

Fridays and sadness

Posted by simchastorah - 10 Feb 2023 07:52

Friday morning I often look at porn and masturbate, I have no work, so less on my plate. My wife goes back to sleep, so no issue there. I'm especially in danger right now because I'm feeling gross, because yesterday something embarrassing happened to me, and I had something of a conflict with a coworker. Lately the way that I would deal with this is to escape into fantasy land, and then hate myself for the rest of the day. Then to get away from hating myself, I'll smoke a little weed, which just makes me feel more depressed.

Additionally I'm struggling right now because my wife is dealing with extreme anxiety. She's not so mentally well, she's on 3 or 4 different medications, but still is in a state of struggling to get anything done because of her anxiety. On top of that, we haven't been together in around three months, she hasn't even gone to the mikva because of issues in our shalom bayis. I also unfortunately have trouble being attracted to her, because of weight gain and some skin problems.

So right now there is a side of me that wants to just throw seichel to the wind and watch porn. But I really really don't want to do that. I want to be close to Hashem. And I want to behave in a way that I can respect, so that hopefully over time I can handle the different external difficulties in my life without feeling so compelled to seek comfort in these unhealthy ways.

The truth is, I walk around feeling pretty bad about myself a lot of the time. I was badly abused and bullied for around a year at age 13, though not sexually abused b'h. I still walk around with these bad feelings about myself, and when anything goes wrong, it's magnified many times because it's compounding the bad way that I already feel. It's very hard for me to bear all of these feelings, and I turn to porn, masturbation, weed, and some alcohol to deal with them. Unfortunately they all have terrible costs. So I need to learn to deal. Hashem help me.

I generally keep everything to myself, because 1) I don't want people to look down on me, 2) I know that everyone is dealing with their own stuff, some more than others, and I don't want to burden them with my stuff and 3) I know that look down or not, people full of negativity are less pleasant to connect with, and people will not want to associate with me.

Writing this all out, I'm filled with a tremendous sadness. At the same time though, I feel like maybe

I have a bit more of a chance to not descend into the hell of porn and self loathing

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Re: Fridays and sadness

Posted by frank.lee - 18 Feb 2023 23:46

Awesome point, no worry about how you will hold off forever, as it is only a fleeting desire.

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Re: Fridays and sadness

Posted by simchastorah - 19 Feb 2023 06:17

Thank you HHM for taking the time to share your hard earned lessons with me on erev shabbos.

I would like to do my best to write up what you shared with me here, as an act of chazarah, and for the possibility of helping another.

Before I start, I want to acknowledge that I am not b'emes holding by the ideas which I will write.

My need to acknowledge that is because of two things, one positive and one negative:

The positive: there is a certain hypocrisy to talking about maalos that one doesn't have. I am avoiding

that hypocrisy by openly admitting that I'm not really holding there

The negative: I'm afraid that in the coming days/weeks/months I will fall. Then I will really feel like a

hypocrite for darshening. I'm dealing with that the same way

Overview:

Hashem gave us sexuality to fulfill a purpose, or as we'll continue, at least two purposes.

The expression of sexuality which we experience when we engage in porn/masturbation/selfish-sex

is not only not in line with the purpose which sex is supposed to fulfill, but even directly opposes it.

The purpose of sex is twofold: producing children and celebrating intimacy. These two purposes are uprooted by P&M, where seed is spilled for no purpose, and rather than celebrating an intimate

connection between two people, we celebrate our isolated self in the most disconnected way possible,

'taava y'vakesh nifrad'

To be continued...

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Re: Fridays and sadness

Posted by simchastorah - 19 Feb 2023 21:29

Continuation from above

Producing children vs zera l'vatala

It's been established through surveys (as HHM for the details here) that people around the world feel bad after masturbating or engaging in selfish sex. I can certainly relate to this. I'm sure you can too. But what is the source of this bad feeling? Certainly through engaging so passionately in issur we cleave to tumah and this hurts us. But what is the specific ra which we are attaching ourselves to by doing this sin?

Hashem created the world for a tachlis. Everything in the world exists to fit into that tachlis. And everything and everyone is only really existing to the extent that they are fulfilling that tachlis. Living our tachlis means taking our potential and building the tachlis out of it, putting it towards tachlis. When we take our potential and put it towards our tachlis, we feel alive, we feel exhilarated. And the opposite, when we r'l take our kocho and don't use them for the tachlis or even worse, we throw them in the garbage, we feel dead. (you know that hollow feeling? that's where the feeling of being alive is supposed to be)

L'mashal, when we take our money, perhaps the most tangible form of potential that we have, and put it towards tov, like through giving tz'daka, we feel wonderful. On the other hand, if we take that same money and burn it, we'll feel terrible.

Zera is a concentrated expression of our potential. It is produced as the result of an incredible act of focus, of creativity, of physical energy, of emotional energy, culminating in a moment of

incredible energy. It bears with in it the most incredible potential to bring a human being, a neshama t' hora chatzuva m'tachas kisei hakavod, into the world, with eyes and ears, hands and feet, a liver, a heart, feelings thoughts. It's like a billion dollars. Take that billion dollars and use it the right way. Then you are truly alive. But take that billion dollars and throw it into the ocean...

