

# **THE SANCTITY OF THE SYNAGOGUE AND THE AMEN RESPONSE # 20**

# **אמן**

## **DOES YOUR SYNAGOGUE HAVE A KOSHER MECHITZA?**

**IN THOSE SYNAGOGUES WHERE YOU CAN SEE WOMEN THE YETZER HARA RULES IN THE SYNAGOGUE. THE KRIAT SHEMA THAT YOU SAY IN A SYNAGOGUE WHERE YOU CAN SEE WOMEN IS NULL AND VOID**

**He who looks at women and forbidden places even if he doesn't think of committing a transgression G-d forbid, anyway that image is engraved in his mind and he ends up damaging his soul.**

**(Chessed le Abraham, Nahar 33)**

## **IT IS MORE PLEASURABLE LOOKING AT WOMEN THAN THE ACT ITSELF**

**"Better is the sight of the eyes than the wandering of the soul" (Kohelet 6:9) Resh Lakish said it is more pleasant the sight of the eyes than the actual act of sexual transgression (Talmud Yoma 74b) The Maharam Ben Chaviv wrote that the intention of Resh Lakish said was to warn men, that since there is more pleasure in looking at a woman than in the act itself, therefore a man must separate in order to be holy and modest and not look at women. (Tov Ayn)**

**He who looks even at the small finger of a woman in order to derive pleasure from looking, is like one who looks at her private place and even to listen to her voice (Which is considered as looking at her nakedness) or to look at her hair is forbidden. (The Rambam Chapter 21, Hilchot Issure Biah)**

## **LOOKING AT WOMEN IS A GRAVE PROHIBITION FROM THE TORAH**

My dear friend you should know that a majority of people think that this prohibition is only words of Chassidut and are not careful to refrain from looking at women, You should know my friend that this is a grave prohibition from the Torah, and the ones who treat lightly this prohibition woe to their souls because they cause great evil for themselves. We have a verse that we repeat three times a day: “And do not go astray after your hearts and after your eyes” And it is written in the Talmud: “Why is it written (Kohelet 6:9) “Better is the sight of the eyes than the wandering of the soul” Because it is more pleasurable looking at a woman than the actual sexual act. And Rashi commented: For the Yetzer ha Ra it is better to make a person sin through the sight of his eyes than to make him sin through the actual sin.

**The majority thinks that the prohibition to look at women is only for pious or saintly people. It is forbidden to listen to their words (Derech Pikudecha, 35 Lo Taase)**

### **IF A RABBI DEVIATES AN INCH FROM THE SHULCHAN ARUCH IT IS FORBIDDEN TO FOLLOW HIM**

The holy Sefer ha Brit (Part 1, Chapter 3) states: “Be wary of all new customs and groups that do not follow the ways our forefathers knew. Even if these people are Torah scholars and doers of acts of kindness, if they deviate even an inch from the Shulchan Aruch do not follow them. If they conduct themselves contrary to the Shulchan Aruch, distance yourselves from their ways and don't go near their homes. Because also among the followers of Shabetai Tzvi [may his name be blotted out] there were many Torah scholars with great Torah knowledge. And there is nothing new that will be good and won't bring sin in its wake. Therefore, be very careful about new things. And this rule should always be in front of you: “The one who turns his face away from the Shulchan Aruch, even a little has no portion in the G-d of Yaakov and in his congregation.” [See also Chovot ha Levavot, Shaar ha Yichud ha Maase, chapter 5 – See also Likute Amarim Tanya, Chapter 1 and 24 - Talmud Eruvin 21b]

### **WOE TO HE WHO LEADS OTHERS TO SIN**

He who leads others to sin and particularly on this sin of mingling men and women or in leading men to look at women, this person is not given the chance to do

Teshuvah and he is worse than the one who kills his fellow for he takes the life of those he leads to sin not only the life of this world but also the life of the world to Come. And this person that brings many to sin has no share in the world to Come (See Rambam Hil. Teshuva, Chap. 3) And if he is the cause of mixing men and women in one place he transgresses also the prohibition of Not to walk in the ways of the gentiles.  
(Sefer Tikkun ha Brit)

## **Rabbenu Yonah writes in Iggeret ha Teshuvah**

11) And it is forbidden for a man to look at a married woman from the Torah as it is written: (Bamidbar 15:39) "And you shall not go astray after your hearts and after your eyes...". And our Sages have said (Tanchuma Shelach 15) The heart and the eyes are the two agents of sin. And it is forbidden even to look at a single woman: "I have made a covenant with my eyes, and how should I think about a virgin?" (Iyov 31:1)

**"There is no greater barrier to sexual arousal than closing one's eyes" (Sefer Chassidim 9)**

**NOW THERE ARE FOOLS WHO ALLOW THEIR SYNAGOGUES TO HAVE A MECHITZA WHERE YOU CAN SEE WOMEN! NOT ONLY ARE THEY NOT DOING A MITZVAH BUT ON THE CONTRARY THEY CAUSE MANY PEOPLE TO STUMBLE IN SIN**

**MAYBE YOU NEVER HEARD YOUR RABBI TALKING ABOUT THESE THINGS FOR IT MAY NOT BE IN HIS BEST INTEREST TO TELL YOU. SO EVEN IF YOUR RABBI RIDICULES YOU FOR KEEPING THE SHULCHAN ARUCH YOU SHOULD BE STRONG AND GO AHEAD FOR IT MAY BE THAT YOUR RABBI BELONGS TO THE EREV RAV AND HE JUST DOES NOT WANT YOU TO KEEP THE TORAH AS IT SHOULD BE FOR MAYBE HE WOULD BE EXPOSED AS A FAKE IN THE EYES OF THE OTHER CONGREGANTS WHEN THEY SEE THAT A COMMON PERSON KEEPS THE SHULCHAN ARUCH TO A GREATER EXTENT THAN THE RABBI. AND WE ARE NOT TALKING ABOUT PIOUS PRACTICES BUT WE ARE TALKING HERE ABOUT KEEPING THE SHULCHAN ARUCH, SPECIFICALLY CONCERNING THOSE AREAS WHERE THE RELIGIOUS LEADERS OF OUR TIME ARE LAX ABOUT. FOR EXAMPLE, TALKING IN THE SYNAGOGUE IN THE MIDDLE OF PRAYERS, DURING THE KADDISH, GIVING TORAH LESSONS TO MEN AND WOMEN WITHOUT A MECHITZA, HAVING A DEFICIENT MECHITZA IN SHUL, LOOKING AT WOMEN WHICH IS SOMETHING FORBIDDEN, ETC**