

SSA issues

Posted by coby613 - 05 Nov 2009 22:06

As suggested by eye, I am starting a new thread based on what was started in the "ghosts from the past thread. Basically the question here is that this is for people who have same sex attraction issues and tips on how to deal with those and input from other people. See above mentioned thread for more info.

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Re: SSA issues

Posted by silentbattle - 09 Feb 2010 18:27

Let's see...for starters, there's a big difference between someone who's involved in M"Z (mishkav zochor) activities, and someone who has the desires.

The fact is that there is a huge tide in the world today to make such actions acceptable. To encourage them, even. We fight back against this.

I would also point to the fact that most of us are not used to accepting such actions as normal. Compare this to someone who's never seen shabbos violated. The first time he sees it, he's horrified, angry. As time goes on, he becomes desensitized. We easily accept someone who's mechalel shabbos not because we love him so much (at least, not entirely), but because honestly - it really doesn't bother us that much. We're not restraining the urge to grab a rock and attack him.

So, this is an aveirah (one that the torah uses fairly strong language regarding) that we're still sensitive too. It still hurts and horrifies us. It seems to me that having it bother us less is a step in the wrong direction.

Just a quick thought.

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Re: SSA issues

Posted by briut - 09 Feb 2010 21:08

Wow, guys. Your comments exceeded my most optimistic predictions. For those tuning in late to the story, my question had been: "how was it that, in the past, you found M-M thinking so particularly negative & 'yuk' while finding M-F thinking so compelling?"

What a range of views! I'm going to review each of your comments in some detail, and I'll try to get back to you soon with some summaries and observations. (I promised, no arguments in this thread. I'll try my best to leave the arguing to all of you.)

In the meantime, though, I'll say two things:

1) THIS DIALOGUE MEANS MORE TO ME THAN A MILLION OTHER COMMENTS ON THE MATTER. WHERE ELSE COULD I FIND A TORAH JEW, WILLING TO ADMIT TO LIKING PORN (in the past, of course), WILLING TO ADMIT TO LIKING IT A LOT (IE, ADDICTION; now in recovery, of course), AND ASK THEM BASICALLY:

"WHY DID [SOME PARTICULAR ACT] BETWEEN M-F TURN YOU ON, WHILE [THE SAME OR SIMILAR ACT] BETWEEN M-M TURN YOU OFF?" (And no, I don't mean just "that" act; I mean nearly anything.)

I've wondered about this question forever. Men with SSA can answer that question (& straight folks ask THEM all the time!). But finding straight, shomer mitzvos Jews to answer the question: why would you (Ch'V) slip & fall only "this" way and not "that" way -- THIS IS PRICELESS. Thank you, thank you, thank you.

2) Please keep posting. Every comment is gold while I go through another round of life inventory-taking.

Thanks. - Briut

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Re: SSA issues

Posted by imtrying25 - 09 Feb 2010 22:25

Btw rage , can i love a jew just because hes jewish, or do i need to know what type of porn hes into first?? Was just wondering.....

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Re: SSA issues

Posted by Kedusha - 09 Feb 2010 22:31

[Rage ATM wrote on 09 Feb 2010 18:03:](#)

in light of some recent important announcements i have decided to edit myself...i wouldnt want to be responsible for any mistaken belief that any of us here are progressive or liberal c"v...

I was going to comment on your post, but since you had the Seichel to delete it, I'll leave well

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Re: SSA issues

Posted by imtrying25 - 09 Feb 2010 22:40

:D :D

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Can i laugh or its a breach of tzniyus!!

Re: SSA issues

Posted by briut - 10 Feb 2010 03:34

OK, guys. Keep it down over there. I'm trying to get some serious input here....

Now, what I had SAID was that I'd try to summarize and then offer some observations. I'm not ready for observations yet, but I THINK I can take a rough crack at summarizing what folks have said so far. I'd love to have add'l insights to add to this list before I make any observations, so post away.

In no particular order, and with apologies to those I'm misquoting, here are some threads of common thought that I think I found.

1. Huh? Why would forum members judge one taiveh (M-M) against another (M-F), indeed?

It would be like one roommate in the asylum telling a visitor that the other guy is crazy.

2. Because G-d said so.

Because M-F sexuality is mutar, M-M is assur.

