THE SEVENTH COMMANDMENT. Fidelity, and modern society (Part 1).

In the third part of the Shema Israel we read a basic indication of the moral standards that the Tora demands of a Jewish person. VELO TATURU AHARE LEBABKHEM … This pasuq tells us that we should not be carried away by our instincts. And that these passions, are fed from what we see with our eyes. What happens around us, what we see, affects us and our thoughts and values, whether or not we are aware of it.

This is also the Biblical source from which the sexual code of conduct of Jewish men and women is learned. This code has as its main objective to teach us that in Judaism **sexuality is confined "exclusively" to intimacy between husband and wife**.

This simple but fundamental idea implies that the interaction between men and women, who are not spouses, should not go over the limits of cordiality. This should be reflected, for example, in the way a Jewish man speaks and looks at a woman. A Jewish man should not talk or behave sensually to any woman other than his wife. Or, in the way a Jewish woman dresses and presents herself when she is away from home. A Jewish woman should reserve her physical "appeal" to her husband.

This simple concept (comprehensive monogamy?) is NOT very friendly to modern society, where sexuality has become a commercial product through advertising, pornography, media, etc. These are all "industries" whose primary purpose is to make money. They sell by appealing to one of man's most basic and powerful instincts. And this generalized exploitation of sexuality-for-profit has radically redefined the culture of the modern Gentile society, in a way that seems irreversible. Sex is no longer a "private" issue between husband and wife. It became a banal product, which, or through which, they sells more and better.

The industrialization of sex leaves psychological and emotional sequels. Girls, for example, from a young age are directly or indirectly indoctrinated to dress to direct the man's eyes more towards her body than toward her eyes. Women

lost the most in this sexual revolution, since, unfortunately, have been the victims of an “objectification” of their person. Men also lost a lot. Young men are constantly bombarded with sensual images, pornography, and over-stimulation. In this context so hostile to the Jewish mores, values, and codes, how could Jewish young men and women associate the sexual with purity, with holiness, with the imitation of the Divine or at least with intimacy? It is very difficult to reach this level of understanding when one lives in a society where sexuality might not longer be even associated with love.

One of the most difficult challenges that the Jewish people face today is how to preserve our Jewish codes of conduct in a society with completely different values. This is a very profound subject that worries not only Rabbis and Jewish educators, but also fathers and mothers of Am Israel.

(*To be continued, BH, Monday*)