

What's wrong with just looking?

Posted by Eye.nonymous - 26 Jul 2009 20:18

I've been looking through the GYE handbook for strategies and for attitudes. I don't understand; I've known a lot of these strategies for a long time already. Yet, I feel like I've been stuck in the same spot for years.

Two questions in particular I have been wondering about.

1. I feel repulsed if I slip up and look at indecent pictures. But, I don't feel any repulsion seeing the tznius women walking down the street. I can't break deep into myself and really feel that something is wrong with this, no matter how hard I try. Yet, chaza"I speak very severely of someone who even looks at a woman's pinky finger for pleasure. Whatever I've read and however much I think about it, I can't seem to break through this obstacle. Can anyone help?

2. The piece of advice that I thought might be the key to why I've been stuck for so long in the same place is, "work on your middos!" But, it's so vague. No matter which mussar sefarim I've read, and no matter how much I've thought about them, I can never manage to get a lasting effect from them. I would be interested to hear what methods other people have found helpful.

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Re: Two questions

Posted by the.guard - 26 Jul 2009 22:32

Maybe this page can help: www.jewishsexuality.com/sexual-fantasies

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Re: Two questions

Posted by kutan - 28 Jul 2009 02:32

Eye.N...

Hi again.

I'd like to try and address the first point. I am not intending to preach, since one should not make jokes in the 3 weeks (and if you knew me, you would be laughing...). Rather, I'd like to discuss the thoughts I've had, and listen to what you think about them.

I believe what is behind the question is why can't I just enjoy the prettiness, without any further intention. What harm is it. Of course, Chazal and the Rambam etc all say it is a no no, but I don't FEEL any thing wrong with it. I don't get that tingly feeling that I get from looking at bad things. Its just something I enjoy.

At least, that is what was behind the scenes in *this* yid's mind.

Then I saw a quote by Dr. Twerski to Guard (I don't think it was about this particular case, but no difference).

He said... "if he is not addicted, then let the young man stop".

Hit me like a ton of bricks.

Its an **addiction!** I *can't* stop. At least not for any looooong period of time. I've tried in the past. I just didn't stop. Maybe for a week, two, a month or two tops.

Why not? Why can't I stop? Do I really need it? Why? What is it giving me that makes it impossible to stop, me a controlled and rational person?

If its just something I do because I enjoy it, like listening to music, then let me do an excersize and stop. For 6 months. Just to see if I can.

Well I was not able to.

Music, no problem. I LOVE music. But I stopped. for as long as I wanted to.

But this thing? Just kept happening again!

Why?

Because I'm *addicted* to the "gentle, innocent" pleasure I get when looking. At looking at the form or face of a tzniusdike but attractive woman

Hmmm.

Addiction. That is a dangerous thing. The GUI site has a awful lot of people who will swear up and down that it is painful. Extremely painful. They are not faking it either. It is for real.

(another quote stuck... this time Guard. He emailed someone... you don't want to travel down the dark road of addiction. It is nothing but pain, pain and more pain. If you get there, we can help you there too....)

I'm addicted. *addicted*. **Addicted**. True, its not painful... yet. But it means I am 'out of control'.

That means someone else is in the driver's seat.

I don't trust that someone.

Whether you believe in the 'yetzer hara' as an independent entity with the mission to derail you, or just are realistic about the animal like nature of humans (in case you are optimistic, look at history and how people behaved, or, scan the news (just the headlines!!!) for juicy stories of poiticians... remember Elliot Spitzer? remember Mr. menuval Clinton? Each of these now wishes they could have seen GUI before the stories happened.) the bottom line is the same... smart, civil, well respected and well liked people can fall, fast and low.

The animal side of us in not polite and civilized. He just pretends to be so our conscience (or, if you choose to call it that, the yetzer tov) does not get in the way.

But once he is in place and grabs a trenchhold, WATCH OUT!!!

(Remember the story with King Solomon and the king of demons?)...

So that gave me a jolt, and I realized that this is not about being a 'kadosh'. Its not about being a frumie. Its about being **me**, saving my humanity, before it gets too late.

I am not sure it is right to say this here in this context but the Germans yimach shimom beyomainu bekorov were the most civilized people on earth. turned into pure animals in a short time.

None of these people, not Elliot Spitzer, not Clinton, not (the list never ends... a new one comes up every couple of months) would have ever thought that they would fall that low. Not in the beginning, anyway. But it is AMAZING what us humans can rationalize. Have you ever seen it in action? Has anyone ever tried to justify their position where you know its wrong, and know why they are doing it? It is scary to see smart humans delude themselves.