Because we must do what Hashem wants, and SSA isn't.

3. Because we're expected to do better.

We must work on ourselves and mesaken our middos (and SSA is no different).

4. Different in the 'root' of the behavior.

M-F porn is simply something good taken to a bad intensity, while M-M porn is something wrong in moderation and in all circumstances.

5. Repulsive, abomination.

Both can be assur, but M-M is unnatural and repulsive. Toevah.

Similarly, a woman could view a male addict's story as repulsive.

To'evah's a very strong, jarring word, as the protest against the YU conference (on gays) indicated.

6. Promiscuity is unpleasant.

M-M activity reminds straight men they might be objects of desire (like roving eyes in the shower room).

Straight male addicts don't go around parading desire for a married woman; yet gay men flaunt it.

Most of us (frum men) are not used to accepting such actions as normal.

7. Since we live without the teiyveh, it just looks disgusting.

Since we don't share the SSA tayvah, we can think it's disgusting. Just like any degrading behavior toward another. Choose your poison....

8. Hate the sin, love the sinner.

Compassion for the orientation.

No compassion for the addiction, only for a desire to change it.

9. The Torah says so.

Even relations with an Eishes ish = chenek; yet mishkav zachor = skila. One must die (or certainly perform other sins) rather than submit. So it's obviously meant that we hate this because it's a sin.

I won't close the record book for a while in case you want a fresh crack at adding something new. (Is it too much to ask that we keep from debating the issue at this point until everything has come in? Yeah, that's probably too much to ask. Oh, well.) Thanks again for this amazing opportunity to ask this question to this category of folks. - Briut

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Re: SSA issues

Posted by briut - 11 Feb 2010 17:20

Well, rabbosai, I have some serious observations on your gevaldige comments so far. How do you feel about the following take-away lessons I've gotten so far?

1. To addicts, gay materials are still more yukky than other shmutz.

The yuk factor for any SSA topic is bigger than other stuff a sex addict might stoop to. M-M topics are indeed judged far worse than M-F, whether for a live act, a video, a thought, etc.

2. Shmutzier to an addict means certainly shmutzier to a non-addict.

The yuk factor seems especially fascinating since sex addicts rationalize all kinds of sexual taboos yet retain disgust for this one. [Like someone in the asylum telling a visitor that the guy in the next room is crazy.] This may help explain overall society's prejudices: if addicts who'll stoop to anything show disgust, kal v'chomer the general, non-addicted society.

3. Shmutzy, because the Torah tells us.

The yuk factor comes as a Torah mandate: Torah says toeva hee, chayav missa; that's it. (Even if other acts of adultery or even driving on Shabbos might also be chayav missa.) Particular yuk is reserved for SSA (compared to toeva of, say, shellfish). One theory: SSA's very roots are bad so it's inherently bad, while in contrast the Torah allows non-Jews to eat shellfish so its roots are neutral. Still, no theories are needed: "G-d said it; I believe it; that's that."

4. Yuk stems from our lofty standards, not their lowly conduct.

The yuk factor may relate to our viewing Jews as “better than that” (Am Kadosh), hence succumbing is another kind of slip/fall we must fight. Similarly, Jews should not join the group stereotyped as too promiscuous, unrepentant, lacking religion. Finally, it’s a thought pattern that can & must be changed.

5. Yuk is perhaps due to both ‘abomination’ and ‘disgusting.’

The yuk factor relates to terms like both toeiva (abomination) and disgusting, suggesting:

a) Powerful toeiva: This toeiva has more stigma and oomph than even other abominations. Perhaps shellfish eaters don’t make us uncomfortable in a lunchroom but a gay man in a locker room is creepy.

b) Powerful taiva: The pull toward a SSA is also powerful: Folks don’t think they’re “born” to eat shellfish; or “never feel the same way” about brisket after they’ve tasted a lobster.

c) Powerful yuk: Mere thoughts of the mechanics of certain gay activities seem gross and disgusting to many, so that anyone who even thinks about it (much less do it) is similarly disgusting.

d) Our yuk and the Torah interact: it’s a chicken and egg problem – are we disgusted because it’s toeiva or do we fall back on toeiva since we find it so disgusting.

