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Does the Bible Believe in the Evil Eye?

The belief in the power of an angry or jealous person’s eye to damage others was pervasive in the ancient Near East, in Jewish antiquity, and medieval times. But what does the Bible say?

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Evil eye decorations, Vik Walker/ Flickr [cc. 2.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0/)

Walk into a traditional gift shop around the Mediterranean, and you might see a collection of brightly colored necklaces or keychains or pottery items with several concentric circles. In Jewish or Islamic stores, you might even find a *hamsa*,[1] a hand-shaped amulet, which sometimes has a picture of an eye in the palm. Although largely viewed as souvenirs or fashion accessories by Western tourists today, these charms are intended to protect the wearer from the evil eye, the harmful glance of another, and reflect a belief that dates back to antiquity.

The Evil Eye in Sumer and Beyond



Wedjat Eye Amulet, Egypt. ca. 1070–664 B.C. [Met Museum](https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/552777)

Belief in the evil eye—*igi ḫul* in Sumerian—can be traced to ancient Sumer (ca. 3000 B.C.E.). In the *Lament for Sumer and Urim*, for instance, the god Enlil puts “the evil eye on the sons of the loyal men” to decimate them, while in the *Lament for Eridug*, Enlil “looked maliciously at Sumer; he demolished it.”[2] *The Instructions of Šuruppag* warns “Do not do evil with your eye” and even describes this as worse than a curse:

Whoever insults can hurt only the skin;
Greedy eyes, however, can kill.[3]

This belief was not limited to Sumer and can be found in cultures across Mesopotamia, Egypt, and Greece. A spell from the Old Babylonian period (ca. 1900-1600 B.C.E), for instance, details the havoc wrought by the evil eye:

The eye is a fearsome snake, the eye of the man is a fearsome snake,
The eye of the evil man is a fearsome snake.
It approached heaven—it did not rain,
It approached the earth—herbs did not grow,
It approached the ox—it broke its yoke,
It approached the cattle pen—its cheese became bad,
It catches the Kasura-fish,
It approached the young man—he lost his strength,
It approached the young woman—she lost her garment,
It approached the nurse with child—her hold became loose,
It approached the vegetables—lettuce and cress became bad,
It approached the garden—the fruit became bad.
The eye of the mountain came out from the mountain,
The wild ram let its shining horns come out. (TCL 16.89)[4]

The Mechanics of the Evil Eye

Belief in the evil eye relies on a physiological understanding of the eye that is quite different from our own. According to modern science, vision occurs when an external light enters into the eye and is converted into electrical signals that the brain can process into recognizable images. In other words, the eye is a fairly passive organ; it cannot act until acted upon by an outside force.

In antiquity, the reverse was thought to be true. The ancient Greeks, for instance, argued that light from within the eye shot forth, connected with objects, and then returned to the eye. The eye’s light collected information about the objects it interacted with, but it could also negatively influence the environment.[5]

Certain individuals, typically widows or strangers, namely, those who did not fit into the normal constraints of society, were thought to possess an eye so powerful that its light could “harm or destroy any object, animate or inanimate, on which it falls.”[[6]](https://www.thetorah.com/article/does-the-bible-believe-in-the-evil-eye%22%20%5Cl%20%22_ftn6) Whether acquired naturally or through an unknown supernatural force (a deity or demon), they were believed to use their evil eye to take from others what they themselves could not have.

The victims were typically the young or those experiencing a change in social status—a birth, marriage, or death in the family. These individuals were vulnerable to misfortune: premature death, the envy of neighbors, the loss of resources. Those engaged in agriculture were also vulnerable, as lack of rainfall or a sudden change in weather could decimate crops vital for the entire community’s survival.



Eye idol, Syria, Tell Brak, ca. 3700–3500 B.C. [Met Museum](https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/324145)

The evil eye was a way to explain these misfortunes. People believed that they did not lose a child due to high infant mortality rates, disease, or malnutrition; the child died because some envious member of the community cast an evil eye. Farmers did not lose crops due to climate shifts or mismanagement; the field withered because an evil eye caused it to do so.

