

## Pirkei Avot 1:5

### Translation

**Yosi ben Yochanan, a man of Jerusalem, says: Let your house be open wide, let the poor be part of your household, and don't multiply conversation with a woman. They said this about a person's wife, how much more so about a friend's wife. From here the Sages said: Whenever a person multiplies conversation with a woman he causes evil to himself, and nullifies words of Torah and his end will be to inherit Gehinnom.**

### Maimonides

**Let your house be open**

**wide:** that you have a gate opened toward the road frequented by travelers, so that anyone on the road who may be in need of anything, or be hungry, or thirsty, may immediately enter the house. **Let the poor be part of your household:** He says: the poor and the needy should be your servants and it is more appropriate than

purchasing slaves. Thus the sages denounced purchasing slaves and praised him who had poor people as servants and members of his household. **They said this about a person's wife:** It is known that most conversation with women relates to matters of romance. Therefore, he said that multiplying conversation with them is forbidden, for it **causes evil to himself;** meaning to say that he will acquire lower moral qualities for himself, that is, "excessive passion/desire." **Nullifies words of Torah;** it is obvious, for he loses time in other matters. **And his end will be to inherit Gehinnom:** because this conversation will bring rebelliousness upon him and he will be culpable in this account for punishment.

### Nedarim 20b

It was taught: Never make a practice of vowing, for ultimately you will trespass in the matter of oaths, and do not frequent an 'am ha-arez, for eventually he will give you *tevalim*; and do not associate with a priest, an 'am ha-aretz, for ultimately he will give you *terumah* to eat; and do not converse much with women, as this will ultimately lead you to unchastity. Rabbi Aha of the school of Rabbi Yoshiah said: He who gazes at a woman eventually comes to sin, and he who looks even at a woman's heel will beget degenerate children. R. Joseph said: This applies even

to one's own wife when she is a *niddah*. Rabbi Simeon ben Lakish said: 'Heel' that is stated means the unclean part, which is directly opposite the heel.

### Rabbi Shaya Karlinsky

**(Based on Maharal)**

The male role, embodied in his requirement for study of the Oral Torah, is to inhabit the world of the abstract, the world of the theory and the principles. It is the female role to translate theory and abstract

principles into the real world, to implement it in real life. The "drawback" of the "chomer," this connection with the physical world, is that the physical world is a temporary and deteriorating one, lacking eternity. (A woman's daily connection with the life cycle -- its potential either actualized or lost -- is but one example of this.) A man carrying on excessive (sic) conversation with women is indicative of his desire to attach himself to this deteriorating reality, and in relation to his prescribed role he "causes himself harm, distracts himself from Torah study, and in the end he acquires Gehinom."

יוסי בן יוחנן איש ירושלים  
אומר, יהי ביתך פתוח  
לרוחה, ויהיו עניים בני ביתך,  
ואל תרבה שיחה עם האשה.  
באשתו אמרו, קל וחמר  
באשת חברו. מכאן אמרו  
חכמים, כל זמן שאדם מרבה  
שיחה עם האשה, גורם רעה  
לעצמו, ובוטל מדברי תורה,  
וסופו יורש גיהנם: