

"And your camp shall be holy, that He shall not see in you any unseemly thing." (23:15) - There shall be no woman who acts licentiously from among the daughters of Yisrael, neither shall there be a moral degenerate from the Bnei Yisrael." (23:18)

The contrast in these *pesukim* is striking. On the one hand, we are positively enjoined to maintain a strict degree of holiness. On the other hand, we are admonished not to degrade ourselves by acting licentiously. Do not the *mitzvos* of the *Torah* focus on establishing us as a *kingdom of priests and a holy nation*? Therefore, it seems incongruous that a nation which willingly has accepted the entire *Torah* should need to be cautioned regarding debauchery. It is unlikely that these two antagonistic attitudes coexist within the same individual. Obviously, a nation, whose goal is to maintain a hallowed existence devoted to serving the Creator with love and devotion, does not entertain immoral thoughts!

This is unfortunately not the case. We live in a society which is largely antithetical to *Torah* values. Thoughts which have been considered unthinkable have become acceptable and routinely accepted. Immoral activity, vulgarity, and violent deeds, which the *Torah* deems reprehensible, are openly flaunted. Moral laxity has so corroded our society that many unfortunate members of society are beginning to become disoriented, their morale and self-respect gradually eroding. The lifestyle which is in vogue has become the standard for determining acceptable behavior. The faithful Jew, guided by the *Torah* perspective, must remain steadfast in face of this onslaught of secular values. He must not deviate even slightly from the Divine imperative. In this *pasuk*, the *Torah* is teaching us that we must always be vigilant in order to protect ourselves from the negative influences to which we are all vulnerable. By strengthening our *Torah* study, we will reinforce ourselves so that we will emerge victorious in our constant battle with the "*yetzer horah*".