



Marital Intimacy: A Traditional Jewish Approach

Avraham Peretz Friedman

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This book presents a traditional Jewish approach to the complex and multifaceted subject of intimacy in the Jewish marriage, misinterpreted by some as centering around the denial of pleasure. Jewish literature has often addressed the negative aspects of the power of the human sexual drive. This is a misrepresentation and, ultimately, a falsification of Jewish tradition. *Marital Intimacy* is a refreshing affirmation of the Jewish view of sexuality in which the sages laud the enjoyment of physical pleasure in general, and sexual pleasure within the marriage relationship in particular, while still condemning hedonism and self-indulgence. In *Iggeret HaKodesh* (The Holy Letter), the classic treatise on sexuality attributed to the Ramban, it is written: "The union of man with his wife, when it is proper, is the mystery of the foundation of the world and its civilization. Through the act they become partners with God in creation." The sexual union between a husband and wife is sacred in the Jewish tradition, which considers sexual intimacy to be above and beyond the commandment to "be fruitful and multiply." Even a barren couple is commanded to make love, for it is a spiritual union that brings husband and wife closer to each other and closer to God. In *Marital Intimacy*, Avraham Peretz Friedman discusses the need for contemporary presentations of the Jewish view of intimacy, the unique role of sex among all other physical pleasures, the Torah's encouragement of procreation, sanctification of the sexual act, the commandment to have sexual relations, and the laws of family purity that govern sexual behavior within the marriage. Friedman presents the rudiments of a traditional Jewish approach to marital intimacy, intended to serve as an introduction to the vast body of Torah literature on this fascinating subject with its inexhaustible wealth of information, instruction, insight, and inspiration.

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