



LAKWOOD  
STORIES  
ABOUT

# YOU & EYE

לזכות הפח נשבר.... עזרנו בשם ה' עש"ו

## **You & Eye**

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*Please read introduction before corresponding*

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סיון תשע"ג

*The cost of publishing this booklet from start to finish went into many thousands of dollars. If you want to share in this זיכוי הרבים please send your (tax exempt) donation to the above address. Make checks payable to You & Eye. For Credit Card donation please Email or call 732-691-2907*

## WHAT IS “YOU & EYE” ALL ABOUT?

**B**ACK IN TIME: Let's meet in Mitzrayim: One hundred people, including you and me, form a support group, one of the many such groups around, to get by these difficult times orchestrated by Paroh and his cohorts<sup>(1)</sup>. Yet only one out of five of us wants to actually get out of here<sup>(2)</sup>. That's you and me and another eighteen people, a real minority, are ready to follow Moshe Rabeinu to the finish line. With eighty people in our group doubting the impending G'ulah, things would be easier for the twenty of us if we would have the final support of each other. But you don't know about me and I have no idea that you feel just like me. Only Hashem knows it's all twenty of us on the ready. Each of us think we are the lonely one holding on<sup>(3)</sup>.

Then comes the big moment of Yetzias Mitzrayim. I am so excited to find you there with me – so are you! And we are joining throngs of other “only ones”- 600,000 to be exact. We just melt away with gratitude to Hashem for helping us be part of this, that we literally dance our way out of Mitzrayim.

**F**AST FORWARD; TODAY: Shmiras Einayim, guarding the eyes, a sensitive issue. You think you are on to this yourself. I think I'm on my own. Comes along “Lakewood Stories About You & Eye” and gives us a glimpse of what we will come to fully realize only with the coming of Moshiach. We will be joining entire contingents of Klal Yisroel who worked on watching their eyes, mostly thinking they are the exception.

Read “Lakewood Stories About You & Eye”. Things go much easier when you are not alone. You will hold on just a bit longer – we are almost there! במהרה בימינו

<sup>(1)</sup> תנא דבי אליהו כ"ג <sup>(2)</sup> רש"י שמות י: כ"ד וגם י"ג: י"ח <sup>(3)</sup> תרגום יהונתן שמות ב: כ"ב / שמות רבא א: ל"ז

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**AUTHOR?** To be perfectly correct, there should be a number of names on the cover of this booklet. Those that wrote and those that collected or submitted these stories are the authors. They all preferred anonymity. But a booklet without a name, nobody to contact, respond to or disagree with, just doesn't work. I put my name on it, in the name of all the real authors.

**SHLOMO MEYER**

*(Names and some details have been changed in some stories)*

# Introduction

Itzik was the town's water carrier. A simple, pious unlearned Jew, serving his customers loyally. Day in day out, Itzik would trod up and down the streets, door to door, delivering his precious commodity, like all water carriers of that time. But there was something different, something special about Itzik. Itzik loved Hashem and in-between deliveries from one house to the next, Itzik would sing a perek of Tehillim, a praise to Hashem.

One Motzei Yom Kippur, the fast day being over, all the congregants, including Itzik, davening along with Reb Boruch of Medzboz inched up to Reb Boruch for an exchange of good wishes for a good year. Reb Boruch stopped by Itzik and told him as follows: "You prayed to Hashem this Yom Kippur, that you should have the means to put down your water pails for good so you can sit all day in the Bais Medrash and say Tehillim".

Reb Boruch paused before he continued. "But in shomayim they answered, they don't need you for that. There are hordes of malochim that say shiros v'sishbochos, song and praise, to Hashem all day. But the nachas ruach, the sheer pleasure that Hashem has, when a person provides for his family and in the middle of it all thinks of Hashem and says a perek of Tehillim, is one that all these malochim with their shiros v'sishbochos can not match."

This was a most powerful lesson which was my companion during my transition from the koslei bais hamedrash to the world of parnassah. How I longed to be back between those shielded walls of a bais hamedrash. But if Hashem had other plans for me, I would strive to give Him a special nachas ruach, one which I might not have been able to do previously.

The challenges began in almost everything I took for granted. Time for learning, davening properly three times a day - with a minyan, honesty and integrity, just to name a few, were almost constant struggles. The battles fought, some victoriously, some not, the tefilos to Hashem for help, the encouragement needed and gotten.... an entire book can be written on each topic.

Yet, come to Shmiras Einayim, the additional hardship was finding a partner, someone who strived and aspired to overcome. Denial, despair and weakness were commonplace on the minds and tongues of my peers. “We’re living in a real world...”; “You can’t win the battle anyway...”; “We just don’t talk about it...” – these were all too common words of discouragement.

With Hashem’s help, I persevered and found there are people out there who have not given up. Entire families, with understanding wives and cooperating children, take Shmiras Einayim seriously and do what they can. In the end, an unofficial support group to deal with our challenges, including Shmiras Einayim, was established for awareness, help and encouragement.

I was fortunate to be one of its participants. While not large in numbers, the group’s diversity alone was encouraging. Ranging from a community rosh hakollel, to a truck driver; from a principal of a local mosad to the retail shopkeeper; from a long time kollel yungerman to a travelling salesman and from Bar Mitzva bochurim to chasanim; the common denominator was we were all realistic and determined to work on it. We shared words of mussar, messages of chizuk and pertinent halachos. Yet, nothing was as effective as a good down to earth story. A story of regular people in today’s society working on shmiras einayim makes the whole subject real. And looking back, we all can say כִּי בָּרַכְנוּ ה' וְנִשְׁמַחְנוּ בְּעַמְּנוּ וְנִשְׁמַחְנוּ בְּעַמְּנוּ we’ve gotten somewhere.

Shlomo Hamelech says in Koheles (4:9,10) “Two are better than one... For if **they** fall, the one will lift up his friend, but woe to him that is alone when he falls, for he has not another to help him up.” Emphasis on **they** fall, plural. A real friend is one who can fall just like me. Only then can he relate and subsequently encourage. If only one falls, his friend cannot relate to him. Our support group consisted of people who were all able to relate. Realizing that nisyonos hit us all was why we were able to encourage one another.

This booklet runs along the same line of the most effective part of our support group – stories. No halachos, no mussar. There are many seforim discussing these halachos. One very comprehensive sefer was authored and published right here in Lakewood - מְלִחַמַת קוֹדֶשׁ, by Reb Mordechai Golub, shlita. Almost all these seforim have a section of Shmiras Einayim stories of various Gedolei Yisroel. But the sto-

ries that make up this booklet are almost **ALL LAKEWOOD STORIES** not of famous g'dolim and acclaimed tzadikim, just regular people rising to the Shmiras Einayim challenge in today's times.

Sifting through all the stories submitted and preparing them for print was no easy task. Had this been stories about Shmiras Shabbos, or keeping Kosher, the reader goes along with the challenge, the battle and the ultimate outcome. Come to Shmiras Einayim, dragging the reader through an obscene experience and thereby evoking unwanted thoughts, is really not the right thing. It is for this reason that none of the stories in "You and Eye" are those involving nisyonos of today's internet. Many encouraging stories from the internet battlefield were submitted, but to retell them in a way that the reader goes along with the challenge, was too borderline.

