

STORY

THE DOCTOR'S OFFICE



Some doctors' offices have a whole bunch of seforim, a nice shas, a set of chumashim,

some Tehillims for their patient's use... right alongside goyish magazines of all kinds. The irony of this just has to be brought to the attention of the office and most of the time you will find a very attentive ear.

My 13-year old son needed braces. After some homework, my wife and I chose a certain orthodontist. After the first check-up, we were scheduled for a consultation meeting with the dentist as to what procedure and treatments he would recommend for our son, at which point if we agreed, we would sign an agreement for treatment. I did not sign the contract/agreement right away, saying instead that I wanted to think about it. What was my concern?

Every time I would go to a medical professional office, there were almost always many magazines readily available for the patients. Something deep down bothered me. Going to a doctor for my physical well-being, but what is happening to my spiritual well being? And like so many

people, I just tried to "shove the issue under the carpet". "I have no choice...", "What can I do?" and so on. Hopefully I won't pick up a magazine. But now, you're talking about my obligation to my son. A 13-year old going steadily for two years to an Orthodontist...

Do I really want to ignore what he might pick up in the interim? Do I want him seeing what I wish I would have never seen? And for what – only for cosmetic reasons?

Uneasily, I went back a week later to the Orthodontist's office and asked if I could speak to the dentist, since I really didn't want to deal with the secretary on this issue. However, Gloria, the secretary was politely insistent. Maybe I can help you? I finally gave in and voiced my concern to the secretary. "I really feel uncomfortable sending my son here for an extended period of time when he is faced with all these magazines." I hardly finished talking and she was up and out into the waiting room. She made a major cleanup. She knew exactly what I meant. She said, "I'm not Jewish but I really wouldn't want my kids exposed to all this. We never ordered the magazines, they come for free and I promise from now on to keep an eye on what will be put out in the waiting room." And for the entire period of two years, she did.

SMILE! IT'S CONTAGIOUS



I caught my son chewing on electrical cords. So I had to ground him. He's doing better currently, and now conducting himself properly.



My friend claims that he "accidentally" glued himself to his autobiography. I don't believe him, but that's his story and he's sticking to it.



Have you heard the latest statistic joke? Probably.



Silence is golden, duct tape is silver.



What do people do with all the extra time they save by writing 'K' instead of 'Ok'?



And you will bow before Hashem, your G-d

וְהִשְׁתַּחֲוִיתָ לִפְנֵי ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ (Ki Savo 26:10)

An anonymous member sent in the following thoughts to GYE:



Shmiras einayim is something that I've been struggling with for years. Lately, I've been a bit lax again and I reached a point of despair where I felt that there

is just no way for me to ever get out of this rut. One morning recently, I gave a painful sigh to Hashem and said, "I'm stuck, I give up, I can't. I don't see any way out. Only You, Hashem, can take me out of this Mitzrayim."

A few minutes later on the way home, I suddenly got a terrible muscle spasm in my leg and dropped my tefillin with a yell of pain. I couldn't move. I couldn't even sit down for the first 10 minutes or so from such excruciating pain. Finally, I was able to sit on the stairs in the neighbor's building, but I felt terrible pain with every move and felt dried out and faint. I realized that Hashem was sending me a direct and strong message to keep me moving forward by-hook-or-by-crook, and I immediately accepted upon myself to be extra careful with shmiras einayim for at least the next 2 weeks.

I felt that Hashem was telling me, "There's the easy way and the hard way". Life is not meant to be a picnic. We can either accept the yoke of avodas Hashem with love, or it will be forced on to us. We are not here just to cruise through life.

B"H, after about 45 minutes I was able to slowly limp back to my home, and after an hour or so the pain disappeared totally. I thanked Hashem from the depths of my heart of having given me this wake-up call.

Later that evening I was listening to a shiur and two points were mentioned in the shiur that drove home the lessons even stronger.

First, he mentioned that the mitzvah of השתחויה, which means prostrating oneself before Hashem, i.e. total submission to Hashem. This Mitzva appears only once in the Torah, in this week's

parsha, by the bringing of the Bikurim to the Beis Hamikdash. Specifically when a person is at the height of his physical success and abundance, that is when he has the mitzvah of complete subjugation to Hashem. Often when all is good, we begin to cruise through life and forget how much we really need Hashem. The mitzvah of השתחויה comes to say, "Don't wait until things are tough to work hard and submit to Hashem's will, but rather specifically now when Hashem has blessed us with all good we must submit ourselves totally to His will."

He also mentioned an amazing vort from the Rizhiner Rebbe on the Pasuk: **עַד-אֲנָהּ, תִּסְתִּיר אֶת-פְּנֵיךָ מִמֶּנִּי. עַד-אֲנָהּ אֲשִׁית עֲצוֹת, בְּנִפְתְּי**. The Rizhiner explains it as follows: "(Hashem), until when will you hide your face from me? As long as I keep trying to find my own eitzos to win..." But once we give up and realize we can't, and we cry out to Hashem for His help, then He will no longer hide from us.

