

Hello

Posted by ploni.almoni@gmx.com - 24 Sep 2013 20:28

Hello there. I am writing this to introduce myself. I am married with kids, BT. I have been struggling with this addiction since I was little. I was one of those kids that start early. It accompanied me all my life.

When I became frum I was very concerned about this problem, because it had already destroyed a marriage, but I blocked it out. I actually became frum believing that I was guilty and tainted, and figured that I deserved death for being who I was, indeed for wanting what I wanted, but I still thought observing the Torah would be worth it even if I couldn't be a perfect tzadik, even if it meant I had to be destroyed in order to be true to it. Thanks to many "helpful hints" from Hashem when I became frum I got an internet filter, which kept out the worst of it. However I still persevered with motzi zera l'vatla through thoughts and looks.

I married a frum girl and had children, and over the years the addiction almost destroyed my marriage. Finally I davened for issurim and I got them. I ended up in a sort of galus (I would rather not go into detail.) After a while I went home, and my local Rabbi has been advising me. He emphasizes the need for simcha in my yiddishkeit, and the fact that the yetzer ha-ra feels like it's a whole cavalry, but really it's more like a lone horseman. The only way it can win is if I choose to let it.

Since then I helped a couple of friends myself, on the strength of my own experience.

I can see the tree of daas in my life, all day long. It's full of inaccuracies, it's foggy, and rotten, and I can't go on if I don't sit down and write down my thoughts regularly, to feel them, examine them, to accept what I truly desire. It's exhausting. But without that tree I would not be able to properly appreciate Hashem's depth. I would just be a guy walking around the garden, eating fruits that don't even need to be peeled, like a child who has no idea what goes through his parents' minds.

I guess I am not an important guy. I am not clean for years and years, I didn't go to yeshiva, I am not a Rabbi, I am not special, but it doesn't matter to me any more. I don't need to be.

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Re: Hello

Posted by ploni.almoni@gmx.com - 17 Oct 2013 04:59

Ok, thanks for explaining. I was wondering after your earlier message:

If such a Mitzavh was not possible to be obeyed, it would not have been given. The same logic should apply to anyone who admits that he is an addict.

I think this statement may hurt some addicts' feelings because they tell themselves that they don't have enough choice to actually keep this mitzvah. They don't have the "derech eretz." I think I know what the answer is but I am not going to talk about it, I am just going to skip over

But it seems that with your choice of words you are contradicting yourself. In the first sentence you say that the Torah applies to everyone, whereas in the second one you introduce the

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Re: Hello

Posted by SIB101854 - 17 Oct 2013 06:05

You wrote in response:

"I think this statement may hurt some addicts' feelings because they tell themselves that they don't have enough choice to actually keep this mitzvah."

That is the far too prevalent attitude at work -far too many of us rationalize our conduct by thinking that they lack the choice to observe this mitzvah-which I would hope would never be Chas Ve Shalom the attitude taken towards other mitzvos that are the nuts and bolts of a Torah observant way of life. Rather, an honest admission that one has made a mistake, is willing to change and to look ahead to the future is far more rooted in the basic definition of Teshuvah.

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Re: Hello

Posted by ploni.almoni@gmx.com - 17 Oct 2013 12:57

That does not help someone who *believes* he has no choice.

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Re: Hello

Posted by ploni.almoni@gmx.com - 17 Oct 2013 13:05

I think this may be relevant to this forum:

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And the Lord said to Cain, "Why are you annoyed, and why has your countenance fallen?

Is it not so that if you improve, it will be forgiven you? If you do not improve, however, at the entrance, sin is lying, and to you is its longing, but you can rule over it."

It sounds a little bit like KOT!

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Re: Hello

Posted by ploni.almoni@gmx.com - 18 Oct 2013 18:35

I masturbated last night. So boring, I can't do porn, so I had a homosexual fantasy. I basically came onto my wife who was dropping hints, I pleased her a tremendous amount, she was really happy, and then when it was my turn I kept stressing out about thinking of her in a demeaning way (which turns me on) because she is pregnant and I have this idea (tested about three times now) that when I think of her that way during pregnancy the delivery gets messy. Obviously I have no proof of this causal connection, but even without proof I couldn't finish with her, so I finished by myself.

Until about five minutes ago I was feeling really fed up with this whole situation (I was formerly happy to sleep in my own bed and stay sober but she got panic attacks and I had to go to her bed,) I figured I am just going to masturbate through the pregnancy, I can't let my wife get anxious when she is pregnant because I am sleeping in a different bed. After almost ten years of marriage it became harder for me to stay sober because now she is sort of crazy about me, but she doesn't turn me on. She doesn't like dressing up etc. and I don't want her to because I don't like being dependent on her. And she doesn't kiss me, we can't make love. I always have to do all the work to get her out of her shell (self-defeating thoughts) and then she gets turned on, she gets her cookie, and I am sort of on my own after that.