6. Take away acts of abomination, and it’s still called disgusting.

The yuk factor may apply beyond the toeiva of just “one particular act” (mishkav zachor; biah lo k’darko). While that act is a small subset of SSA behaviors or fantasies, any gay orientation is still yuk. Two men holding hands on the street (neither toeiva nor chayuv missa) is simply more disgusting to many than a man and woman doing the same. A public kiss is still an outrage, anywhere and anytime.

7. Disgusting is as disgusting... doesn’t do.

The yuk factor perhaps comes from observing teivahs we do not hold ourselves. Women can hate men’s objectification, straight men can hate gay men, etc. Yet even the tolerance pledged in 12-step programs, liberal society, GYE, etc might not extend to accepting a gay man. And if we “hate the sin” more than other sins, it might also be hard to “love the sinner” quite as much.

8. If disgust is wrong, is tolerance enough?

The yuk factor might not exist in everyone, but some offer up their tolerance. Elie Wiesel once spoke of religious tolerance and said, basically, "I don't want to be tolerated; I want to be loved, cherished, respected." So acceptance from a distance might not equal a loving integration into the community.

YOUR REACTIONS? THX.

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Re: SSA issues

Posted by briut - 12 Feb 2010 04:56

I got a PM today asking what the purpose is in asking so much about sex addicts' views on SSA.

Well, I thought the answers were obvious. Upon reflection, though, there may be more to the question after all.

First, of course, there's my own personal work. No, not my voyeurism of peeking into the world of someone else's loves and hates. Rather, my own peeking into how SSA may fit or not fit the parameters of a sexual addiction. Is a desire for another man the sign of a sick addiction? Is an act with another man (and it's been lifetimes ago for me) a kinky sign of excess or simply the way some folks are wired? How can I know where to dig if I don't know where the bodies are buried, so to speak?

There's another piece to this, though: I'm trying to understand the definition and nature of addiction. Let's see, "I really like oxygen, and the last time I breathed some oxygen it felt really good. And every time I decide I'm not taking another breath, I slip and fall." Come on, that's obviously not it. So what is? When and how does sexual desire, gay or otherwise, become the defining feature of an addiction? Speaking to men who hold some desires (straight) yet not others (gay) helps paint the picture.

The most helpful statement I've heard so far (thanks, Guard!) is that we don't measure

addiction by WHAT we desire, but rather by HOW we react to that desire and what we DO with that urge. It's the lust, not the sex, that addicts us. Straight or gay is irrelevant. Even a strong sexual desire can be part of the healthy human wiring; the sign of addiction is what happens when that urge begins to play out.

I'll add one more point. I believe there are lots of guests on the site. Some may be frum and some flavor of SSA. They face a difficult road. A really, really hard time. A discussion of how straight men recovering from sex compulsions might view a gay compulsion might be enlightening, even life-saving, for folks out there who feel there's no place to turn beyond looking in from the sidelines to a site like this. (And face it, how many sites like this exist in the frum world?)

So, to anyone who thought I was baiting, or planting triggers, or indulging in voyeuristic drivel, my serious apologies. But to those who see that this is a real issue with real impact on the part of sincere, searching, growing men ... please add your views. Thanks.

And, R2H, thanks for your comments, esp. the reminder that mishkav zachar is assur for ALL bnei Noach. I had forgotten; I had wrongly figured a goy is different in this. Nice to know you're monitoring me to keep me straight, so to speak.

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Re: SSA issues

Posted by briut - 12 Feb 2010 05:00

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Re: SSA issues

Posted by briut - 12 Feb 2010 13:13

[Return2Hashem wrote on 12 Feb 2010 06:31:](#)

[Briut wrote on 12 Feb 2010 04:56:](#)

Nice to know you're monitoring me to keep me straight, so to speak.

My pleasure Briut. Good Shabbos holy Jew.

Are you suggesting that I might actually have intended such a pun? That would be a very queer thing for me to do. Perhaps you have another guess?

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Re: SSA issues

Posted by briut - 14 Feb 2010 12:24

To keep you 'straight'? Pun intended? _____

[link=action=profile;u=3109 date=1265917435\]](#)

[I'm not sure of the constructive purpose of your thread other then satisfying your curiosity.](#)

[\[/quote\]](#)

[\[quote= wrote on 12 Feb 2010 19:20:](#)

I understand why you feel there's a need for this topic.

