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Arutz Sheva
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Secret of Rain

As if Israel doesn't have enough problems with a host of savage enemies, a government of corrupt and mediocre politicians, and millions of Jewish refuseniks who refuse to give up the exile, now there is no rain. The water level of the Sea of Galilee is very low, and farmers are bracing for a dry and economically disastrous summer.



Kinneret low water level

So last night, I joined the holy Kabbalist, Rabbi Eliahu Leon Levi, and several dozen students, aficionados, and even journalists in a journey to Meron for an all-night prayer-fest in the tomb of Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai, the author of the holy Zohar. On the way, we stopped in Safed for a purifying midnight mikvah in the freezing, mountain-spring cave of the Ari. **Since the winter has passed without very much rain, our supplications were focused on unclogging the heavenly pipes that have been damaged through sexual transgression, especially, the Rabbi said, the brazen gay parade that was held in Jerusalem earlier in the year and the abominable perversions that went with it.**



Who is the smiling face?



Rabbi Eliahu Leon Levi

The Talmud teaches that the power over rain is one of the three keys that the Almighty has kept for Himself - the key of Rain, the key of Childbirth, and the key of the Resurrection of the Dead" (Taanit 2A).

Before exploring the connection between transgression and rain, this concept of keys must be explained. Since G-d rules over everything, what is the meaning of retaining three keys for Himself? The answer is that in establishing His sovereignty over the world, G-d has appointed celestial messengers to rule over different aspects of existence. For example, G-d Himself rules exclusively over the Land of Israel, but over every other country, He has appointed an angel. This celestial minister gives each nation its distinctive culture. Thus, the celestial

minister over France is, figuratively speaking, a connoisseur of women's fashion and perfume; the celestial minister over England prefers rugby and gin; and the angel which presides over America enjoys beer, hot dogs, and watching sports on TV.

The Ramban explains that this is the concept behind the Talmud's striking proclamation that leaving the Land of Israel to live in the Diaspora is like worshipping idols (Ketubot 110B). Since G-d has appointed celestial ministers to rule over the nations, when a Jew prays or learns Torah in Paris or New York, his prayers and Torah learning go up the angel who presides over that nation, strengthening the foreign country where he lives. In this sense, his worship of G-d is like idol worship, since he is not serving G-d directly. It is only in the Land of Israel, where, "The Land where eyes of our L-rd are always upon it from the beginning of the year to the end" (Devarim, 11:12), that a Jew serves the L-rd without a celestial go-between (Ramban, "Commentary on the Torah," Vayikra, 18:25).



Hitchhiking on to Safed

Because the key of rain is in G-d's keeping, when rain does not fall in Eretz Yisrael, we know that G-d Himself has turned off the faucet. It isn't some freak disturbance of regional weather patterns, but, as the Talmud teaches, the result of our sins:

"Rabbi Tanchum ben Hamilai said, **No rain falls unless the sins of Israel have been forgiven**" (Taanit 7B). The Talmud goes on to list many transgressions that cause the withholding of rain, but to understand the secret of the matter, we will turn to the holy Zohar.

It turns out that the secret is no mystery at all, as it explicitly states in the Shema:

“Take heed to yourselves, that your heart not be deceived, and you turn aside and worship other gods and bow down to them; and then the anger of the L-rd will be inflamed against you, and He will shut up the heaven that there be no rain, and that the Land yield not its fruit; and you perish quickly from the good Land which the L-rd gives you” (Devarim, 11:17).

The Zohar explains that bowing down to other gods means sexual transgression. Jews never believed in idols, but only worship them as an excuse to practice the sexual licentiousness that accompanied pagan rites. In punishment for misusing the “lower waters” of the seminal life force during sexual sin, G-d shuts up the heavenly “upper waters” of life sustaining rain (Zohar, Bereshit 189B). This relationship occurs specifically in the Land of Israel, because the G-d’s covenant bequeathing Eretz Yisrael to the Jewish People, symbolized the brit milah, is based on sexual holiness.

After leaving Meron, we returned to Safed to pray at the gravesites of the Arizal and the Ramak, Rabbi Moshe Cordevero, who was dean of the Safed academy of Kabbalists, immediately preceding Rabbi Yitzhak Luria, the Ari. The Ramak explains that the heavens are associated with the “sefirah” or spiritual channel “Tiferet.” From here, the Divine blessing of rain flows forth to the earth, identified with the sefirah of “Malchut.” The channel that conducts the blessing of rain from Tiferet to Malchut is the “Yesod,” associated with the atmosphere between heaven and earth. Therefore, when the channel of Yesod is damaged, rains are withheld from the earth. Since the sefirah of Yesod also parallels the organ of the Brit in man, it follows that sexual transgression causes the greatest damage to the channel of Yesod, drying up the flow of G-d’s blessing and rain (See the commentary on the Zohar, “Matok M’Dvash,” Vayashev, 189B).

Readers who are interested in exploring this concept further are encouraged to read the condensed online introduction to our book, “Secret of the Brit.”

After our visit to Safed, we journeyed on to Tibrias, where we prayed at the tombs of the Rambam and Rabbi Meir Bal HaNess.



Tomb of the Rambam



Rav Leon at the tomb of the Rambam



At the tomb of Rabbi Meir Bal HaNess

Readers who would like to refresh their memories about proper marital relations are advised to read Rabbi Levy's guidelines, "Keys to a Holy Marital Union." **May we all endeavor to mend our sexual lapses, and may the Almighty have compassion upon us and grant us the blessing of rain, as it says, "And G-d saw their deeds, in that they turned from their evil way" (Yonah, 3:10).**