None of these stories tell of winning jackpots for watching the eyes or disastrous endings for letting them go. These are stories of awareness, stories of fighting and forging ahead, stories of climbing. Hopefully the stories told here, will encourage and inspire people to get from where they are and move upward, a goal that deep down, everyone knows and wants to get to. With the help of Hashem.



Some of You & Eye choice stories revolve around shopping experience. Proof readers of You & Eye had different reactions. Some appreciated the stories, while others couldn't fathom 'where are these guys coming from?' Assuming that more readers might not either relate to them, I felt this additional introduction in place.

As previously mentioned, this booklet is not intended on teaching Halachos of shmeiras einaym. The Halachos discussed below are only bits and pieces of a much broader whole, intended on facilitating appreciation of the stories that follow.

The four primary laws of Shmiras Einaym (watching the eye) are: 1) שׂוֹרֵעַ (אהע"ז סי' כ"א) It is forbidden to look at a woman if she is dressed immodestly. 2a) If you know of an area where immodesty will confront you, it is forbidden to enter this area. An alternative route must be taken. 2b) If there is no alternative route, or the alternative route is impractical or costly, you are permitted to pass through the area providing you make every reasonable effort to avoid seeing the

immodest sights. 2c) If you know you won't refrain from looking, it is forbidden to enter this area at all costs even with no alternative. 3) It is forbidden to have thoughts of desire for any woman. 4) It is forbidden to derive pleasure from looking at the beauty of a woman, even if she is modestly dressed. (*There are different laws regarding one's wife.*) Of these four primary Halachos, number two is the foundation of our stories. A provocative appearance of a teller, cashier, or other employee, as well as inappropriate magazines screaming for your attention at the checkout counter, bring this part of Halacha to the forefront.

What is considered "no alternative route" is very much open for interpretation. How exactly is 'no alternative' measured? A place that's more expensive, is that considered an alternative? If yes, how much more? What about less convenient? If the wife can go is that an alternative? Must I modify vacation plans? If both places are problematic do I have to seek out the lesser of the two evils? Hundreds of particulars ultimately define 'alternative route.' Unless the individual clarifies what constitutes 'alternative route' for his particular circumstance, the whole subject tends to move into oblivion. As these stories tell, Lakewood can proudly boast people that are very far from ignoring the issue. Either on their own or upon council of a Rav or other mentor, they figure out the do's and don'ts as it pertains to them, and try to live by the rules.

It was to be expected that stories submitted of shopping experiences would involve Shoprite more than other stores. The type of business Shoprite is brings people in on a steady basis. By no means is Shoprite isolated. Wal-Mart, Target, Banks, Doctors' offices... all have to be evaluated ascertaining whether an alternative is mandatory.

Meet the protagonists of the following stories. Whether they are on their path by obligation or by choice, they all defy the notion "it is what it is". Study your personal circumstances, apply what is required, daven for hatzlacha, and get started. You'll be happy you joined this crowd and so will Hashem.

להצלחת

ר' יוסף ארי' ב"ר ברוך פינחס ומשפחתו שיחיו



## **YOU CANNOT DO IT ON YOUR OWN! ONLY WITH SIYATA D'SHMAYA**

*Reb Yitzchok said "The Yetzer Horah begins anew every day." Reb Shimon ben Levi says "The Yetzer Horah becomes stronger every day." Were it not for Hashem helping the person, he could never conquer the Yetzer Horah. (Kiddushin 30:) R' Chiya bar Ashi, in his old age, would daven every time he said Tachnun. "Harachaman, should protect me from the Yetzer Horah." Dovid Hamelech prayed "Turn away my eyes from seeing vanity: (119:36); "My eyes await for your help"(119:123)*

## **STORIES OF T'FILAH FROM THE BATTLEFRONT**

### **CHOL HAMOED OUTING**

*Bochur in a Lakewood Mesivta*

I had consented to my well meaning mother's wishes for me to use Bein Hazmanim for a 'change of scenery' to refresh my kocho for the next zman. Chol Hamoed plans were being made for a family outing and I would join. The place my mother thought of as a kosher place because lots of Yiden go there was really not for me or any frum person. It was a geshmake place but used by Goyim also. I was in for the thrill like most teenagers, but Rebbe made us aware this z'man, that Shmiras Einayim shouldn't take a back seat ever. I tried explaining my concerns but my mother couldn't understand. "You don't have to look". "So many frum families go". In the end my mother did settle on another place. But I knew the only thing that makes this place more Kosher than the first is that even more frum families go there. I wasn't happy and was being considered overly frum. I couldn't possibly explain my feelings. My father, a generation older than me, was indifferent and would go along with whatever the family decided. What do I do? I turned my eyes to Shomayim. Hashem surely understands me. I asked Him for help without deflating my mother's burst of good intentions. I davened Mincha and at 2:00 we set out on our Chol Hamoed outing. The line was out the door, an estimated hour and a half to get in. Being close to the ocean, we moved on to the boardwalk and had a good old fashioned afternoon in the nearby park.

Races, ballgames, swings, it was great. When we got home my mother said she hoped I wasn't too disappointed that we ended up in the park instead of our original plans. I told her it was fine, it was L'Chatchila. I thanked her profusely. And I thanked Hashem even more.

## THE MEETING

*A Lakewood senior*

My meeting with Mrs. Karot was scheduled a good week in advance. She was in charge of operations and many important decisions were contingent on this meeting. It was now minutes before the meeting. The Hilchos Yichud aspect was O.K. one hundred percent, glass doors, unlocked, off a heavily traveled hallway etc., it was fine. But still, a one on one ninety minute meeting with one who was not known for her refined dress was a challenge. I made sure to do my seder halimud before work today for reinforcement. On the way in to the meeting I davened to Hashem. I didn't even know what I was asking for. The meeting had to happen. I just asked for some kind of a nes. We hardly started our meeting and a big commotion was coming from the floor below. Then the smell of smoke reached us and we raced out to join the pandemonium. A small fire, already extinguished, was the cause. It was well over an hour until everything returned to normal. Actually not everything. Our very important meeting was transformed to resemble more of a huddle than a professional conference. Mrs. Karot had to get on to her next appointment. We crammed our issues, came up with decisions and made conclusions all in a harried ten minutes. One conclusion I made, when you hold on even in the last minute, and just daven for help, you most likely will see nissim (miracles), the likes of which you never would have imagined.

## WHO RUNS THE KOLLEL

*A young Lakewood Bochur*

At 14 years old, I found myself in yeshiva away from home. My yeshiva didn't have a mikvah and since I try to toivel every morning, I started using the mikvah at the kollel down the block, six o'clock in the morning to be exact - seder started at 6:30, one hour before Shachris. The first day, the mikvah was full of people belonging to the kollel upstairs. I'm embarrassed to say, but my eyes needed help.

They were not where they should be. I wouldn't talk to anyone about it, it was too embarrassing. But when a Jew needs to talk to someone and can't – he looks upwards and talks to Hashem. And that's what I did. I actually found myself crying to Him. I told Him my dilemma and that I needed help. The next day, at 6:00 am, the mikvah was empty – not a soul there. Only later in the day would I find out why. The kollel “decided” that instead of having a seder halimud from 6:30-7:30, they will make it from 7 to 8. As a result all those kollel yungerleit came half hour later. Everyone thinks Rabbi Meisels runs the kollel, after all he gives out the checks. In reality, maybe it's a 14 year old bochur, concerned about his eyes, davening to Hashem, that runs it. Why else would they change the time?

