

ABSTRACT OF HEBREW ARTICLE

**BETWEEN KABBALAH, GENDER, AND LAW: SEXUAL
ETHICS IN THE ZOHAR**
Ruth Kara-Ivanov Kaniel

The article discusses antinomian trends and unique models of sexual ethics in the Zoharic literature in light of their halakhic and gender applications. It indicates the duality of the Zoharic attitudes—which, despite being innovative and open in many spheres—express oppressive and abusive attitudes towards women. Focusing on the realm of sexual ethics in the “Saba de-mishpatim” section of the Zohar, it discusses the tension between the revolutionism and theosophical radicalism, on the one hand, and the importance of the commandments in the Zohar, along with its theurgic approach, on the other hand. Three cases stand in the focus of the discussion: the case of the widow, the divorcee, and the menstruating woman. Through these cases, the article explores the perception of the woman as a lethal and dangerous figure in Jewish mystical literature, and, in a broader sense, examines the way sexual ethics serves as an important criterion and litmus test for exposing the intense contradictions between a “purely mystical approach,” the “accepted halakhic standards,” and “daily ritual.”

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