

any doctors/biologists in the house (others too)
Posted by strugglingandstrivngBT - 06 Oct 2010 15:41

So I was wondering (as I am in the middle of one) about why we have these periods of cleanliness, and then BAM fall into extreme desire. Further, they seem to follow patterns; 30 days seems to be a rough point as an example. These periods of really bad desire can last an hour, a day or a week. This one has been going 3 or 4 days and I find myself (not thinking about doing B"H) wanting to give up just to calm down the desire! (granted I know that's the Y"H, as if I were to cave it would only ultimately get worse, though in the past caving has temporarily solved the issue). Is there a physiological cause for the patterns and swings? I feel that this is beyond addiction and falls closer to how the body works (though acting on it would be addiction). They sometimes seem provoked by a glimpse of something triggering, but sometimes not. Sometimes I'm just sitting there and all of a sudden my mind is flooded with thoughts. Yet I can go a week with nothing right up to it!

Looking for answers of why and how to avoid/clear the desire.

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Re: any doctors/biologists in the house (others too)
Posted by the.guard - 07 Oct 2010 19:30

Hashem has our journey all planned out on this world. And in his plan, your soul needs some

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Re: any doctors/biologists in the house (others too)
Posted by frumfiend - 07 Oct 2010 22:56

Baruch habaa moreinu vrabainu guard. Long time no speak.

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Re: any doctors/biologists in the house (others too)
Posted by Dov - 08 Oct 2010 00:16

[strugglingandstrivngBT wrote on 06 Oct 2010 15:41:](#)

So I was wondering (as I am in the middle of one) about why we have these periods of cleanliness, and then BAM fall into extreme desire. Further, **they seem to follow patterns**; 30 days seems to be a rough point as an example. These periods of really bad desire can last an hour, a day or a week. This one has been going 3 or 4 days and I find myself (not thinking about doing B"H) **wanting to give up just to calm down the desire!** (granted I know that's the Y"H, as if I were to cave it would only ultimately get worse, though in the past **caving has temporarily solved the issue**). Is there a physiological cause for the patterns and swings? **I feel that this is beyond addiction and falls closer to how the body works (though acting on it would be addiction)**. They sometimes seem provoked by a glimpse of something triggering, but sometimes not. Sometimes I'm just sitting there and all of a sudden my mind is flooded with thoughts. Yet I can go a week with nothing right up to it!

Looking for answers of why and how to avoid/clear the desire.

Wow. To try and respond, be"H:

I believe that addiction **is** in my very body - it is not just something I **do**, but that it is something I **am** - I carry it with me wherever I go; that it is one of the most essential if not **the** most essential ingredient of my life in this world - for better or for worse; and that this nature I have is Hashem's own special way of finally getting me to really **need** Him.

I feel I must mention here that if recovery would be a mission to get back to *where we would be if only I had never been addict*, then I say the entire this is hogwash. And I believe such an attitude apikorsus. It is setting Hashem out of the bounds of my actual life. It is the G-d of a book, not of a person. (I posted somewhere before about why some of the shiurim of the Torah are in *human body* parts, davkeh. Tzaref l'kan v'timza nachas. ;D)

I believe that He planned the refuah **before** the makkah - - - which means, if you think about it for a second, that there is really no such thing as a 'makkah', at all. It's *all* Him and His Will for me. And through the steps I live with Him right now, as soon as I wake up and start speaking to Him intimately (in English - my language, of course). I reach Hashem and stick close with Him (my Eternal Best Friend) **by way of** my failures and addiction. That appears to be my chelek. And it's nice.

And I owe it all to the fact that I couldn't keep my zipper up and couldn't stop following those ladies and couldn't stop using porn for all those years - while I was a 'frum' adult raising a family at the same time, of course (haha) - until I finally, really, needed Him and only Him. All my trying, fighting, and tshuvah was powerless to help me. I needed Him to help it all work, for a change. And I had to go slow - and *stay* slow.

