

Dangers of SAPosted by workingmyprogram - 18 Mar 2018 23:52

My Dear Yidden,

?I haven't seen this issue addressed on here and think it's important to mention. Namely, the dangers of SA. I went to SA meetings for years and found that there is a very insidious and unhealthy way that SA as a whole seems to approach what we call taiva. Its seems they attach a lot guilt and shame to sexual desire. They view the struggle against "lust" as some kind of war against ourselves, not recognizing that the sex drive is an inherently holy thing that merely needs to be channeled. It's a very Christian way of looking at human nature, and when exposed to this type of thinking for so long, its very easy for yidden that go to these groups to take on this mentality (which I believe is at odds with the Jewish outlook). In addition, there was more than one occasion that people from program, not necessarily SA though, tried to convert me to Christianity! My own sponsor even tried to convert me! This is a danger that is prevalent whenever Jews are around Christians and are vulnerable and going to them for advice. I believe that combining Christian extremism with the disease of addiction makes for some very unhealthy people (Mel Gibson anyone???), hence my former sponsor. But even WORSE was the following incident: I was at a meeting once and we read from a pamphlet which contained the story of a frum man who was having a hard time getting sober, so he approached Roy K (the founder of SA) for advice. Roy K told him that there was no way that he would be able to get sober if he remained a practicing Jew! Desperate to believe anything, the man stopped becoming frum (lo aleinu). In my mind that's unforgivable, and despite the good that Roy K did, it's all for nought if he took part in taking even a single yid away from torah and mitzvos. So, for anyone in SA, be very careful. SA is like chemotherapy. It may save your life, but the dangers are real and the cure itself can kill you. Definitely don't expose yourself more than necessary, and try to find the answer in Yiddishkeit and the Ribbono Shel Olam. This post is going to make some people angry and uncomfortable, and that's a good thing. We can no longer ignore the elephant in the room.

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Re: Dangers of SA

Posted by ieeyc - 19 Mar 2018 02:19

thank you so much for putting a little bit of balance in the concept of sa, i think your post is a must read for anyone who is contemplating sa,they may have to go,it might be pikuach nefesh if they dont go ,their own nefesh ,or c"v someone elses nefesh,but they cant go running blindly without the awarness of the above post!thank you for having the courage to post even though you might undergo the scathing comments or ways of showing displeasure by members here.this post should definitely be made public , not to **deter** those who need it, but to keep them on their toes.

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Re: Dangers of SA

Posted by hashiveinu - 19 Mar 2018 03:07

ive never been part of an sa group but i have heard more than once about different things about sa which contradict what yiddishkeit stands for. someone once complained to me that he is part of a frum group and if anyone ever mentions anything about yiddishkeit or a vort about the parsha which might help, he is put down. they tell him that the only way sa can work is if yiddishkeit is seperated from recovery.

how can this be? we are born to believe that all things have a source in the torah, so if this method of recovery doesnt, then how can it be considered the right thing?

im not trying to knock the sa but maybe it doesnt have to be without torah and mussur. maybe for us yidden a modified version should be created...

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Re: Dangers of SA

Posted by TrueServant - 19 Mar 2018 03:19

thanx a lot for sharing your experience, I really appreciate it, you are 100% right & for the reasons above & some I was directed not to go to sa, we have to realize that it is the LAST resort, it is not a lichotchila at all, of course if someone needs it & will not get better unless he goes than he should go, but please do urself a favor & speak to daas torah! there are rabbanim out there that are ready to help (I know that some people think otherwise, but my personal experience showed me) & ALL options are open to them u just have to make the call their here to help

at the same time it is very important not to put down sa to much in a public forum bec. there are many people here who are bh doing very well through this program & we don't wanna discourage them or cause them any doubts, just be honest with urself & speak to a rov, & once u make a informed decision hold your heads up high

there is another point that I wanna say, there are certain places where one can be in sa groups within a complete frum jewish setting, I think that will take care of most of your problem (I know its not available in most places), & I believe that gye is working on its own live meetings

wishing everyone much hatzlacha on your journey

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Re: Dangers of SA

Posted by workingmyprogram - 19 Mar 2018 04:23

Its not about putting down SA, rather it's making sure that people finally get honest about the risks of going there. Nobody seems to be addressing those risks here, so I felt compelled to make it known. Just like a doctor has an obligation to tell his patient the dangers and risks of chemotherapy, even when it may save a persons life, so too we need to be honest about the dangers of going to groups that are heavily rooted in Christian philosophy, such as SA. It doesnt mean not to go if it's pikuach nefesh, but it means to understand the risks so we can guard ourselves and protect ourselves as much as we can if we find ourselves in such an environment. And I believe that just as one only takes the minimal amount of chemotherapy that is necessary to cure the disease, because taking more can start damaging his healthy organs, so too one shouldn't be more involved in Christian based groups and fellowships than is necessary. Otherwise, we can C'V come to great damage from what's supposed to be the cure.

