

Rational Recovery (RR) and Torah
Posted by Tomim2B - 04 Jan 2010 23:50

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Re: Rational Recovery (RR) and Torah
Posted by Tomim2B - 05 Jan 2010 06:10

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Re: Rational Recovery (RR) and Torah
Posted by Tomim2B - 05 Jan 2010 06:25

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Re: Rational Recovery (RR) and Torah
Posted by Tomim2B - 05 Jan 2010 14:06

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Re: Rational Recovery (RR) and Torah
Posted by the.guard - 05 Jan 2010 15:12

Q & A of the Day (From Chizuk e-mail #674)

Doesn't being "ill" absolve me from responsibility?

Why do the 12-Step groups call the addiction an "allergy" or "disease". Won't that absolve people of responsibility for their acting out?

The idea of this being an "illness" has nothing to do with absolving ourselves from responsibility at all. And to prove this, let me bring a few quotes from a 12-Step book I have (from the First Step).

- We realized we were acting insane. It's not sane to repeat self-destructive behaviors.
- We recognized how insidious the addiction is, how it continues to tell us lies, getting us to continue to act out again and again.
- We recognized that will power alone, is not effective in dealing with the complex problem of sex addiction.
- We cannot think our way out, we need to act our way into a new pattern of thinking.
- **Powerless does not mean helpless.**
- **Powerless is never an excuse to continue.**
- **We are responsible for our recovery.**
- **Determination is completely up to us.**

Let me explain what the 12-Steps mean by it being a disease: If a cucumber falls into brine and you take it out right away, you can just wash it off and it will be a cucumber again. But if it sits in the brine for a little longer - it will become a pickle, and nothing you can ever do will make it a cucumber again. It's the same with this addiction. Someone who fell once or twice out of curiosity can be washed off and get out of it. But once a person has sunk his mind into this stuff for years, and he has trained himself to use lust as an escape mechanism from life whenever feeling R.I.D (Restlessness, Irritability, Discontent) and he has trained his mind to be triggered by everything he sees, this person develops an "allergy" to lust that never really goes away. What that simply means is, that for the rest of his life, he knows that he can not take even the first sip of lust, because if he does, he can easily lose control. His acting out all these years burned neuron pathways into his brain by "conditioning" himself to be aroused by everything he saw.

And this is a proven condition as well. A big psychiatrist (who doesn't even know much about the 12-Steps) once explained to me that an addict develops a medical condition known as "[hyper-sexuality](#)" by conditioning himself over time to react to triggers and get aroused. He explained to me that this condition can be tested by special sensors which show how an addict's dopamine levels spike high on the chart from the slightest triggers.

What the psychiatrist calls "hyper-sexuality" is what the 12-Steppers call an "allergy".

Knowing that one has this condition doesn't absolve him of anything. (After all, he is the one who sat in the brine all these years and became a pickle!) It's just called "getting honest about the facts about ourselves". And the reason why that is so important for an addict, is because once he knows that he has this condition (and that he is allergic to lust like someone who is allergic to peanuts), he changes his entire attitude in the following three ways:

1) He stops trying to "test" lust and see if he can maybe "lust a little", like most people can... He knows that he simply needs to stay away from lust completely and not let it in at all - because once he allows himself to "struggle" with it, he'll fall.

2) Also, he stops wallowing in guilt and realizes for a change that he is not someone "bad" who needs to become "good", but rather he is simply "ill" and needs to get "better". When attacked by lust he simply says to himself, "well I'm an addict after all, there I go again!", and he surrenders the lust to G-d - knowing that he can't afford to even battle with it at all.

3) Instead of "fighting it" and losing, like he always did for years, he changes his focus to simply doing G-d's will for him today, to the best of his ability. Instead of viewing it as a valiant "struggle" of good over evil, he begins to look at lust as simply a distraction from doing G-d's will, and he asks G-d humbly to remove it from him so he can continue to live for G-d and not for himself.

This is a beautiful and proven approach that has worked for millions of people around the world to find freedom from their addictions, be it alcohol, drugs, lust, or others.