To protect against these misfortunes, individuals wore specially designed amulets, cast incantations, or applied special substances to their houses or their bodies. The “eye of Horus,” for instance, was thought to protect Egyptians from evil and heal them from illness; the “eye idols” of Tell Brak in Syria likely served a similar function.[7] The Babylonian incantation quoted above likewise offers a verbal counter to the evil eye:

May the evil eye, the sick eye be cut off,
May it split open like a leather bag,
May it break into pieces like the potter’s *pursītu*-pot on the marketplace.
When it approaches, when it approaches,
When it approaches at the entrance of the street,
It encounters the man without a personal god.
Let the eye turn into wind,
(Even) Asar in Abzu
Cannot undo (this spell). (TCL 16.89)[8]

Such talismans and spells were thought to ward off the evil eye or at least mitigate its effects and can be found in archaeological records across the Mediterranean and ancient Near East.

The Evil Eye in Rabbinic Literature

The rabbis expressed a similar concern about the evil eye. For instance, the Mishnah lists an evil eye as one of three self-destructive characteristics (m. *Avot* 2:11):

רַבִּי יְהוֹשֻׁעַ אוֹמֵר, עַיִן הָרָע,[9] וְיֵצֶר הָרָע, וְשִׂנְאַת הַבְּרִיּוֹת, מוֹצִיאִין אֶת הָאָדָם מִן הָעוֹלָם.

Rabbi Joshua said: an evil eye, the evil inclination, and hatred for humankind put a person out of the world.[10]

This phrase is explored in a later text, Avot de-Rabbi Nathan A (16.1), which describes an ominous fate for the man who is envious of another’s learning:

עין הרע כיצד שלא תהא עינו של אדם צרה במשנתו של חבירו. מעשה באדם אחד שהיתה עינו צרה במשנתו של חברו נתקצרו חייו ונפטר והלך לו:

The Evil Eye: How so? A person should not look askance at his friend’s learning. There is a story of someone who looked askance at his friend’s learning, and his life was cut short, and he reached his end prematurely and passed on from the world.[11]

The medieval sage R. Jonah of Gerona (d. 1264), in his commentary on the Mishnah quoted above, describes how scientists (חכמי הטבע) have explained that when people look with covetousness at the property of their fellow:

...אויר עולה מן המחשבה ההוא ושורף את הדברים שעויין בהם בעיניו הרע. גם בקרבו ישרף אחר שמתאוה לדברים שאין יכולת מצוי בידו לעשות המחשבה ההיא מקלקלת גופו כי יתקצר רוחו ומציאתו מן העולם.

…an invisible gas (literally “air”) comes forth from one’s thoughts and burns the items that the person is looking up with his evil eye. He also burns himself up, for he desires things that he is unable to obtain. This kind of thinking destroys a person’s body and shortens his life and his time on this earth.

The concept is firmly entrenched in rabbinic sources;[12] does the Bible have a similar concept?

The Affective Eye Metaphor

Around twenty passages in the Hebrew Bible connect the eye to evil in some capacity. While the Bible does not offer any clear description of the operations of the human eye, biblical authors apparently understood that the eye was an active organ, brightening and dimming, especially as individuals aged or became sick. For example, the story in which Jacob steals Esau’s blessing begins:

בראשׁית כז:א וַיְהִי כִּי זָקֵן יִצְחָק וַתִּכְהֶיןָ עֵינָיו מֵרְאֹת...

Gen 27:1 When Isaac was old and his eyes were dim so that he could not see…

Similarly, in describing his failing faculties, Job says:

איוב יז:ז וַתֵּכַהּ מִכַּעַשׂ עֵינִי וִיצֻרַי כַּצֵּל כֻּלָּם.

Job 17:7 My eye has grown dim from grief, and all my members are like a shadow.

In contrast, despite Moses’ old age,

דברים לד:ז ...לֹא כָהֲתָה עֵינוֹ וְלֹא נָס לֵחֹה.

Deut 34:7 … his eyes were undimmed and his vigor unabated.

The Bible also describes how the eye gathers knowledge.[13] A look, however, can be dangerous: if a person sees God, this can be fatal (Exod 33:20, Gen 16:13), and the same is true for those that God looks upon (Hab 3:6).

The Eye Experiences Evil

Most passages that speak of an eye that experiences evil describe a situation that is displeasing to an individual. For instance, when the Israelites in the wilderness complain that the food was better in Egypt:

במדבר יא:י וַיִּשְׁמַע מֹשֶׁה אֶת הָעָם בֹּכֶה לְמִשְׁפְּחֹתָיו אִישׁ לְפֶתַח אָהֳלוֹ וַיִּחַר אַף יְהוָה מְאֹד וּבְעֵינֵי מֹשֶׁה רָע.