And this is literally what happened to me today. Exactly when I told Hashem I simply can't win this and acknowledged that only He can help me, He sent me a wakeup call that really struck home.

So much of our frustration with the struggle stems from our misguided thinking of "Why do I have to work so hard on this? It's just not fair." But if we internalize that we will end up either working on ourselves the way Hashem wants, or we'll be forced to

FOR THOSE WHO STRUGGLE WITH SHMIRAS EINAYIM. NOW IS HARDER THAN EVER!

Being confined to home without work, feeling anxious and stressed, as well as constantly checking our computers and phones, are breeding grounds for the Yetzer Hara.

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The Curse of Sadness



In this week's parsha, Ki Savo, we are given a list of 98 terrible curses which could befall the Jewish people in their exile, Rachmana l'tzlan. The Arizal explains that the reason why there are 98 curses is because the way of writing 98 in lashon hakodesh, tzaddiches, makes the word chetz, which means

an arrow. Says the Arizal, "this alludes to the sin of p'gam habris, which shoots like an arrow." Thus we see that according to the Arizal, these curses are ultimately a result of one's not being careful in this area.

However, what is puzzling is that the Torah itself appears to indicate a different reason for why these curses should befall the Jewish people: "נַחַת אֲשֶׁר לֹא עֲבַדְתָּ אֶת ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ בְּשִׂמְחָה וּבְטוֹב לֵבָב" literally, "because you did not serve Hashem your G-d with simcha (joy)." How are we to understand this?

The truth is, that both of these things are connected. As R' Nachman of Breslov explains, there is a direct relationship between this sin, and sadness. Sadness brings a person to this sin, and this sin itself causes sadness. It is literally a vicious cycle.

Thus, we see that the 98 curses are because "you did not serve Hashem your G-d with joy" which is bound up part and parcel with the sin of p'gam habris. Thus, the only solution we have, the only way to help ourselves get out of this trap, is to serve Hashem with joy! Be happy, do things that make you happy, be with people who make you happy. Stay away from people who speak negatively and bring an air of darkness and bitterness into your life. Do not be this person yourself, either. Always look at things positively and speak positively. When doing mitzvos, be happy. Remind yourself how great each mitzvah truly is and how much it makes Hashem happy when we are doing His will, especially in such a world when the challenges are so great. And above all, when a person fails, whether in this challenging area of shemiras habris or in any other area, he should not let himself get down. He should remind himself that Hashem knows how hard it is for him, and Hashem will always give him another chance because of His tremendous love for him. This way, one will have more siata d'shmaya and hatzlacha in fighting this extremely challenging battle.

בסתר - IN HIDING



In this week's parsha, Moshe commands the Yidden that when they go over the Yarden into Eretz Yisrael, six tribes should stand on Mount Gerizim to represent G-d's Blessings, while another six should stand on Mount Ebal to represent G-d's Curses. When we read

this Parasha from Devarim Chapter 27 Verse 11 thru Verse 26, we can feel the overwhelming drama of hearing two million people after hearing "Accursed is the man who..." then And the ENTIRE people shall say, AMEN!"

Have you looked carefully at what these 12 sins have in common? The first one reveals what they all have in common - "Accursed is the man who will make a graven or molten image, an abomination of Hashem, a craftsman's handiwork and places it IN SECRET - בסתר"

And all of the rest of the 12 sins have a similar theme. As the Rashbam in Or HaChaim shares, these twelve subjects of the blessings and curses are acts of the sort that transgressors could DO SECRETLY!

Thus the nation would proclaim that it abhorred stealthily committed sins, and acknowledged that G-d would punish those who commit them. Accordingly, the entire nation would inaugurate its occupation of The Land by declaring that there can be no contradiction between public and private morality; a nation that considers it acceptable to sin in private will inevitably see erosion in its moral integrity!