So, that is why I stopped. And it has still not been easy, as the habit is there. But with the help of all the chevra on GYE, it will be successful, IYH

Please think about these points. To me, it is clear as day. Like I said, it hit me like a ton of bricks.

I tell my children when the play starts getting rowdy... your going to fall / hurt yourself / hurt someone etc.

And they always say, no we will not...

And my answer is that no one ever did something planning on getting into an accident. But accidents *do* happen in the world! How is that? Answer is that they happen to people who are sure that they will not get into one.

So we have to look out before the accident can happen, as other wise it can't be prevented.

Thank you for your question, which really helped me crystallize the thoughts that were floating around in my head for a while, I think.

with sincere love,

kutan

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Re: Two questions

Posted by Eye.nonymous - 28 Jul 2009 18:53

Thankyou for your reply, kutan.

The question is exactly what I've been feeling: What's wrong with just seeing prettyness if it doesn't seem to do anything.

I like that angle, that if you can't stop, you're addicted--which isn't good.

Also, that nobody plans for accidents to happen.

But, I'm still grappling with it. How many people are addicted to their morning cup of coffee. Yet, I don't know if a Coffee Anon. group will suddenly become the most urgent topic to sweep the world. Also, I don't know how often a caffein addiction leads to a crack addict.

I definitely can imagine that seemingly innocent interactions between men and women in the workplace can eventually lead to sin.

But, these women on the street, there's absolutely no interactions. It's also an ultra-frum neighborhood. The women neighbors won't even say "hello" or "good morning" in a million years. And, likewise, I wouldn't ever say a word to them.

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Re: Two questions

Posted by kutan - 30 Jul 2009 20:35

[Eye.nonymous wrote on 28 Jul 2009 18:53:](#)

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Hi Eye.N...

Interesting.

Never say never. I had the same problem as you, and thought the same. Then a couple moved in next door, and the woman looks and walks etc like a woman of ill repute. All technically tznius, but she manages to act that way anyway.

Well, she once noticed that I was looking...

Now, without going into details, it is very possible for something to have developed in this particular case. My family is away, her husband is out of town a lot, they don't have the greatest marriage...etc.

Baruch Hashem, I'm into GUE for many months now, and I don't look b'chlal, and avoid her like the plague (anyway, she's fat :D). Baruch Hashem. Because the headaches of the fantasies and compusions that a situation like this could have caused are NOT pretty.

Shudder.

And the diff. between coffee (I happen to like that too...) is straightforward. If I was drinking coffee and my Rosh Yeshiva walked in, I would not blink. I might even offer him a cup. But if I was walking on the street and suddenly noticed my Rosh Yeshiva, I would not be looking at woman at that time. And I would definitely not walk over to him and say... hey, did you notice that one...?

Listen, if you break the addiction and then decide it wasn't a good idea, you could always go back to the old ways, in a flash. But trust this little writer, you'll never look back!

kutan

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Re: Two questions

Posted by 7yipol - 30 Jul 2009 21:24

Kutan, you are writing amazing yesodos here. Ground level truths.

Eye.n, just a slightly different perspective, from the view of one of those 'ultra frum' women:

If any of them knew what you were thinking, they would feel an invasion of privacy and even a sense of molestation. None of the emotionally healthy ones would consider it a compliment. All women want to be regarded as special on a level which goes far deeper than mere superficiality.

If you cant yet feel anything wrong for your own sake, try resist for sake of those kadosh women instead.

Good luck and hope you dont mind my 2 cents

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Re: What's wrong with just looking?
Posted by Eye.nonymous - 28 Aug 2009 06:29

I have been thinking more about this topic, "What's wrong with just looking?"

A thought came to mind. When I was Bar Mitzvah age, I was introduced to Judaism, which I thought consisted of putting on Tephilling, keeping kosher, and not turning lights on or off on Shabbos. I didn't understand why anyone would commit to it. But then I met up with a Kollel community. I was greatly impressed; it was a quality of life, peace and happiness, that I couldn't have imagined before.

It clicked--somehow, though I don't know how, these weird boxes and this weird diet produce a much better way of life.

So too, here. Even if I don't understand logically, not looking will definitely lead to a much better life.