Num 11:10Moses heard the people weeping, every clan apart, each person at the entrance of his tent. The Lord was very angry, and it was evil in the eyes of Moses.[14]

The reverse is also true: a situation that is pleasing is “good in the eyes”:

ירמיה מ:ד וְעַתָּה הִנֵּה פִתַּחְתִּיךָ הַיּוֹם מִן הָאזִקִּים אֲשֶׁר עַל יָדֶךָ אִם טוֹב בְּעֵינֶיךָ לָבוֹא אִתִּי בָבֶל בֹּא וְאָשִׂים אֶת עֵינִי עָלֶיךָ וְאִם רַע בְּעֵינֶיךָ לָבוֹא אִתִּי בָבֶל חֲדָל רְאֵה כָּל הָאָרֶץ לְפָנֶיךָ אֶל טוֹב וְאֶל הַיָּשָׁר בְּעֵינֶיךָ לָלֶכֶת שָׁמָּה לֵךְ.

Jer 40:4 If it is good in your eyes to go with me to Babylon, come, and I will look after you. And if it is bad in your eyes to come with me to Babylon, you need not. See, the whole land is before you: go wherever seems good and right in your eyes.

Biblical authors use similar metaphors to describe God’s emotions:

בראשית לח:ז וַיְהִי עֵר בְּכוֹר יְהוּדָה רַע בְּעֵינֵי יְ־הוָה וַיְמִתֵהוּ יְ־הוָה.

Gen 38:7Er, Judah’s first-born, was evil in the eyes of YHWH, and YHWH took his life.

Unlike Enlil’s evil eye that destroyed Sumer, YHWH’s evil eye does not kill Er; YHWH must do this as a separate action.

The Expression in Proverbs

Proverbs, a collection of wisdom texts, refers to individuals who are stingy or miserly as having an “evil eye” (רַע עָיִן; Prov 23:6, 28:22), always hoarding goods and longing for more:

משׁלי כג:ו אַל תִּלְחַם אֶת לֶחֶם רַע עָיִן וְאַל תִּתְאָו לְמַטְעַמֹּתָיו.

Prov 23:6 Do not eat the bread of a man with an evil eye; do not desire his delicacies.

‏משׁלי כח:כב נִבֳהָל לַהוֹן אִישׁ רַע עָיִן וְלֹא יֵדַע כִּי חֶסֶר יְבֹאֶנּוּ.

Prov 28:22 A man with an evil eye hastens after wealth, and does not know that want will come upon him.[15]

In contrast, a person who is generous has a “good eye” (טֹוב עַיִן):

משׁלי כב:ט טוֹב עַיִן הוּא יְבֹרָךְ כִּי נָתַן מִלַּחְמוֹ לַדָּל.

Prov 22:9 He who has a bountiful [lit. good] eye will be blessed, for he shares his bread with the poor.

The point is not to avoid those who physically harm others with their eye; rather, the point is to avoid those with specific dispositions: those who are greedy. The connection of evil to the eye here is metaphorical, and the biblical authors rely upon concrete experience to convey their meaning. In this case, the belief that the eye has the ability to physically affect the environment became associated with emotional experiences and influence the way such experiences are described.

The Curses in Deuteronomy

The idiom in Proverbs helps us understand the reference to doing evil with the eye in the curses in Deuteronomy 28. At first, this text sounds like an example of the evil eye at work. The full context of the verse, however, shows that the eye is not what causes the damage directly:

‏דברים כח:נד הָאִישׁ הָרַךְ בְּךָ וְהֶעָנֹג מְאֹד תֵּרַע עֵינוֹ בְאָחִיו וּבְאֵשֶׁת חֵיקוֹ וּבְיֶתֶר בָּנָיו אֲשֶׁר יוֹתִיר. כח:נה מִתֵּת לְאַחַד מֵהֶם מִבְּשַׂר בָּנָיו אֲשֶׁר יֹאכֵל מִבְּלִי הִשְׁאִיר לוֹ כֹּל בְּמָצוֹר וּבְמָצוֹק אֲשֶׁר יָצִיק לְךָ אֹיִבְךָ בְּכָל שְׁעָרֶיךָ.

Deut 28:54 He who is most tender and fastidious among you shall do evil in his eyes to his brother and the wife of his bosom and the children he has spared 28:55 to share with any of them the flesh of the children that he eats, because he has nothing else left as a result of the desperate straits to which your enemy shall reduce you in all your towns.

