

ABSTINENCE - I may be headed into a long period of it

Posted by Jooboy - 18 May 2010 17:25

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I have been sexually sober in SA for over 13 months now, and sober from pornography for over 5 months. Although my recovery is going well, my wife seems to be getting more uncomfortable with intimacy. She has told me that she has stopped taking her birth control and is not really interested in physical intimacy. Due to some of the craziness in our home and marriage I am not willing to be with her if she could get pregnant so I may be in for a long haul.

I feel hurt that she does not want to be physically close and afraid that I will have a harder time staying sober. I understand that nothing can possibly happen to me that GOD does not want to happen and that whether or not I trust HIM, HE is the one running the show. - so I might as well sit back and relax - right?

Easier said than done.

**If anyone has experience, strength and hope to share here I could use it.**

Gut Yom Tov

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Re: ABSTINENCE - I may be headed into a long period of it

Posted by yoyo - 24 May 2010 23:04

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I'm sorry... I thought I shouldn't.

Best of luck all of you, and again, thank you as its very helpful for me in understanding my husband.

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Re: ABSTINENCE - I may be headed into a long period of it  
Posted by kanesher - 25 May 2010 07:47

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Thanks so much! I"YH may all work out for best in you and your husband's life!

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Re: ABSTINENCE - I may be headed into a long period of it  
Posted by osh.oshosh - 26 May 2010 18:15

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Commando:

It is not as simple as just saying "both sides have obligations."

People may not accept these obligations, or may be so unhappy in their marriage or life  
that they can not deliver on them.

I've been in a marriage like this for a long time. I've mostly given up on being intimate with my  
wife.

It became impossible to get her to go to the mikva; she has not gone in 14 months. And it  
became a degrading process of trying to coax her into it.

I have not given up on some miracle happening; I guess I am hoping that by improving myself  
it may pay off down the road. But day to day I've had to live with the reality that  
I am married without physical intimacy.

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Re: ABSTINENCE - I may be headed into a long period of it  
Posted by commando612 - 26 May 2010 21:37

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osh.oshosh:

I hear you loud and clear. I think I can relate a little to your pain, I'm unmarried without physical intimacy (I don't know which is worse, but I'll guess you have it worse than me). And I agree it's not simple at all.

Here's what upset me. Jooboy said he's been sexually sober in SA for over 13 months now, and sober from pornography for over 5 months. And his wife doesn't want any more physical intimacy. So people seemed to be telling him (even he told himself) that this must be the will of Hashem and he should just live with it. Well, maybe it's not the will of Hashem. Hashem gave us the Torah, and according to the Torah if he took his wife to a Beis Din then she would lose her whole K'suva and more for this type of behavior. I'm not suggesting Beis Din, but I respectfully disagree with the attitude that either the husband or the wife has to just learn to accept any decision that the other makes. If someone steals from me, do I say "that's the will of Hashem" and just accept it ? Or do I try to get back what is rightfully mine ?

I read Yoyo's post and I sincerely feel sorry for women in that situation. There are many many people living in marriages which are tormenting. But the response to bad situations can't be to deny your spouse the basics of married life. The Chazon Ish wrote (I think in the beginning of his famous booklet "Emuna U'bitachon") that we should never use our attitudes to judge people's behavior before we see what the Halacha says about their behavior. He says halacha determines what is right or wrong, and Mussar then is used to uphold the halacha, not the reverse.

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Re: ABSTINENCE - I may be headed into a long period of it  
Posted by kanesher - 26 May 2010 22:03

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I don't think rights are going to actually help anyone, though. You are correct...Halachicly speaking. But Halacha - in Even HaEzer is about rights. Yes, a Beis Din can and will fine a woman for withholding intimacy.

But let me ask you, what kind of intimacy do you think you get with a court order? GIVE ME WHAT IS MINE! And indeed, as per his halachic rights, Beis Din will enforce them as best as

they can.

