

The Halachah of all of this is driving me insane
Posted by ilikeostrichmeat - 12 Jul 2022 05:48

Let me preface this by saying I didn't grow up religious. I went to a baal teshuvah yeshiva for a year, which is nowhere near enough, but it's a start. B'H' I'll return when I get the chance.

Anyways, we consider sexual urges to be natural, like hunger, thirst, tiredness, etc., but the boundaries of acting upon those sexual urges are so much more restrictive, punishable, and limited than any of the others, and it's beginning to drive me mad. Don't argue kashrut is worse, because I, as a food lover, have had a far easier time conquering over my urges to eat treif than I have my sexual urges. And where, for a 24 year old bochur like me, are the solutions? We poskun in a way where sleeping with a non-Jewish girl, even as a d'rabbanan, is held to be as bad as an issur d'raisa; sleeping with a Jewish girl who likely hasn't toveled is an issur d'raisa that's hayev kareis; zerah levatalah, well, there's a reason this organization exists; and simply getting married to the first girl I meet simply to solve these issues is a pretty stupid thing to do.

WHAT IS A GUY LIKE ME TO DO? Just install filters on everything I own and lift weights 3 hours a day?

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Re: The Halachah of all of this is driving me insane
Posted by committed_togrowth - 12 Jul 2022 07:14

I hear you, this can be a difficult thing to process. I hope if I share a bit of my own journey it might help (I'm also a baal teshuvah). I think it is never healthy to regret our pre-Torah past as that is what Hashem chose for us to be born into, but if there is one area that causes me to tear up whenever I think about it, it is the sexual relationships I have had in the past (mostly in college and shortly after). Some of these were with non-jewish women, and some were with

jewish women. In each of these relationships, I was ultimately seeking to satisfy myself and ended up using the person I was with. I lacked the maturity and correct perspective on what a true relationship is about, and because of that I did harm both to myself and others. That I have used and discarded a bas yisrael in my past is a deep source of pain for me, but there is nothing I can do to change it and I have to accept my past. In fact, the absolute emptiness, vanity, and harm of these sexual relationships was one of the main factors that drove me to wake up and start thinking seriously about what life was about. If you can take it from someone who has been from one end of the earth to the other in this regard, trust me you are not missing anything by having not engaged in the university hook up culture.

All of this is to say that you are in a very special position, in that you have been specially reserved for your future wife. Because you haven't been with other women, you will be able to be with your wife in a truly unique and special way that many baalei teshuva do not have the opportunity to do. I in no way want to diminish the difficulty of being a mid-20s bochur, but I hope you can understand your lack of sexual experience as a very special thing and not in any way a deficiency. Have you spoken to any of your rebbeim about when the appropriate time for you to start dating might be? Keep growing, without a doubt you are going to make someone very happy in the future, soon b'eZRas Hashem.

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Re: The Halachah of all of this is driving me insane
Posted by Vehkam - 12 Jul 2022 14:49

Hi, i am very impressed by your openness and clarity in expressing the temptations and desires that you are facing. Although i grew up religious I still had some of the same challenges that you describe. (i unfortunately did stray, but will not go into details here.)

I believe that you will gain tremendously from seeing things from a different perspective than the punitive and restrictive limits that you describe. I will iy'h come back to write more, but the most important thing is to get to the point where challenges are viewed as opportunities as opposed to restrictions.

all the best,

vehkam

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Re: The Halachah of all of this is driving me insane
Posted by Vehkam - 13 Jul 2022 01:33

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ok, here is my promised longer response!

These are my thoughts i hope some of them are helpful.

Sexual boundaries are not put in place to be punishable. They are not meant to be restrictive just for the sake of having restrictions (although by nature they are of course inherently restrictive). The boundaries and laws are put in place to help you become the greatest version of yourself possible. Ultimately that is the goal of a person on this world. To put in the effort to the best of his ability and strive to fulfil the mitzvos. Every mitzva is an opportunity to connect to hashem and every time you overcome a forbidden desire you are doing the ultimate ratzon hashem.

