

'The Lost Key': Film Review

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Courtesy of CineAttico Films

THE BOTTOM LINE

Not everything here feels kosher.

Rabbi Manis Friedman reveals the "Universal Secret of Jewish Sexuality" in this documentary in which he dispenses Kabbalah-infused sexual advice to couples.

Don't watch the new documentary *The Lost Key* if you want to have good sex.

Well, to be accurate, don't watch *The Lost Key* while you're actually having sex. A strict taboo on televisions in the bedroom is one of the tenets laid down in this film whose tagline promises "The Universal Secret of Jewish Sexuality Revealed." This comes as a news flash to this reviewer, a secular Jew who somehow never got the memo.

Co-directed by **Ricardo Adler**, **Belen Orsini** and **Ricardo Korda** and inspired by Adler's quest for greater sexual knowledge after a traumatic divorce, the film revolves around the teachings of Rabbi **Manis Friedman**, an author and marriage counselor whose 1990 book *Doesn't Anyone Blush Anymore?* features a cover blurb by no less a sexual authority than **Bob Dylan**. The avuncular, long-bearded rabbi is seen dispensing his Kabbalah-infused wisdom about human sexual relations to couples including Adler and his new wife.

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"Love is not important," Manis asserts, instead claiming that the number one goal for couples should be to achieve "oneness" and "intimacy." The latter word is invoked time and time again, and, although I hate to be the bearer of bad tidings, most viewers should assume that their relationship is sorely

lacking it.

In his onscreen counseling sessions with the sometimes skeptical couples, this Dr. Ruth of rabbis explains that all distractions in the bedroom are to be avoided. That means, among other things, no pornography, total darkness, no sexual toys and no positions save missionary. Even if the sex is for recreation rather than procreation, the man is strictly the giver and the woman strictly the receiver, with ejaculation into the uterus the ultimate goal. Fortunately, birth control is allowed.

While these lessons may prove amenable to certain viewers, many more are more likely to sympathize with the husband who says that he wants to see his wife's body while he's making love to her and the wife who points out that greater intimacy is actually achieved via more sexual experimentation.

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In an effort to infuse more variety into the proceedings — something to be desired in the cinema, if apparently not the bedroom — the film includes interviews with random subjects who blame their relationship problems on such familiar bugaboos as modern technology and media exploitation of sexuality. There are also clips from several Hollywood rom-coms (**Tom Hanks** and **Meg Ryan** make a de rigueur appearance) and, as if to illustrate that birds do it and bees do it, scenes of various animal species nuzzling each other. (But not to worry, you don't actually see them do the nasty.) Along the way, onscreen graphics deliver thematically appropriate quotes from such sources as the Talmud and the Jewish religious text the Zohar.

"We can literally change the world, one bedroom at a time," says the smiling rabbi at the end of the film.

Production: CineAttico Films

Directors: Ricardo Adler, Belen Orsini, Ricardo Korda

Screenwriters: Ricardo Adler, Fernanda Rossi, Sonia Chocron

Producer: Jose Ernesto Martinez

Executive producers: Mairo Cohen, David Fridzon, Salomon Levy, Ricardo Adler

Directors of photography: Antal Steinbach, Daniel Garcia