*[This story of controlling the eyes, while not on the same plane of other You & Eye stories, still depicts a Bochur davening to get where he wants to.]*

## FIGHT TO THE END

*BMG Bochur*

It was the end of a lousy day. My night seder chavrusa, who was my roommate, was away for the week. I spent, nay wasted, the last 5 hours just moping around. Now at 12:30 A.M. I found myself in bed in my dorm room alone for the night. But I wasn't alone. The Yetzer Hora was with me in full fury. I was going to succumb. My conscious was invigorating me with guilt and I was trying to deny it as if it doesn't exist. The struggle raged. I believed in S'char V'onesh, reward and punishment, I would have to give an accounting one day but the Yetzer Hora was just too much. I'll do Teshuva afterwards. But another part of me was silently screaming 'I don't want to, I don't want to'. It was this part of me that, with a teary eye, had one thing to tell Hashem just before capitulating. “Hashem, how many times do I sit down to learn and within minutes I'm sleeping over the Gemara? Can't this ever happen when the Yetzer Hora has me engulfed??” the next thing I knew, I opened my eyes and it was morning. I must have fallen asleep. A miracle! Hashem saved me at the last moment. The Gemara in Berachos says: Even when a sharp sword is resting on the throat ready to behead, a person should not give up on praying for salvation. I believe it!

*[This story is not one of Shmiras Einaym per se, but its powerful message is applicable to every challenge.]*

## PRAYER & BIKES

*Lakewood Balabus*

As my kids were growing up they needed... BIKES. But I soon learnt that almost every season I would need at least one new one, because the old one was stolen. Theft being inevitable, I resigned to the flea market. The older bikes probably have less of a chance of being stolen and if they would be, at least the monetary loss would be less. But the flea market was only a choice in the winter. Once summer came around, the flea market was not at all a choice. As luck would have it, one bike was stolen, leaving one of my kids needing a bike right in middle of June. The second bike wasn't working well either. My wife tried Walmart late at night but they had none in stock. We really had no choice but the flea market. I tried to avoid the flea market but this time I thought I had no choice. With an early prayer on my lips, that Hashem please help me through this, I left for the flea market. I utilized the ten minute ride for some more tefillos for siyata dishmaya. As I made a left turn to find a parking spot, the first thing I passed was a man standing in the shade of a tree apart from the other vendors at an almost empty table. Among the very few items he had were 2 bikes. "How much for the bikes?" I asked from my car. "If you take both, you can have them for \$25." I paid, took the bikes, and left, less than 2 minutes after I got there. Hashem helped me that I really didn't have to go into the flea market, after I showed I did the most I could.

### מראה כהן

*Picture it! The Kohen Gadol, the holiest person in the universe, goes into Kodesh HaKodoshim, the holiest place on earth, on Yom Kippur, the holiest day of the year, and effects total forgiveness for all of Klal Yisroel. How does one describe this beauty? the splendor of this glorious moment? In the Yom Kipur liturgy we say כיושב כהן מראה כהן. לחלות פני מלך מראה כהן. An unassuming person sitting in seclusion begging Hashem – The Kohen Godol in Kodesh HaKodoshim on Yom Kippur with full universal forgiveness..... He almost looked as good. (Hishtapchut Hanefesh)*

להצלחת

ישראל דוד • שלמה • אלטר יוסף חיים • אלעזר מנחם  
זושא דוד • יעקב מיכאל • אהרן הלוי • יוסף • אברהם  
ומשפחתם

## FOUR REASONS WHY YOU & EYE DON'T

*Guarding one's eyes is more than just a mitzvah. It is actually one of the six constant mitzvos (שש מצוות תמידיות) (see Biur Halacha א סימן). Yet, many people pay little attention to this important Mitzvah. Identifying the reasons for this laxation followed by stories that rebuff them might help You & Eye improve.*

1) **IGNORANCE:** Shmiras Einayim is not a preferred topic to teach, be it father to son, be it teacher to student.. For the most part, teenagers have to figure it out on their own. Many are entangled by the time they get to know the do's and don'ts of 'Eye Safety'. Like Shmiras Halashon, Tznius, Kashrus, Shabbos, etc. If you don't know the Halachos, you can't possibly know right from wrong.

In addition, from knowing the Halachos to implementing them requires further teaching. The methods and techniques to reach proper shmiras einayim could be tricky. On the one hand refraining from looking at the forbidden is one of the שש מצוות תמידיות - six constant mitzvos. A person must be ever so vigilant lest his eyes stray. On the other hand, being too busy not looking will produce a reverse effect. To maintain a proper balance between these two, which could vary from person to person and situation to situation, needs training.

For one on the outside who never learnt and never practiced guarding the eyes, it is very overwhelming. In his mind, guarding the eyes would mean bumping into telephone poles, ignoring people, walking into oncoming cars and generally behaving like a hurricane. Yet the one who knows the halachos and practices 'eye safety', knows how natural it becomes. He walks the streets when needed, he rides the bus, he shops and mingles with people, all the while keeping his eyes in check and behaving very 'normal'.

A Ba'al Tshuva who is just beginning to keep kosher most often finds it very overwhelming. There is dairy and meat, there is Pareve and Treif, there is chometzdik and Pesachdik. In the B.T.'s mind keeping kosher is going to be on his mind all hours of the day. And as anyone who is a veteran keeper of kosher knows, with practice, it becomes natural instinct. The laws of Kashrus are many and very intricate. They make up the first 120 סימנים of יורה דעה, while there are only 4 primary laws pertaining to Shmiras Einayim, making up less than 1 סימן in אבן העזר. (See page 7)

2) **DENIAL:** Like if I won't address the issue it will just go away..... Like my eyes are not really darting back and forth at..... Like my son won't ever be tempted .... Like the Halachos of guarding the eyes will change if I think I'm not bothered by it..

And then there is the rationalization angle. The Rambam in Hilchos T'shuva states: "There are some transgressions that a person most likely will never repent on. Among these is looking at what we are not supposed to. The person rationalizes, 'Did I have relations with her? Did I touch her?' He doesn't know that it actually leads to the worst".

This kind of rationale, depicted about 1,000 years ago, is very much relevant today. "It might not be right, but after all, it's only looking." This is all the more so for someone who is 'on the way back' from much worse than 'only looking.' His rationale carries an additional twist. "It's wrong but many times better than what I used to do." "What I look at might be improper but still better than other things I could have looked at." This rationale also contributes to the warped thinking of women who slacken on their tznius observance, they pose a challenge to men but after all "it's only looking!"

3) **ALL OR NONE:** "Anyway I can't avoid everything." This is a common feeling people have. If I can't do it 100% right, what's the use? Paradoxically, it is someone who cannot master 'shmirat einayim' right, that needs these small accomplishments to show, Heaven and himself, that even though I fall and my eyes wander, that is not what I want to do. Proof: The few times that I do try.

A Lakewood resident asked a storekeeper to fix his windows so the mannequins displayed are more refined (i.e. tzniusdik). The storeowner retorted "people see all kinds of immodesty in the street and my manquins are going to make a difference?" This very same store owner would be devastated if his son stopped studying because he is not going to get 100 or 90 anyway. Yet, come to watching what his customers will see in his window, it's 'all or none'!?