You mention that kashrus is not "worse". Mitzvos are not better or worse. They are opportunities. Some of them present easier challenges and some of them are more difficult challenges. The ones that you find most difficult are also the ones that present the greatest opportunity for you. It is important to keep that perspective so that you don't feel stifled by the mitzvos. That does not mean it is not hard. It just means that it's worth it!! If you develop this perspective you will feel much better for withstanding the urges of forbidden desires.

Much of the sexual urge and desire that you describe do not necessarily stem from the natural attraction that hashem put into nature. Rather it is a result of the messages that we receive from the promiscuous society in which we are living. This is not an accident. If we were given this challenge by hashem, and he saw fit to put us into this society, then this is clearly the opportunity for greatness that hashem is affording us. A good portion of people who grew up religious are dealing with these same challenges.

It is also important not to see yiddishkeit as a religion that demands nothing less than perfection. People are not perfect. Hashem does not expect you to be perfect. Hashem understands the difficulty of your situation as he is the one that put you there and he is there with you rooting for you to succeed. We are required to do our best and if we fall, to get up and keep trying. Hashem is not waiting for you to fail so that you can be punished. (I mention this only because you describe some of your challenges as punishable) He is there to help you succeed and grow one step at a time.

Many people want to be good and "do the right thing" to live a torah life because it seems like the right and a beautiful way to live, but they haven't developed a strong desire to do ratzon hashem on a personal level. They don't see their life and kiyum hamitzvos as their direct connection to hashem on an individual level

In my opinion, the best way to overcome these desires is to work on this desire to do ratzon hashem. If your desire to serve hashem is stronger than the desire to act on the urges of the yetzer hara, then you will be successful almost 100% of the time. You need to clarify for yourself what you really want and work on that desire. I found that the best way to build that desire to serve hashem was to focus on how much hashem loves me as an individual. The Chasam Sofer says that the reason there is only one bayis in the tefillin shel yad (as opposed to the tefillin shel rosh which has four batim) is to show that Hashem's love (tefillin shel yad is next to the heart) for every single yid is the same – no matter what he has done in the past. Hashem's love is unconditional and hashem's desire is to reward us with unimaginable rewards. Those rewards will far exceed any fleeting pleasure that the yetzer hara tries to

convince us to partake in.

You mention that you are a virgin. That you had no confidence when you were younger. Now you have that confidence.... I say that you are triple blessed! Hashem guided you on this path. You did not partake in relationships that were forbidden. You are so fortunate for this. You now have confidence. Use this gift to continue to develop yourself and and to develop a meaningful relationship with someone. Someone who can help you accomplish your true goals in life.

Regarding d'oraysa vs d'rabanan. It really does not make a difference regarding how one should approach how careful they are. Once it is assur it is completely assur. Chazal did not make mistakes. If they said something is assur one should not entertain any thoughts that chazal made it harder for us. Chazal were protecting us and they established these protections with a full understanding of all the ramifications. (of course if there is a place to be lenient in halacha one should follow their rav's guidance use the leniencies available as appropriate)

Lastly, if you have not already done so, I encourage you to talk to hashem about this. Open up to hashem when you daven. In your own words you can say that deep down you really want to do what is right. Ask Hashem for his help. You cannot do it without him. None of us can!

I apologize if any of my wording shows a lack of compassion or understanding. I have the utmost respect for you, your commitment and the magnitude of the struggle. Hopefully some of the ideas that I have written will be helpful to you or to others.

With the greatest wishes for continued success in this and all areas.

vehkam?

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Re: The Halachah of all of this is driving me insane
Posted by tcproperty44 - 13 Jul 2022 02:14

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Re: The Halachah of all of this is driving me insane
Posted by wilnevergiveup - 13 Jul 2022 05:09

[ilikeostrichmeat wrote on 12 Jul 2022 05:48:](#)

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Dude! Awesome post!

I ain't got much to say.

I think a lot of what you are asking is perspective, which can take a time to change. Like someone else mentioned earlier, it's best to find someone live to talk these things through, I am not sure an anonymous internet forum will suffice.

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Re: The Halachah of all of this is driving me insane

Posted by Lchaim Tovim - 13 Jul 2022 20:13

I wish I knew what to tell you. Your in a tough situation and hurting. All I know is, since your a BT, you've gone through challenges that I cannot fathom and have strength and courage that I could only dream of having.

