



## PURE VISION (1)

### Standing Guard

The *Midrash* tells of the great *kedusha* of Yosef HaTzaddik who vigilantly controlled his eyesight. Potiphar's wife tried to entice him to look at her, even putting an iron rod under his neck, but despite whatever she did, he did not look. Later, when Yosef was chosen as second to the king and was escorted throughout Mitzrayim, the local princesses endeavored to look at his face, yet he did not glance at any of them. He therefore merited success in *Olam HaZeh* and *Olam HaBa*.

(בראשית רבה פ"ז י"א, ילקוט שמעוני ויחי רמז קס"א)

The *Midrash* says that whoever restrains himself in the area of *tznius* is called *kadosh*. For example, Elisha HaNavi is described by the woman of Shuneim as "*kadosh*", for throughout the time he was there, he never looked at her.

(ויקרא רבה כ"ד ו')

The wife of On ben Peles was determined to prevent her husband from joining Korach's campaign against Moshe Rabbeinu. She positioned herself at the entrance of her tent and uncovered her hair, saying to herself, "Now I know they will not approach the tent, for even these *resha'im* are careful to guard their eyes."

(סנהדרין ק"ט סע"ב)

### The Powerful Impact

The Rebbe Rashab writes: Those who care for their *neschama*, and want to safeguard it from becoming impure, should monitor their vision and not look at everything around them, especially forbidden sights. Even if this is difficult and one may be ridiculed for it, he should strengthen himself like a lion and know that it is vital for his *neschama*. Without this, all his *avoda* is worthless and will have no effect. For one's physical health, one overlooks nothing; how much more should this apply to the life of the *neschama*.

(קונטרס העבודה פ"ב)

The Rebbe writes in a letter: One who looks where he should not, is misusing his eyes. He is considered blind for the moment, and a blind person is considered to be lacking in life.

In another letter the Rebbe adds that the mere sight of something negative, even without conscious thought, has a negative effect on the onlooker.

(אג"ק חי"ט ע' שד"מ, אג"ק ח"כ ע' פב)

A German Yid once traveled to the *tzaddik* Reb Pinchas of Koritz to request a *bracha* for his daughter, who had suddenly become blind. "The reason," said Reb Pinchas, "is that her father is also blind, and this disease is hereditary."

The Yid protested, "But my eyes are perfectly healthy! I don't even wear glasses!"

The *tzaddik* explained that it is a sinner who is truly blind. He warned the Yid that his entire family was in danger of losing their vision, for "if one gazes upon the face of a *rasha*, his eyes grow dim."

Hearing this, the Yid wept and resolved to begin conducting his life according to Torah, and indeed, upon his return to Germany he made his home *kosher* in all respects. When his daughter was cured, she traveled to Koritz to see the *tzaddik* and donated money for the writing of two *sifrei Torah*.

(סיפ"ח זוין תורה ע' 97)

When Shaul HaMelech asked some girls for directions while searching for his donkeys, they gave him a lengthy response. *Chazal* say that they did not do so because they wanted to gaze upon his handsome appearance, "for just as it is forbidden for a man to gaze upon a woman, it is forbidden for a woman to gaze upon a man."

The Mittlerer Rebbe writes that when a woman does so, this can affect the health of the children that she will bear.

(ילקוט שמואל א' פ"ט, פוקח עורים)

### Holy Eyes

One day, as Rashi was leaving his *beis midrash*, he saw a minister's wife riding towards him and was greatly disturbed that his holy eyes had to witness such a scene. Later on, when he wrote his *peirush* on the Torah and had to describe the *ephod* of the *kohen gadol*, he understood that this was why he had seen that woman.

(לקו"ש חכ"ו ע' 198)

A certain chossid called Reb Yitzchak of Yanovitch used to do business with a German Yid who would deliberately ask him questions of *kefira* (heresy) to challenge his *emuna*, but Reb Yitzchok was able to answer them all.

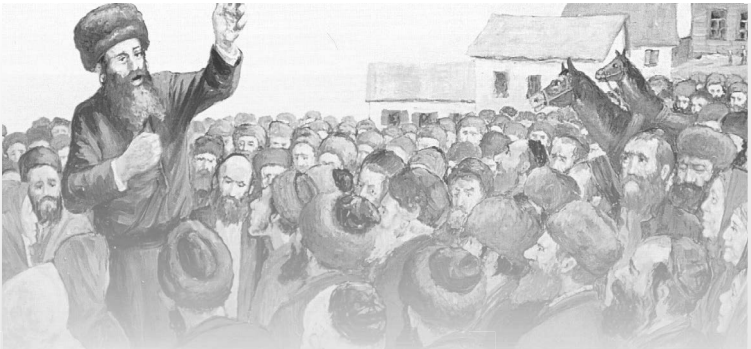
Seeing his lack of success in angering Reb Yitzchak with his questions, he decided to make him stumble with lusts. "We've been doing business together for a number of years," he said, "so why don't you come over to my home for a friendly visit, at least for a cup of tea?"

Reb Yitzchok agreed, and when he arrived and sat down by the table, his host had the refreshments served by his daughter, who was dressed in an insolently un-*tzniusdik* manner. Immediately upon seeing her, Reb Yitzchok vomited, being unable to handle her insolent immodesty.

(רשימות דברים ח"א ע' רל"ז)

## CONSIDER THIS!

- Why is holiness especially attributed to one who protects his vision?
- What type of blindness is caused by harmful sights? Why is it called blindness?



