



Physical Contact – Introduction

As mentioned in previous emails, the *Rishonim* teach us that we derive from the *pasuk* of “Lo **sikrevu** l’galos erva – do not **come close** to impropriety” that if a man makes physical contact with a woman in a close manner and/or with the intention of fostering closeness, he has transgressed an *issur d’Oraysa* of *kereivah l’arayos*. One must give up their life rather than transgress this sin. (*Sefer Hachinuch*, Mitzvah 188; *Rambam* in *Sefer Hamitzvos*, Lo Saasei 353 and in *Hilchos Issurei Biah* 21:5; *Shulchan Aruch* EH 20; *Shach* YD 157:10)

Furthermore, the *poskim* explain that even physical contact which is not done to promote closeness is prohibited. There are several reasons for this:

1. There is an *issur d'rabbanan* (rabbinical prohibition) which forbids all physical contact between genders, even in an impersonal manner. This prohibition is only waived in specific circumstances, such as a doctor examining a patient, as will *iy"H* be explained in the upcoming emails.
2. Even if the contact is not with the specific intention to breed closeness, it can often lead to further contact which will foster feelings of that nature. Thus, such contact would ultimately fall under the severe prohibition of *abizrayu d'giluy arayos*, for which one must give their life rather than transgress.
3. Physical contact with a woman will also generally lead a man to have *hirhurim* (inappropriate thoughts), which are prohibited.

(See *Shach* YD 157:10; *Beis Shmuel* EH 20; *Ezer Mekudash* EH 20:1; *Igros Moshe* YD 3, 54:1; *Malbushei Mordechai* 8:2; see also *Sdei Chemed* 3, 100:7)