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Re: Dangers of SA

Posted by ieeyc - 19 Mar 2018 07:24

[ieeyc wrote on 19 Mar 2018 02:19:](#)

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Alas! Ive been smitten!

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Re: Dangers of SA

Posted by cordnoy - 19 Mar 2018 08:06

Many rabbanim have encouraged sa. Many have showed where it is not only compatible with the Torah, but it's also sourced in the Torah. Some have even suggested that it is the derech eretz, which is kadmah latorah.

I am no expert. Sa in a church worked for me. I have said, based on minimal experience, that the Jewish sa can do more harm than the other.

And yes, there seems to be a push for pa, although I don't know much about it.

People should ask beforehand. Just for the record, in my years of experience speakin' with hundreds of fellows, I've never heard of any missionary tactics. I don't believe I've ever heard it from Dov either, although it's obviously possible.

And finally, a nice suggestion is always to hear from a person what worked for them. What didn't work is much more complicated.

God speed.

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Re: Dangers of SA

Posted by ieeyc - 19 Mar 2018 12:58

i dont think working my program was actualy discourageing sa, it was more like a word for the wise, and the consumer beware to quote a latin expression,

"What didn't work is much more complicated."true but when a danger lies before people it has to be mentioned.

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Re: Dangers of SA

Posted by grateful4life - 19 Mar 2018 15:58

1. The main hindrance for addicts going to get help is probably denial and resistance. As if an addict doesn't have enough discouraging him from getting into a recovery program, a post like this can easily deter an addict from ever getting the help he desperately needs. The pros/statistics by far outweigh the cons so posting something discouraging like this in a public forum is not constructive.

Let someone get help first and get some recovery into his system. Then talk to him about the cons if you wish. I'm sure you had good intentions but IMHO, by posting here you are more likely to deter the addicts that are contemplating getting into SA recovery than the addicts that are ready for SA recovery but just need to know what to look out for.

I will agree that there are some cons to SA and there is what to look out for but nothing to the extent that your describing and certainly nothing on the level of scary "Dangers of SA" or of overshadowing or equating the overwhelming good that comes from SA recovery. I'm sorry that you had a bad experience with SA but you are definitely from the minority as there are always exceptions to a rule.

The real Klippah that we need to pay attention to is that there are over 25,000 people that utilize this website which is only a fraction of the real number of people that need help and many of them are still pretending that they are so close to Hashem and real upstanding yidden, it's b'gader "toivel v'sheretz beyodoi"! That's where you see the Klippah's strength the most, not in SA. Baruch Hashem there is GYE and SA that have success in counteracting the tremendous forces of this Klippah.

2. As others have already mentioned, there are many Rabbonim that encourage SA and the 12 steps as "Lechatchilla" for recovery, not a b'dieved and that this spiritual program is actually a very torahdike way of life. Rabbi Shais Taub has written extensively about this in his book "The Gd of our understanding", which I've read and highly recommend for everyone.

3. I'm sorry to hear about your unfortunate experiences in SA with christian ideas but I've never experienced anything similar to that. Granted my home group is mostly frum yidden but in my travels I've been to meetings in over a dozen cities/towns all across the USA and I've never encountered any christian missionizing or beliefs that were forced upon me. It is a generic spiritual program that is not connected to any one religion and that is the feeling and ambience of this program - to each his own. "Gd of your understanding".

Having said that I think it would be great to have a Jewish version of the SA program. GYE has started a 12 step program/fellowship of live meetings for addicts in lieu of having to go to churches and working with goyim but it hasn't yet gained traction. As far as I know there is only one such program in the USA and a couple in EY but that's all. Let's see how that evolves and let's focus and discuss how we can roll out this pilot program into a major program. But in the meantime we'll have to use what we have on hand that's been tried and true until now.

I'm pretty involved with this initiative and I attend these meetings regularly so if anyone would

like further info on the GYE live meeting fellowship in NJ feel free to PM me for further details.

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Re: Dangers of SA

Posted by workingmyprogram - 19 Mar 2018 21:08

[grateful4life wrote on 19 Mar 2018 15:58:](#)

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To address a couple of your points:

1. According to your logic, a doctor should never tell his patient the possible side effects of medications for fear that it will deter that patient from taking the medication. That is a foolish and irrational outlook. Patients need to know what to look out for, especially when there are clear and present dangers, so they can protect themselves. If an addict decides it's not worth the risk of getting exposed to some bad hashgafas in SA and would rather be in his addiction, that's his choice. To hide important information from him is not the solution, especially since there are other solutions besides SA meetings (such as GYE, therapy, SLAA and SAA which are much less Christian, etc...)

2. SA is bedieved. PERIOD. Ideally we should not have have to go into churches and grovel at the feet of non Jewish people who secretly despise our belief system in the hopes that they can somehow show us the way to Hashem, the same Hashem that WE brought into the world, not them. Don't fool yourself into thinking that this is the way that Hashem intended it. The fact that we need the non Jews and their churches and guys like Roy K who tried to get Jews to become non religious is evidence of how far we have fallen as yidden in the golus. Go to your meetings, but at least be honest with yourself and don't for one second think that this is lechatchila.

