tehillim, 5:5.)

He explained: Come and see – someone who cleaves to the evil inclination and pursues it, not only does he defile himself, but he is led to pollute himself further, as has already been stated. For the wickedness of mankind was great (in the generation of Noach) and all kinds of evil was committed, but the measure of their guilt was not complete until they wasted their blood (semen) upon the ground. Who are these people who corrupted their way on the earth? We know by comparing two verses. Here, it is written, “Only evil (ra) all of the day,” and in another verse, “And Er, Yehuda’s firstborn, was evil (ra) in the sight of the L-rd,” (Bereshit, 38:7.)

Said Rabbi Yosi: Isn’t evil (ra) the same meaning as “wickedness” (resha)? No. A man is considered wicked if raises his hand to strike his neighbor, even if he doesn’t touch him, as it is written, “And he said to the wicked one (rasha), why will you strike your fellowman?” He is called wicked even though the future tense of the verb indicates that he had not yet done any physical harm.

But, evil (ra) refers only to a person who corrupts his way and pollutes himself and the earth (by spilling semen in a sinful manner.) This lends force and added strength to the impure spirit which is called “ra” as it is written, “only evil (ra) all the day.” This person will not be allowed to enter the celestial palace, nor gaze upon the Shechinah, for by this sin the Shechinah is driven from the world.

How do we know this? From Yaacov. When the Shechinah departed from him, he thought that perhaps his sons were blemished in this manner, and because of them the impure spirit had grown stronger in the world, even blemishing the moon and diminishing its light. If you wonder how this can be – the reason is that this sin pollutes the Temple (and drives the Shechinah from the world.) If this is what caused the Shechinah to leave Yaacov, how much more so does it apply to any man who corrupts his ways and defiles himself, thus adding strength to the spirit of impurity. Therefore, when a man defiles himself in this manner, he is called evil (ra.)

Behold, when a man defiles himself, the Holy One, Blessed Be He does not visit him with blessing. Rather, he is subject at all times to visitations of the spirit called “ra.”

Since the act of spilling semen in vain defiles both man and the earth, the spiritual blemishes it causes can only be rectified through a great t’shuva.

Zohar, Bereshit 61b

Rabbi Yitzhak was in the presence of Rabbi Shimon. He asked him: Regarding the verse, “And the earth was corrupt before

G-d,” (Bereshit, 5:11,) if men transgressed, why should the earth be called corrupt?

Rabbi Shimon answered him, Because it is written, “For all flesh has corrupted its way.” In a similar fashion, it is written, “And the land was defiled, therefore do I punish its iniquity upon it,” (Vayikra, 18:25.) If mankind sinned, why is the earth to blame? The reason is that mankind is the essence of the earth. When they pollute their way in the world, the earth becomes defiled. This is proven by the verse, “And G-d saw the earth, and behold it was corrupt, for all flesh had corrupted their way upon the earth.”

Come and see, all sins of man, and all of his acts of defilement, can be rectified through t’shuva (repentance.) But the sin of spilling one’s seed on the earth, which defiles the man and casts semen onto the earth, defiles both him and the earth. Of such a man it is written, “The stain of thy iniquity is before me,” (Yirmeyahu, 2:22.) It also says, “For Thou art not a G-d that hath pleasure in wickedness, nor shall evil (ra) dwell with Thee,” (Tehillim, 5:5,) except through a great t’shuva. On this it is written, “And Er, Yehuda’s firstborn, was evil (ra) in the sight of the L-rd, and the

L-rd slew him,” (Bereshit 38:7.)

Rabbi Yitzhak asked, Why did the Holy One, Blessed Be He judge the world with water, and not with fire or something else? Rabbi Shimon answered: This is a secret. Through their sin of corrupting their ways, they prevented the upper waters and the lower waters from uniting as they should. Since in corrupting their ways (spilling semen in vain) they did not allow male and female waters to join, thus they were punished with water, for the transgression of wasting their water.

Furthermore, the waters were boiling and caused their skin to peel off, just as they had corrupted their ways by spilling their hot semen - measure for measure.

As long as the Jewish People guard their sexual purity, embodied by the Brit, there is no enemy that can harm them.

