

"seal of truth"="seal of suicide"

Posted by happygrowth - 19 Apr 2010 22:26

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i am a young youth counsellor and i am close to a lot of frum and secular teens.

i know some secular kids, that were becoming very passionate about yiddishkeit and had even started keeping shabbos.

however after they saw the film "the seal of truth" they told me that they don't want a relationship with a god that tortures people for masturbating and not keeping shabbos, even if they were born secular! "the guy in the film does not even mention being judged for the way he treated people yet he was publicly humiliated for masturbating!"

What worries me the most and what really compelled me to post this is that i have had 2 frum kids cry to me, with terrible guilt and fear in their eyes after watching that movie, they both told me they had not slept properly in weeks. the one kid sounded suicidal so i sent him for help as i am not qualified.

the thing is, before they watched the film they were doing well.

I am begging anyone who can stop this to do something, **must we wait for the first child to kill himself G-d forbid?** the movie clearly is not true if this even has to be debated it is tragic. one is judged on a personal level for what you were able to do. the film gives the christian impression that you will burn in hell even if you never hear of the torah.

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Re: "seal of truth"="seal of suicide"

Posted by the.guard - 19 Apr 2010 23:15

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Wow, this is scary. You given me some food for thought.

Maybe on the page where we have links to this clip, we should put a disclaimer that Hashem has infinite patience with us, and wants us to do Teshuvah. Etc. Etc.. And that is we succeed in doing Teshuvah, we will uplift all the fallen souls to their true place. Instead of being accusers, they will become advocates for us!

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Re: "seal of truth"="seal of suicide"

Posted by briut - 20 Apr 2010 02:31

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Happygrowth, thanks so much for speaking up.

I'm afraid to say that I've seen some of this same 'hellfire and brimstone' coming as advice to teens from this very site. I'm not happy to see it, of course, but I don't know what to DO about it. It's a free country, one poster said to me.

It's sad to think about what impact such statements can have on teenagers, just now having to reconcile G-d's mitzvos of sexual purity with the hormonally-raging bodies that G-d has also given them.

And you've given me food for thought about what greater impact it might have on non-religious Jews (or those questioning their entire connection to Yiddishkeit and mitzvos).

Yeah, Guard, I think there's room to DO something. I wish I knew what.

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Re: "seal of truth"="seal of suicide"

Posted by nederman - 20 Apr 2010 04:07

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I think this is the old problem of the mussar movement. Is mussar a good thing? The answer is: it depends. Some people are well-balanced, even if they sin it never takes over their lives, and they are not attracted to a shtark existence. Others needs it and won't settle for anything less. That is usually pretty easy to tell in person, but on a forum it is not.

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Re: "seal of truth"="seal of suicide"

Posted by silentbattle - 20 Apr 2010 16:06

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This is an interesting point. I've never seen the movie, although I've heard a lot of people have

reacted negatively to it.

Now, those of you know who know me will (I think) agree that although I can be intense at times, I'm not one to advocate guilt trips, or feeling miserable as a good approach. And before I say anything, let me emphasize that I am not suggesting that guilt is a good motivator, or that I am even agreeing to the idea of the movie ( as I mentioned, I've never even seen it). I am simply trying to give a sense of perspective.

It seems to me that this movie is coming to address major issue - ignorance and apathy. Most people, even religious people, have grown up just not knowing, not caring about the issue of being mz"l. And the fact is that it IS a major issue. For those of us that believe in a spiritual world, this is an area where our actions have a very strong negative impact on that world - which, in turn, effects the physical world we live in, making it a darker place in every way.

We live in a world where masturbation is normal. It's reached the point where people who *don't* give in are considered abnormal. Religious jews have reached the point where they're no longer embarassed, can justify it out loud, and I've even heard someone claim that his rabbi (who again, he claims is orthodox) says it's OK for single guys to be mz"l.

This is the world we live in. For most people, to change their perspective, they need something dramatic to shake up their worldview, like shaking a snowglobe. Polite explanations just aren't going to help, because deep down, we tell ourselves that it's really OK. We've grown up in a world that insists that it's not a problem.

Again, I'm not saying that this movie is the answer - I'm just saying that there *is* an issue, and there needs to be *some* answer - and one way or another it *does* need to be something that will shake people up.

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Re: "seal of truth"="seal of suicide"  
Posted by briut - 20 Apr 2010 19:57

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[silentbattle wrote on 20 Apr 2010 16:06:](#)

I'm just saying that there *is* an issue, and there needs to be *some* answer - and one way or another it *does* need to be something that will shake people up.

[30years wrote on 20 Apr 2010 04:07:](#)

I think this is the old problem of the mussar movement. Is mussar a good thing? [...] Others need it and won't settle for anything less. That is usually pretty easy to tell in person, but on a forum it is not.

Let me try to explain how seriously concerned I am about how/when this Forum might try to 'shake up' a teen on the site.

