

Halachos of shemiras einayim

Posted by davidt - 01 Feb 2024 15:18

The following is from the "Doeihu | Daily Halacha" email series

Shemiras Einayim - Part 1

Below is a short overview of the *halachos* of *shemiras einayim*.

1. It is forbidden for a man to **gaze** at a woman. One who does so transgresses the prohibition of “*V’nishmarta mikol davar ra*, you must guard yourself from every improper thing” (*Devarim* 23:10). In many instances, he also transgresses the prohibition of “*Lo sasuru acharei levavchem v’acharei eineichem*, you may not turn after your hearts and after your eyes” (*Bamidbar* 15:39). (*Berachos* 61a; *Shulchan Aruch* EH 21:1 and OC 75; *Mishnah Berurah* 75:17)
2. According to the letter of the law, if one merely **glances** a woman incidentally, without intention to gaze at her, he has not transgressed any prohibition. (The *poskim* write that the prohibition against looking at a woman only applies when one gazes at her, i.e., while concentrating and analyzing her features. However, if one merely glances at a woman superficially, without analyzing details or focusing on what she looks like, this is permitted according to the letter of the law. It is possible for one to know of the other person’s features after glancing at them many times. However, in this case, knowing the features is the result of glancing, rather than gazing.) (*Yam Shel Shlomo*, *Kesubos* ch. 2; *Pri Megadim* MZ 76:1; *Mishnah Berurah* 76:7; *Igros Moshe* OC 1:40; see *Chut Shani* EH p. 42)
3. From a *mussar* perspective, however, a man should avoid even glancing at a woman, certainly when that could lead to improper thoughts. (*Mishnah Berurah* 75:1 and :7; see *Chut Shani* EH p. 42)

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Re: Halachos of shemiras einayim

Posted by notezy - 06 Mar 2024 18:12

Lol thanks

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Re: Halachos of shemiras einayim

Posted by davidt - 06 Mar 2024 19:23

[redfaced wrote on 06 Mar 2024 15:53:](#)

[notezy wrote on 06 Mar 2024 15:45:](#)

Curious about what the halach says about AI generated stuff... if that counts as a women if it's not a specific women I guess it falls into the same categories a video game or cartoon charcter would right?

Based on the assumption that only true images are a problem - Art focuses on drawing nudes very often . Should that be fine?

As stated above:

one is forbidden to do any type of action that could lead him to have improper thoughts.

If a person knows that doing a certain thing or going to a certain place will lead him to have such thoughts, he may not do so. (*Sefer Hachinuch*, mitzvah 188; see also *Shulchan Aruch* EH 21:1, 23:3, and 25:1; *Chut Shani* EH 21:7; *Igros Moshe* EH 1:69)

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Re: Halachos of shemiras einayim

Posted by davidt - 07 Mar 2024 14:38

The Objective of a Filter

5. A filter on the internet is not like a *hechsher* on food. It does not certify the internet as "kosher," thereby making it completely acceptable to use at will. A filter is merely a "helper" to make it easier to protect ourselves from potential danger as much as possible. Even with a proper filter installed, we still have to remember the *halachos* and, if anything pops up that is against *halachah*, we must act according to *halachah*. One cannot say, "If my filter let it through, it must be okay."

This can be compared to a person driving a car who comes to an intersection where there is a green light, signaling that he has the right to proceed. If he sees a car that is sitting in the intersection or coming toward him from the other lane, the driver understands that he can't go until that car gets out of his way. He can't say "If the light is green, I can go", and barrel into the other car. He understands that the traffic light is only a signal to help him know when to drive, but he also has to pay attention and keep himself safe on his own. A filter works the same way. It helps to alleviate the danger of the internet to an extent, but it doesn't remove a person's responsibility for himself. He still must pay attention to ensure that he doesn't transgress any prohibitions.

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Re: Halachos of shemiras einayim
Posted by davidt - 08 Mar 2024 14:14

Censoring Immodest Pictures

6. According to the letter of the law, a man must set his filter to cover up all images of immodestly dressed women and any inappropriate pictures on the internet. (As previously explained by the rules of "*darka acharina*" and from the words of the *Chinuch*, mitzvah 188. Furthermore, without this measures one would almost certainly transgress the prohibitions of "*Lo sasuru*," "*V'nishmarta m'kol davar ra*," and others. As we previously stated, one must give up all his money to avoid transgressing a *mitzvas lo sa'aseh*. Therefore, one certainly must pay the cost of installing a good filter.)