Zohar, Bereshit 66b

“And I will establish My Brit with thee,” (Bereshit, 17:21) that you shall be the sign of the Brit in the world. After that, “And thou shall come into the ark.” For if he had not been a tzaddik (a guardian of the Brit) he could not have entered the ark, for only the tzaddik can unite with the ark. Therefore it is written, “And thou shall come into the ark,” as has been explained.

Rabbi Elazar said, As long as men remain attached to this Brit and do not loosen their hold of it (do not blemish it with sexual sins,) there is no nation nor language in the world that can do them harm. Noach clung to Brit and guarded it, therefore the Holy One Blessed Be He safeguarded him. But all of his contemporaries did not guard the Brit, and because of this, the Holy One Blessed Be He removed them from the world. As has been stated, in exactly the same way that they sinned, they were blotted out from the world.

Once again, the Zohar emphasizes that by safeguarding the holiness of the Brit, a man is protected, not only in this world, but also in the next.

Zohar, Bereshit 94a

Another began his exposition by referring to the verse, “Unless the

L-rd had been my help, my soul would have soon dwelt in (Duma) silence, (Tehillim, 94:17.) We have learned: what is the special merit of Israel that they do not go down to Gehinom, and are not delivered into the hands of Duma (the angel in charge of Gehinom) like the idol worshipping nations? The reason is that they are distinguished by the sign of the Brit.

For we have learned that when a man leaves this world, bands of destroying angels, wielders of fiery judgment, gather to claim him. But when they examine him and see that he bears the sign of the holy Brit upon him, they flee from him, and he is not delivered into the hands of Duma, to be cast down into Gehinom, for whomever falls into his hands is condemned to punishment there. Both upper and lower (angels) are afraid of this sign, and no evil decrees have dominance over a man if he has succeeded in safeguarding this sign, because he is attached to the Name of the Holy One, Blessed Be He.

The sefirah of Yesod, associated with the organ of the Brit, is the spiritual channel connecting an individual to G-d. Through the channel of Yesod come Divine Inspiration (ruach hakodesh,) and perception of G-d. Thus a proper Brit Milah, and guarding the laws of sexual purity, are the keys to a Jew’s attachment to G-d.

Bereshit 94a

Another explained the verse: “And from my flesh, I shall see G-d,” (Iyov, 19:26.) What is the meaning of “And from my flesh?” It would be more proper to say, “from my inner essence.” However, “my flesh” is to be understood literally (as being the place of the Brit,) as in the verse, “and the holy flesh is removed from thee,” (Yirmeyahu, 11:15,) and also, “and my Brit shall be in your flesh,” (Bereshit, 17:13.)

For thus we have learned: Whenever a man is stamped with the holy impress of this sign, through it literally he will attain his awareness of G-d, because the holy soul is attached to this place (in the parallel spiritual world of the Yesod.)

But if he does not merit this, because he did not guard this sign, then of him it is written, “They lose the soul of G-d,” (Iyov, 4:9,) for he did not properly guard the impress of G-d. If, however, he guards it, then the Shechinah does not part from him….

When is the Shechinah established with him? When he is married, then the sign enters into its intended place….The holy soul is attached to this place, and everything depends on this sign. Thus it is written, “And from my flesh, I shall see G-d.” This is the perfection of everything, literally from “my flesh,” from this

very sign. Therefore, how fortunate are the holy Jewish People who are attached to the Holy One, Blessed Be He; fortunate are they in this world and fortunate in the world to come. Regarding them it is written: “But you who cleave to the L-rd your G-d, are alive every one of you this day,” (Devarim, 4:4.)

Having relations with a gentile woman not only defiles a Jew and his offspring, it is like bowing down to a false god.

Zohar, Bereshit 131b

Whoever cleaves to a woman of any of the gentile nations becomes defiled. The child born from such an attachment receives a defiled spirit. It may be asked, if the child is from a Jewish father, why should he receive a defiled spirit? Behold, at the very start, his father polluted himself when he attached himself to that impure woman. Since the father become impure from this impure woman, all the more so, the child born from her will receive an impure spirit. Not only this, but he transgresses the Torah, as is written, “For thou shall not bow down to another god; for the L-rd, whose Name is Zealous, is a zealous G-d…” (Shemot, 34:14.) He is zealous over the holy Brit.

Avraham had his servent, Eliezer, take an oath by placing his hand under the place of Avraham’s circumcision, because of its exalted holiness.

