

What 'actually' constitutes porn?

Posted by DesertLion - 01 Jan 2010 21:06

Dear Members of the GYE community,

Recently, I have fallen a considerable number of times in a short period of time. This has possibly been triggered by my relaxing the nerves of discipline after a long clean stretch.

We all know what hard core porn constitutes, but in a moment of lust, Satan can blur the line between what is permissible and and what is not.

I have a series of questions that will help me clarify all the material I need to avoid. Hopefully, this will prevent future falls, or at the very least, drastically reduce their frequency.

1.) Whats is soft porn? Is it pictures of sexy girls in lads' mags? Or could even billboards with an advert of a lingerie model be deemed inappropriate?

2.) Reading and looking at erotica has also been forbidden. However, so many classic novels contain scenes (sometimes more than one) of a graphically sexual nature. I want to read them because they are considered 'good' books, but one notorious volume has already possibly caused me to fall twice. I thirst for knowledge, but I also want to do the right thing.

Thanks for all your help guys and I wish you all a happy new year! May it be a great one for all of us!

TC,

DesertLion

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Re: What 'actually' constitutes porn?
Posted by Lamplighter - 01 Jan 2010 21:35

Dear DesertLion, it's nice to have non-Jews join our Jewish community here at GYE in fighting this fight.

Yes, Satan is a master at blurring lines, distorting good and evil. He is a master strategist and will try any and every tactic. This is why our ancient rabbinic sages, known as Chazal, instituted many fences to keep us safe in these areas, such as laws of not listening to a woman sing, not secluding oneself with a woman, not looking at women's clothing, not smelling woman's perfume, among others. All of these things are triggers. It doesn't take much to trigger the male, so ultimately whether it's "hard" or "soft" porn, it's all lust enticing and destructive for our souls. And the prohibition of gazing at a woman for pleasure is actually of Biblical origin, unlike some of those rabbinic fences just mentioned. So whether it's a "hard" porn, or lingerie models in the newspaper, or simply a woman you pass in the street, it doesn't really matter, because deliberately looking at any of these to derive pleasure is violating this Torah commandment and the opening to sin.

And you got it right about even the classic books, or movies. That's why in our Torah observant communities we are to stay away from such literature and avoid television and the movie theatre for this exact reason.

Even newspapers are dangerous territory, given some of the immodest, lust provoking advertisements and even articles. I should know- I work for my city's major paper and it's a perpetual struggle for me in maintaining my personal and ethical integrity at the office in trying to be a ben-Torah.

All the best,

Clark Kent

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Re: What 'actually' constitutes porn?
Posted by DesertLion - 01 Jan 2010 22:45

Hey 'Superman' ;D,

Thanks for the warm welcome and your lucid answers to my questions. After reading your post, I immediately deleted some bookmarks on my computer that led to some 'glamour photography' sites. The real point that helped me understand what needs to be done is the biblical injunction that commands us not to derive pleasure from looking at women.

However, what is permitted for the purposes of education? Recently, I was attacked by a bout of curiosity, and I felt an urge to investigate images of female reproductive anatomy. This was most probably the YH duping me yet again, but has this acutally been proscribed by the Jewish sages?

Also, it's one thing knowing what the ideal thing to do would be, but if we were seriously to live as the rabbis suggest, we might as well just become hermits in mountain retreats (no disrepect to the Rebs intended). It's really not easy, or sometimes even practical trying to implement their teachings in today's world and society, especially if you're a non-Jew.

I love your pseudoname given your career lol: it's most fitting. Thanks for your time and help Clark.

Unfortunately, this modern plague has spread to all nations and races in the world. Well, we have a common purpose and are in this fight together on GYE, Jew or Gentile alike.

TC and have a great 2010,

DesertLion

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Re: what actually consists

Posted by loi-misyaeish - 02 Jan 2010 18:35

Looking at the modern day society, has porn improved the way of living. NO! The world has become so corrupt because of it. It is written in the torah that the reason God brought the flood to the world was exactly for this reason. The world was so morally corrupt that there was a threat to the entire existence of mankind. Since the flood there has been no generation so incorrupt as ours. The torah's laws are the perfect balance. The rabbis instituted laws that help us prevent ourselves from going further. These are called 'fences' that we should be able to keep our distance from the immoralites of the world. I saw an article recently that writes that china and australia want to begin banning porn sites, they've realized what a destruction it's making to the world. The increase of crime and murder stems from this immorality. Concerning reading the medical aspects of sex, if one finds that it will have bad effects, then it should not be read. But if one is reading for purposes of knowledge, there shouldn't be a problem. We find in the talmud, topics that discuss about different aspects of sex, menstrual cycle etc. They are written for the purpose of knowledge and understanding in the laws of the torah, but not to trigger the person, that can lead to sin. All the best. LM

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Re: What 'actually' constitutes porn?

Posted by Kollel Guy - 02 Jan 2010 18:56

Recently, I was attacked by a bout of curiosity, and I felt an urge to investigate images of female reproductive anatomy. This was most probably the YH duping me yet again, but has this acutally been proscribed by the Jewish sages?