Then I thought maybe I will write to myself anyway. Even if it's just to decide to jump off the wagon for a while. I figured I can't make it worse by deliberating about it. About three minutes later I saw it totally different. I remembered that yesterday I got up extra early so I could write to myself and then go learn before davening, and I used up all my writing time thinking about that, and I cut it short because I realized if I was going to go learn I'd better go. I did not reflect about what I need to do all day so I don't choose to think about sex with my wife. Then I had a great day. I was sort of radiant when I went to work. But I noticed something during the day. I was not using my ability at each moment to remind myself that I did indeed think about sex and that if I engage in other things I will not get turned on more. Instead, I thought about sex a few times, and I was surprised at myself because I waited several seconds or minutes to take corrective action. And I realized that because I cut my writing short in the morning I was not sold on the idea that I am better off turning myself off all day. Whereas the previous several days I did just fine. Then my wife made advances at night and I decided to turn her on.

So when I look it that way it's pretty reasonable. I am in a situation which is more trying than I have been in the past, and I just found a favorable cost benefit analysis to convince myself to put in the effort to turn myself off all day, and it's only been a few days, and instead of waiting a bit to throw any more meat on the fire I decided to start working on something else right away (learning before davening.) Fortunately that other effort worked (I verified that I have a better day,) and now I am very sold on it, and I can go back to concentrating on sleeping next to my wife.

So I might keep on trucking.

If I keep deliberating.

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Re: Hello

Posted by gibbor120 - 18 Oct 2013 19:37

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I haven't been on the forum much since yom tov and I'm just getting back into it. I read this thread and boy you sure think a lot!

A couple of things you wrote make me think you may be a perfectionist. Is that accurate? If not, please ignore. If yes, Dr Sorotzkin's articles and audio helped me quite a bit. Maybe they would be helpful to you too. You can find them here www.drsorotzkin.com/ (I have a link in my signature as well). He's got some good stuff.

Therapy is indeed tricky. It seems a lot of people here have gotten bad advice from therapists. Some have tried multiple therapists until they found someone truly able to help them.

After reading many of your posts, I'm still a bit confused as to what your specific problem is. What problem are you trying to address?

Could you provide a succinct description?

Are you looking for ways to solve your problem/issue, or are you just here to commiserate with others who can listen to you?

You obviously don't have to answer any of my questions, and I will not be insulted if you choose to ignore them.

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Re: Hello

Posted by ploni.almoni@gmx.com - 18 Oct 2013 20:09

Hey, thanks for posting something on my thread.

I am quite confident I am not a perfectionist, but I think I do have a problem that looks a lot like it. Namely I disqualify what I do as "small potatoes" so I am always looking around for something interesting to learn or to work on. Sometimes it looks like perfectionism, because perfectionists are also unsatisfied, but for a subtly different reason. The practical difference is that when a perfectionist is working on something he must keep on refining it and refining it, whereas I need to switch to something else. In fact I tend to abandon things in the middle. I think that ordinary people are crap so I try my best to look special to myself.

Separately from that, I tend to think about sex all day long. When I have problems with people at work, I often act out sexual fantasies with them in them. I love pornography, and I would do it two hours a day every day (and I did, for a few years.) It makes me feel great. I thought I was going to become frum and then get killed for being so bad, but I did not get killed, so now I am trying to manage those desires so I can be happy as a frum person. I find I have a lot of similarities with other people on this forum.

I am a little out of place because I don't soothe myself afterwards by feeling guilty (which would save my self respect by implying that deep down I am a good person.) So I don't post things like "I fell, I couldn't help it .."

I am definitely the odd man out. Basically I try to be, because of the first problem I mentioned above. I feel bad when I am not peculiar.

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Re: Hello

Posted by gibbor120 - 18 Oct 2013 21:35

ploni.almoni@gmx.com wrote:

Hey, thanks for posting something on my thread.

I am quite confident I am not a perfectionist, but I think I do have a problem that looks a lot like it. Namely I disqualify what I do as "small potatoes" so I am always looking around for something interesting to learn or to work on. Sometimes it looks like perfectionism, because perfectionists are also unsatisfied, but for a subtly different reason. The practical difference is that when a perfectionist is working on something he must keep on refining it and refining it, whereas I need to switch to something else. In fact I tend to abandon things in the middle.