Zohar, Bereshit 181b

“Put, I pray thee, thy hand under my thigh,” (Bereshit, 24:2) this is place of the tzaddik, the foundation of the world (the sefirah of Yesod.) The secret of the matter is that from this place the life force of existence emanates to the world.

The Zohar teaches that the Divine punishments stated in the second passage of the Shema fall upon the nation and the Land due to Israel’s sexual transgressions.

Bereshit 189b

Come and see, when G-d watches over the world with the intent to judge it, and finds evildoers there, then, as is written, “He shut up the heaven, so that there shall be no rain, and the ground shall not yield her produce,” (Devarim, 11:17.) And afterward it is written, “You shall quickly perish from the land,” for through the sins of mankind, heaven and earth are shut up and their natural workings are impaired.

Those who do not guard the sign of the holy Brit cause a separation between Israel and their Father in heaven, as is written, “And you turn aside and worship other gods, and bow down to them,” (Ibid.) And afterward, it says, “He shut up the heaven, so that there be no rain.”

For to be false to the holy Brit is considered like bowing down to another god.

From Yosef, we learn that whoever safeguards his Brit in sexual purity, it is like he observed all of the Torah.

Zohar, Bereshit 197a

Come and see, the Holy One Blessed Be He fashioned the kingdom of earth after the model of the kingdom of heaven, one like the other, and whatever transpires on earth has first been approved above by G-d.

The holy kingdom was not a completed kingdom until it was united with the Patriarchs, since the Holy One Blessed Be He fashioned the upper kingdom that it should be illuminated in the world by the (sefirot mystically embodied in the) Patriarchs.

And when Yosef, the tzaddik, went down to Egypt before his family, he drew the Shechinah after him, since the Shechinah only follows after the tzaddik (keeper of the Brit.) This is the reason that Yosef preceded the others to Egypt, where he gathered up all the wealth of the world, as was fitting. Afterwards, the Shechinah went down to Egypt to accompany the descent of the tribes.

And because Yosef guarded his Brit in sexual purity, he merited to be crowned with and attached to the place fitting him (the Yesod,) and thus merited kingship both in the upper and lower kingdoms. And likewise, whoever guards the holy Brit, it is like he observed all of holy Torah, since the Brit is equal in weight with the whole Torah.

Rabbi Abba teaches that the most exalted secret of the Torah is the secret contained in the recondite understandings of the Brit. These secrets are only revealed to those who fear sin.

Zohar, Bereshit 236b

Rabbi Abba explained the verse: “The secret of Hashem is revealed to those who fear Him, to make known to them His Brit,” (Tehillim, 25:14.) “The secret of Hashem,” is the most exalted secret of the Torah that G-d only grants to those who fear sin. To those who fear sin, G-d reveals the most exalted secret of the Torah. And what is the most exalted secret of the Torah? It is (the secret of) the sign of the holy Brit, which is called the secret of the L-rd – this is the holy Brit.

The man who lives a life of sexual purity, guarding the Brit, is the true man of valor.

Zohar, Bereshit 240b

Rabbi Abba taught: “Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O valorous one; thy glory and thy majesty,” (Tehillim, 45:4.)

Is this glory and majesty, to arm oneself with weapons and use them? One who studies Torah and wages the battles of Torah, and arms oneself in this way, this is praiseworthy, this is glory and majesty. Yet it says, “Gird thy sword.”

The main point of the matter, however, is that G-d has given the sign of the holy Brit, and stamped it upon men for them to guard it, and not blemish it – it being the stamp of the King. He who blemishes it, behold, the sword which avenges the blemish to the Brit is raised up against him, (Vayikra, 26:25,) to avenge the blemish to the holy Brit which is impressed on him and which he impaired.

He who desires to safeguard this place should hurry and make a rectification-tikun on himself. When the evil inclination gains strength over him, he should picture the sword that is girded on the thigh to punish anyone who blemishes this place. This is the reason it says: “Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O valorous one.” This one is called valorous, and this is his “glory and majesty.”

The tzaddikim are the guardians of the Brit.

Zohar, Bereshit 247b

Fortunate are they who are called tzaddikim, for only he who guards the grade of the sign of the holy Brit is called tzaddik. Fortunate are they in this world and in the world to come.

Sexual wrongdoings cause the Shechinah to be exiled from the world, and the prayers of mankind go unanswered.