4) **WEAKNESS:** Most people think that should they undertake working on their eyes, they are in this on their own. Instead of standing tall, the scorn of their peers, some real some imaginative, makes them crouch and do nothing. This weakness manifests itself in greater proportions, when speaking up is required.

We're stronger than we think. Rabbi Nachman of Breslov wrote, "Do not be like the large elephant or camel. Whenever a mouse *'shlept eim by di nuz'* (drags

him by the nose), he follows out of foolishness simply because he does not know his strength.”

Rabbi A. J. Twerski, in his book *Generation to Generation*, writes:

Many Jews have developed an “exile complex” manifested by self effacement and subservience.

I was once travelling on a bus, dressed in my customary garb, wearing a beard, black hat and black frock coat. A man approached me and said, “I think it’s shameful that your appearance is so different. There is no need for us Jews in America to be so conspicuous, with long beards and black hats.”

“I’m sorry, mister,” I said to the man. “I’m Amish and this is how we dress.”

The man became apologetic, “Oh, I’m terribly sorry, sir,” he said. “I did not mean to offend you. I think you should be proud of preserving your traditions.”

“Well, well,” I said, “if I am Amish then my beard and black hat doesn’t bother you and I should be proud of my traditions. But if I’m Jewish, then I must be ashamed of my Jewishness. What is wrong with you that you can respect others but have no self respect?”

Putting down and belittling those that take their ‘eye-safety’ seriously is a way of trying to quell the guilty conscience that comes along with letting the eyes ‘do their own thing.’

We must know our strength and remain focused on our goal. The Yetzer Hora confuses us with all kinds of reasoning. Commonly “we can’t change it anyway,” “Chilul Hashem” and “I anyway end up seeing what I am not supposed to.”

Remember: You’re not on your own: Many people in our town do work on watching what they see. They live in the very same environment we all live in, but they do what they can.

לע"נ

הדסה פראדל  
בת הח' ר' ישראל ע"ה  
כ' אייר

לע"נ

הב' חיים צבי ע"ה  
ב"ר פנחס אליעזר נ"י  
גאטינגער  
ז' שבט

לע"נ

הר"ר יוסף בהר"ר אהרן ז"ל  
נפטר י' אב

## THE YOU & EYE DO STORIES

*You have read “Four Reasons Why You & Eye Don’t” now read the You & Eye Do Stories – stories of today, not of a hundred years ago. Stories of plain people just like You & I. With the help of Hashem, you too will have a good story to share. More often than not, you can see Hashem assisting your efforts. You do what you can, proudly, and Hashem will assist you.*

## THE STORY OF A BARGAIN

*Gemarah Sanhedrin*

When Bilaam failed on his obligation to Balak to obliterate כלל ישראל by cursing them, he gave Balak some advice to accomplish this ‘final solution’ goal in another way. “The G-d of these Jews hates immorality. If we couldn’t curse them, get them to be immoral.” But think of it. ‘Immorality’, a great idea, but how do you get the Jewish men there, when still in Mitzrayim they were פרושים מן העריות, plain holy?

The Gemara in Sanhedrin gives the full account.

Bilaam knew that the Jews have a penchant for linen garments. It was now 40 years since they were in Egypt where they were accustomed to wearing clothes of linen which grew there in abundance. Balak, following the advice of Bilaam, set up tents, flea market style, through the territory controlled by the Jews. He placed young harlots inside and old ones outside. When the Jews would eat, drink and be merry and go for a walk in the marketplace, the old one would offer her linen garments at their full price, while the younger one from inside would hawk a much lower price. The Yidden, interested in the bargain price, went inside to investigate. The scene they encountered was so obscene that they should have ‘run for their lives’ the moment they entered. But – they were just going to chap a met-ziah and leave. This would repeat itself two or three times, until buyer and seller became friendly. To stall him and additionally interest him, the woman inside offered him jewelry and even free wine, (the prohibition of יין נסך was not yet). By then the יצר הרע was so strong and unfortunately brought about the death of 24,000.



The core of this terrible episode - just chapping a metziah.

Sounds familiar? 3,000 years later, we still are facing the same test. We know we will be confronted with inappropriate sights when shopping at \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_, you name it. But the BARGAIN... the convenience... and what about their give-aways? Just like Bilaam advised.

But, Boruch Hashem, not everyone. Even though this is a subject not spoken much about, many people work hard on controlling what they see. Some inconvenience themselves and pay more, others do without. JOIN THEM!

## ADMIRATION

*Lakewood Mesivta Bachurim*

A bachur in Lakewood Mesivta once mentioned to a group of boys that in all his 15 years in Lakewood, he never was in Shoprite. Another bachur who heard this began to ridicule him, "You're such a sick kid, etc., etc." But the first bochur held his own. And the rest of the group? Well, they felt differently. "Bad enough we don't keep away, the least we can do is admire one who does watch his eyes."

## FRUIT TO GROW

*Lakewood Store Keeper*

Years ago I had a fruit store, and I used to buy fruits and vegetables from a wholesale vendor who had all of his walls plastered up with pritzus'dige pictures. I was a relatively infrequent customer but I was determined to meet the owner. After several attempts, I finally got to meet him. I explained that although I didn't shop often in his store, the shmutz on the walls makes me feel very uncomfortable. Maybe he could be kind enough to remove it.

When I came back to the market the next week, the owner was not there but the manager called me over. Proudly, he pointed out that there wasn't a single picture hanging. He then took me up to the business office, where customers do not even enter, there too, nothing was hanging. "The boss feels we do not gain any extra business from all the posters anyway, so why not satisfy Mr. Meyer," he explained. "Frankly," he continued "we have so many other orthodox customers, I wonder why nobody asked for it yet?" Shortly after, this warehouse closed after being open for many years. Possibly, Hashem had it there just for my growth. I thank Him for helping me pull through. Once it served its purpose, there was no need for this store.

## CONSISTENCY?

*Lakewood Store Keeper*

I was approached by two separate people. One addressed the issue of my female non-Jewish employees who dress in a manner found very offensive to the frum customers. The second one voiced concern regarding the pritzus on the packaging of many items sold at my store. The first one suggested perhaps a dress code could be established amongst the employees so as to set an image and tone in line with the majority of the clientele. I felt "I really can't tell them what to do." The second person suggested putting stickers on items whose packaging pose a problem (as has been adopted by some other stores in town). Now I felt – "stickered-up" packaging would not be good for the overall image of my store." Eventually I realized how the yetzer hora really had me wrapped around his wily fingers. When the yetzer hora needed the image for his purposes, then image was important and "the packaging could not be tampered with." But when the image would not be conducive to the yetzer hora's evil designs, then it becomes "I really can't tell them what to do."

## RESOLUTIONS - קבלות

*Lakewood Individuals*

Sample קבלות from six different people showing practice of controlling the eyes - beyond the mandates of Halacha. (Try one for a couple of days.)

- 1) Dentist appointments to be made only with a friend as a shmira in the waiting room
- 2) Do not stop to read newspaper headlines.
- 3) Refrain from reading bumper stickers
- 4) When coming to a stop sign, not to begin looking right and left until all the cars in front of me have driven off.
- 5) קנס - when I look at what I am not supposed to, I will learn one whole hour without lifting my eyes from the sefer
- 6) Not to look up and down the block when getting out of my car

## ANTHRAX

*Lakewood Kollel family*

The assignment to the 6th grade class: What did you learn from the Anthrax fiasco? (in 2002) One answer came in: My family now follows the advice of Home-

land Security. Never open an envelope that you don't recognize or that you are not expecting. We know it could have the deadly anthrax.... or worse.... deadly pictures and ads!