You describe in the most simple and basic way, what every drunk out there knows as 'tolerance' and 'withdrawal'. Nothing more, in my opinion.

Hatzlocha!

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Re: any doctors/biologists in the house (others too)
Posted by strugglingandstrivngBT - 08 Oct 2010 15:58

That makes sense, but there a few major differences between my addiction and alcoholism (and perhaps it is my fault for my lifestyle, but I'm going to try and explain my frustration).

1. the desire for alcohol is foreign. Sex is a mitzvah under kosher circumstances, hence the body has those desires. I am 22, still in school, and as my Rabbi said "there is no tachlis for dating now". I couldn't support children, therefore at the moment there is no kosher outlet. This is an antithetical concept to the body's natural inclination.
2. My Rabbi also said to finish school, partly being my ticket to yeshiva and partly out of need for a parnasa. I struggle with this concept and really don't like school, but out of 3 Rabbi's I discuss such matters, they all agree. My school is FILLED with very immodestly dressed females that a few years ago would be exactly what I was looking for. As much as I am fairly good about shomer eynim, I'm an addict. There is a filter on my computer, not my classroom. My YH/YT sometimes get in these fights where I get so mad at myself for such objectification of misguided girls, you can interact without having fantasies or trying to mentally undress them. and of course I can't and then have to fight being a kiruv diplomat in where I've been placed and not wanting to interact or make any eyecontact within three feet of them (the class is MOSTLY girls that fall into this category, it is VERY hard).

So yes, life is a test, without the illness there would be no refuah, without the refuah there would be no goal, but I never made a complete recovery. My p & m addiction never ruined my life, it never brought me to a low. A related issue (codependency with sexual undertones) did, and I

did use it to bring me to a higher level, but I was still active while reaching that. Now this is an issue simply because I'm frum and when I'm filled with desire I have no room for Hashem or spirituality. If I were to act, even in the way I was 1.5 years ago, it really wouldnt affect my life all that much. It sounds like I'm in denial, but it's true. It cost me no money, little time, and hurt no one (outside of the emotional damage of the people on the p..sites and social issues perhaps). The only thing it really messes up now is my thoughts and emuna, and quite honestly it is very hard for me to feel I need Hashem when I'm having trouble believing in Him.

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Re: any doctors/biologists in the house (others too)
Posted by strugglingandstrivngBT - 08 Oct 2010 16:01

I got carried away with 2 and forgot 3.

The patterns I mentioned often coincide with the amount of school work/stress/gashmius I'm around. The last week or so I have been inundated with school work and often feel spiritually numb when my face is in a secular psych book or bio book all day. in the past P and M were like my after work beer (that happened to be ussur).

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Re: any doctors/biologists in the house (others too)
Posted by frumfiend - 08 Oct 2010 19:03

It sounds like you have enormous nisyonos. You also have a great asset in a rabbi you can talk to.

Great hatzlacha you can do it!

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Re: any doctors/biologists in the house (others too)
Posted by Dov - 08 Oct 2010 19:28

Nu.

1- I respectfully disagree with what you say about it being relevant that sex is natural, because I do not believe that my problem is sex, at all. I believe it is **lust**. I have discovered that I can have sex without being controlled by lust. When I look for porn and delve into fantasy and masturbation, I am in 'a trance' and everyone around me is in-the-way - a pain in the butt. No one else (besides my lust target) is really valuable when I am acting out or seeking it out. Not so with sex in sobriety - and certainly not so with a life of sobriety. It is living a different, useful sort of life that enables me to tolerate sobriety. All along, sex and lust were not my problem - it was **sobriety** that drove me crazy! I couldn't tolerate it for very long because living was too uncomfortable. The natural faculty of sex does not address that, at all, does it? Having a girlfriend or wife and occasional sex would not address it at all, of course. So, (to paraphrase the song) 'what's sex got to do with it'?

2- I *also* wouldn't have ended up quitting if my acting out was not ruining my life, so I am not surprised you are frustrated. If you feel there is ever anything I can do to help, just let me know.