Dear Friends:

I'd like to share a brief exchange of PMs I had with a somewhat senior macher on the forum, who I expect would rather not go public. Being somewhat sensitive about "outing" other people

(it goes with the job...), I'll honor that.

His first response to one of my posts about homosexuality and sexual addiction was "I'm not sure of the constructive purpose of your thread other than satisfying your curiosity." Then I wrote back with something. Then he replied with, "I understand why you feel there's a need for this topic." Wow.

I'm not sure what I said in that message that wasn't already in the thread. I'm hoping the dialogue will continue, including some forum discussion rather than just PMs. But I figured I should share what I said. (Minor edits to clarify my middle-of-the-night rambling from my PM.) This was:

... I think there's really an answer back to you.

Is this just my voyeuristic curiosity, you ask? I really think that's not the bulk of it. (I can't say it's 0%, because of my basic curiosity over how addicts hitting bottom could come to do all kinds of things but _nothing_ involving a guy.) But even beyond this voyeuristic aspect, I think I have a purpose for me in seeing what the limits of lust are, because that helps me see where the boundaries of love might begin.

The higher purpose is like this. I'm trying to figure out what a sexual addiction really is, compared to, say, alcoholism. If someone's really an alcoholic, wouldn't they drink cooking sherry when they want a fix? Perhaps even antifreeze? Yet we call this sexual lust an addiction even though there are clear biologic factors creating a yuk factor in some areas. The most risky, degrading, embarrassing, etc lusting behaviors seem to have a limit to them -- "eww, that guy in the locker room might possibly be maybe LOOKING at me." Or, "I'd do X and Y and Z, but never THAT."

I really think understanding this is a key to my understanding of sexual motivations more generally. And it's not just me -- as I said in a public post last night I think there are LOTS of guys trolling this site who have similar challenges and questions. And they have NO place to go for even answers, much less support. (I've heard some pretty homophobic things in PMs this

week.) Maybe a little data for them might prevent even one suicide (Ch'V), in which case I don't feel even a hint of regret over keeping the discussion going as long as I can.

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Re: SSA issues

Posted by briut - 06 Jun 2010 17:17

OK, friends, I REALIZE I'm flogging this dead horse of a thread to death. But I'm asking anyway.

Anyone got insights on tackling the challenges of shmiras einayim, particularly when the true challenge comes from looking at other... MEN? Namely:

I consider myself a good frum man. Hence, I know it's a bad idea to stare at women. Not only half-dressed women, but even tznius-dressed women. It's a chillul Hashem, it's a bad example for the kinder, etc.

And, as someone who might get a lustful surge from looking at men, it's a bad idea looking at men.

Subtract men AND women from the population on the street, and what's left is basically... sidewalk.

So, I've been doing fine in avoiding young women. (And finding that I react to them more than before my GYE work began.) But I haven't really mastered staying away from men. And as summer approaches, the shirtless joggers and swollen zippers are fueling reactions that aren't healthy.

Maybe I could train my eyes to look DOWN when women pass and further UP when men pass. Maybe I could work on looking without reacting. For some reason, it seems there's an answer out there and I'm just too to see it clearly.

Anyone with any comments on shmiras einayim in general? (I won't ask anyone to claim knowledge of lust for men - that's obviously too volatile a subject for here.)

Thanks, guys.

(PS: and if anyone has the beitzim to re-open the SSA/gay/homosexual/etc aspect of this thread, please feel free. I think lots of lurkers here could benefit.)

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Re: SSA issues

Posted by silentbattle - 07 Jun 2010 06:17

Taking off glasses has helped me learn to simply zone out a bit. To just look ahead and not focus on the people, not check them out.

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Re: SSA issues

Posted by breaking free - 07 Jun 2010 13:51

Hi.

Imcho onoichy...

I think that looking at the sidewalk is what you have to do basically....

not so easy, huh?

I think the reason its easier not to look at women, is that for women there is a clear issur to look (which I think I never got addicted to women in the first place) where as by men, ive never seen

written an issur to look at men. I don't even know if there is an issur to touch men, so there is much less guilt in looking.

If I walk around thinking: I not going to look, but lets check incase I'm missing something, that means I really want to look. I think the yesoid is to realize that one look is POISON and you really don't want to look whatever is there.

BF

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