

A Midrash for Monday

written by Ozer Bergman | July 4, 2011



There are streams that grow strong people and streams that grow weaklings. Some streams grow handsome people, others grow ugly ones. Some streams grow chaste people, some licentious ones. The stream of Shittim, the water source of Sodom, was licentious. Because that stream was cursed, its waters will dry up. But they will be replaced by the waters coming out of the Holy of Holies (Joel 4:18).

[In Rebbe Nachman's story *The Master of Prayer*, he points out that different lands are conducive to different goals. Our Midrash continues.]

Cast a stick in the air and it will return to where it grew. The immorality came full circle. The older daughter, the future matriarch of Moab, began the seduction: "Come. We'll get our father drunk on wine and lie with him ..." (Genesis 19:32–34). Now, her grand-daughters followed in her footsteps: "The hoi polloi desecrated themselves by committing harlotry—with the daughters of Moab" (Numbers 25:1).

[So there are a lot of forces, some of them behind the scenes, influencing you in one direction or another. But the final decision—and responsibility—is still yours. May God give us the wisdom and the strength to choose correctly. Amen!]

Rendered from *Midrash Tanchuma, Balak 17*

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