There are several ways to set a filter to cover up pictures. One option is to cover any "skin color". This setting covers only the bodies of people in pictures. Other options are "image filter," or "image replace," which covers the entirety of every picture that has a person in it. It is important to contact one's filter company to ensure that the images are covered in the best way for his/her personal usage.

- In emails as well, one can set the settings — or do so via the filter company — to obscure any pictures that he receives. This should be done to ensure that he does not receive any emails with inappropriate pictures.

7. It is also advisable for women to set their filter to at least cover parts of images containing any

exposed skin (option 1 above) so they do not see any improper pictures. (As explained in the laws of *shemiras einayim* for women.)

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Websites Apps Known to Contain Forbidden Things
Posted by davidt - 11 Mar 2024 12:59

Websites, Apps, Etc. Known to Contain Forbidden Things

8. Some websites, apps, and platforms are known to be replete with things that are forbidden to see, such as inappropriate pictures, videos, and literature. Examples of this are YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, TikTok etc. These sites/apps must be blocked and may not be kept open. (As explained in the rules of “*darka acharina*,” *hilchos shemiras einayim*, *hilchoshirhur*, and from the words of the *Chinuch*, mitzvah 188. As we previously stated, one must give up all his money to avoid transgressing a *mitzvas lo sa’aseh*. Therefore, one certainly must pay the cost of installing a good filter and insure to not transgress these *issurim*. Additionally, this may lead to a transgression of “*Al tikrav el pesach beisah*, do not go close to the door of her house,” (*Mishlei* 5:8) which the *Shulchan Aruch* (EH 21:1) understands as a prohibition to pass within four *amos* of the door to the home of an immoral woman. Images that fall into this category abound on unfiltered internet, and specifically on these sites, where if one visits them, he can easily transgress “*abizrai hu d’gilui arayos*,” a transgression that is related to immorality, by looking at literal *arayos*. Such images, which corrupt the heart and draw a person to thoughts of sin, are included in the category of *abizrai hu d’gliui arayos*, as is stated in the *Shach* (YD 157:10). Also, one can very easily get in contact with such *balei aveira* through such platforms.. Rav Nissim Karelitz *zt”l* echoes this in a letter titled “*P’sak Halachah – 7 Shevat 5765*.”)

If someone must use one of these platforms, he can arrange with the filtering company to allow access only to the specific part of the site to which he needs access [while ensuring that this part is properly filtered]. (He can set the filter to only open a specific link that connects directly to the place he needs to access.)

Another option, in some instances, is to set the filter to cover all pictures. (However, this usually is not sufficient for a site full of immorality, as the facts show that many glitches allow images through.) (As we mentioned previously, it is not only forbidden to enter the home of an immoral woman; it is also forbidden to go near her doorway. It is certain that these types of sites are a “doorway” to sin.)

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Re: Halachos of shemiras einayim

Posted by davidt - 12 Mar 2024 13:49

Introduction to the Upcoming Halachos

As previously explained, there is a concept called “*ika darka acharina*,” which means that when a person has a choice of two paths to his destination, one of which involves the danger of seeing forbidden sights and having forbidden thoughts, while the other does not, and he chooses the spiritually challenging path, he is termed a *rasha* by *Chazal*. If, however, the safer route costs a significant amount of money or involves other hardships, one may take the dangerous path, provided that he guards himself from seeing and thinking forbidden things. (As we explained, this only applies if the safer path is much more expensive or difficult, to the extent that he would not take it even for his own physical comfort.) We also explained that this leniency only applies to one who is merely passing through on the more spiritually dangerous road. It is almost always prohibited to travel to, and spend time in, a destination where spiritual challenges exist.

The Strength of the Filter

9. Because of the rule of “*ika darka acharina*,” one who must use the internet is obligated to install the best, most effective filter that is compatible with his needs to ensure that he has the least number of challenges possible. If he installs a weaker filter, which allows for some dangers to seep through, when he technically could have installed a better filter without compromising his business needs, he may be included in the category of “*ika darka acharina*,” deeming him a *rasha*.

(In upcoming posts, we will discuss this concept in more detail.)

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Re: Halachos of shemiras einayim

Posted by davidt - 13 Mar 2024 13:03

Whitelist

10. If possible, one should have the filter company install a whitelist on his internet access. This type of filter only allows access to the websites that the individual needs to consistently use for his work while blocking everything else. This considerably minimizes unnecessary dangers. (If one needs to access other websites later, he can contact the filter company that installed the whitelist and ask them to grant him access.)

