

THE HOLINESS OF THE EYES BULLETIN 3

DO NOT FOLLOW THE MAJORITY TO SIN

THE NATURE OF A PERSON IS TO BE PULLED BY THE THOUGHTS AND ACTIONS OF HIS FRIENDS AND ACQUAINTANCES AND TO BEHAVE ACCORDING TO THE CUSTOMS OF THE PLACE WHERE HE RESIDES, THEREFORE A MAN MUST ASSOCIATE WITH TZADDIKIM AND SIT NEXT TO THE WISE SO HE CAN LEARN FROM THEIR ACTIONS. AND HE SHOULD DISTANCE HIMSELF FROM EVILDOERS THAT WALK IN DARKNESS SO THAT HE WILL NOT LEARN FROM THEIR ACTIONS.

(Rambam, Hilchot Deot, chap. 6)

The true strength of a person's piety is demonstrated under the following circumstances: a devout person does not cast off his piety even when people ridicule him; whatever he does is for the sake of heaven; he does not look at women. His piety is put to the test especially when he is in the company of other men in a situation where women are usually around—for example, in a wedding hall where women are dressed in elegant gowns, and all are gazing at the women, and he does not stare. For that, he will be rewarded with abundant good. Therefore, when a man meets a woman, whether she is single or married, gentile or Jewish, an adult or a minor, it is best for him to turn his face aside and not to look at her. And so do we read in Job, "I made a Covenant with my eyes not to gaze on a maiden" (Job 3 1: 1). The verse "He shuts his eyes against looking at evil" (Isaiah 33:15) refers to the person who does not look at women when they are doing their washing. 'When they wash their clothes, they lift their skirts so as not to soil them and thus uncover their legs; and we know that a woman's leg is a sexual excitement. And so said the Sage, "There is no greater barrier to sexual arousal than closing one's eyes. (Sefer Chassidim 9)

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)

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