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Re: What's wrong with just looking?
Posted by the.guard - 28 Aug 2009 10:50

Someone just wrote me an e-mail today:

As it is, I am doing very well and lust doesn't have any room in my life any more. The only thing I wish I could do better at is shmiras ainayim. In the frum world, everyone rants and raves all day about tznius, but for me, the more tznius a girl is, the more of a trigger she is for me. I never thought that Kew Garden Hills, NY would be more of a challenge in shmiras ainayim than Los Angeles, but it certainly is (at least for me). In LA, there are lots of scantily clad women, but it's not much of a trigger for me. Here in NY, I am going to be inside most of the day learning and studying, but when I have to walk outside, the place is TEEMING with tznius and highly attractive frum girls and married women. Just today I was at a hardware store, and there was a tremendously attractive married frum woman. After a couple of looks, I had to literally bite down hard and walk out of the store because I just couldn't control my eyes. I felt great afterward, but I don't know how often I'm going to do that.

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Re: What's wrong with just looking?
Posted by Pintele Yid - 28 Aug 2009 18:59

[Eye.nonymous wrote on 26 Jul 2009 20:18:](#)

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someone who even looks at a woman's pinky finger for pleasure. Whatever I've read and however much I think about it, I can't seem to break through this obstacle. Can anyone help?

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Dear Eye,

You were zocha to get some great posts to your questions. (Kutan - you **must** change your name to Ari).

Although Guard's link to the article by Horav Daniel Frisch Zatzal, was relevant to both your questions, nobody has directly commented on question #2. (BTW, thank you Guard for another great link - I"Y"H I will buy his sefer)

I found that although learning seforim on Kedhas Einyayim helped alot, but until I did **physical actions** to assist me, I never got anywhere. The following is what I use to help me when I am on the street. <http://rehab-my-site.com/guardureyes/forum/index.php?topic=514.0> Once, I implemented these things, the words of the seforim somehow sunk into my bones. I can tell you that the Tayva to look is still there from time to time, and now for some strange reason, the triggers to the Tayva are even more subtle. (even a woman's voice can sometimes get me going - which wasn't the case before) But my resolve to not look is BS"D totally overpowering and as a result, I have over 99% of the time been very successful in not looking at any woman in the street for several months. I had a brief downfall several times during the 3 weeks, but I dusted myself off and came back on the path. I am telling you this notto Chas Vesholom boast, but because I hope you can successfully implement the things I have detailed in that link.

Regarding question 1, I found that 7 UP's comment is right on. Before I **really** got determined to stop looking, I noticed in my neighborhood in Boro Park, that many High School (and older) girls

walk in a way that you can tell that they **really don't want you to look at them**. If you do, they start walking much faster. It is a tremendous Kidush Hashem.

To the crux of your question, the bottom line is Emunah. Hashem owns this world and everything in it. He sets the ground rules and the rules are to keep your eyes and mind clean. We should have Emunah that **the only thing that is yours, is what Hashem gave you**. He did not give you permission to look at your neighbors wife, no matter how Tzniusdik she is dressed. That pleasure that you are deriving from looking at her is **stolen**, since she is your neighbor's wife - not yours. Even the single girl will hopefully some day belong to someone else. She will **never** belong to you - so you are again stealing from someone else.

You should have emunah that Hashem gives you exactly what you need. If this girl/woman was not given to you, then you don't need it. If you don't need it, then anything foreign to you usually does damage rather than help.

Pintele Yid

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Re: What's wrong with just looking?
Posted by coby613 - 28 Aug 2009 21:36

frunny story about looking at women on the street: I was with my friend walking through an Arab neighborhood, and we passed three Muslim women walking together. Two of them had the traditional outfit with the veil, but one dressed moderately tznius and had no head covering nor veil. My friend turns to me and whispers (out of hearing range) "now we know which one is the _____" I remember thinking, the same could be true of Jewish women. it all depends on the viewer. If I were a person with a narrow mind, when I see a girl with a short skirt and assorted other issurim (os?), I might be thinking thsat she was such a person also. But what it comes down to is a Jew is a Jew. if she decides to dress like that, she is either undereducated or chooses to ignore it. I may find her attractive, but when I see a girl like that, it helps me to think back to the incident with the Muslim women and how we can be so cynical of our own. with this in mind, i usually can snap back and instead of feel lust for her, feel rachmunus instead. So, applying this to a broader range, if this is how we should feel for our own, how much more so should we feel for the rest of the world, who have to stoop so low and exhibit themselves for whatever reason, being money or low self esteem or somewhat. And when you think about that, it all becomes a little clearer. to me at least.