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Re: Rational Recovery (RR) and Torah
Posted by Tomim2B - 05 Jan 2010 15:26

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Re: Rational Recovery (RR) and Torah
Posted by the.guard - 05 Jan 2010 15:51

I just had a talk on the phone with Yakov Schwartz and we agreed that AA's original view of seeing it as a real **physical** disease may not be correct according to today's scientific assesments. However, he agreed with me that we can call it a "behavioral disorder" or use the Moshol of an "allergy".

And although Yakov feels strongly that an addict can heal completely from his "so called" disease, he agreed with me that the neuron pathways remain in the mind. We can learn, however, to "close up those pathways" through new conditioning. However, he agrees that if the addict lets himself fall back in, even a little bit, he will re-open those pathways and react much more intensely to the lust than a normal person would. Basically, this means (the way I see it) that although he can heal, he is never really fully healed. He can close the pathways, but he

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We also agreed, that what is "TRUE" for one person may not necessarily be TRUE for another. This world is funny that way, it seems there are no "absolute truths" besides for Hashem Himself. The way I see it, is that **what works for you is your own personal "Truth"**.

There's no denying that for a guy like Dov and Duvid Chaim, viewing this **as a disease** is 100%

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Re: Rational Recovery (RR) and Torah
Posted by Tomim2B - 05 Jan 2010 16:06

Great points! All of them!

~~try~~ for them, and it WORKS for them.

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Re: Rational Recovery (RR) and Torah
Posted by Tomim2B - 05 Jan 2010 17:09

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Re: Rational Recovery (RR) and Torah
Posted by Tomim2B - 06 Jan 2010 10:34

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Re: Rational Recovery (RR) and Torah
Posted by battleworn - 06 Jan 2010 12:48

[Tomim2B wrote on 04 Jan 2010 23:50:](#)

This thread is devoted to the recovery program called "Rational Recovery" (RR), their approaches, methods, and where there may or may not be compatibility with Torah based attitudes. As I see it, even though in the larger scheme of things we may not find ourselves agreeing to everything, this should not impede us from taking what is indeed founded within our belief system and using it to benefit our recovery. The purpose of this thread is to discuss this very idea.

Rational Recovery, founded in 1986 by Jack Trimpey, a California licensed clinical social worker, is a popular alternative to those seeking an independent form of recovery from any type of addiction (e.g., alcohol, crack, heroin, opiates, sex and porn addiction, overeating, computer addiction, gambling, or other personal behavior that goes against a person's better judgment). Rational Recovery is intended to be a program which supports the idea of planned permanent abstinence.

A note: unlike Alcoholics Anonymous which is a program designed to change the person's entire character from bottom up - giving him a new design for living, Rational Recovery makes no claim that to deal with anything indirectly related to the dependency itself. Rational Recovery is only for the recovery of addiction, and is in no way intended to be a guide towards a spiritual way of life.

Because Rational Recovery is not meant to be anything other than this, it makes no demands of a person's spirituality and his religious belief and standing. As long as there is room for its ideas and practices, there should be no reason why it should not have any stand. As we continue through this thread, we will BE"H discuss their approaches in full detail.

I encourage anyone interested in getting involved in this discussion to visit their site (<http://www.rational.org/index.php>) and read up on their program.

A few years ago, a long time Baal teshuva was going to visit his granchildren in Israel. His non-frum mother asked if she could send along some books for the kids. So he said "Of course, but don't buy anything Jewish". I thought that was very smart of him. She would naturally look for Jewish stuff, but with her ideas of what's Jewish... But if you keep out of that area, it's much much safer.

The same is true over here. It might sound very good if the program involves Hashem and spirituality, but it's a whole lot safer if it doesn't. We can learn all sorts of great things from goyim, but when it comes to Hashem and spirituality we are taking a great risk. So thank you very much for this thread, I can't wait to see where it's leading up to.

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Re: Rational Recovery (RR) and Torah
Posted by Tomim2B - 06 Jan 2010 14:23

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Re: Rational Recovery (RR) and Torah
Posted by the.guard - 06 Jan 2010 14:39

We can learn all sorts of great things from goyim, but when it comes to Hashem and spirituality we are taking a great risk.