## ON THE WAY HOME

*BMG Kollel Yungerman*

It stared me in the face every day. I'd leave the hallowed walls of yeshiva still drenched in the sweat of ameilah shel Torah, still warmed by the glow of kedushah emanating from the ancient tomes I pored over, still savoring the sweet aftertaste of the sugya I was absorbed in. And then I'd begin my drive home.

It wasn't a long one at all. But the ten minutes it took by car were more than enough to extinguish that glow and dissipate the sweetness that had enveloped me but moments earlier. I felt defiled, violated.

It was that horrific billboard I had to pass every day on my way home.

I tried what I could; I averted my eyes, still trying to keep my eyes safely on the road, but that didn't always work. Several times I entertained the notion of calling the number posted at the bottom of the billboard, but then abandoned the thought. "Why on earth should they be interested in one lone voice requesting the unheard of?" I asked myself.

And yet, after days of discomfort and distress, I took down the number posted at the bottom of the sign. Coming home, I braced myself for the call. I would do mine, I decided, and the rest was up to Hashem.

Was I surprised. I hung up the phone with a feeling of disbelief. Not only did the voice on the other end understand my concerns, not only did he say he knew exactly what I meant - he actually apologized! He apologized and gave me his word that he would never again lease his board to someone who would post an inappropriate image.

Emboldened, I asked him if there was anything to do about the present picture. He explained that a contract has already been signed and could not be renege unless there was more of a demand for it to go down. I thanked him profusely for his help and hung up. I had gotten much more than I had imagined.

That very day, I contacted a few chavirim, neighbors whom I assumed would agree with my position on the matter. I gave them the number and asked them to take the few minutes and call to protest the billboard. They agreed.

The next day, yes, one day later, not a week or a month, one day, the sign was down.

You do yours and leave the rest to Hashem.

*Postscript:* The Steipler זצ"ל said: A yungerman that commutes to kollel and does not keep his eyes in check, loses all that he gained from learning in kollel. (ספר קדושת החיים 420)

## THE DOCTOR'S OFFICE

*Lakewood Balabus*

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 fully colored 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 I want 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 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 to keep an eye on what will be put out in the waiting room." For almost two years she did.

## THE WAY THE REBBI DOESN'T SEE IT

*Lakewood Melamed*

Reb Yaakov, a Rebbe in a local cheder, walked to cheder every day. He figured out which streets to walk through that would put his eyes under the least stress possible. He could not avoid everything, but he did what he could. This Rebbe was זוכה throughout his over 20 years of teaching to a very noticeable degree of תלמידים הצליחה with his תלמידים.

## ALL FOR A BIKE

*BMG Kollel Yungerman*

S.K., a Lakewood yungerman, has a small son who needed a bike. Being that it was summertime, he faced a dilemma. The flea market was out of the question, being that pritzus is a certainty there. Walmart does sell bikes, but also has its share of pritzus, between the customers, employees and check-out counters. What should he do? S.K. and his wife gave themselves until Sunday to come up with a solution. If not, he will have to go to Walmart and get a bike. With a strong אמונה coupled with some תפילות that Hashem help him not to have to confront any נסיבות, S.K. continued to hold out, and was going to do so as far as he could push it. Sunday came, still no bike. After second Seder, he resigned to his fate of having to go to Walmart. As he walked out of the Bais Hamedrash - right across the street in an empty field, a Puerto Rican spread out about 2 dozen brand new bikes to sell. S.K. did not need to go to Walmart after all.

## FLOWERS FOR SHABBOS

*Lakewood Balabus*

My wife and I once entered a store here in Lakewood to purchase a gift. The woman who helped us was dressed very inappropriately. As it turned out, we didn't find what we needed and left. I came back a few days later and dropped off a letter for the owner who rarely came to the store. In my letter I told of my

experience a few days ago and pointed out two things: 1. It's the wrong thing to allow this kind of dress when almost all of the customers are yeshivaleit; 2. Employees from outside our community know and see that we are different. When they come to work in our midst and are told of dress code or uniform expected of them they have no problem complying. I signed my name on this letter. Shortly thereafter, I got a call from the owner. He thanked me for my letter and said, "I always knew it was the wrong thing, but I needed a push to get me to do something about it. Thank you for giving me that push." He even sent me flowers for Shabbos as a token of appreciation. A dress code was implemented until today.

## HASHEM SHOULD ONLY FORGIVE ME

*A Rosh Yeshiva in Lakewood*

I was at the l'chvod hachag sale at the Blue Claws stadium shlepping all my stuff for Yom Tov. I got on line – the men only line – to pay. A 'trend victim' in the background at her computer facing the customers posed a problem. I lost control of my eyes three times before I finally pulled myself together.

It was during the short drive home that I was innerly torn to pieces. Here I was already in my 40's, a magid shiur with bochurim looking up to me, and I let my eyes stray three times at once. Losing control once, I could justify, after all I am only human. But what could I say to myself – to Hashem – about the other two times? The remorse gnawed at me and being a mere 4 days to Rosh Hashana only intensified these feelings.

I decided to figure out how much this whole savings was – almost \$360 – and just give it to tzedaka. If the savings was the premise to take me down, I don't want the savings. But my conscience still gave me no peace. Finally I dialed the number to a chesed organization that distributes food to the needy for Yom Tov and gave them over my whole order – fish, chicken, meat, wine, produce and paper goods. I wanted no trace to remain – not here on this world – and I hope in the next world neither.

*Postscript:* A woman was dreying zich in the Chofetz Chaim's room. Her sleeves were not of proper length. The Chofetz Chaim, over 90, scolded her "What are you doing here? What do you want from us? You think we are מלאכים?"

(קדושת החיים 430)

## EZ PASS FOR WHOM?

*Related by BMG Kollel Yungerman*

I once heard Reb Dovid Singer, the owner of Singer Cookies, talking that he needed a new truck to deliver his merchandise. He was going to limit the size of his truck to the largest size van there is and no bigger. The reason? In the days before EZ Pass, there were 2 options on paying tolls. One was the “exact change” lane, where cars, busses and vans were able to drop in the required toll and go on. The other option was the manned lanes, where you stop to pay a person. All trucks had to use this lane, since every truck pays according to the size of the truck. In the summer, it was almost inevitable not to meet up with pritzus when the lane was being manned by a woman. The owner of the cookie company was limiting the size of his truck so as not to be confronted with this. While this in itself is an incredible story, where did this end? A short time later, the EZ Pass system began being implemented on many highways, which trucks could also make use of. The EZ Pass was not made for the millions of motorists that use it. It was made to help a Yid who wished to watch his eyes a little and might need a larger truck.

## MIDNIGHT CONVERSATION

*B.M.G. Kollel Family*

*Chaya:* Oh good Gitty. You're still up it's almost 1:00? Could you possibly listen in on the kids for about 15 minutes?

*Gitty:* At 1:00 in the morning? Where are you going?

*Chaya:* I am out of diapers, I don't drive and my husband doesn't go into Shop-rite so...