# OUR HEROES

## Reb Menachem Mendel of Riminov



Reb Menachem Mendel of Riminov was one of the great *Chassidische Rebbes* of his time. He was a *talmid* of Reb Shmelkeh of Nikelsburg and Reb Elimelech of Lizhensk. He served as the *Rov* in Pristik and then in Riminov, and passed away on the 19<sup>th</sup> of Iyar, תקע"ה (1815).

The then-childless father of Reb Mendel was a simple villager, when the local *poretz* decided to move and offered to sell his entire estate to the simple Jew. It was a golden opportunity, and he sold everything he had in order to amass the sum necessary. On his way to the *poretz*, he heard the cry of a widow and seven orphans. They had nothing and no one to support them. He calmed them and gave them all his money.

Left with nothing, he had no reason to go to the *poretz* or to his home which he had sold. He went to *shul*, resolving not to ask anyone for help, and only accept whatever help might be offered to him. Two days passed and nothing was offered. He did not give up. He thanked Hashem for the *mitzvah*, and trusted that He would help him.

In Heaven there was a great commotion. The heavenly court decided that he must be rewarded. The Satan demanded one more qualifying test, which Eliyahu Ha'Navi insisted on carrying out in order to ensure a fair test. Eliyahu appeared disguised as a wealthy old man and offered the simple Jew half of his wealth in exchange for his *mitzvah*. "No way!" he answered. "But you will die of hunger?!" "So be it." The old man tried negotiating for half the *mitzvah*, a third, and even one percent, but the man would not hear of it.

Eliyahu revealed his identity, and gave him a choice: long life, incredible wealth, or a son who would illuminate the world with his holiness. He chose the latter. Eliyahu said he would have a child of extremely rare holiness, but he and his wife would not live to see the child grow. The father would pass away before the birth, and the mother, when the child reaches two years in age. He asked to consult his wife before committing. She agreed wholeheartedly. This was the story behind the birth of Reb Mendel.

The government officials once came to Riminov looking for a storage house for the army's food supply. Of all places in town, they decided the local *shul* would serve best. When the leaders of the community found out, they ran to Reb Mendel in total loss. The only thing that gave them a hope was that the leaky roof of the *shul* might deter the officials.

The *tzaddik* heard this and called out, "If so, the decree is a valid one. If the Jews do not respect the *shul* enough to fix it, what do you expect from the *goyim*?" Reb Mendel ordered the roof fixed immediately, and nothing more was heard about the army. They later found out that the army settled on a place in another city altogether.

לזכות ר' שלום מרדכי הלוי שי' בן רבקה

# A WAY OF LIFE

Rabbi Moshe Gourarie

## Littering

Is littering forbidden according to *Halacha*?

- Besides for the obvious problem of causing a *chilul Hashem*<sup>1</sup>, there are also clear sources in Halacha that forbid littering:
- The Gemara<sup>2</sup> states: "All those who open their gutters or sweep out their garbage [into public property] are acting unlawfully if it is the summer period, but lawfully if it is the winter period." Rashi<sup>3</sup> explains that in the winter the streets are anyways muddy, while in the summer the streets are dry, and littering would be dirtying the streets, thus in the summer time it is forbidden. One can learn from here that causing a clean street to become dirty is forbidden.
- Poskim<sup>4</sup> add that the permission to sweep garbage into the street during the winter was only permitted at a time when there were no alternative places for the garbage. Today, however, there are designated places to put garbage and thus it is forbidden to throw garbage anywhere else.
- It is needless to say, that throwing something slippery in the street that can potentially cause another person to hurt himself is prohibited.<sup>5</sup>
- Although the concept of "*dina demalchusa dina*" is very complex, it is clear that a law enacted for the benefit of the inhabitants of the country is halachically binding.<sup>6</sup> Poskim add<sup>7</sup> that even in *Eretz Yisroel*, where there is room to say that *dina demalchusa* does not apply, a law that is for the benefit of its inhabitants is nonetheless binding.

Please note that the above may not be applicable for your situation. Consult your Rov for a final psak.

- ראה תוספתא ב"ק פ"י ח, שו"ע אדה"ז
- ב"ק 1 ע"א.
- ד"ה בימות החמה.
- ראה ערוך השולחן חו"מ סי' תיד ס"א.
- ראה סמ"ע שם ס"ק ג.
- ראה רמ"א חו"מ סי' שסט ס"א. ואף הש"ך בסי' עג ס"ק לט לא כתב לחלוק אלא בחוק המנגד לתורה.
- שו"ת חת"ס חו"מ סי' מד.

לע"נ מרת ציפא אסתר בת ר' שלום דובער ע"ה

# A MOMENT WITH THE REBBE

## Tzomoh Lecho Nafshi



Shabbos Parshas Kedoshim, 5714. The *farbrengen* began with the singing of *Ani Ma'amin*. The Rebbe then explained the meaning of the Russian song *Nye Zurise Chlopsi*. At that point, the Rebbe began to speak about the significance of *tzimaon* (yearning), and asked that the Alter Rebbe's tune for *Tzomo Lecho Nafshi* be sung.

At first, there was silence. Then someone began a tune, which the Rebbe said was not the Alter Rebbe's *niggun*. The chassidim tried another *niggun*, but again it was wrong. After someone attempted a third time, the Rebbe asked whether anyone present knew another one. Nobody volunteered.

The Rebbe leaned on his hand, his face aflame with *kedusha*, and began to sing with great devotion. What would become a regular occurrence, the Rebbe sang stanza by stanza, and the chassidim repeated after him.

After the *niggun*, the Rebbe asked, "Why indeed do we not feel the *tzimaon* (yearning)? Because *esen est zich* (we eat with pleasure)...", and the Rebbe went on to explain the fourth *niggun* of that *farbrengen*.

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