- It is important to note that whitelists do not have to be limited to only a few websites. One can create a comprehensive whitelist of hundreds of sites and links that he needs to access. This way, even one who needs frequent access to many websites can still benefit from using a whitelist.

11. If it is difficult for one to determine in advance which specific websites he will need to access, it is possible to ask the filter company to install a “general whitelist” that allows access to all of the websites that are important for business reasons. If one needs a specific website that is not on that list, he can ask the filter company to add it.

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Re: Halachos of shemiras einayim

Posted by davidt - 14 Mar 2024 14:06

General Filters

12. As mentioned previously, an individual is obligated to install the best filter that works for him personally, rather than just installing a “general filter.” If one installs a standard one offered by a filter company (i.e., not a whitelist), he is also obligated to use the best filter possible. This includes:

- The filter company should be *ehrllich* and have strong principles.
- The actual filter should be a strong one (as there is a wide range of filters available).
- Any categories of websites that one knows are unnecessary should be kept closed.

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Re: Halachos of shemiras einayim
Posted by davidt - 15 Mar 2024 13:51

A Website that Causes One to Sin

13. If a person knows that viewing a specific website will cause him to see forbidden sights, or think forbidden thoughts, it is prohibited for him to leave this site unblocked. (As explained in the *halachos* of *hirhur*, a person is obligated to ensure that he doesn't commit any transgressions.)

Email

14. Often, a business requires access to email but not to any other part of the internet. In such a case, one should arrange with the filter company to allow only email access and block access to the rest of the internet, thereby removing all of the potential dangers that are inherent in the internet.

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Re: Halachos of shemiras einayim
Posted by davidt - 18 Mar 2024 13:03

"Net Free"

There is a filter that is currently available called Net Free. This is the best and most effective filter in existence today. It is highly recommended that anyone who is able to use this filter should do so.

The way this filter is able to be so effective is because the company employs a large staff of highly trained non-Jewish workers who look through every individual picture, video, and website before it is opened. (If a site is blocked and someone needs access to it, he can ask the company to open it, and they will usually look it over within a short time. If the picture or website is determined to be clean, they will open it to allow access to all customers. Since they have

thousands of users around the world, almost anything someone might need is already open — even new things — because they are constantly updating.)

Nothing can be opened on the Net Free filter unless it was previously looked into and approved by a living person (unlike other filters that are often operated by automation). Therefore, it is the most reliable filter on the market today to block improper material on the internet.

It is important to mention that while NetFree is considered reliable, it may often be impractical. Therefore, it is recommended that you do proper research before installing it to ensure it can meet your needs.

Note:

For proper installation of NetFree, please contact your local TAG office as it requires trained technicians. Click [here](#) for more information.

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Re: Halachos of shemiras einayim
Posted by davidt - 19 Mar 2024 13:13

Appointing a Guardian

15. In *hilchos yichud*, we find the concept of a *shomer*, guardian. The general idea is that a person will be afraid to perform a forbidden act in front of a *shomer*. The same concept applies to internet usage, and is especially relevant for one who uses a very general filter (and even more so when, for whatever reason, the filter being used is not the strictest or strongest). One can appoint an upstanding person (such as a boss, friend or mentor) as his *shomer* who will have the ability to view what he does on the internet. This can be done either by allowing him access to one's internet activity remotely, or by having the *shomer* receive regular reports of all online activities. This can greatly help keep a person in line.

In addition to the option of having a technician install a system where a shomer can view one's online activities, there are also companies that offer such a program that one can install himself, e.g. "Web Chaver".

(Please note that we are sharing the above information as we have received it. Please ensure to conduct your own research before installing any of such programs.)

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Re: Halachos of shemiras einayim
Posted by Heeling - 19 Mar 2024 13:26

Thanks R' David, please keep them coming.

Thank you,

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Re: Halachos of shemiras einayim
Posted by davidt - 19 Mar 2024 16:43

[Heeling wrote on 19 Mar 2024 13:26:](#)

Thanks R' David, please keep them coming.

Thank you,

@Heeling, if anyone get's inspired by these messages, it's your zechus!

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Re: Halachos of shemiras einayim
Posted by Heeling - 19 Mar 2024 19:40

[davidt wrote on 19 Mar 2024 16:43:](#)

[Heeling wrote on 19 Mar 2024 13:26:](#)

Thanks R' David, please keep them coming.

Thank you,

@Heeling, if anyone get's inspired by these messages, it's your zechus!

Keep them coming,

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That sounds like a fair deal...