Zohar, Shemot 3b

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There are three transgressions which drive the Shechinah away from the world, and cause it to be that the Holy One Blessed Be He has no abode on earth, and that the cries and prayers of mankind go unanswered.{/styleboxop} And these are the transgressions:

A man who has sexual relations with a woman during the period of her menstruation. There is no impurity in the world so strong as menstrual impurity (niddah.) The impurity of niddah is the most damaging type of impurity there is. The man is defiled and everyone who touches him is defiled with him. Everywhere they go, the Shechinah flees from them.

In addition, this man brings terrible diseases on himself and on the child born from such a union. Because he had contact with a woman in niddah, this impurity is transferred to him and clings to all of his body. A child born from this is possessed with a spirit of impurity, and this impurity will accompany him his whole life, since his foundation is built upon the most powerful and most stringent impurity that exists. For as soon as man has relations with a niddah, her state of menstrual impurity clings to him, as is written, “Her niddah impurity will be on him,” (Vayikra, 15:24.)

The second category is the man who has sexual relations with a gentile woman. For he enters the holy Brit and the sign that upholds the world into a foreign realm, as is written, “For Yehuda has profaned the holiness of the L-rd whom he loved, and has taken to himself the daughter of a strange god,” (Malachi, 2:11.) For we have learned that the Holy One Blessed Be He has no zealousness, except for His zealousness over the holy Brit, for this Brit (the Yesod) is the secret of the Sacred Name and the secret of faith. As is written, “And the people began to commit harlotry with the daughters of Moav,” (Bamidbar, 25:1) then, immediately afterward, “And the anger of the L-rd was kindled against Israel.”

The leaders of the Jewish People have the responsibility to make sure that the Brit is guarded properly.

The leaders of the nation who know of this, and yet do not actively protest, are the first to be punished, as is written, “Take all of the leaders of the people and hang them up before the L-rd against the sun,” (Ibid, 4.)

Rabbi Abba asked, What is the meaning of “against the sun,” in this verse? This is referring to a transgression against the Brit which is called sun. Referring to this, the verse speaks: “For a sun and a shield is the L-rd your G-d,” (Tehillim, 84:14) A sun and a shield, this is the holy Brit. Just as the sun rises and spreads light over the whole world, so too the holy Brit rises and spreads light over a man’s body (when its sanctity is properly guarded.) Just as a shield is used to shield a man, so too the holy Brit shields a man. Whomever safeguards its sanctity, there is no harm in the world that can come near him, and this is the meaning of, “hang them up before the L-rd against the sun,” (for their transgression against the Brit which is called sun.)

The leaders of the people are deemed responsible in every generation for this transgression, if they know of it, yet are not zealous in stamping it out. For they are required to be zealous on G-d’s behalf against this transgression (of sexual wrongdoing,) for this is (the impairment of) the Brit.

Repentance is possible, even for the grave transgression of sexual relations with a gentile woman.

But he who enters this holiness into a foreign realm transgresses the prohibition, “Thou shall have no other gods before Me…thou shall not bow down to them, nor worship them; for I the L-rd thy G-d am a zealous G-d,” (Shemot, 20:3.) For it is all the same zealousness (for bowing down to a foreign god and bowing down to have relations with a gentile woman are considered the same.) For this reason, the Shechinah flees from such a person. Being false to the holy Brit which is stamped on a man’s flesh, is like being false to the Name of G-d. For whoever is false to the seal of the King is being false to the King himself. He has no portion in the G-d of Israel, unless through the power of a constant (great) repentance....

Abortion is the third wrongdoing that drives the Shechinah from the world.

He who murders his child - the fetus his wife is pregnant with – by bringing about its death in the womb. For this is contrary to G-d’s blueprint and His creative workings. There is a man who kills another man, but this one kills his own child.

This act brings about three evils that the world cannot endure. These things destroy the world’s foundations, little by little, without people knowing the cause, and G-d removes Himself from the world, bringing war, famine, and pestilence upon mankind. These are the things brought about by abortion: the murder of one’s child; the destruction of G-d’s blueprint for creation; and the Shechinah is exiled and made to wander in the world without finding rest. Over these, the Shechinah weeps, and the world is punished with harsh judgments. Woe and sorrow to the man who causes this - it were better for him that he had never been born.

In the merit of guarding themselves from these three sins, Israel was redeemed from the bondage of Egypt.

