

THE HOLINESS OF THE EYES
BULLETIN 21

IS YOUR RABBI ORTHODOX OR REFORM?
THE TRUTH ABOUT LOOKING AT WOMEN

**LOOKING AT WOMEN IS
LIKE WORSHIPPING IDOLS**

"You fill their belly with tzefuncha (that which is hidden with you) ... [they leave their yeter (abundance; remainder) to their babes.]" (Psalms 117:14) Avoid gazing at material things that are attractive. How much more so avoid gazing at the beauty of women to indulge your desire. For that sort of looking is self worship, which is like worshipping idolatry. Moreover that thought leads, Heaven forbid, to nocturnal sin. Thus you will add strength to kelipah (husks, the forces or realm of evil), impregnating it.

(Tzaavat ha Rivash of the Baal Shem Tov, 90)

**LOOKING AT WOMEN INCREASES
THE STRENGTH OF THE KELIPOT**

This is the meaning of tzefuncha, i.e., that which you tzofeh (observe) for your sake, such as the beauty of a woman. By looking for self-indulgence you add power to [kelipah]. Moreover, if you do so before giving birth to a child, your child will be rooted in the power [of the kelipot]. R. Isaac Luria, of blessed memory, thus explained [the ruling] that "Honor your father," (Exodus 20:12) includes [the obligation to honor] your elder brother (Ketuvot 103a): The older brother is like the major branch of a tree. As another branch grows from that major branch, it draws vitality from the major branch. So, too, the younger brother draws vitality from the older one. Thus it follows that when first infusing strength into kelipah and then begetting a child, that child will be like the smaller branch. The principal strength is [given] into [the forces of evil], and the child is like yitron, something additional. This is the meaning of 'they left their yitron to their babes.'" (Psalms 17:14)

(Tzaavat ha Rivash of the Baal Shem Tov, 90)

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