1. Highest suicide risk is for teens 15-19. Most common apparent reason (researchers have a hard time interviewing the subjects...) relates to relationships, sex-related topics, etc. That's just a fact of the field of public health.
2. Teens who've shown the [guts] to post on this site, and even more so those who lurk and can't bring themselves to register, are already shook up. They wouldn't be here if they weren't shook up.
3. As I understand mussar, if you don't really know the person, love the person and know they'll take it to heart -- then IT AIN'T MUSSAR. [In fact, for a troubled teen it could be something as awful as incitement to suicide, R'L. See below. ]

4. We don't know who these teens really are: is there abuse or something in their background; do we know the rest of their story. Yet I can't help but think that "shtark so-called mussar" can't hold a compared to love, support, facts, and encouragement.

Having lost one friend in my youth to a suicide related to such issues, plus another more recently in the child of a current friend, I can say that warmth can play a beautiful role in a confused teen (I hate to use the word addiction for folks that young). On the other hand, that so-called mussar message might risk playing an opposite role.

V'nishmartem ME'OD....

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Re: "seal of truth"="seal of suicide"

Posted by silentbattle - 20 Apr 2010 21:28

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Like I said - I'm not telling you what the answer *is* - but there needs to be an answer. And the fact is that it's a very difficult message to get across on a real level.

And my impression was that the video is pretty much for people who have NOT been to GYE, and are clueless as far as this issue.

I agree that warmth and loving is a better approach. But how do you propose we use that to get the message out to everyone?

Again - I know nothing of the video. But if you're going to bash something, at least first accept that it's around to address a very real need (even if you feel that it's not a good way of addressing that need).

Briut - when you talk about suicide, people with otherwise healthy backgrounds and families are committing suicide over masturbation guilt? I would guess that it's probably closer related to abuse issues of some kind.

Rage - mz"l is mentioned in gemara and midrashim as well. And the extent of the consequences from those sources seem pretty clear. In addition, halacha mentions various safeguards to avoid even getting an erection...

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Re: "seal of truth"="seal of suicide"  
Posted by Ineedhelp!! - 20 Apr 2010 21:35

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I dont think we can take everything out because it MAY cause someone to do something like this. This is an extreme case and I dont think many people, especially in our situation, would react like this in such an extreme way. I cant speak for everyone but I'd have to say most people here KNOW that mz'l is an issur of some sorts. We know its not what Hashem wants. I kind of wish I could react in a similar (but not as extreme) way as these kids. They have theirheads on straight if you think about it. I am numb to that feeling. Maybe we should cancel the whole forum because it MAY lead to stalking. All I'm saying is dont judge the world based on 2 kids.

-Yiddle

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Re: "seal of truth"="seal of suicide"  
Posted by silentbattle - 20 Apr 2010 22:09

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But halacha DOES seem to follow the idea that this is something so dangerous, that we need to stay far away from it.

It's true - we can't know what it does. But when something's called "yesod," that gives me a pretty good starting point. And yes, that's kabbalah...but if you want to understand what's going on with the spiritual world, you're gonna need a little kabbalah. You don't really have a choice.

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Re: "seal of truth"="seal of suicide"

Posted by happygrowth - 20 Apr 2010 22:29

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Maybe on the page where we have links to this clip, we should put a disclaimer that Hashem has infinite patience with us, and wants us to do Teshuvah.

The problem with films like these is that they definitely imply that Hashem does not have infinite patience.

The only reason that the person did not burn is because he cleaned the graves. which means that according to the film the average secular kid who dies is going to burn, big time for all eternity, unless he has some very big merit to save himself, the fact that he was never informed of the Torah is no excuse, accordingly how much more so are frum people going to burn, if one's upbringing is no excuse then neither is their hormonally-raging bodies, or addiction. if I believed this I think I would go off the derech.

I am not overly analyzing the film this is the simple message, or at least it is the way that most will understand it.

We live in a world where masturbation is normal. It's reached the point where people who don't give in are considered abnormal. Religious Jews have reached the point where they're no longer embarrassed, can justify it out loud, and I've even heard someone claim that his rabbi (who again, he claims is orthodox) says it's OK for single guys to be mazel.

there is a far worse problem than people thinking masturbation is fine, the problem is the silent guilt that a lot of frum teens, and adults suffer. A very close friend of mine told me that he once felt so guilty for masturbation that he started doing worse things. I don't think people realize the torment that people suffer, I am not exaggerating, this is one big problem.

yes most people probably won't kill themselves, but I know that any frum teen who really believes this film will suffer a terrible, and cruel battle that will get nowhere (I think Dov will agree).

I don't think it is correct to "save" people with lies.

yes masturbation is against the torah but the film ignores the fact that Hashem understands human nature, loves us more that we love ourselves and that he wants the best for us.