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Re: What's wrong with just looking?
Posted by Eye.nonymous - 29 Aug 2009 19:19

I've had yet another realization on this topic.

First of all, I started reading through the Big Book a little while ago. It's amazing how much it reads like a great mussar book. Now, I can understand that an alcoholic grabbing for a drink is problematic.

And, I understand that problems in the area of guarding your eyes is an addiction to lust.

I started to think about the comparison. Yes, when I see a woman on the street there is some kind of false satisfaction. I can understand that if I would take a drink to get that feeling it would be wrong. So, getting that feeling is wrong no matter how it is achieved.

Alcoholic. Lust addict. The comparison still remained abstract.

Until I thought of "LUSTAHOLIC." Which, I don't know if anyone else has tried to coin this phrase yet. For me, this term helps me feel the problems of lust more directly, instead of abstractly comparing to other addictions. Even "lust-addict," for me, lacks a certain power which I think "lustaholic" conveys.

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Re: What's wrong with just looking?
Posted by the.guard - 29 Aug 2009 22:22

Yes, that's a great word: "lustaholic". If I'm not mistaken, it is used a lot in SA.

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Re: What's wrong with just looking?
Posted by kanesher - 30 Aug 2009 21:44

My own two cents-

-Things certainly can and do happen from "looking"; Rabbenu Guard can tell you the real horror stories - but I know of a maggid shiur who had a tzinius charedi married woman type up his seforim (this is first hand!) tried to get her into bed. She refused, and he freaked out, left a note begging for mechila , promising to be metaken himself and she never heard from him again. I doubt they have long and deep conversations. Some charedi (looking!) fellow grabbed my wife while holding the door open for her.

But it's deeper then that. We've got to develop a taste for beauty in the context of connection - this issue comes up in shidduchim - you think when chazal teach us assur lekadesh isha ad sheyerana is look lustfully? that's an issue d'oraysa. There is a mehalach of seeing a girl as a full human being which her beauty in context. And obviously if she's married, that's totally irrelevant, because her context is not yours - nor is single whom is not immediately relevant to you - because you only have half the picture, and so all you're doing is lust. Just seeing one part of her and judging her by it. It is deeply dehumanizing - which I think is what the good Rebbetzin was referring to. A bas Yisrael has hopes, dreams, fears, aspirations. And all you see is another dress size. We stop looking at them as human beings and look at them as objects. And that is terror to a woman. Molestation on our small scale. But it adds up.

As the media makes women into objects, sex crimes rises - correlates almost exactly - because is they are objects, well, heck, I can take by looking - why not take in other ways?

I've been vague because I'm in a rush. I'll try to add some hesber later.

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Re: What's wrong with just looking?

Posted by the.guard - 31 Aug 2009 10:47

Kanesher and eye.nonymous, you might find this page interesting:

www.guardureyes.com/GUE/FAQ/FAQ44.asp

Also, read days 16-21 of the translations from the book "[The first day of the rest of my life](#)"... I think it will give you some great perspective on how to view *other* women vs. one's wife, etc...

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Re: What's wrong with just looking?

Posted by kutan - 31 Aug 2009 13:24

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I've been vague because I'm in a rush. I'll try to add some hesber later.

Kaneshher,

Your points are right on the mark.

I personally have to thank Hashem for sending Guard and this site, along with all the wonderful people that make it up (if you think about it, the site is no longer "guard", its all the amazing people that post here, each with their own blend of personality that contributes to an amazing living entity), since who knows, I might have ended up being one of those people ch'v.

If we do not learn to despise lust, meaning the animalistic actions that people so wontonly succumb to , then even if we are successful in 'building up' yiras shomayim and squashing it, who says we will be successful all the time? all one needs is a SINGLE downfall. It becomes unlikely that we will have a perfect record.

But if we develop the right attitude, then it becomes likely that we will have a perfect record, with Hashem's help. Because we are no longer battling... We despise lusting, and so when we feel like we are about to be 'triggered' into it, we sincerely beseech Hashem to remove it... AND HE DOES!

There is no problem with appreciating a woman's beauty. Hashem is not asking us to live out of sync with nature. Its simply recognizing that it is a facet of our personality that is not supposed to be 'out of control'.

I really feel bad for that magid shiur. He is no worse than me, and likely is better. Just never received the right training, the right tools. This subject is typically taboo and is little discussed. Who was he supposed to receive guidance from?

I really wish there was a non-internet way to get this message out to the bachurim and yungerleit of klal yisroel.

kutan

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