*Gitty:* Really? ....Hold on a minute..... My husband said he'll go for you.

*Chaya:* What??

*Gitty:* My husband will.... hold on..... no he won't go either. Fine, go, I'll listen in... and enjoy your night out with your husband.

## HOSHANA RABBA

*Lakewood Balabus*

It was Hoshana Rabba less than an hour to Yom Tov. We were out of seltzer and I tried Shloimy's Kosher World, maybe they'll be open. As I pulled into the parking lot, two other men were returning to their cars. They also came to get last minute stuff, but Shloimy's was closed already. One fellow told the other “I guess

I will go across the street to Shoprite.” The other fellow responded, “Me? Never! I’ll just do without rather than going into Shoprite on Hoshana Rabba, no less.” They both got into their cars and were on their way. I was left dumbfounded. I did frequent Shoprite – you know – like everyone does. The magazines at the checkout counters? I guess plain denial – let’s not talk about it. But Hoshana Rabba today, still some sort of Yom Hadin. Do I go? Don’t I go? In the end I compromised. I am going to get my case of seltzer. It is only one item and I’ll use the express lane that has no magazines. But, I promised myself right there, I will definitely delve into this issue, right after Yom Tov. I did discuss the whole thing with my Rov. I suggest everyone should – but be honest with yourself when you ask.

## A CELEBRATION

*Lakewood Rosh Mesivta*

הקב"ה אנחנו אוהבים אותך That was the song being sung to the dancing in the bungalow next to ours. It looks like only the father and his four kids – a siyum maybe? A birthday party? I’ll find out sooner or later. “An ice cream party celebrating our victory today.” That’s what Shmully the 9 year old told me. “The whole summer my father promised us boating. Today was the day. We drove down to the landmark park until we came to a sign directing to the right for the boating/swimming area. As we came closer, we saw that they were actually both at the same place. A bunch of Yidden were renting boats. But you had to get the boat at the swimming area. How could we go? (The fact that the place was listed on a bein hazmanim outing list didn’t make it any better.) We remembered we are Yidden even on vacation and cannot go there. We turned back and left. All four of us kids were proud to uphold our Yiddishkeit. My father decided to celebrate his good fortune together with us – his comrades.

## MR. NUMBERS

*Lakewood Professional*

There he was. I was at the early shachris minyan the first day of my vacation in Huntsville N.Y. Manny better known as ‘MR. NUMBERS; blue shirt, light colored pants, maybe from Flatbush maybe Washington Heights, was vacationing there too. (*He was actually from Lakewood*). I remembered him from last year and this nick name bothered me now as it did then. Manny’s life seemed to be steeped with purpose and didn’t seem to mind being ‘Mr. Numbers.’ He learnt the Daf dai-



ly from his Artscroll G'mara. If he was any sort of Talmid Chacham or Lamdan, he definitely never let on. When old man Sol announced his 100th birthday, Manny instantly quipped, "Count 100 words into אשרי, and you get to 'סומך ה' Hashem supports". A brocha for the centurion and a chuckle for the audience. This habit, always with a number on hand, earned him the title 'Numbers'. In time I would find out there was much more to it.

A few days later, when we were at the duck-feeding pond, I with my kids and Manny with his, Manny Mr. Numbers did 'a number' on me. "Count the benches in the park. Nine benches each with seventeen slats. Nine times seventeen equals one hundred fifty three. This weeks parsha begins ki saitzay lamilchoma, lamilchoma equals one hundred fifty three." I grabbed the opportunity to glean the secret behind his, seemingly out of line, numbering at all times.

*This is the lesson Mr. Numbers left me with:*

"Guarding ones eyes is a full time obligation of every Jew. Yet I realized, unless my mind was in full gear thinking about something, steering my eyes away from wrong would not suffice. My mind would be looking back reflecting on what I was not looking at and how I was fulfilling this Mitzvah etc. and while physically I was not seeing, my mind definitely was and was slipping quickly. I decided to start counting. Add, subtract, multiply, just think numbers. Counting myself counting with my kids count whatever I see, whatever comes to mind, parts of the t'filah, the parsha, the Daf, all adding up to equal watching my eyes plus my thoughts."

I guess 'Numbers' is really a badge of honor for someone in remote Huntsville, N.Y. being M'kadesh Shem Shomayim in the privacy of his own mind.

## THE BACK DOOR

*Lakewood Office Professional*

Yankel always used the fire exit door to get to his desk at work, purposely skirting the immodestly dressed receptionist stationed at the front door. An Italian coworker pressed Yankel for an explanation. When Yankel couldn't put off his coworker any longer, he told him the truth expecting to be laughed at. "I'm a Jew and I try to keep my eyes from seeing immodesty". After a moment of silence, this Italian Goy had only one comment to make. "My respect for you Jews soared to new heights".

## A REAL BOSS

*Lakewood Store Keeper*

Leah not yet 40 years old, did her job well and had a good customer relationship. I consider myself a fairly decent boss, who knows what he wants and can designate responsibilities. Employer's and employees appreciated each other. However I must confess, I was weak in a most important area. I should have instituted a dress code or a uniform system to eliminate Leah's inappropriate dress mode. I owed it to my customers and I owed it to myself. But uncomfortable as it would be to deal with and denial being fact, I let it ride, day after day.

I finally did get the wake up call when one of my best costumers called me aside to tell me "I can no longer ask my husband to run errands at your store". Her reasoning Leah's continued degenerating dress mode. That was enough. I was boss and my weakness was no more than self effacement. I summoned Leah to my office and, without going into details, told her "effective immediately you are expected to show up to work outfitted like a Bais Yackov girl knows she should".

Leah was mollified and hysterically made today her last. I let the day move along and once again summoned her to my office. "As of now I am not accepting your resignation. You are acting out of hurt emotions not clear logic. You're expected tomorrow as usual. Think your decision over for two weeks at that point if you want, you can resign". Leah now 2 years later dressed properly is still at her post. As for myself I haven't capitulated to imaginary weakness since.

## INSTEAD

*Lakewood High School Bochur*

"Ma, it's bein hazemanim and I'd love to help you, but let me wash the floor and you go to Shoprite instead of me."

## MAZEL TOV

*Lakewood Couple*

It was all quiet. Visiting hours were over and now it was only my husband and our third child all of 12 hours old. B"H all went well and I felt pretty good. In the peace and quiet of my hospital room we discussed the baby's name and the Kiddush in two days. Then we moved on to our Korban Toda of sorts. In the past as a תודה, a thanksgiving to Hashem, for all His kindness to us, we did something

special in honor of the birth of our first two children. For the oldest, we sponsored the Avos Ubanim Motzai Shabbos learning program in our shul. For the second, being born only days before Purim, we made a large contribution to Lakewood Yeshivas Mordechai Hatzaddik. What shall we do in honor of the third? It would be hard. My husband lost his job nine weeks ago. Anything we would do would cost us money that we didn't have now.

The next day, I was being discharged with all the papers, instructions, baby's next appointment and all the other paraphernalia. That's when it struck me. The magazines... the ones the hospital gives along with all the coupons for diapers and wipes, cribs and carriages, baby books and toys and portraits. But these magazines also have a lot of un-Jewish family-life articles. This will be my sacrifice, my korban toda. I'm just leaving it behind. I shared my thought with my husband, who was all for it with one addition. We should do this with all this kind of stuff that keeps coming in the mail after the baby is home. We'll just forgo all those coupons - as much as we could use them now, and keep our home 'clean'.

