

The Ramblings of a Recovering Lunatic (General)

Posted by MendelZ - 08 Aug 2013 23:22

FYI: There is another version of this post in the Balleh Battim forum that has more about how this all relates to intimacy with the wife.

First time poisting anything of a personal nature. Yes, I am interested in comments and questions. It will help me and others (I hope). Here it goes...

I never believed Chazal when they said starving it will satisfy it. It just didn't seem possible. How can you go without that feeling of release, of goodness? Not having it wasn't an option for me. No matter what I tried, I could never stay off of porn and masturbation for an extended period of time (expect a few times where I did a couple months without) because I just didn't believe I could live without it.

Over the past four months (approximately), I have noticed a big shift in my understanding of this whole business. **Yes, the longer one holds off from lustful thinking and acting out, the easier it gets. Big chiddush: Chazal were right.** But the concept was not real to me until I saw it in action in my own experience. (This is important: One need to see the truth for himself. We cannot force insight into another person.) By not focusing on me and by staying clean for a little while more than is comfortable, I see how real it is to "starve" in order to be "satisfied". We don't really need sex. (And B"H, my wife and I are currently in a month of self-imposed no sex and only once did I feel a little regretful. Not being chained to sex is such a freeing feeling, like taking off handcuffs.)

I still have plenty of work to do with my "addiction". But I want to point out that the main thing that helps me is seeing in real time that I DON'T NEED SEX. NOTHING WILL HAPPEN TO ME IF I DON'T GIVE IN.

It all started with filters and keeping busy and living in the moment and finding meaning in my life (still need to do all those things all the time)...but the realization that it is possible to say "no" and that every "no" is bringing me to less and less dependency was HUGE. Saying "no" to lustful thoughts and feelings is really saying "yes" to the Aibishter. Its saying, "Yes. Hashem, I do want You to be real in my life. I want to let You help me."

I heard from my Rebbe that the reason we have trouble giving up the things that we know are taking us away from Hashem is because we really don't believe that what He can offer us is more pleasurable. The ice cream looks and tastes really real and sweet right now on my tongue. I can rely on that ice cream. It never fails me when I need something fulfilling. Ever. Even though its only a few seconds worth, but it is real and trustworthy. I can take the sweetness and geshmak of porn and masturbation to the bank, any hour of the day, any day of the week. So we don't give what Hashem has to offer us a chance. Especially for those of us who got caught in this addiction at an early age before we could really stop from taking over our lives. It is hard to imagine that the goodness of Hashem can compete with porn and masturbating. Can real life really be better than that mind-blowing sensation of release?

Recently, I had a "nisayon". For me that means taking a shower while feeling depressed. Bad idea. Really bad idea. But I figured I would try it out and see if anything would be different. Stupid idea. Really, really, really stupid idea.

Baruch Hashem, I didn't fall. Some lustful thoughts surfaced but, thank G-d, the shower was uneventful. What helped me in the moment was the above ideas. The play-by-play went something like this:

First I thought, "If I say no to this, it will just get worse and harder to contend with. Give in now so that it won't be a constant struggle." So that was a tiny blip on the radar, a faint, muffled lie that could easily destroy me.

Then I thought, "Say no to acting out right now in this moment because each moment is a moment far zich. One moment at a time. If you want to act out later, that will be an eisek for then but the fact that it will get more difficult if you say "no" doesn't matter. So you will have to worry about it then."

Then the next thought(s) came along: "Hashem will take care of you if you say "no". Starve and be satisfied. He can give you what you need to be strong in a moment from now, just as He is giving you what you need to say "no" in this moment. Hashem CAN give you something better. Just trust Him."

That was it. Home free. The desire/need to masturbate dissipated (for those moments). And I realized that saying "no" (with the right attitude behind it) is saying "YES".

If I recognize Him as my strength, He will be with me. He is found where we let Him in. (Kotzk! Kotzk! Yaaaaaaay, Kotzk!)

Please RBSHO, save me from complacency. Help me remember Who is the source of my strength. Give me gratitude and humility, always.

These are the ramblings of a recovering lunatic. Please take them with a grain or two of salt. And if any of the above was helpful or you relate to any of it, please let me know in the comments. It will give me chizuk. Thanks.

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Re: The Ramblings of a Recovering Lunatic (General)
Posted by Gevura Shebyesod - 28 Oct 2013 08:40

YAY!! WOOOOOHOOOOOO!!!

MAZEL TOV KUTGW!!!

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Re: The Ramblings of a Recovering Lunatic (General)
Posted by ZemirosShabbos - 28 Oct 2013 19:34

Twiddledooleedoo!

mazel tov to you!

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Re: The Ramblings of a Recovering Lunatic (General)
Posted by Pidaini - 29 Oct 2013 01:05

HOooooooooooooWoooooooooooo!!!!!!!!!!

May it be the beginning of the 90,90,90 of 90 days!!!

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Re: The Ramblings of a Recovering Lunatic (General)
Posted by cordnoy - 29 Oct 2013 17:08

Continued hatzlachah!