In order to make proper judgement in these situations, you need to give yourself an objective view.

What I mean is, you will "feel" like it is your curiosity telling you to study those areas - because you want to feel that way. You know the implications of the possibilities, and are biased.

The best thing would be to ask somone else (who is on the same page as you concerning the importance of the matter) for his opinion.

If this is not possible, picture in your head that reading the material *might* cause you to lose a

large sum of money, or be seriously injured G-d forbid.... and it might not.

Is reading the material important enough to you, that you are willing to take that chance? If not - then this should be no different.

Also, it's one thing knowing what the ideal thing to do would be, but if we were seriously to live as the rabbis suggest, we might as well just become hermits in mountain retreats (no disrespect to the Rebs intended). It's really not easy, or sometimes even practical trying to implement their teachings in today's world and society, especially if you're a non-Jew.

The rabbis don't tell us which situations to be in. They tell us to do our best. Obviously becoming a hermit is not an option - (unless all of society becomes *really* bad). "Our best" means to have good filters, and keep away from things which can trigger the wrong reactions.

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Re: What 'actually' constitutes porn?
Posted by DesertLion - 02 Jan 2010 21:54

Hey Kollel Guy and LM,

Thanks for your replies and explanations. You've put things in a far clearer light for me, and I now have no second thoughts about closing another loophole through which I was falling.

TC and all the best,

DesertLion

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Re: What 'actually' constitutes porn?
Posted by silentbattle - 03 Jan 2010 02:27

If you're a doctor, and you need to better understand the female body - then yes. Otherwise, I'd

Actually, the arabbis are pretty clear about NOT living like a hermit. However, a person has to make constant decisions about whether the things he's doing in his life are making him a better person.

Say that it's probably a better idea to focus your further education on other areas

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Re: What 'actually' constitutes porn?

Posted by Lamplighter - 03 Jan 2010 02:40

DesertLion, I gotta come clean- I threw in the part about me working for a newspaper for my persona as Clark Kent. In my real life identity, Perry White is not my boss nor am I employed by the Daily Planet.

In terms of what I do in my real life identity, I'm working on having my answer be like that of Jonah. When he was asked what he does for work, he responded, "I am a Hebrew and I fear the Lord." (Jonah 1:9)

May we strive to likewise make our avodas-Hashem our real life's work, and though He's a demanding boss at times, he sure is a fair and loving one too.

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Re: What 'actually' constitutes porn?

Posted by Kedusha - 03 Jan 2010 03:55

[silentbattle wrote on 03 Jan 2010 02:27:](#)

If you're a doctor, and you need to better understand the female body - then yes. Otherwise, I'd

Don't think it's so easy for physicians. I once overheard a frum doctor say to a Rav that he had to examine 1,000 female patients before it stopped affecting him at all (the only part that I have trouble believing is that he has no problem with it now).

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Re: What 'actually' constitutes porn?
Posted by silentbattle - 03 Jan 2010 03:59

Oh, I wasn't saying that it's easy - and although it may not be NO problem at all, I'd guess that he's learned, to a large extent, to view it from a clinical point of view.

My point was that in THAT case, he has a valid reason to pursue that particular area of education - he needs to! For the rest of us, thank god, there are lots of other areas in which we can broaden our knowledge.

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Re: What 'actually' constitutes porn?
Posted by Kedusha - 03 Jan 2010 04:05

[silentbattle wrote on 03 Jan 2010 03:59:](#)

Oh, I wasn't saying that it's easy - and although it may not be NO problem at all, I'd guess that he's learned, to a large extent, to view it from a clinical point of view.

My point was that in THAT case, he has a valid reason to pursue that particular area of education - he needs to! For the rest of us, thank god, there are lots of other areas in which we can broaden our knowledge.

I understand. Still, I can't fathom how a frum man can choose this field of medicine.

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Re: What 'actually' constitutes porn?

Posted by silentbattle - 03 Jan 2010 04:23

Do you mean medicine in general, or areas that involve women in particular?

I've heard from well-known frum doctors that they wouldn't recommend it.

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Re: What 'actually' constitutes porn?

Posted by Kedusha - 03 Jan 2010 04:27

[silentbattle wrote on 03 Jan 2010 04:23:](#)

Do you mean medicine in general, or areas that involve women in particular?

I've heard from well-known frum doctors that they wouldn't recommend it.

Areas that involve women in particular.

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Re: What 'actually' constitutes porn?

Posted by Ano Nymous - 03 Jan 2010 04:35

I've often wondered the same thing. Even if I didn't have any issues with pornography, just being a normal frum male I would never want to put myself in the position that those doctors put themselves in. But if they can do it and truly remain upright, good for them :D

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Re: What 'actually' constitutes porn?

Posted by silentbattle - 03 Jan 2010 04:47

interestingly, I've heard from people that are PAs that in their (non-jewish) classes, no one really wants to do those rotations...apparently, it's not as fun as it sounds.

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