Comparing this to my last two Todahs: The last ones cost me much more than the amount I was giving up on these coupons, (I could have used them much more now than in the earlier days.) The publicity went with the last ones, none with this one. The effectiveness? I wouldn't be surprised to learn one day that the latter was the more effective.

## BEST CLIENT

### *Lakewood Professional*

I work in a small, professional office building. I share the secretarial services with other professionals. I hardly had to meet up face to face with the secretaries, but the few times that I would, was enough to ruin my day. Simply immodest. What the other (frum) professionals were doing, I don't know, but you just don't talk about it and make believe the problem doesn't exist. Until Mr. Anshin became my client. On the day we were supposed to meet, Anshin came and announced his presence at the secretary desk. He was shown to my office and we got down to business. Anshin started with what bothered him the most... the immodest dress he had to confront at the front desk. I was uncomfortable, because it bothered me too and what should I answer. Somehow we moved on to our business matters and our meeting ended. But Anshin would not let up. He called the office manager and he called the owner. It turns out that there is a dress code, but

everyone felt too weak to address the issue. At the end, the dress code was implemented to everyone's silent satisfaction. Anshin never became a big client, but by far was my best client ever! Thank you, Mr. Anshin.

## WHICH ROUTE

*B.M.G. Kollel Family*

The people in the van were deliberating do we take the Parkway or do we go with the 9? "Take the Parkway, there are no billboards there." I turned around to see this suggestion coming from an 11 year old boy. The Gemara at the end of Succah says the sayings of a child are what he hears at home. I had to meet his father. I asked him his name and got hold of his father. I told him the story and wished him much nachas. And then I asked where did he get it from. "It's actually my wife who is much more vocal on this. Since he was little whenever my son went somewhere, she would send him off wishing him all the best, be careful and 'heet de eigen' (watch your eyes)." We did take the parkway.

## HUMILIATING?

*Part Time BMG Kolllel Yungerman*

When I was still full time in Kolllel, I got involved in real estate with Shmiel. The numerous meetings we were going to have were all in Shmiel's house. But every time I was in Shmiel's house, I felt an urge (read: yetzer hora) to look at his wife. Now Shmiel is Chassidish and so is his wife, dressed modestly and busy in the house. But that Yetzer Hara just to gaze..... After a few agonizing meetings I took a drastic step. I told Shmiel I have a problem. Every time I come to your home I have this urge etc. What do I do? Shmiel scolded and berated me. What kind of thing is this, you're not allowed... and so on... (I guess Shmiel himself doesn't have this problem.) It was pretty humiliating, but I just kept quiet. After that, I felt that urge, that Yetzer Hara, was gone. It never again was a nisayon. A success story! Boruch Hashem!

I stood there thinking. I wonder if I could have done this. I asked Joe "wasn't it embarrassing for you to make such a move?" "It was very hard, but I was being honest with myself and figured I am going to be embarrassed either in this world, or the next. Then the decision was easy." Joe answered with a victorious nod.

*Postscript:* See Gemarah in Kiddushin 81. Story of Reb Amrom Chassida answering like this.

## SOLD OUT

*Lakewood Store Manager*

I went to get a coffee on the way to work like I did almost every morning. But today's Asbury Park Press, sold at the coffee shop, was horrific. The front page article and the pictures along with it were just terrible. Boruch Hashem I was able to keep my eyes in check after the initial visual onslaught. But as I left I thought about all the other frum people going there and coming face to face with the Satan alone. I went back to the store and spoke to the (frum) owner to get rid of the whole stack of papers – just today! The owner was very indifferent to my concern. “Anybody that doesn't want to see it doesn't have to look. Most people will just turn the page and go on to other news.” In short – denial – like it's not a problem. I got to work but this ‘trap’ right around the corner weighed heavily on my mind. After half an hour, I came up with an idea. I called the owner and asked how many papers were on the news-stand. I was going to send one of my workers to buy them all and just dispose them. I figured it would cost me \$50-\$60, money I didn't have, but it had to be done. The owner answered me “sorry, somebody else beat you to it!”

It felt so good to know, that there are those around that shmiras einayim means something to them – enough to do something about it even if only to eliminate one negative sight and bad thought.

## CHECK IT OUT

*Lakewood Doctor*

Page 573 in the Yellow Pages of the Lakewood Directory (2013).

Dr. Charles S. Tomaszewski, M.D. A world of expert urological experience.

A full page add also stating: “We check our magazines”.

## SEE SOMETHING? SAY SOMETHING!

*Lakewood Office Worker*

My husband works in a secular office. His bosses, a husband and wife team, are Jewish, but not frum. One year, as the summer approached, the dress in the office got worse and worse. Finally one day, the “she” boss gave out a dress code for the women in the office to follow. One day a couple of weeks later, the “she” boss walked in. Everyone was shocked. Even the non-Jewish workers had their

comments about how inappropriate she was dressed. My husband couldn't just sit there without doing something. How can she impose a dress code and walk in dressed like this? He made a copy of the dress code and when she stepped away from her desk, put it on her desk. As soon as she saw it, she knew what she had to do. She left the office and changed to something more appropriate!

## IS IT REALLY ALL OR NONE?

*Lakewood Teenager*

At age 16, Yoily worked for me. Originally a Yerushalmi bochur with long payos and all, now he didn't even wear a yarmulke. He was past all risk factors and completely off the derech. I liked him and felt for him. We had many long discussions about his past, present and future.

One time I asked him, "Yoily, do you believe that one day you are going to have to pay for all your aveiros?" Yoily answered, "Yes, but I can't help it. I have a big yetzer horah...." I cut him short. "That's not my point. I want to know, do you believe that anything good you do, you will also get paid for?" After a moment of contemplation, Yoily answered in the affirmative. "If that's the case," I continued, "let's not mix the two. If you feel you're not able to refrain from aveiros and all kinds of shmootz, let that not stop you from any good you might do. As least you'll have some good on the other side of the scale, and what more, you'll even get rewarded one day."

I didn't know it at the time, but as a result of this conversation, Yoily was determined. Any time the yetzer horah got the better of him and he knew he would succumb, for the sake of Heaven, he would push it off for one minute. Refraining completely from the forbidden is hard, especially when already engulfed in desires, but pushing it off is not as hard. In the end, even if I get punished for sinning I will get paid for the minute or two of refraining. Yoily has always heard from his Rebbeim how bad it is to push off learning - davening, mitzvos, etc., so pushing off an aveira must have some positive value. Yoily felt accomplished about doing some good enroute the worst. He decided five minutes is not too hard either, and then it was fifteen minutes then half an hour. This kept on going and was the beginning of a complete turnaround in Yoily's life. He continued back, got married and today has a fine mishpacha.

Yoily reflects on his past and says with conviction, "Hashem does reward even for very seemingly small accomplishments in the midst of a losing battle".

## NEW AT THE JOB

*A Lakewood Employee*

I am not from Lakewood. My business has quite a few employees; male and female, some Jewish and some not. Yankel, who commutes from Lakewood, works in the warehouse. One bright day, Yankel summoned me-his boss! to a Din Torah. Yankel argued that I, as owner of the company, should be obligated to maintain a safe environment for all employees. This should include an employee dress code to eliminate Shmiras Einayim problems at the warehouse. I, on the other hand argued, "Yankel doesn't have to work here. He can leave today and get a job elsewhere or open his own business." I have been telling this to Yankel for weeks already. We left the Bais Din after presenting our case to await a ruling within the next few days.