Zohar, Shemot 3b (cont)

It was a mark of Israel’s righteousness that, even though they were in exile in Egypt, they guarded themselves from these three sins; from transgressing the laws of Niddah; from having sexual relations with gentile women; and from abortion. In fact, they made a special effort to multiply, in open opposition to the decree that every newborn son be cast into the river. Not a single Jew aborted a pregnancy, nor slew any child at all. It was in the merit of these three things that Israel was liberated from the exile.

In answer to the question, why didn’t the Almighty reveal Himself in all of His glory when he redeemed Israel and the Shechinah from the Babylonian exile, like He did from Egypt, the Zohar answers:

Zohar, Shemot 7a

Behold, we have learned that it was because of their sin, for the Jews took gentile wives and caused the holy Brit to enter into a foreign realm (profaning G-d’s Name.) This is the reason that the miracles and wondrous signs that were fitting to be performed were denied them. This was not the case in the exile in Egypt, where all of the Jews remained true to being the Tribes of Hashem. As the pure Sons of Israel they entered Egypt, and as the pure Sons of Israel, they departed.

Guarding the purity of sexual life is the key to possessing the Land of Israel, for in doing so, the sefirah of Yesod is united with the sefirah of Malchut, which finds its earthy expression in the Land of Israel.

Zohar, Shemot 23a

“And I have also established My Brit with them to give them the land of Canaan,” (Shemot, 5:4,) because they circumcise themselves. For all those who are circumcised inherit the land, for the land is only inherited by the tzaddik, and everyone who is circumcised is called tzaddik, as it is written, “Thy people are all righteous, they shall forever inherit the land,” (Yishayahu, 60:21.) Whoever is circumcised and guards the purity of the sign of the Brit is called tzaddik. Come and see with Yosef. He was not called tzaddik until he had safeguarded this same Brit, the sign of the holy foundation (Yesod.) Since he guarded its purity (by overcoming the temptations of Potifar’s wife,) he was called tzaddik - Yosef HaTzaddik.

At the time of the resurrection, only those who have guarded the Brit will merit everlasting life.

Zohar, Shemot 57b

Rabbi Shimon said, Fortunate are those who will remain in the world at that time (of resurrection of the dead.) And who will they be? Behold, no man will remain except for the circumcised who accepted the sign of the holy Brit, and have entered into this holy Brit in its two parts, as we have noted (the circumcision itself and the folding back of the skin,) and have guarded the Brit, not to enter into forbidden relations. These are the men who will remain, and they will be inscribed for eternal life.

How do we know this? Because it is written, “And it shall come to pass that he that is left in Zion, and he that remains in Jerusalem, shall be called holy, everyone in Jerusalem that is written to life,” (Yishayahu, 4:3.) We can learn from this that those who are left in Zion, and who remain in Jerusalem, that is, those who perform the circumcision properly enter into these two grades (of Zion-Yesod, and Jerusalem-Malchut.) And if he properly guards the purity of the Brit and is careful not to blemish it, regarding him it is written, “He that is left in Zion, and he that remains in Jerusalem shall be called holy.” These shall remain at that time, and the Holy One Blessed Be He will renew the world with them and rejoice with them. Regarding that time it is written, “May the glory of the Lord be forever; may the L-rd rejoice in his works,” (Tehillim, 104:31.)

The commandment “Remember what Amalek did to you,” is a warning to remember that Israel’s arch enemy wages not only a physical war against us, but also a spiritual war against Israel’s attachment to the Brit. As Rashi writes (Devarim, 25:18,) Amalek’s strategy was to entice the Jews into sexual transgression, as it says, “asher karcha b’derek,” from the word keri, meaning the impurity of a forbidden seminal discharge.

Zohar, Shemot 194b

“And Moshe gathered together all of the congregation of the Children of Israel,” (Shemot, 35:1.)

Rabbi Hiya began by explaining the verse, “And Shaul said to the Keni, Go depart, go down from among the Amelekites,” (Shmuel 1, 15:6.) Come and see. It is written, “I remember that which Amalek did to Israel,” (Ibid, 15:2.) What is the reason that the war that Amelek waged against Israel was singled out for remembering by the Holy One Blessed Be He, more than the wars that all other nations waged against them? Certainly, the reason is that the war with Amalek was waged on all sides, above and below. For at the same time, the evil serpent mustered its strength on high (in the spiritual battlefield,) and physically down on earth.