No lookin' back!

Onward!

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Re: The Ramblings of a Recovering Lunatic (General)
Posted by MendelZ - 29 Oct 2013 21:24

Thank you all for your kind words of encouragement and advice (and all the rest of the strange stuff y'all do).

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Re: The Ramblings of a Recovering Lunatic (General)
Posted by MendelZ - 29 Oct 2013 21:51

"Mesirus nefesh is not about giving up one's life. There is something more dear to a person than that. Mesirus nefesh is giving up one's self: the way I see things, that which I perceive as 'needs' and my desire to have it my way."

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Re: The Ramblings of a Recovering Lunatic (General)
Posted by ZemiroShabbos - 29 Oct 2013 22:34

is that from the furry grizzled benevolent avuncular bear?

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Re: The Ramblings of a Recovering Lunatic (General)
Posted by Machshovo Tova - 29 Oct 2013 22:40

[MendelZ wrote:](#)

"Mesirus nefesh is not about giving up one's life. There is something more dear to a person that. Mesirus nefesh is giving up one's self: the way I see things, that which I perceive as 'needs' and my desire to have it my way."

As Rashi in last week's Parsha says:

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Hatzlacha

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Re: The Ramblings of a Recovering Lunatic (General)
Posted by MendelZ - 29 Oct 2013 23:10

[ZemirosShabbos wrote:](#)

is that from the furry grizzled benevolent avuncular bear?

Nope. Its from an elter eagle.

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Re: The Ramblings of a Recovering Lunatic (General)

Posted by MendelZ - 06 Jan 2014 03:08

Hi y'all. I've been checking in every so often but haven't really posted much. More for myself than anyone else, I hereby embark on an update post.

After 14 years or so, I'm about 7-8 months clean, d'heinu clean from actually acting out, d'heinu porn and masturbation. I have slipped here and there but, thanks to the One Above, have managed to stay clean.

The last week and a half I found myself lusting and white-knuckling more than I feel comfortable with. So, yeah...just wanted to say hi and that here's a guy who is still in the game. Nobody give up. Let's all keep on doing what we know works. Talking to friends about where we are holding, talking to Hashem about anything and everything in an honest way, remembering that He is the Boss - not us, doing real things with our time.

As I was typing this I realized that I kind of let go of how helpful and imperative it is to remember "one day at a time." Man! One day at a time...One day at a time...one day at a time...Sheesh. Just for right now, I am not going to search for something that might bring up something questionable that could get me to click on something that might bring about a trigger. Just for right now.

Suddenly, the task that I have to complete that I was dreading going back to doesn't seem to annoying. Its just part of my life today. Just for right now I am going to choose the annoying thing that is part of my real life today instead of toying with what might happen if I go off into la-la land for a couple minutes.

May we all be blessed.

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Re: The Ramblings of a Recovering Lunatic (General)

Posted by MendelZ - 06 Jan 2014 23:21

From the 90,000 reasons...thread:

Truth is that sometimes I'm not really sure why I say "NO". But we just gotta say it anyways. Like Paroah. Why did he say "no"? It doesn't make any sense. But he just stuck to his own for no comprehensible reason. No! No! No! I will not let them go!

"?????? ??????"

But over there it says in 20 words or less, so here's the rest of the thought:

If I can manage to re-frame the way I look at lust and make "lust" or "acting out" synonymous with "crazy" or "under the influence" (since that's really what it is - as we can all testify to if we'd be honest) then whenever I feel like I gotta distract myself with fantasy, I'd remember that the only reason I would want that is if I am poshut nuts. And ANYTHING that I - a crazy person - want to do is probably not a great idea. So when I want to act out, I don't need a reason to say NO. Its pashut. Why would anyone listen to a guy who thinks this is a good idea?

Hahaha!! The very fact that I want to act out as a means of fixing my life means that I'm not trustworthy right now. And anything that I think is a good idea is surely at the very best just plain dumb.

So, why to say No? Because the guy telling you to act out is shikur vi Lot!

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Re: The Ramblings of a Recovering Lunatic (General)

Posted by skeptical - 06 Jan 2014 23:32

I was wondering how you've been.

Thanks for the update!

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Re: The Ramblings of a Recovering Lunatic (General)

Posted by kilochalu - 10 Jan 2014 05:44

makes alot of sense and sounds like it should work for someone who is sane.

However try explainig this to a shikur, I think he would be much quicker to trust the other shikur and listen to him, but Hey! if it works for you thats great!

I guess you are saying that the sane part of us can be programmed to not pay attention to the insane and then its as simple as that.

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Re: The Ramblings of a Recovering Lunatic (General)

Posted by MendelZ - 30 Jan 2014 01:46

Yes, I do not think that telling the above to someone in the throes of addiction will get him anywhere. Nor to someone who is at the moment sane but still doesn't believe he is truly addicted. For someone who understands what is going on by him when he is addicted and has experienced a degree of real living when he isn't, I think it could be helpful.

But at the end of the day its just what came to mind at the time.

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