I was seething with anger. AH CHUTZPAH! Who does Yankel think he is? I have frum employees for years and nobody is bothered with the immodesty. Yankel comes along, a new employee, and is making demands! I was determined to send Yankel back to Lakewood! Where is his Hakaras hatov?

The next morning, at my request, Yankel was sitting opposite me at my desk. I was all pent up but I was going to do this with constraint, with professionalism. I had Yankel's final pay - twelve hundred dollars - with me and fumbling for the right words. My mind was churning the happenings of the past few weeks since Yankel was hired. The nagging, the guilt trip, the ultimate Din Torah. I looked Yankel in the face.....I almost started to cry..... "Why was I letting Yankel go? What exactly was his crime?"

I finally found my tongue and told Yankel, "I wanted to personally let you know how very pleased I am with your all around performance". I gave him the twelve hundred dollars as a bonus and told him to keep up his good work.

That was my Hakaras Hatov to him.

*The psak/ruling is beyond the scope of this publication*

## WHAT A WEDDING!

*Lakewood Working Bochor*

Moshe met the criteria of an alter bochor all the way. People stopped wondering 'when will he get married?! Instead it was beginning to be 'why didn't he ever get married?' And here we were, all his friends, celebrating his chasuna. I was at the kabbolas panim waiting with everyone else for the mesader kidushin to arrive. He was almost an hour late and my stomach kept reminding me that I was

really hungry. Food on the men's side was sparse to begin with and my salvation was on the tables on the other side of the mechitza. "I'll try to be conscientious of where my eyes roam, pick up a plate of food and head straight back." But then a different thought brought me to a halt. "We fast on Yom Kippur as part of our T'shuva. I certainly can go hungry a bit longer so that I don't have to do T'shuva to begin with. We waited so many years for this chasuna, I'll push it a few moments longer." I didn't go!

No sooner had I determined not to go and a waiter holding a platter of food passed. "Young man would you like some food?" I was wondering, "How did he know?"

*Postscript:* The mashgiach, Reb Chatzkel ב"ר זצ"ל said: Being at a chasuna and not guarding the eyes, one can lose, in one night, the gains of six years in Shanghai. (ספר קדושת החיים 420)

## SPIRITUAL SIGHTSEEING

*A Manhattan Businessman*

The first thing I started doing was to let my eyes consciously rest on my tefillin before I put them on each day. I made it a point to look inside the Torah as it was being held up during services in the synagogue. When I pass the Beit Medrash on my way to the train in the morning, I peek inside and catch a glimpse of people learning Torah. On my way home after work, I watch the sun set.

These are small things and each only takes a few seconds. Yet I found that I'm uplifted by them. Maybe it's the increasing awareness of the spirituality around me, I don't know. All I know is that I feel more connected to G-d and the intrinsic holiness at my fingertips – and there is nothing quite like it.



*When a person hears tales of the heights attained by righteous people and of their devotion to Hashem... and his heart yearns and he fervently wishes that he too merit to truthfully serve Him with this devotion... This is a very good indication that Hashem is with him.*

*Noam Elimelech, Shemos*



# TAKE A “GOOD” LOOK

The Zohar (1:191 & 3:185) states, every morning when a person awakes, his two accompanying angels remind him ‘your eyes should look right on and your eyelids look straight before you.’ (Mishlei 4:25). While Zohar is warning against wayward looking, in its literal meaning, Zohar is encouraging seeing and looking at good and holy things. If seeing immorality defiles mind and soul, certainly looking at holy things adds holiness and strengthens. Here is a list of many good things the eyes can do. Hopefully an accumulation of ‘Good Looking’ will diffuse any stockpile of sinful seeing.

- 1. When you look at the face of a tzaddik, your soul is illuminated with light and holiness.** (*Degel Machaneh Ephraim*)
- 2. Looking at the sefer Torah when it is raised before or after kariat haTorah – and reading a word or two from the scroll – imparts a great, holy light to us.** (*Magen Avraham, chapter 134*)
- 3. Viewing the shin on either side of the Tefilin shel Rosh imparts holiness.**
- 4. Looking at water is good for the eyes.** (*Ibn Ezra*)
- 5. Looking at the heavens imparts Yiras Shamayim.** (*The Vilna Gaon*)
- 6. When reciting the Krias Shema in Shacharis, it is good to look at the tzitzis and touch them to the eyes when you say, u'reitem o'toh.** (*Shulchan Aruch 24:4*)
- 7. Whoever brings the tzitzis to his eyes when saying Parshat Tzitzis will never lose his sight.** (*Be'er Hetev*)
- 8. Looking at the tzitzis inspires one to perform mitzvot and stops him from randomly following his eyes. We should look at our tzitzis a few times a day. This is especially important and beneficial if an impure thought enters your heart.** (*Shmirat HaLashon - [Chafetz Chaim] 2:30*)
- 9. Before saying Kiddush on Shabbos night, look at the candles. While saying Kiddush, look into the wine cup.** (*Shulchan Aruch 271:10*)
- 10. Whenever leaving the house, look at the mezuzah and kiss it.** (*Ma'aseh Rav HaChadash*)
- 11. It is a mitzvah to watch other people who are performing a mitzvah, just as it was a mitzvah to watch the Kohen Gadol perform his Avodah on Yom Kippur.** (*Nefesh Kol Chaim Phelagi*)
- 12. If you look at a synagogue or a Beit Midrash you will be spiritually elevated – how much more so if you enter the building. You will be even more elevated if you stand in front of the Ark and look at the holy Torah.** (*Rosh HaGivah*)
- 13. Looking at the four-letter name of G-d – YHWH – and visualizing it, is a great spiritual influence and enhances Yirat Shamayim.**
- 14. Looking at the 22 letters of the Alef Bais.** (*Hasegulos*)
- 15. Make a list daily naming all the Torah authorities you encounter in the course of your learning (i.e. Tanaim, Amoraim, Rishonim, etc.). Glance through this list constantly. This builds love of Hashem.** (*Shaimos Hatzaddikim*)
- 16. Looking at the words of Torah.**
- 17. During Havdalah looking at the hands can bring Siman Bracha.** (*Mishna Brurah 298:3*)
- 18. Looking at the heavens at daybreak draws the holy knowledge to remain for the entire days.** (*Zohar Beshalach*)
- 19. Looking at the heavens imparts emunas chachamim and humility. Also, it mitigates harsh judgments and enemy hatred.** (*Sefer Hamidos*)
- 20. The mind is sharpened when you look at the face of a tzadik.** (*ibid.*)

(1-13 reprinted from Guard Your Eyes, by Rabbi Zvi Miller)

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החבר ר' ישראל בה"ח שלמה ז"ו מירלא בת ר' משה לאורך ימים טובים

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HE WHO KEEPS HIS EYES FROM SEEING THE FORBIDDEN  
...HIS ENEMIES WILL NOT REACH HIM - HIS CHILDREN  
WILL THRIVE AND ALL HIS NEEDS WILL BE PROVIDED

*Yeshaya 33:15,16 (see Rashi & Metzudos)*

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