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Re: any doctors/biologists in the house (others too)
Posted by strugglingandstrivngBT - 08 Oct 2010 19:37

Dov, that's a very interesting point. The lust is definitely more of a problem, but there is a component of wanting the gratification of M.. I feel that they are two parts of one problem, with either or coming first and worsening the other: there is a lust for visual stimulation and a craving for M. Lust almost always causes a desire for m, but m doesnt always come with lust. There are times that I am around no one or in healthy situations and I just get a craving. I think the latter was what I was refering to in regard to natural sex. Often once the craving starts, the lust follows and makes it worse. And often the swings come intense until I cave. If I cave with M.. I am set in both for about a month (with a day of feeling really bad), and if I cave to lust I almost always cave to M.. soon after. If I beat both, the craving for m doesnt go away. that's my frusteration. kitzer: lust is an absolute problem; I'm simultaneously a normal young adult with desires that make my issues worse.

So I agree with what you said, but add those details. I'm curious as to what your opinion is now.

GOOD SHABBOS ALL!!!! may we have true rest from our addictions and stress this week and start off (technically keep starting off) chesvan right!!!

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Re: any doctors/biologists in the house (others too)
Posted by Dov - 10 Oct 2010 01:58

[strugglingandstrivngBT wrote on 08 Oct 2010 19:37:](#)

The lust is definitely more of a problem, but there is a component of wanting the gratification of M...I think the latter was what I was referring to in regard to natural sex. Often once the craving starts, the lust follows and makes it worse. And often the swings come intense until I cave. If I cave with M.. I am set in both for about a month (with a day of feeling really bad), and if I cave to lust I almost always cave to M soon after. If I beat both, the craving for m doesn't go away. that's my frustration. kitzer: lust is an absolute problem; I'm simultaneously a normal young adult with desires that make my issues worse.

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GOOD SHABBOS ALL!!!! may we have true rest from our addictions and stress this week and start off (technically keep starting off) chesvan right!!!

Wow. You brought up a lot here. First, and quite annoyingly, I want to reiterate that I do **not** equate having a desire for lust and sex with 'addiction'. I believe that probably most of the men and women out there who struggle with occasional desires of this nature are not addicts, but just *normal*. Even in the context of yiddishkeit, where there is no room whatsoever for expression of inappropriate sexuality, I see no reason whatever to throw the label 'addiction' at it. Many others feel otherwise, I know, and I believe that (in their case) 'addiction' may be a big red herring for them. Finally, I feel that participation of non-addicts waters down the program for everyone because a non-addict is not personally desperate. It is all philosophical rather than practical. I believe he doesn't really **personally** need a G-d for his problem.

He may see it as a **religious** problem - in other words, **G-d's** problem with **him** - but not a personal problem of his own. And that is where I believe *addiction, 12 steps recovery, and Derech Eretz* departs from '*frustration with youthful desire*', *the YH, and Torah*. This was all just *my little opinion* - not '**the Truth**'. There - I have said my peace.

Here is an interesting tidbit for you: In SA, we define masturbation 100% as sex. It is defined as: sex with yourself. This is neither semantics nor a moshol, but what it really **is**. For me, that changes the playing field a bit.

All that having been said, you describe the cyclical experience that Roy described in his White Book in the chapter *before* the steps, called "Step Zero". You may enjoy it (maybe you have seen it already...).