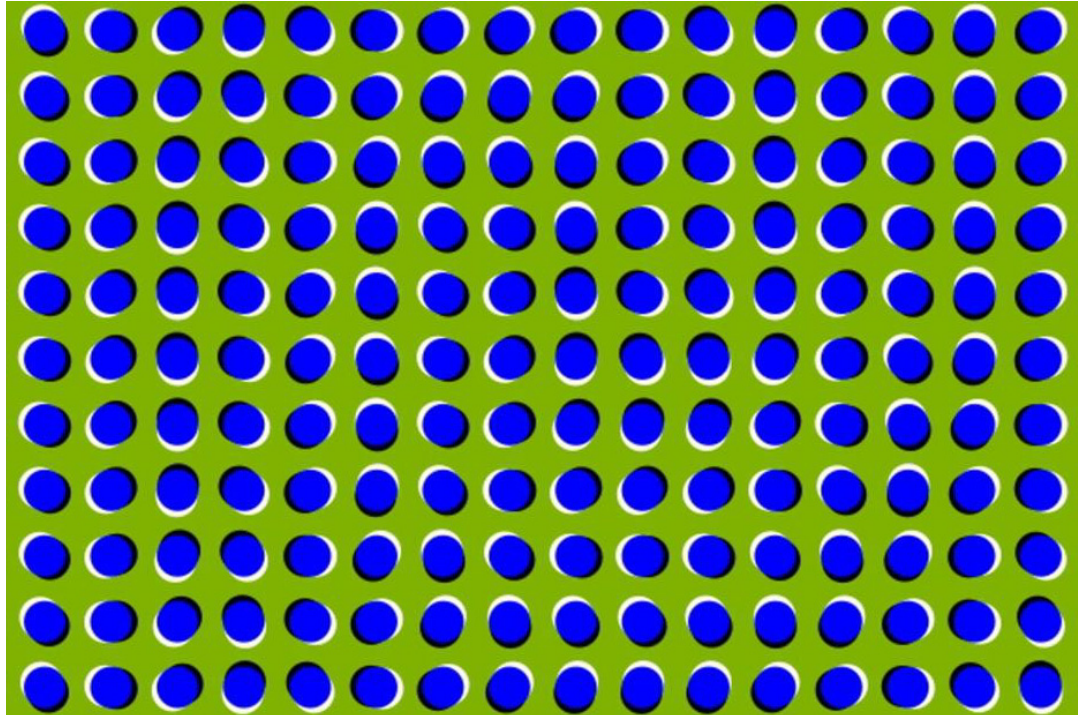
For those of us familiar with the world of forbidden desires, people always run after it in secret! They hide their actions, tell no one and carry this issue all to themselves. As the Pasuk in Mishlei (18:1) says לְתַאֲוָה יִבְקֶשׁ נַפְרָד - "For desire seeks isolation". The word "Isolation" is like "I Solution". In other words, we isolate when we believe that we hold the solution to all our problems by ourselves. We seek to solve our own problems through giving in to desire, instead of turning our troubles over to Hashem.

Let us learn from this week's parsha to trust in Hashem and act in private as we do in public!

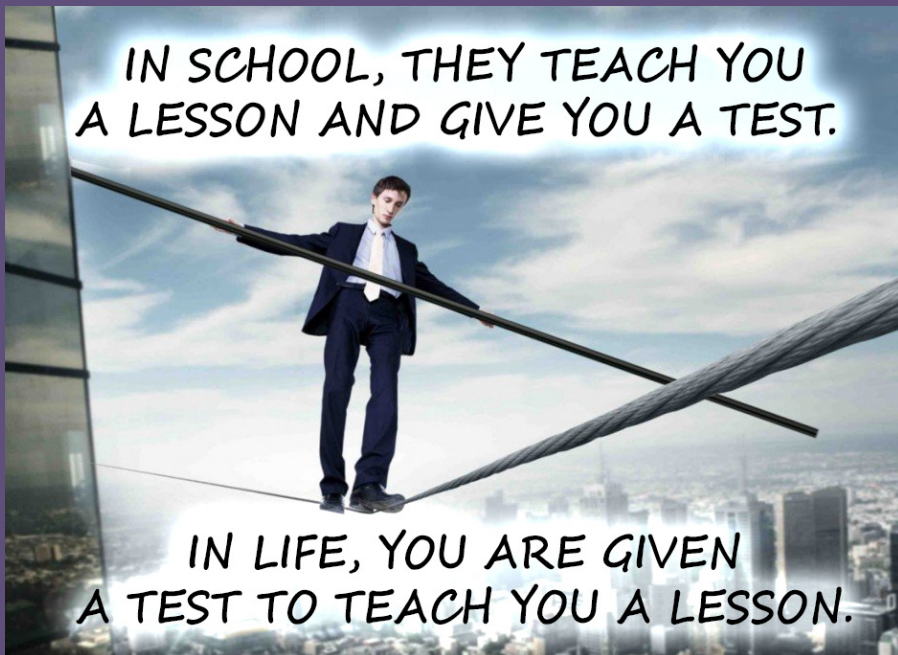
DESIRES ARE AN ILLUSION

Look back and forth at the circles, do they look like they're moving?

Our eyes are a tremendous blessing that allow us to perceive the world around us. However our eyes can trick us as well, making us believe that we need things that in reality it may be very bad for us. Let's train ourselves to use our eyes for good and not let them trick us to turn after our hearts desires!



INSPIRATIONAL IMAGE OF THE WEEK



PRACTICAL TIP OF THE WEEK

Urges don't last very long



Urges are like an itch, it passes on it's own after a few minutes unless you keep thinking about it. How can you make the time pass

faster? One popular option is to distract yourself by doing something like calling a friend or family member, leaving your device at home and taking a walk outside, or doing something that captivates your mind so that there is no space left for thinking about the urge. To make this strategy work, prepare ideas in advance and write them on an "emergency card" so that you can spring them into action when you feel an urge coming.