I would like to address one point though. You wrote ", and I still have that desire to experience what a no-strings-attached college-style relationship (or any real relationship) is like, rather than having one single relationship for the rest of my life and be left with nothing to compare it to and wondering what the alternatives could have been."

Many of us have fantasized and lusted over this and maybe still are. How many are there that you will need for comparisons sake? Is one more girl enough? 5? 10?

There's always going to be another girl, another shape, color or size that we could wonder what would it be like with her...

Truth be told, lets say you actually had experienced some mind blowing s*x with some other girl, and now, the woman you chose to marry because she is the one you want to raise a family with doesn't compare in that arena, your actually going to be worse off and not better off.

I guess the bottom line is and easier said than done, If to you, your wife is the only girl in the world, and you make her feel like she's the only girl in the world, that will bring happiness. our job is to stop comparing, stop fantasizing and stop lusting.

How?? I'm still learning but there's a treasure trove of info over here.

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Re: The Halachah of all of this is driving me insane
Posted by OTR - 14 Jul 2022 15:21

[ilikeostrichmeat wrote on 12 Jul 2022 05:48:](#)

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Yo Amigo. Thanks for joining and posting this. First let me say... ostrich meat? that one takes the cake! Love it.

Second-As regards your post- I'm BT too. I grew up modern Orthodox. I was always called by my Hebrew name, house was always kosher even though I strayed for a while, I went to co-ed schools (which is the root of modern Orthodoxy's problems IMHO) and had many girlfriends many who I used and sort of viewed as conquests in my own sick immature demented arrogance. I was from a decent background, narcissistic, went to co-ed summer camps. To sheltered to realize how sheltered I was actually from the streets and the 'real' which seemed to call to me. Before God smacked me back on track, I was aiming for serious drug abuse and I don't know what would have happened to me had I gone with my friends to Dahab and tried acid while in Israel for the year.

That said I never went to college but I was close enough to get the vibe. I missed out and longed for the care-free spring break hookups.. I still do, to a degree. But at the same time, the desire did lessen. Flatly- The only answer is time, effort and patience.

I would suggest focusing and realizing that you are not the first nor will you be the last person to feel this way. I would venture to say you most likely have at least a handful of people in the same boat as you in your immediate circle of acquaintances like in shul or yeshiva but you don't even realize it. BT syndrome is a challenge but it is something many BTs face. There is no amount of anyone telling you about how empty secular culture is, how obviously flawed the mentality of 'play the field to learn what you like' is, that will assuage these desires. That's a fact.

You yourself found in the heat of the passions and feeding your desires that you felt empty. So, what more proof do you need? You think you missed the 'big payoff? The light at the end of the tunnel? The pot of gold? THE pinnacle of sex?

It seems you are a sensitive soul. You must be, because what other reason is there for you to work to change your life in the way you have and are continuing to do? So, you know it's empty, false, decadent and numbing. And yet, wet t shirt contests and body shots, drug/alcohol fired parties will most likely continue to call to you for some time. I hate to sound pessimistic in that regard. But it is just the fact.

I might respectfully add that Chazal were well aware of this pull, as are FFB's. We all experience the same thing and the word for it is *prikas ol* which means throwing off the yolk. It's the call of the times and it's everywhere. We can't escape the near constant conscious and subconscious invitations to just fill those desires. Look at your Pepsi bottle.. or Coke.. one of them has in big letters- OBEY YOUR THIRST.

The world is trying to convince itself that *prikas ol* will make us happy. Soundbytes and vidgrabs of throngs of people dancing immodestly clad body parts moving in suggestive ways.. who doesn't feel the pull when walking down the street and seeing that billboard for a 'dream beach vacation.'

The sheltered frum? He for sure feels the pull. Actually, he's looking at you and saying, 'at least this guy had a chance to XYZ. Look at me, I never stepped foot in a bar or even got to talk to a woman other than when dating for shidduchim.

It is the same for you. The same for me. The same for everyone. *Prikas ol* pulls us. We can always look back and find some additional pleasure we didn't experience. There is no end to it. And submitting to that is the only way out. To realize there was and is nothing you can experience that would leave you feeling, for the rest of your life, like you had the 'absolute best-creme de la creme of physical enjoyment' and THEN decided to become frum. There is no way to check that box on the bucket list. It will always be empty because that is the evil inclination. A persistent desire for more no matter how much you already have.

