

# THE SANCTITY OF THE SYNAGOGUE AND THE AMEN RESPONSE # 4

# אמן

## 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)

And all those who look at a married woman, they diminish the strength of their Yetzer ha Tov and his splendor is given to the destroyer for thus have said our Sages (Sanhedrin 92a) The one who looks at those forbidden to him, his strength is diminished and on him who doesn't raise his eyes to look at a married woman, he merits and sees the beauty of Hashem, measure for measure, as reward for the merit of not enjoying forbidden sights, for thus have our Sages said: All those who conquer their eyes from looking at forbidden women merits and receives the face of the Shechina as it is written: “And closes his eyes from looking at evil”, and after it says: “The King in his beauty your eyes will behold”

### NOW WE ASK: HOW CAN WE HAVE SYNAGOGUES WITH MECHITZOT WHERE MEN CAN SEE THE WOMEN?

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