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Re: Dangers of SA

Posted by aryehdovid85 - 19 Mar 2018 22:28

[grateful4life wrote on 19 Mar 2018 15:58:](#)

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For the record and the sake of those who are very much in need of the support,healing and opportunity for spiritual growth and recovery available in the live 12 step meetings, sharing my experience over many years of attending live 12 step meetings (first Overeater's Anonymous,AA (open meetings as an observer) and most recently at SA in Manhattan and Brooklyn.

The meetings which I have attended are mixed with people of all religions and levels of spirituality.

While I was a bit skeptical at first,I have not encountered any type **missionizing or beliefs that were forced upon me.** btw I did consult a famous Rav who is familiar with addiction about the dangers of going to a 12 step program with all types of people,and was advised to attend.

For those who are curious about SA,there are free recordings available on the ESH phone line which can be reached at (845)859-1190,password in 1552.Follow the prompts press 2 for SA.

Speeches which I found helpful given by Henoch (a frum yid) press 2 again. You can even listen to Roy K. if you want to.....

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Re: Dangers of SA

Posted by grateful4life - 20 Mar 2018 00:01

[workingmyprogram wrote on 19 Mar 2018 21:08:](#)

[grateful4life wrote on 19 Mar 2018 15:58:](#)

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1. A. Just for the record most doctors I've been to don't tell me all the side effects about penicillin or anit-biotics. They just tell me what I need in their professional opinion and have a nice day. We all know that medicines have potential side effects and it's up to each individual to do his own research and ask the necessary questions.

B. IMHO you have the analogy all wrong. Paramedics don't talk about side effects when they're saving someone's life. If someone is overdosing on opioids EMS will administer Narcan without asking questions. So please don't talk to an addict about Hashkafa when he is all drugged up on sex (what irony!). An addict that is ready for serious recovery should be told where to go to join SA. To do anything to the contrary is simply absurd; and any Rav that is not intimately familiar with this disease should not be consulted about this either.

2. Please don't be over zealous and dramatize the situation. We don't "grovel at anyone's feet" in this program nor do we "need their churches". We sometimes use meeting rooms that unfortunately happen to be located in a church bldg as a meeting place. (Try asking a Rav if we can use his shul's meeting rooms or simcha hall as a meeting place for SA and see how that goes?) We do not go there and talk about christianity.

I never met Roy K. but I certainly heard many of his recordings and I don't recall ever hearing him say anything about christianity. I certainly don't see any clear and present danger as you do.

Again when you use words as bedieved you seem to imply as there is a lechatchila of recovery equivalent to SA that is a viable option for most addicts and there just isn't any such thing.

At worse it's like taking a life-saving medicine that has some non-kosher or uncertified ingredient. To hesitate taking the medicine when there is nothing else as strong available is an aveirah and taking it is a lechatchila.

The real bedievd here is getting into this kind of addiction in the first place! But if you're already in it RUN and take the strongest, most proven medicine out there - GO JOIN SA ASAP.

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Re: Dangers of SA

Posted by Markz - 20 Mar 2018 03:04

Excusing me for butting into this cool (heated) convo

People come onto the forum with a wide variety of perceptions

Some assume SA is for wierd people, and if my therapist recommends it, I should look for a different therapist

Working my program assumes SA is the way to go for many. His comment about the danger of SA comes after that accepted fact.

And he got burnt - im sorry to hear

BUT as far as I recall there were some enticements to 'other religions' on porn pages I used to frequent

Hence for the average member on GYE that's looking to break free, I would consider that the risk of being confronted with SA missionary talk must be weighed with the alternative options, and we all know assimilation devoured a large part of the nation, and my hunch is that lust played a big part - I know of such a case with a 'frum' man that recently simply left his wife and

my2c

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Re: Dangers of SA

Posted by workingmyprogram - 20 Mar 2018 03:37

The real bedieved here is getting into this kind of addiction in the first place! But if you're already in it RUN and take the strongest, most proven medicine out there - GO JOIN SA ASAP.

You are completely downplaying the dangers of SA and recklessly recommending that everyone should join SA despite these dangers. It seems that you are just too enamored to see past your pink cloud. You see, I can recommend SA to people (and frequently do) because I know and admit to the risks, and can therefore be careful about who I recommend it to. You, on the other hand, should not be recommending it to anyone since you seem to lack all clarity regarding what the risks are, and therefore seem to have no problem guiding neshamas into a situation that may not be the best thing for them. Tread carefully my friend.

Despite your attempts to minimize, the dangers are real, as I have demonstrated from personal experience.

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Re: Dangers of SA

Posted by i-man - 20 Mar 2018 04:01

I would say similar to Reb Markz

Going to the heart of the matter - whats the better alternative ??

sex addiction ,or going to SA and fixing it (for someone who needs it to get better)???

additionally , from what i know of the 12 steps, a lot of them seem very in sync with hashkafos of yiddishkeit , and i defenimately have heard rabbis discuss just that.

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