



Shemiras Einayim

1. Below is a short overview of the *halachos* of *shemiras einayim* (which were discussed at length in previous emails).

A. 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*)

B. 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)

C. 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)

D. Furthermore, an “*adam chashuv*” should act stringently and refrain from even “glancing” at women. (*ibid.*)

E. It is forbidden to “glance,” and certainly to gaze, at any part of a woman's body that is normally covered. It is certainly forbidden to even glance at a woman who is dressed immodestly. (*Mishnah Berurah 75:1 and :7; Igros Moshe OC 1:40*

and EH 3:13; see Chut Shani EH p. 42)

F. Women also must guard their eyes to avoid looking at inappropriate things. In certain cases, there is an *issur d'Oraysa* for a woman to look at men or at indecent things, just as there is for men (as discussed at length in previous emails). (*Sefer Hachinuch, Mitzvah 363; Shevet Halevi vol. 5, 197:2, Igros Moshe EH 1:69;*

Chut Shani EH p. 43; Shu"t Az Nidberu 12:39; see Shu"t Be'er Moshe vol. 4, 147:23)

G. If a person saw a forbidden sight inadvertently, it is not considered an *aveirah*; however, he must look away immediately. (*See Tur OC 1:1)*