Do you think , commando, that a marriage that you have threaten to call the dayan in order to get into the bedroom is what our goal is? "What is mine by right" - youch, not a bedroom life, who is suppose to be the zienth of love , connection and the one place that a woman can be totally validated mind body and soul - done with a gun to her head? sounds like rape with a hasgocha on it. It's kosher. But I'm not particularlyly hungry, frankly.

Denying the basics? What, to be used? Technically yes - but, God, try looking a woman in the eye and explaining that to her? As the Stiepler writes - it is a fate worse then death, to not feel loved by her husband. Perhaps such a fate could make a woman take such measures. Halachicly speaking? Sure. Try asking a Dayan what he thinks. Or find one who would agree to hear such a case.

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True, SHE should be doing all sorts of things. But what now? What can we do?

I have dealt with this, and am indeed working through it. I didn't cause it; but I found that by looking at her side of the coin - and seeing what she wanted - that things got better. When I dropped wondering about what my right is - in Even HaEzer - because Even HaEzer is about rights. But Orach Chaim is about how a Ben Torah should live, and it says a very different story, of being Noyeg bkedudasha, and appeases one's wife before being with her. But isn't it his right? appease her? HECK, just call the dayan! There are rights, and then there's the way it's suppose to be.

that said, individual situations are very complex as is mine. But by focusing on what can we do to improve the situation - well that's the only thing that we can do to improve it. Not saying I have the magic bullet, but by focusing on what she should be doing - well...what good is that? May I suggest the the married chevra's thread on this - [www.guardyoureyes.org/forum/index.php?topic=1593.0](http://www.guardyoureyes.org/forum/index.php?topic=1593.0)

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One thing I have learned is that I was blind to how I was treating my wife - even if I had the right to treat her that way - I think love means loving someone on their level, with what they need and how they need it.

And Osh - have you tried dealing with the situation? Counseling? Sex therapy?

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Re: ABSTINENCE - I may be headed into a long period of it  
Posted by Jooboy - 14 Jul 2010 21:05

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Thank you to those of you who have posted. It has been helpful to have some support.

Briut - thank you for the book recommendation. It is not often that I can honestly say that a book has changed my life. R' Arush's approach to marriage has been really eye-opening and I think it was a direct lifeline to help me get through what is a very challenging period of time. The blessing in this is that my wife and I are definitely on a good track emotionally. Focusing on my obligations to her and totally ignoring her obligations to me is, for me, truly the key to a peaceful marriage. Its not easy. As the big book of AA says, it requires the destruction of self-centerdness - OUCH! but in the long run it really is easier than the emotional turmoil and pain that comes with primarily seeking out what others can provide to me.

I can't say I would have ever chosen this path and it has been painful at times but the rewards have been pretty amazing as well. I have really been able to get to a truer place of understanding that "sex is indeed optional" and chill out about more.

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Re: ABSTINENCE - I may be headed into a long period of it  
Posted by kosher - 15 Jul 2010 03:37

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R' Jooboy,

This certainly doesn't sound easy and I am not sure that I can make it easier, but if I can put in my two cents (from 3000 miles away - without knowing the people involved and at no potential ), I actually think there might be a very positive aspect to this.

If a woman feels the intimacy is not about her, rather she is the only one convenient/halachically

available for the man to engage in his lust, it is not a very comfortable feeling for her, to put it mildly. It is entirely possible that this is your wife's issue (considering your issues). The positive aspect is that until now she may have not felt comfortable expressing her hesitations, because she was concerned where you would go if she wasn't available. Now she is comfortable that you aren't going anywhere terrible regardless, so she doesn't have to put up with this.

Considering that, I think it should not be that hard to use this break to make sure (for yourself and for her) that when you are with her, it is about her...

(I myself am unsure how to be certain that when I am with my wife it is about her and not just a convenient way to exercise my lust - I don't think I am ready for abstinence though)

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Re: ABSTINENCE - I may be headed into a long period of it  
Posted by ToAdd - 15 Jul 2010 08:07

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Hi,

Being a married addict I fear the same situation in my own life.

I know I am not as emotionally available to my wife as I should be.