There is a beautiful line in the White Book about what you said (quite well) above. It is in a short intro piece titled, "The Problem", and probably 'darshened' a bit more in the Step Zero chapter, and goes like this: "the only way we knew to be free of it was *to do it*." I have always found it very profound and also helpful when I have a desire. When I get a stupid idea like "Yep, following her or getting a better look at that would *really* help me out" and it doesn't just go-away after I say no (which proves to me that my body really believes that it is good for me, in fact, that my body innocently and honestly believes that *I need it*, exactly like I am convinced - by my *stomach* - that I need food when I am starving), I ask Hashem to help me remember that there will always be yet another stupid lust image/fantasy/pretty lust object out there later, so 'getting over' my current desire by 'doing it' will not do me any good, at all - the exact same feeling that *I must have this* will return. Nothing will have changed at all. 'Hanging on' just for today while doing nothing to learn tools to get free of lust is nothing but a bastardization and poor usage of the old adage, 'One Day at a Time". Spare me of *that* fate, please. I want to surrender lust one day at a time, not hold my breath and pretend I am overcoming it.

Did I address your points in a useful way?

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Re: any doctors/biologists in the house (others too)
Posted by kutan - 10 Oct 2010 16:50

SASBT,

Fact is that the natural desire for releasing sperm goes away, once someone pushes through.

Say your feel the need once a month, like you mentioned. This is without external stim.

Well, if you hold out, one day at a time, without 'white-knuckling', but rather giving over the issue to Hashem and trusting Him to help you one day at a time, well, you will find the next couple of weeks difficult. but then, the whole thing will be gone. After a couple (or a couple more than that) of weeks, the body will get used to the idea, and will adjust to it, and the need will disappear.

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Re: any doctors/biologists in the house (others too)
Posted by strugglingandstrivngBT - 10 Oct 2010 16:58

yes. I think my key lies in finding the distinctions. I seem to have innappropriately high desire for lust, and potentially high sexual desire but not at an addictive level. I have to be careful, but I'm not really an addict in this sense. I do become aroused in very inappropriate situations, but it's more of a physical arousal nothing more. probably some deep lying psychological cross wire.

However, I was a codependent/addict in some sense not so long ago. I need to figure out if I need to address this, or just accept that it's over and done and move on. I do have concern that the unhealthy attitudes will return when IYH I find a wife. Sex became and remains on most levels something selfish, lustful and emotional empty. My desires for a wife lay at least partially in this box, and that is a problem. I fear that although the situation may be better, my underlying problems remain. any more advice?

bTw I really appreciate you sharing your ideas and wisdom. it is very helpful and actually explains some of the disconnect I've felt to responses that claim I was in denial when I felt that I didnt have a true addiction. your last post at least offers the possibility that I and my rabbaim are right (not to discredit any one on this site as being helpful or not/am addict.)

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Re: any doctors/biologists in the house (others too)
Posted by Dov - 10 Oct 2010 21:14

Well, thanks.

I haven't met more than one or two well-intentioned Rebbi's who actually know anything about addiction - at least enough to make a distinction between what is normal and they can explain, and what isn't and they can't explain. Those few are aware that inspiration *does not work*, and that the odds for any addict actually getting better are pathetic. So the situation needs a multi-pronged approach that probably involves the wife and maybe even the entire family - every situation is of course different. But an addicts double-life **has** to get the cover ripped off of it *somewhere*. For me it was in at home (a bit), and finally in SA meetings (totally).

Also, typically we tell these rebbi's too **little** or too **general** information about what we actually do and are are thinking/feeling. (As in, "I have trouble with porn and fantasy, and masturbation!" Oy vei, what a useless bit of communication that is!) Though generalizing to save face is quite

normal (for me, at least), it is not of much use to us. When I, for the first time, really laid-in and got *everything* out on the table for a rebbe of mine, he sat back, and after a minute calmly said, "Dov, you are ill and need some serious help. I hope you find it. Your life is so precious and it would be a terrible waste for you not to get the help you need, whatever it is." That man's simple acceptance of the facts did more for me than the other advice I had ever gotten, and it took me only six months more to quit and to get the help I really needed to stay quit. Some of the wacky advice I got included:

1- learn Tanya

2- just stop! You can do it!!

3- convince your wife to have lots more sex with you

4- looking at porn really isn't *that* bad, considering the alternative...

5- learn how to have more pleasure

6- just stop already!