The siege causes starvation, and the man looks with an evil eye at his family, meaning that he decides not to share any of his food (in this case the flesh of his dead children). The siege causes the person to act in uncharitable ways, but the act of looking is not itself the cause of the evil.[16] Thus, Deuteronomy expresses in a harsh way the same image that we saw in Proverbs.[17]

Saul’s Evil Eye?

The closest example in the Bible to the classical “evil eye” that can affect the surrounding environment is the description of how Saul’s watchful eye causes him to be overcome by an evil spirit:

שמואל א יח:ט וַיְהִי שָׁאוּל עון [עוֹיֵן] אֶת דָּוִד מֵהַיּוֹם הַהוּא וָהָלְאָה. יח:י וַיְהִי מִמָּחֳרָת וַתִּצְלַח רוּחַ אֱלֹהִים רָעָה אֶל שָׁאוּל וַיִּתְנַבֵּא בְתוֹךְ הַבַּיִת וְדָוִד מְנַגֵּן בְּיָדוֹ כְּיוֹם בְּיוֹם..

1 Sam 18:9From that day on Saul kept a jealous eye on David. 18:10 The next day an evil spirit of God gripped Saul and he began to rave in the house, while David was playing [the lyre], as he did daily....

This passage is the closest we get to the evil eye in a biblical text. Indeed, Rashi (R. Shlomo Yitzhaki, ca. 1040–1105) glosses the term עֹוֵןasעין רעה “evil eye.” However, the person affected is Saul himself. The story certainly foreshadows trouble for David, but he is only endangered by Saul’s repeated attempts to kill him, not by his evil eye.[18]

Evil Eye? Not in the Hebrew Bible

Did the people of ancient Israel and Judah believe in the evil eye, that certain people could physically harm others just by looking at them, as was the common belief in the ANE and ancient Greece, and was accepted in rabbinic Judaism? We have no clear evidence for it. The Bible does not reference evil eye in this way explicitly, and there is little evidence for amulets and incantations designed specifically to ward off the evil eye from this period.[19]

The Bible does associate the eye with an ability to affect the environment and the individual, but in biblical texts, when someone casts an evil eye upon another, that is a description of the person’s emotional state, not a magical attack requiring talismans to thwart.

[View Footnotes](https://www.thetorah.com/article/does-the-bible-believe-in-the-evil-eye)

1. The word خمسة means “five” in Arabic, in this case, referring to the five fingers on the hand.
2. The Lament for Sumer and Urim t.2.2.3.69; The Lament for Eridug c.2.2.6.3–4; Translations available from Black, J. A., et al., [*The Electronic Text Corpus of Sumerian Literature*](https://etcsl.orinst.ox.ac.uk/) (Oxford: University of Oxford, 1998–2006), Ancient sages warn against doing evil with the eye, and men complain about being overwhelmed by its effects. Sumerian Proverbs 2+6 t.6.1.02, 31; Letter from Lugal-nesaĝe to a King Radiant as the Sun t.3.3.03.15. For a more detailed discussion, see Zacharias Kotzé, “The Evil Eye of Sumerian Deities,” *Asian and African Studies*30 (2017): 102–115; *idem*, “The Evil Eye of Humans, Animals, and Demons in Sumerian Literature,” *Asian and African Studies*30 (2021): 53–74.
3. c.5.6.1.134–135. Translation from Black et al, [“The instructions of Šuruppag,”](https://etcsl.orinst.ox.ac.uk/cgi-bin/etcsl.cgi?text=t.5.6.1) *Electronic Text Corpus*.
4. Translation from Kotze, “Evil Eye of Humans, Animals, and Demons,” 65.
5. Most ancient communities did not devote as much time to explaining this process as the ancient Greeks did. Yet, the underlying assumptions appear to have been widespread.
6. John Elliott, *Beware the Evil Eye: The Evil Eye in the Bible and the Ancient World*, 4 vols. (Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2015), 1:3. For a lengthy discussion of the social dimensions of the evil eye belief in antiquity, summarized briefly below, see Elliott, *Beware the Evil Eye*, 1:1–37.
7. Elliott, *Beware the Evil Eye*, 1:82.
8. Translation from Kotze, “Evil Eye of Humans, Animals, and Demons,” 65.
9. The Kaufmann MS has רָעָה, implying, as many commentators argue, that the terms are interchangeable.
10. Translation from Joshua Kulp, [“Mishnah Avot,”](https://www.sefaria.org.il/Pirkei_Avot.2.11?ven=Mishnah_Yomit_by_Dr._Joshua_Kulp&vhe=Torat_Emet_357&lang=bi) Sefaria.org. Later in this same tractate, when describing different forms of charity, we are told of two types of almsgivers who possess an evil eye (m. Avot 5:13):