Of course a man feels empty when he spills seed. He's spilling himself into the garbage, he's taking his life, and flushing it down the toilet

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Re: Fridays and sadness

Posted by simchastorah - 19 Feb 2023 21:50

Breaking from chazara of HHM's chasan shmooze to write briefly about my journey. B'h today was day 13 of cleanliness from porn and masturbation. I really feel like I'm starting to come back to myself after a few years of being away. I feel more clean. I have contended with many urges over the last few days. The surfing technique has been helpful today. Thanks to Vehkam's encouragement, yesterday and today I read a chapter of The Battle of the Generation. It was good. I also went through two sections of the sefer v'haer eineinu.

I'm really dying for a feeling of freedom from this thing. I can imagine people responding that the freedom comes when you stop dying for it or something along those lines. But I am dying for it. I have a constant pit of fear in my stomache that I'll fall again, that in retrospect this will be a tkufa that I'll look back on and smirk at my naivety, thinking I had actually got somewhere.

I need chizuk to stay on top of my game. I need to connect with people. I need to have real friendships with people where we can talk about things that matter.

You know, it can be hard to talk about things that matter. Because the place inside ourselves where things matter to us is really very vulnerable and raw. And especially when you have trauma like I do, it can be very difficult to open up that place. I'm not just talking about porn and the like, which has it's own stigma. But even if I want to talk to you about serving Hashem, about having a good davening, about longing to be davuk in Torah, if we don't talk about these things as our selves, then we're missing the boat. And to talk about these things as our selves, we have to be willing to open up. Otherwise we'll be just monkeys, acting out the way that we think that we feel, instead of just being ourselves.

So I don't mean it's hard to talk about things that matter, I really mean it's hard for me to be comfortable being myself. And I think that it's this discomfort in part which positions me to have a tendency to get stuck in sexual fantasy. Because I crave that love and acceptance of me which porn is an immitation of. Unfortunately porn is not the real thing, that is, animalistic sexuality is not the real thing. But I've gotten so confused between real connection and animalistic sexuality. So I go barking up the wrong tree. I need to retrain my brain to know what love is really, what connection is really, and what sexuality is really.

The sefer cheshbon hanefesh works with a theme of comparing the nefesh ha'bahamis to an animal which we are responsible to train. If you're too machmir on the animal that you're trying to train, it will rebel, but if you're too meikel, it'll come to be the one in control.

Currently the animal which I'm trying to train is quite a nebuch. It is dying for love and real connection, but is horribly confused about what those things mean and how to get them. It is in the habit of engaging in very unhealthy behavior, tragically disappointed when it never gets what it wants. Like a dog waiting at the door for it's dead owner for years and years.

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Re: Fridays and sadness

Posted by jackthejew - 19 Feb 2023 21:58

[simchastorah wrote on 19 Feb 2023 21:50:](#)

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I spent years quashing my feelings with porn and masturbation. To the point that when I started in recovery, deep down, I was afraid to feel at all. I couldn't know that I wanted to be an Eved Hashem until I shed some of the old habit of never feeling, reaching instead for the pacifier I'd chosen to shield me from reality. The stigma of porn by me also came from a place of wanting to protect it. Because I felt subconsciously that I needed my coping mechanism to survive, I

shielded it with my life. I couldn't lose it. It was precious, and needed to be kept hidden. Because it was so bad. And yet so necessary and great at the same time. Freedom was when I could learn to move on. When it doesn't really matter much to me if someone figures out my identity.

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Re: Fridays and sadness
Posted by simchastorah - 19 Feb 2023 22:07

Thank you for sharing, that's very interesting. It sounds like you're saying you became free when you were no longer afraid of losing the escape of porn. Like the feeling of being trapped for you was the fear of not being able to cope without it, and you eventually unlearned the fear and discovered that you could cope without it.

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Re: Fridays and sadness
Posted by sleepy - 20 Feb 2023 00:09

[simchastorah wrote on 19 Feb 2023 21:50:](#)

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bravo! well articulated!

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Re: Fridays and sadness

Posted by simchastorah - 20 Feb 2023 13:39

continuation from HHM chasan shmooze

Intimacy vs self centeredness

Chazal tell us that Hashem created Adam and Chavah as a single unified being, which was then divided into two halves.

This means that man can not experience his true self without reuniting with his lost half. Our experience of being as single people is really an experience of our self out of context, we are only really our full selves in the context of unity with a spouse.

The process of achieving shleimus in marriage is a process of achieving a full state of unity, of becoming one. L'mashal, when you see a couple walking down the street who has really

merged together it is natural to say, "hey there go the Birnbaums" and not there goes Aharon and Tova.

Intimacy between a man and woman is nothing less than a celebration of this fusion. It serves as a way of enhancing and maintaining the unification of the couple. It's like the frosting on top of a cake, which enhances the experience of the cake. Take a big chunk of frosting without cake, and it is unpleasant, its overly sweet flavor even tasting bitter. So too with the intimate act outside of the context of true intimacy.