...cheshboning, cheshboning, and ever more cheshboning. Didn't they realize that it was my **thinking** more than anything else, that got me as screwed up as I was in the first place? How could I possibly *think* my way into healthy *living*?! Nuts.

Boruch Hashem I admitted in my heart that my entire life was at stake here, not just *one* marriage and *one* family and *one* yiddishkeit - but I was doomed to repeat this the **next** time with my *next* yiddishkeit (after doing just a little better job at teshuvah and an extreme 'makeover'), with my *next* wife, and my *next* family...I could not run from myself forever. And this was not going away. Since being in recovery, I have met guys who finally came only after their 3rd wife (and family) and after being 'born again', or whatever...b"H I came earlier. I hit bottom while I was still floating on top - **of the bottom of the sewer sludge**. *Chesed Hashem mei'olam v'ad Olam*, indeed! It could have gotten much, much worse.

Thank-G-d I found and stuck to SA like to a piece of wood in the middle of the ocean (and I am still very scared of sharks :o, and cannot swim!), and still do.

SA and probably even Recovery en-gantzen, is not for everyone. But for me, it is working. I do not wish you or anyone would just come and join SA. All I wish for you is that you see and

accept whatever the full truth about yourself is and what you really need, and that you follow it to the end.

People like to quote "sheva yipol tzaddik, v'kom". I wonder: What makes a guy who looks at porn, fantasizes, and masturbates a tzaddik? What gives any struggling, non-sober guy the right to assume this possuk has anything to do with him?! I think that the reason he *is* referred to as a 'tzaddik' at all, is only because **he is taking actual, concrete steps to deal with his problems - he has accepted that he is screwed up and is taking responsibility to get better by doing what he really needs. And he is occasionally failing. Then he gets up, looks in a mirror and admits that he only failed because he still doesn't admit how sick he really is - and then he goes forward to get the help he really needs!** It is not describing the guy in denial, at all.

As far as the arousal in weird places, I will share with you that I occasionally have erections without *any* fantasy at all, right in the middle of shemoneh esrei. So what? The rhetorical "So what?" is one of the most important tools I have been taught (and one of the most dangerous denial tools, too). I use it whenever my sechel tells me it would help my sobriety. I am not surprised if gedolei olam have had the very same experience. So. What. What business is deep subconscious stuff to a puny brain like mine? *Hanistoros laShem Elokeinu*, period. Needing to have more control than that, I consider pure hubris.

Wow, are we getting to know each other or what?

Hatzlocha!

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Re: any doctors/biologists in the house (others too)
Posted by strugglingandstrivngBT - 11 Oct 2010 00:16

one of my rabbaim actually has a BA in psych. I tend to go to him about things related to psych, which was my explanation for things before Torah. I still see a lot of overlap.

What you said once again all seemed very true, I'm just not sure which parts were relevant to me, which werent and which were but in a different manifest. I have been trying to figure out which issues are what, which need work and which to say *so what* to for a while now, and IYH next week I'll be able to sincerely bring it to the table with him (he's away this week, and quite

honestly I dont have time this week). The denial speaks worlds to me. Not about any issue/addiction in particular (I dont actually have any other addiction, just addiction related behavior ie escapism, avoidance, denial in regard to more generalized things. I dont Baruch Hashem partake in any active addictive behaviors other than lust, which Baruch Hashem I have been doing much better with aside from last weeks desire brigade). This all has a more detailed version as well, I'm just not going it to it at the moment. Maybe it's avoidance, maybe it's because this is public, maybe because I dont want to feel like a burden (leaning towards the latter two actually).

I want to reiterate how much I appreciate your help. halazlacha raba vatah vkol tov!

(ps, my Hebrish is actually very limited, and despite my use of translit phrases occasionally have to search what yours mean...)

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Re: any doctors/biologists in the house (others too)
Posted by Dov - 11 Oct 2010 04:02

Sorry for being on the cryptic side....hey! Tales from the crypt!! Whatever, just old bad TV (R"L)...keep moving up!

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