I bash the film because the film bashes Hashem's love and mercy.

sorry for being sharp but, i am in contact with a lot of kids on an informal level, so they feel they can open up to me, and things are not good...

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Re: "seal of truth"="seal of suicide"

Posted by silentbattle - 21 Apr 2010 01:35

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Hashem loves us, yes. On the other hand, I believe in a spiritual reality. The gemara does not say kind things about someone who says that hashem "just lets sins go." When we do an aveirah, there is a real consequence. We've destroyed things in our spiritual self. in the case of being mz"l, we're destrpying our yesod, our foundation.

Now, you can try to cushion that, but let's be honest here - that IS really scary! If you've destroyed your foundation, what do you have left?! Where is the lie in there?

Now true, hashem understands the battles we face. But that doesn't change the fact that in a real way, we're doing damage, aware or not. Spirituality is *real*. That's why I say that every day I stay clean is such a huge victory, worth celebration, because you've built something real.

You're right - silent guilt is not a good thing. The motivating factor should not be guilt. However, if one is aware of the potential that he has, what an amazing person he is, what a beautiful soul he has, and is also aware of the consequences of his actions - then there will certainly be a negative feeling associated with that. And removing that negative feeling, IS a lie.

There are consequences for our actions, good and bad. And although the fact that a person might be an "ones" removes the fault/guilt, it's still not a good thing, and it seems pretty clear that there still are negative repercussions.

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Re: "seal of truth"="seal of suicide"

Posted by nederman - 21 Apr 2010 02:34

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This is not a topic I can contribute much to. It was pretty obvious that the people on the forum who felt strongly about it must have some personal experience with it, and it turned out to be correct. This is a much bigger problem than masturbating. If somebody must masturbate or kill himself seemingly he is required to masturbate! For sure suicide is not the answer, because you are murdering yourself. It certainly is not a religious answer.

As far as guilt that is not what mussar does. The purpose of mussar is to remind and to explain. Once you have all the facts you can then do what is in your best interest, which is not to sin. Guilt I think has no purpose religiously. It's not regret and it's not even atonement, so it's useless. I think the people that feel guilty are not feeling guilty because of G-d.

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Re: "seal of truth"="seal of suicide"

Posted by happygrowth - 21 Apr 2010 08:44

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I believe in a spiritual reality. The gemara does not say kind things about someone who says that hashem "just lets sins go." When we do an aveirah, there is a real consequence. We've destroyed things in our spiritual self. in the case of being mz"l, we're destrpying our yesod, our foundation.

my point is that we are only juged for what we have free-choice for,

let me ask you some thing if someone has never heard of the Torah and he dies, lets say at age 25, do you think he should suffer public humiliation and be tortured for all of the Torah?

according to the film the most painfull suffering is from masturbating, above anything else, even for a selular jew.

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Re: "seal of truth"="seal of suicide"

Posted by briut - 21 Apr 2010 13:29

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You tell 'em, Rage!!

I'll only add that I've never seen effective change (tshuva) through fear, only love.

Fear ain't gonna help the teen who's already joined this site or otherwise begun the work, and fear sure as heck ain't gonna bring anyone into the site on an effective basis.

As to whether kabbalistic predictions etc are worth publicizing, I don't know. I'll merely say that when I was CONSIDERING whether Torah Jewry was a path for me (20-30 years ago), I went to a shul that had a big poster telling people they can't come to shul on Shabbos with a wallet or a purse or uncovered hair, etc, because the other members considered it an insult and G-d found it repulsive. DO YOU THINK I EVER EVER RETURNED TO THAT SHUL??

If we want teens to develop an attitude of love rather than lust controlling their lives, I just think we have to MODEL THAT LOVE. To them, to ourselves, to HKBH. Love, love, love.

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Re: "seal of truth"="seal of suicide"

Posted by silentbattle - 21 Apr 2010 14:10

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Rage - i agree that it would be very difficult and complex to follow everything mentioned in kabbalah. However, this is something which is not mentioned exclusively in kabbalah, but is also mentioned in many areas of the gemara, and has halachic ramifications as well. I think that distinguishes it, and tells us that there IS something different about this.

Happygrowth - I agree...kinda. First of all, we need to figure out what our free will is, exactly (that's not out topic here, but if a certain person has the capability to search for the truth and learn about, then he's expected to). Next, when we talk about "punishment," and say that someone doesn't "deserve" something, we need to consider what's going on. Fact - this person did not choose to rebel against hashem. He was born with different tests than we were, and he

may have succeeded fantastically at those tests. However, he still was involved in terrible aveiros. And it could be that he needs to be cleaned of that dirt. Not as a punishment, but in the same way that anyone who's dirty needs to be cleaned. Why is that fair, you may ask? I have no idea, but I can offer one possible solution, based on the idea that who we are, on a deep level, is not our physical bodies, but rather, our souls. So, this soul may have made decisions beforehand that put him in this situation, even if in this lifetime, he didn't.

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