When a person experiences sexuality in it's proper form, as an expression of intimacy, he realizes that the charade that exists in pornography and fantasy of that nature is just that - a charade. A poor imitation of something much more wonderful and potent.

I myself experienced this in the past, during a t'kufa where I was working on relating to things properly in the bedroom. I remember once after intimacy thinking to myself "how could anyone think that the right way to engage in this is in that disgusting exaggerated way, the poor fools." If we spend our lives chasing after the sex from the movies, from the books, from porn, from our imagination, we are mamash such a nebach. We are chasing after something mamash lame.

My father once told me a mashal for the yetzer hara, that he's like a man who comes to you with his hand closed in a fist, tempting you with the untold treasure he bears in his hand. But when he finally opens it, you see there's nothing inside.

This is mamash sexual fantasy. It's so tempting. The promise of wonder is so great. But if you give in, you find out there's really nothing there.

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Re: Fridays and sadness

Posted by simchastorah - 20 Feb 2023 13:48

I left out a very important bit above. Sexual relations for selfish reasons is the very opposite of intimacy. Two people can engage in this without caring about each other at all, without even knowing each other's names. If the other one drops dead the next day he won't even sigh. It is complete involvement in my pleasure, my internal experience, not about the other.

So there you have it. The two purposes of sexuality aliba d'emes are entirely uprooted when one uses sexuality inappropriately.

One more nice thing - in shulchan oruch orach chaim, the siman which talks about hilchos tzniyus is siman resh mem. There is a wonderful sefer on this siman called Mishkan Yisrael, which goes through the halachos, but also has a beautiful introduction. This sefer has a massive amount of askamos from g'dolei yisroel, litvish, chassidish, sefardic, everyone. More

than any other sefer I've seen. There is a haskama there from R' Yaakov Hillel. In it he writes that he likes to say that there's a remez in this siman being siman resh mem. Resh mem is the letters of the word 'ram' as well as the word 'mar'. If a person engages in intimacy properly, with k'dusha, with tzniyus, as an act of connection, then it brings him to be 'ram' to achieve 'romemus'. But on the other hand if a person acts the wrong way in this area, if a person is with his wife b'vchinas znus, then we will find it to be 'mar' very bitter.

I am looking forward to tomorrow and the next day being the first rosh chodesh in quite a while without looking at porn or masturbating. Usually on rosh chodesh, that special 'zman kapara', I am plagued by guilt. How have I allowed another rosh chodesh to come without being msaken this inyan? How have I let myself engage in this filth on yet another holy day?

But this rosh chodesh, beh'y, I will not look at filth. I will not abuse my holy potential. Thank you Hashem for two weeks of coming back to myself

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Re: Fridays and sadness
Posted by jackthejew - 20 Feb 2023 18:00

[simchastorah wrote on 19 Feb 2023 22:07:](#)

Thank you for sharing, that's very interesting. It sounds like you're saying you became free when you were no longer afraid of losing the escape of porn. Like the feeling of being trapped for you was the fear of not being able to cope without it, and you eventually unlearned the fear and discovered that you could cope without it.

Yes. Although I was only able to understand that in hindsight. Not saying I'm free. I'm Baruch Hashem a healthy male, but that's when the Inyan changed into a more manageable place.

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Re: Fridays and sadness
Posted by simchastorah - 20 Feb 2023 20:03

Me: I feel great about having been clean for two weeks!

Yetzer Hara: Great! Lets celebrate with a little masturbation!

Me: But then I'll feel terrible...

Yetzer Hara: No you wont. You only felt terrible when you were a slave, now you're free

Me: First of all, I am not yet free. Second of all the thing itself causes me terrible pain. You are not my friend. You are not wise. You are my enemy, and your advice is terrible.

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Re: Fridays and sadness

Posted by Yeshayahu 41:6 - 20 Feb 2023 23:35

My friend, you are a real tzadik! you are like the nazir from the south who called out his yetzer hara knowing it was NOT HIMSELF but a foreign enemy talking with his own voice (ayin nazir daf 4...not a shas yid, just looked it up now for the post!!)

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Re: Fridays and sadness

Posted by simchastorah - 21 Feb 2023 07:01

Thank you for the divrei chizuk. The other thing in common I have with the nazir from the south is that I need a haircut. Wish I could say I had the good looks too

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Re: Fridays and sadness

Posted by simchastorah - 21 Feb 2023 08:20

Yetzer hara: It's really hard for you to resist this urge right now, you should just do it, it'll feel like such a relief after depriving yourself

Me: But then I'll have to admit that I fell to my friends on GYE, that would be really embaressing

Yetzer hara: Why should it be embaressing? They'll still accept you and give you encouragement, you see how people respond when others have a fall

Me: You're right, people would be nice about it. Though there's one person who probably

wouldn't be nice about it at all. And that's you. You would make me feel like garbage about it. You're acting like you want whats best for me, to give me relief. But really you're the nastiest one of all.

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