Just as a poisonous snake lies in wait on the crossroads, so too Amalek was to Israel, like an poisonous snake waiting to ambush them on the crossroads, as it is written, “How he lay in wait for him on the way when he came up from Egypt,” (Ibid, 15:2.) He was lying in wait on high to defile the Mikdash (the Temple is Israel’s bond to Malchut,) and lying in wait below to defile Israel’s purity (Israel’s bond to Yesod.) How do we know this? Because it is written, “how he met thee (karcha) by the way,” (Devarim, 25:18.) The meaning of “karcha” can be understood from its alternate form “mikre” in the verse, “If there be among you any man that is not pure by reason of impurity that chances (mikre) by night,” (Ibid, 23:11.)

We are omitting a passage describing how Bilaam would enter a state of defilement through keri in order to wage a spiritual war against Israel.

Here also, from the verse,“how he met thee (karcha) by the way,” we learn that Amalek set against thee that evil serpent on high in order to defile you on all sides. And if Moshe had not waged a mighty spiritual battle on high, and Yehoshua a mighty war down below, Israel would not have been able to overcome him. It is for this reason that the Holy One Blessed Be He insisted on preserving the memory of this hatred from generation to generation. What is the reason? Because Amalek strove to uproot the sign of the Brit (Israel’s sexual purity) from its place.

A Jew is commanded to sanctify himself in his marital relations and not to be drawn after his lusts.

Zohar, Vayikra 49b

Rabbi Abba said, I see that the masses pay no attention to, and are ignorant of, the honor due to their Master.

It is written of Israel, “I have set you apart from the nations to be mine,” (Vayikra, 20:24) and it is written, “You shall sanctify yourselves and be holy, for I, the L-rd, am holy,” (Ibid, 11:44.)

If they distance themselves from G-d (by following after their lusts,) where is their holiness, since their desires turn them away from Him? About this, the verse proclaims, “Be not as the horse, nor as the mule which have no understanding,” (Tehillim, 32:9.) How are men distinguished from the horse and the mule? By sanctifying themselves, and by perfecting themselves, and by distinguishing themselves from all other beings.

Therefore, a man’s marital relations should be at established times, in order that he may concentrate his desire on cleaving to the Holy One Blessed Be He. Behold, we have emphasized that at midnight, G-d enters the Garden of Eden to take pleasure in the tzaddikim, and then Knesset Yisrael (the Shechinah) praises Him. This is the favorable time to cleave to Him.

At this time, the disciples who study the Torah (at midnight) join Knesset Yisrael in praising the Holy King by their study of Torah.

All other men at this favorable time should sanctify themselves in

G-d (during their marital relations) and concentrate their desires on cleaving to the Holy One Blessed Be He.

For the Torah scholars, their marital union should be at the time when there is another (supernal) union, and this is from one Sabbath (midnight) to the next Sabbath (midnight,) in order to concentrate their desire on cleaving to the Holy One Blessed Be He and Knesset Yisrael. For this is a favorable time Above when all of the worlds, the upper and the lower, are blessed.

If men distance themselves from Him and behave like beasts during their marital relations, where is their holiness in their duty to be holy? Where are those holy souls that could have been brought down from Above? Regarding this, King Shlomo cried out and proclaimed, “Also the soul without knowledge is not good,” (Mishle, 19:2.) What knowledge does this refer to? The knowledge of the Holy One Blessed Be He (during marital relations.) When this

occurs, then the soul is not good. This is the soul that is drawn down to their offspring through their marital relations, it is not good, for this soul is drawn down from the Sitra Achra (the realm of evil called the “Other Side”) and this is not a good soul, for their hearts are not concentrated on G-d.

A man who incites himself with the evil inclination, and who does not focus his intention and the desire of his heart on G-d, the soul which he draws down comes from the side of the evil inclination, and this soul is not good. This is the meaning of, “Also the soul without knowledge is not good.”

Whoever races forward transgresses. Someone who hurries (to have relations) and ignores the favorable time, without desiring to sanctify the act, he behaves sinfully. He acts wrongly in every aspect.

And this is the reason that evil diseases fall upon men, and bear witness against them because of their brazenness, and reveal that G-d is repelled by them, and that He will not look on them with favor until they repent and mend their ways and return to their original purity.