I almost married my high school sweet heart. Well she wasn't a sweet heart I guess, because I cheated on her and she cheated on me while I was away in Israel. So much for teen love. I look back from time to time and think about the ones that I got emotionally involved with. Sometimes I'll check out old girl friends facebook pages... imagining.. what if? Was it worth it? What did I give up, what did I gain.... But as time goes on I find it easier to focus on my life now. My family, my kids. And overall myself.

I wish you luck bro. Know that you have to find your own path through it, but that others have walked there before. Indeed, we all walk the same road we just don't realize it.

With love

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Re: The Halachah of all of this is driving me insane
Posted by ilikeostrichmeat - 14 Jul 2022 20:20

You inadvertently brought up an important point, as I do have rebbeim to consult with, but how does one bring up an issue like this, and would it even be worth it if I already know what they're going to say? If I come to them and say "hey I have this zera levatalah problem, so can I just swap it out for a lesser d'raisa like sleeping with non-Jewish women and then wind down from there?", they'll look at me like I'm nuts, because this isn't an issue where you can replace one aveirah with the other and call that progress, and they know I know enough Torah to know that. I guess I just have to leave it open, and say "I have this problem, so what should I do about it?"

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Re: The Halachah of all of this is driving me insane
Posted by ilikeostrichmeat - 14 Jul 2022 20:21

[tcproperty44 wrote on 13 Jul 2022 02:14:](#)

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Re: The Halachah of all of this is driving me insane
Posted by Vehkam - 14 Jul 2022 20:24

Just verbalizing to them that this is a struggle should be helpful for you. Knowing that someone cares about you and your struggle may be better than any answer.

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Re: The Halachah of all of this is driving me insane
Posted by Avrohom - 15 Jul 2022 02:51

[ilikeostrichmeat wrote on 14 Jul 2022 20:21:](#)

[tcproperty44 wrote on 13 Jul 2022 02:14:](#)

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Firstly, you are clearly both driven to growth and incredibly honest - which are two really important qualities in Avodas Hashem in general and certainly in this particular battle. I don't know your Rebbeim, but in my experience, if they know you and you respect and trust them - then they should not think you "nuts" at all for your desires nor your questions about why Hashem wants us to have these prohibitions and live with these restrictions and difficult challenges. I wouldn't call it a "problem". Any healthy male virgin (imho) has desires, to some extent, for the things you mentioned, whether they are FFB or BT - It could be yours are stronger than most, I don't know. Either way, it's normal, and the questions are good ones, that are important to address in an honest, non-judgmental way. I would suggest approaching your

Rebbe, and begin by asking the questions about why Hashem wants us to live this lifestyle of making such things available, with such strong desires for it, and attaching such heavy prohibitions to it. You can later add in your particular strong interest and desires for it, when you feel comfortable.

Hatzlocha Rabba in your continued battle to achieve closeness to Hashem by avoiding the desires and pitfalls of this world.(Mesillas Yeshorim Chapter 1)

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Re: The Halachah of all of this is driving me insane
Posted by frank.lee - 17 Jul 2022 00:54

ILOM - what should you do? Yes, get good filters on all your devices. Unfiltered internet is asking for trouble, putting yourself in a worse, harder situation. Lift weights for 20 minutes a day, do some other exercises too...

You will be shocked to learn and experience that you can live a healthy life and not obsess about girls and things, conquering your taava for mzl, without going insane. To the contrary, you will feel awesome! As much as it is hard to imagine now.

Start your journey to 90 days if you did not yet do so. You will be pleasantly surprised how great it is. Will you still have taavas, desires? Yes. But you will be able to be much stronger than them, and stronger from them, that it won't bother you.

Welcome to the forums, meet the great people here, and feast in the great content and support here.

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Re: The Halachah of all of this is driving me insane
Posted by Shtarkandemotional - 26 Jul 2022 06:27

I just wanna comment - I've heard lifting weights can increase desires in the long run.. better to

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go for a run or bike ride

Re: The Halachah of all of this is driving me insane
Posted by 1084 - 14 Mar 2023 21:53

wow Vehkam, I am deeply moved by your response...

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