True, true... But sometimes "dying" is even a bigger risk...

You know, people have asked me a question in the past and I haven't been able to answer them satisfactorily: Why is the Emunah of a Jew who was raised to believe in Hashem and Torah - any better or more real, or require any more sacrifice than the Arab who was raised to believe in **His** version of G-d and his "Koran"? After all, they too are willing to die for the sake of their G-d? So what makes ours any more "**real**" to us - or "precious" to Hashem (besides for the obvious fact that ours is simply "right")? In other words, **when does Emunah become "real" to a person**, instead of just a Jewish version of "Santa Clause" or the Arab version of the "72 virgins"?

I've seen answers to this question discussed in the Ba'al Hasulam, but it's not understandable by everyone... But something Dov wrote to me just yesterday touches on the answer to this... And strangely enough, it seems that Dov picked this up while hanging out in SA with non-Jews!). Dov wrote:

I have seen enough watered-down versions of the 12 steps, to know that the dependence on G-d that an addict like me needs **must** be more real than what I had while I was acting out. I wasn't OK with believing and saying stuff like "*Hashem, I love you and and I need your help to be sober and useful today*", in English (my mameh-loshon) and even with other people around, till I was desperate. I simply did not **need** to take these ideas as seriously as they really need to be taken, until I became truly desperate. It seems to me that as long as an addict takes either their problem, or G-d, any less seriously that they would take cancer or having a leg cut off, their emunah and bitochon won't really work for the addiction. So I'm not surprised that frum people can also be wacked-out addicts. Normal Torah living in this free and fun day and age just does not **demand** that we really take Hashem seriously.

Of course, it comes in stages, but it's not so poshut a journey.

Many times I've seen folks basically need to go through:

(hey, when a person is desperate enough, they find Hashem in the lowest places!)

1- a period of basic emunah in the ideas, **while** they are acting out and getting deeper in trouble;

2- **coming to a program** of some sort and learning the ideas/steps, parroting the words of recovery. Sometimes they make it, but if they don't, they often:

3- get the distinct feeling that they were **duped** - that "Hashem" **doesn't really "work"**. They won't leave yiddishkeit over it, but they may not get better, either.

I have seen many folks get to this stage. They then either give up on everything and disappear, feeling absolutely positive that their situation is different that that of all other addicts - **their** situation alone is really **really** beyond help! I was sure of that many times, but somehow came around, I guess because nothing else worked.

The lucky ones stick with the program and begin giving themselves to a Purpose or Power

higher than they are. Like Hashem, for example.

This was my journey. Most frum SA guys that I know go through something like this. They get the crapola beat out of them and finally, finally G-d becomes *more* than a nice idea, or maybe whatever the jewish version of santa claus or superman is.

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Re: Rational Recovery (RR) and Torah
Posted by the.guard - 06 Jan 2010 15:12

[Rage ATM wrote on 06 Jan 2010 14:47:](#)

Answer: Shabbat. We make the emmunah concrete. Like the married man that makes his love concrete (and no longer has to sing i love you i love you i love you to his girlfriend (or i love jesus i love jesus i love jesus). Hence, mechalel shabbat befarhesya dinno kegoy. this is not a punishment (too draconian to be a punishment) but rather it is a definition of your commitment to god.

A nice vort, but try explaining that to an Arab...

[Rage ATM wrote on 06 Jan 2010 14:47:](#)

This is actually a common misperception of the Koran. The koran promises martyrs one seventy two year old virgin.....

LOL ROTF ;D ;D

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Re: Rational Recovery (RR) and Torah
Posted by battleworn - 06 Jan 2010 15:35

[guardureyes wrote on 06 Jan 2010 14:39:](#)

We can learn all sorts of great things from goyim, but when it comes to Hashem and spirituality we are taking a great risk.

True, true... But sometimes "dying" is even a bigger risk...

Yes Rabeinu, that was exactly my point. We are stuck between a rock and a hard place and Tomim says he has a solution.

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