



The Source of the Prohibition

There are many details related to protecting one's eyes from forbidden gazing, such as one's intention when gazing, upon whom or what one is gazing at, etc. The following is a list of the various prohibitions against gazing and the *pesukim* from which they are derived. We will *iy"H* delve into specific practical halachic implications in subsequent emails.

- The *pasuk* (*Bamidbar 15:39*) says, "***V'lo sasuru acharei levavchem v'acharei eineichem asher atem zonim achareihem***, do not pursue the temptations of your hearts and your eyes, which you follow." From this *pasuk* we derive that it is forbidden for a **man and woman** to gaze upon each other with an intent of sin, or to gaze for

the sake of deriving pleasure from the gazing itself. (The *Rishonim* disagree about the exact parameters of the prohibition of “*Lo sasuru*.” Some hold that this *issur* only applies when the gazing is done with the intention to draw pleasure specifically from looking at a member of the opposite gender **because they are of the opposite gender**. According to these *Rishonim*, gazing for any other reason [e.g., a man who gets pleasure from gazing at a queen not because she is a woman, but from beholding her royalty] would not be included in “*Lo sasuru*.” Other *Rishonim* disagree, and maintain that “*Lo sasuru*” applies across the board. Even though the *halachah* follows the first opinion, it would still be forbidden for men to gaze at women under all circumstances, due to the additional prohibition of “*V’nishmartem*,” as will be explained.)

(*Berachos* 12b; *Sma”k* 30; *Charedim*, *Lo Saaseh Hateluyos B’einayim* 22; *Sefer Hachinuch* 387; *Mishnah Berurah* 75:7; *Chut Shani* 39; see *Levushah Shel Torah* 70)

- The *pasuk* (*Devarim* 23:10) says: “***V’nishmartem mikol davar ra***, you should be vigilant to avoid all evil.” From this *pasuk* we derive that it is prohibited for a man to gaze at a woman, even if there is no specific sinful intent. (*Avodah Zarah* 20a; *Sma”k* 30; *Charedim*, *Lo Saaseh Hateluyos B’einayim* 22)
- The *pasuk* (*Vayikra* 18:6) says: “***Ish ish el kol sh’eir besaro lo sikrevu l’galos ervah***, do not commit impropriety with anyone made of your flesh.” From here we derive that if a man and woman gaze upon

each other with intention to sin, or with pleasure derived from personal closeness, they transgress the severe prohibition of *avizrayhu d'giluy arayos*, “accessories” of impropriety, for which one must give up their life rather than transgress. (*Sanhedrin 75a; Nimukei Yosef and Ran ibid.; Rema YD 157; Shach ibid. 10; Chut Shani EH p. 40; see Igros Moshe EH 1:56*)

- The *pasuk* (*Iyov 31:1*) says: “***Bris korati l'eynai, umah esbonein al besulah***, I made a covenant with my eyes; how can I gaze at a girl?” From this *pasuk* we derive that the prohibition against gazing at a woman also applies when gazing at an unmarried woman. (See *Beur HaGra EH 21:3*)