One way I am trying to improve is with adopting the attitude: "I am going to [wash the dishes] now, because it will make her happy", but I am generally lazy and often look for an easy way out.

I suppose porn is an easy way out of having to work at intimacy.

I found this post very interesting and will see if I can get Garden of Peace.

Thanks to all who contributed.

I have not yet gone to the married section of the forums, should I?

Any other suggestions?

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Re: ABSTINENCE - I may be headed into a long period of it  
Posted by Jooboy - 15 Jul 2010 12:22

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thanks for the replies.

kosher, I think that you are right that my wife does not want to feel like she is the escape valve for my lust and there certainly have been times when that was true, although I don't think that during our being together I was enveloped in lust, rather I am very giving and emotionally present.

ToAdd, I certainly can understand you fear the same situation. I was there once also. Truthfully there are other times earlier in my marriage where I would have guessed my wife would have been more inclined to take this path than now. What I have learned is that GOD is directing my life in such a way that I only get what I need when I need it. It is not hard for me to imagine that He had a cheshbon that I needed this but wouldn't be able to handle it earlier and therefore waited till the time was right. In short I would say you have nothing to fear. If it is not good for you it won't happen and if it happens it will be good for you.

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Re: ABSTINENCE - I may be headed into a long period of it  
Posted by ToAdd - 16 Jul 2010 05:33

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Thanks.

I'm not afraid of going through it myself, I'm afraid I'm subjecting the most important person in my life to something she does not deserve.

Right now, things are okay, so there's nothing to fear.

Keep well, have a good Shabbos.

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Re: ABSTINENCE - I may be headed into a long period of it  
Posted by Haleivi76 - 16 Jul 2010 10:33

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Jooboy!

Tough times!

I'm afraid like so many I'm not sure that I can offer any real advice. I can share my experiences though. I think that by virtue of their nature many women are quite fickle - i.e. they change their minds an awful lot. However, once they are fixed on something for a reason, they can also be the most stubborn creatures that H" has put on this earth. It makes me wonder whether your wife is aware of your addiction and past actions and that this has somehow prompted her cooling towards you in the intimate sense.

I know the same has certainly happened to me in the past. My wife is not aware that I have an 'addiction' per se, but she has caught me out a couple of times over the 8 yrs we have been married and her response has always been to cool it physically with me for a long time. It is tremendously frustrating of course, but then I did bring it on myself. When things calm down a bit though, she then seems to want intimacy again and complains that she does not get enough. It is a vicious cycle, because in the past, my response to the barren times, was to indulge my addiction more and more, so by the time she is ready to be intimate again, I hold her up against all the 'fake' images and movies I have spent my time oggling and find her very wanting, so perhaps I then find myself not so interested in her. and on and on. Sometimes even now when things are relatively good between us, she wants me to be intimate with her, but does not reciprocate, which is even more frustrating, but I 'take it on the chin' as kapporas avoinos for all the bad things I have done.

My suggestion is to perhaps go for the 100/0 principle. If we try to focus on making our wife's lives and world better 100% of the time, not just in the bedroom, but in every aspect of our lives WITHOUT EXPECTING RECIPROCATION OF ANY KIND, she will eventually not be able to avoid doing so. It is a hard road to travel, but I think the only true way of making it work.

If you think it is nuts, consider this - is what you are doing now working? If not, what have you



got to lose?

But it has to be done in a consistent, systematic way for it to have any chance of success.

Good Luck my friend,

Kol tuv and Good Shabbos,

Haleivi

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Re: ABSTINENCE - I may be headed into a long period of it  
Posted by Jooboy - 16 Jul 2010 13:54

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Halevi,

Thanks for the response. My wife is actually aware that I am a lust addict and my attitude toward intimacy and how I behave when we are not is very much the reason for her wanting abstinence. For in the last number of years this has been my biggest issue - overwhelming obsession with being with my wife that can really throw me off track emotionally when I am disappointed, which is quite often.

Thanks

Good Shabbos

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