A man is called “one” when he sanctifies himself with his wife during marital relations.

Zohar, Vayikra 81b

And when is a man called “one?” When the man and his wife are together, and he sanctifies himself with an exalted holiness, and his intention is directed toward sanctification (during their marital relations.) Behold, when a man is engaged in marital relations, and he strives to sanctify the act in the proper fashion, then he is whole and is called “one” without blemish. For this reason, a man should make his wife happy at this time, in order that they should share the same desire and the same intention. And when they are united in this manner, then they are completely one; one soul and one body. Their soul is one through their shared desire to cleave one to the other. And their body is one, for as we have learned, a man who is not married is in a state of separation, and only when male and female are united do they form one body. Thus, they are one soul and one body, and are called one person. Then the Holy One Blessed Be He rests upon that oneness, and infuses it (the offspring of that holy union) with a spirit of holiness. These (offspring) are the ones referred to as, “sons of HaKodesh Baruch Hu,” as has been said, and thus it is written, “Be holy for I, Hashem, am holy.”

When a man gazes at forbidden things, he brings impurity upon himself, comparable to worshipping idols.

Zohar, Vayikra 84a

We have learned, it is forbidden for a man to gaze upon the beauty of a woman, so that he should not come to have evil thoughts and thus be incited to something worse (the wasting of semen. See Avodah Zara, 20b.)

For this reason, when Rabbi Shimon had to walk through the town, followed by his disciples, whenever he came to a place that beautiful women were apt to be found, he would to lower his eyes and say to his companions, “Do not turn aside!” (“after foreign gods.”)

For whoever gazes at the beauty of a woman by day, will have sinful thoughts at night. And if these evil thoughts overcome him, he transgresses the commandment, “Thou shall not make for yourselves molten gods.” Furthermore, if he has marital relations with his wife while thinking about these evil images, the children born from such union are called “molten gods.” For this reason, it is written, “Do not turn astray after their gods,” and, “Thou shall not make for yourselves molten gods.”

A Jewish man and Jewish woman who conduct their marital relations in holiness influence the highest celestial channels and cause Divine blessings to flow to all of the worlds.

Zohar, Devarim 266a

As they walked along, Rabbi Abba said, What is the meaning of the verse: “They have forsaken Me, the fountain of living waters, and have hewn them out cisterns, broken cisterns that can hold no water?” (Yirmeyahu, 2:13)

The meaning of “they have forsaken Me (oti)” refers to one who has forsaken “my sign,” by being false to the imprint of the holy Brit. And how does he betray it? By bringing it into a foreign domain, as is said, “and took for himself the daughter of a foreign god,” (Malachi, 2:11.) These women are called “broken cisterns,” for all of the gentile nations are broken cisterns.

But Israel's women are “a well of living waters.” This is a holy domain, of a holy faith, and it is called a flowing well of pure, streaming waters, as is said, “streams from Lebanon,” (Shir HaShirim, 4:15) and, “Drink waters out of your own cistern, and running waters out of your own well,” (Mishle, 5:15.) Also, it is written, “A fountain of gardens, a well of living waters,” (Shir HaShirim, 4:15) But the other domain (Sitra Achra) is called, “broken cisterns than can hold no water.”

Behold, the ever-flowing stream above (Yesod) waters all the Garden (Malchut) and irrigates every place, as we have already explained, until it fills that place in the Garden which is called “the well of living waters,” which nourishes all of the upper and lower worlds, as is said, “And from there it was parted,” (Bereshit, 2:10.)

But all the sides of the Left Side are not watered from that fountain of flowing water, because they are of the side of the other nations, and they are called “broken cisterns.”

And one who is false to the holy imprint of the Brit cleaves to this side of the broken cisterns that do not hold water, because the water does not flow into them.

While the man who merits to guard the Brit properly merits to drink of the waters of that flowing stream in the world to come, and causes that upper well to be filled in order to send forth blessings above and below. Fortunate is he in this world and in the world to come. About him it is written, “And thou shall be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water whose waters never fail,” (Yishayahu, 58:11.)

It is our fervent prayer that through the study of these teachings from the holy Zohar, all those who drink from its waters will experience the fulfillment of this verse, “And thou shall be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water whose waters never fail,” (Ibid.)