אַרְבַּע מִדּוֹת בְּנוֹתְנֵי צְדָקָה. הָרוֹצֶה שֶׁיִּתֵּן וְלֹא יִתְּנוּ אֲחֵרִים, עֵינוֹ רָעָה בְּשֶׁל אֲחֵרִים. יִתְּנוּ אֲחֵרִים וְהוּא לֹא יִתֵּן, עֵינוֹ רָעָה בְשֶׁלּוֹ. יִתֵּן וְיִתְּנוּ אֲחֵרִים, חָסִיד. לֹא יִתֵּן וְלֹא יִתְּנוּ אֲחֵרִים, רָשָׁע.

There are four types of charity givers. He who wishes to give, but that others should not give: his eye is evil to that which belongs to others; He who wishes that others should give, but that he himself should not give: his eye is evil towards that which is his own; He who desires that he himself should give, and that others should give: he is a pious man; He who desires that he himself should not give and that others too should not give: he is a wicked man. (Translation from Kulp, [Mishnah Avot](https://www.sefaria.org/Pirkei_Avot.5.13?ven=Mishnah_Yomit_by_Dr._Joshua_Kulp&vhe=Torat_Emet_357&lang=bi&with=all&lang2=en), *Sefaria.org*.)

The one who withholds charity, either his own or another’s, does as much harm as the one who actively works to harm his neighbor.

1. Translation from David Kasher, [“Avot D’Rabbi Natan 16,”](https://www.sefaria.org/Avot_D%27Rabbi_Natan.16.2?ven=Avot_DeRabbi_Natan,_trans._by_David_Kasher,_2019&vhe=Talmud_Bavli,_Vilna_1883_ed.&lang=en&with=Navigation&lang2=en) *Sefaria.org*.
2. Other examples are in j. Peah 8:7; b. Berakhot 20a; b. Bava Metzia 84a.
3. The Hebrew word ראה is used for visual perception and intellectual comprehension. Thus, vision becomes the basis for metaphors about knowledge.

קהלת ח:טז כַּאֲשֶׁר נָתַתִּי אֶת לִבִּי לָדַעַת חָכְמָה וְלִרְאוֹת אֶת הָעִנְיָן אֲשֶׁר נַעֲשָׂה עַל הָאָרֶץ … ח:יז וְרָאִיתִי אֶת כָּל מַעֲשֵׂה הָאֱלֹהִים כִּי לֹא יוּכַל הָאָדָם לִמְצוֹא אֶת הַמַּעֲשֶׂה אֲשֶׁר נַעֲשָׂה תַחַת הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ...

Eccl 8:16For I have set my mind to learn wisdom and to observe [lit. see] the business that goes on in the world … 8:17and I have observed all that God brings to pass. Indeed, man cannot guess the events that occur under the sun...

What the eye sees, the person knows.

1. Another example is when the Israelites cry to Samuel for a king:

שמואל א ח:ווַיֵּרַע הַדָּבָר בְּעֵינֵי שְׁמוּאֵל כַּאֲשֶׁר אָמְרוּ תְּנָה לָּנוּ מֶלֶךְ לְשָׁפְטֵנוּ

1Sam 8:6The thing was evil in the eyes of Samuel that they said, “Give us a king to govern us.”

Individuals can control this emotional response, as God tells Abraham to do in response to the tension between his wife Sarah and his slave-woman Hagar:

בראשׁית כא:יב וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים אֶל אַבְרָהָם אַל יֵרַע בְּעֵינֶיךָ עַל הַנַּעַר וְעַל אֲמָתֶךָ....

Gen 21:12 But God said to Abraham, “Do not let it be evil in your eyes because of the lad and because of your slave woman….”

People may respond to what they see with negative actions, but they do not physically harm one another with light from the eye.

1. Unsurprisingly, the rabbis read this as a reference to the classic evil eye and use it as a crux for interpreting the story of Abraham’s purchase of the Cave of Machpelah from Ephron the Hittite (Gen 23), who charged 400 shekels of silver, a high price (Genesis Rabbah §58):

"נבהל להון איש רע עין"—זה עפרון שהכניס עין רע בממונו שלאברהם, "ולא ידע כי חסר יבואינו"—שחיסרתו התורה ו' הה"ד וישמע אברהם אל עפרון וישקל אברהם לעפרן עפרן תניינא חסר ו'.

“A man with an evil eye hastens after wealth,”—this is Ephron who cast an evil eye upon Abraham’s money [causing Abraham to pay an exorbitant price to bury his wife]. “And does not know that loss will come upon him”—for the Torah removed a *vav* [from his name in v. 16], for it says, “And Abraham listened to Ephron (עפרון), and Abraham weighed out the silver for Ephron (עפרן).” The second Ephron is written without that *vav* [*as a mater lectionis*].

Such a reading fits with the rabbinic world view but does not reflect the contextual meaning of the verse in Proverbs.

1. The same is true of the next curse:

כח:נו הָרַכָּה בְךָ וְהָעֲנֻגָּה אֲשֶׁר לֹא נִסְּתָה כַף רַגְלָהּ הַצֵּג עַל הָאָרֶץ מֵהִתְעַנֵּג וּמֵרֹךְ תֵּרַע עֵינָהּ בְּאִישׁ חֵיקָהּ וּבִבְנָהּ וּבְבִתָּהּ. כח:נז וּבְשִׁלְיָתָהּ הַיּוֹצֵת מִבֵּין רַגְלֶיהָ וּבְבָנֶיהָ אֲשֶׁר תֵּלֵד כִּי תֹאכְלֵם בְּחֹסֶר כֹּל בַּסָּתֶר בְּמָצוֹר וּבְמָצוֹק אֲשֶׁר יָצִיק לְךָ אֹיִבְךָ בִּשְׁעָרֶיךָ.

28:56 And she who is most tender and dainty among you, so tender and dainty that she would never venture to set a foot on the ground, shall do evil in her eyes with the husband of her bosom, and her son and her daughter, 28:57 the afterbirth that issues from between her legs and the babies she bears; she shall eat them secretly, because of utter want, in the desperate straits to which your enemy shall reduce you in your towns.

Again, her evil look expresses her decision not to share her food with her husband (which in this case is her aborted fetus). The same metaphor is used elsewhere in Deuteronomy, in a different context, to claim that an individual who does “evil with the eye” is “mean” toward his kin when the sabbatical year approaches.

דברים טו:ט הִשָּׁמֶר לְךָ פֶּן יִהְיֶה דָבָר עִם לְבָבְךָ בְלִיַּעַל לֵאמֹר קָרְבָה שְׁנַת הַשֶּׁבַע שְׁנַת הַשְּׁמִטָּה וְרָעָה עֵינְךָ בְּאָחִיךָ הָאֶבְיוֹן וְלֹא תִתֵּן לוֹ וְקָרָא עָלֶיךָ אֶל יְ־הוָה וְהָיָה בְךָ חֵטְא.

Deut 15:9 “Take heed lest there be a base thought in your heart, and you say, ‘The seventh year, the year of release is near,’ and your eye do evil to your poor brother, and you give him nothing, and he cry to YHWH against you, and it be sin in you.”

1. Editor’s note: For the connection between Deuteronomy and wisdom literature, see Ethan Schwartz, [“Torah: Deuteronomy’s Version of Wisdom for Israel,”](https://www.thetorah.com/article/torah-deuteronomys-version-of-wisdom-for-israel) *TheTorah* (2015).
2. Emotions are all prompted by vision and impact the individual having the visual experience. It is this aspect of vision that becomes the basis for the metaphors about the evil eye that one finds in the Hebrew Bible.
3. The idea could have entered Judaism as a result of outside influence, Greek, Egyptian, etc. Some scholars argue that belief in the evil eye was prevalent in ancient Israel and Judah. See, for instance, Elliott, *Beware the Evil Eye*. Other scholars, however, argue that the evil eye belief was not prevalent in ancient Israel and Judah. See, for instance, Marie-Louise Thomsen, “The Evil Eye in Mesopotamia,” *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*51 (1992): 19–32; Yael Avrahami, *The Senses of Scripture: Sensory Perception in the Hebrew Bible*(New York: T&T Clark International, 2011), 152–153.