I'm not sure that your distinction is true. I think it is entirely possible for a perfectionist to "abandon things in the middle". Perfectionism can manifest in many ways.

Even if you are not a perfectionist, you seem to have the same symptoms, and may be helped by the same medicine. Alcoholics, sex addicts, overeaters, drug addicts all use the same 12 step program to recover even though their "illnesses" look very very different. So you may want to give the Dr. Sorotzkin stuff a look anyway.

ploni.almoni@gmx.com wrote:

Separately from that, I tend to think about sex all day long. When I have problems with people at work, I often act out sexual fantasies with them in them. I love pornography, and I would do it two hours a day every day (and I did, for a few years.) It makes me feel great.

I'm not sure I agree with the words "Seperately from that". Usually the 2 are pretty well linked. The lack of self esteem etc. You clearly describe using fantasy and pornography as a coping mechanism.

ploni.almoni@gmx.com wrote:

I thought I was going to become frum and then get killed for being so bad, but I did not get killed, so now I am trying to **manage those desires** so I can be happy as a frum person. I find I have a lot of similarities with other people on this forum.

What do you mean by "manage those desires". Are they affecting your life in any negative way, or do you simply want to do it without feeling guilty? What do you mean by "so I can be happy as a frum person"? Again, do you just want the candy without the guilt?

ploni.almoni@gmx.com wrote:

I am a little out of place because I don't soothe myself afterwards by feeling guilty (which would save my self respect by implying that deep down I am a good person.) So I don't post things like "I fell, I couldn't help it .."

You make it sound like guilt is not the problem. If not, what is the problem? Why are you "not happy as a frum person"?

ploni.almoni@gmx.com wrote:

I am definitely the odd man out. Basically I try to be, because of the first problem I mentioned above. I feel bad when I am not peculiar.

. Join the club.

External accomplishments will not give you self-esteem. It has to be an internal recognition. Trying to accomplish something to raise self esteem does not work (which is why I think dov

doesn't beleive in it). There are quite a lot of very successful people with very low self esteem.

Focusing on others and being humble paridoxically raise self esteem. So we need to be humble and give. Think of others before ourselves. It's a tall order, but with dov's (and others) help, I have come to be more accepting of myself and have better self-esteem (but dov probably won't call it that)

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Re: Hello

Posted by ploni.almoni@gmx.com - 18 Oct 2013 21:58

The reason I said separately from that is because low self-esteem is one item, but I the belief and they are independent things. I also have a belief that it would be terrible if things do not turn out the way I want them.

I want to be happy as a frum person because I understand from a pasuk in the Torah that the Torah is intended as a gift. So I think I should be better off with it than without it. But I only think that on an intellectual level. I don't believe it in my heart. Rationally I know my heart is not seeing it right, so I am still at it.

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Re: Hello

Posted by gibbor120 - 18 Oct 2013 23:40

ploni.almoni@gmx.com wrote:

The reason I said separately from that is because low self-esteem is one item, but I the belief that I am weak in the lust area is a different. To be a good addict you need both and they are independent things.

They seem related to me, but we may just be argueing semantics, and it may not make any difference.

ploni.almoni@gmx.com wrote:

I also have a belief that it would be terrible if things do not turn out the way I want them.

I had have the same beleif. I have been able to let go of that beleif a little bit. When I "let" Hashem run the show - things are great. When I try to control things myself, my life is a mess. I need to remember that and remember who is *really* running the show.

ploni.almoni@gmx.com wrote:

I want to be happy as a frum person because I understand from a pasuk in the Torah that the Torah is intended as a gift. So I think I should be better off with it than without it. But I only think that on an intellectual level. I don't believe it in my heart. Rationally I know my heart is not seeing it right, so I am still at it.

So, if the Torah said that masturbating to porn is "A OK" - your life would be great?

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Re: Hello

Posted by ploni.almoni@gmx.com - 19 Oct 2013 01:44

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Re: Hello

Posted by ploni.almoni@gmx.com - 22 Oct 2013 18:14

I had a really tough few days. Basically I figured out that I made a big mistake to talk to my wife about having sex while she is pregnant. I would have been better off acting out (if it came to that) and then figuring out how to sleep in her bed without touching her. The reason is because a) sex doesn't bring us closer because she keeps her distance because of her tough background and b) I have difficulty climaxing because I have to do all the work to give her a

good time and if I want something from her (like her washing her hair) she blows up at me.

Now I know how to stay away from her while I am in bed. If I remind myself that just because she is not sleeping with me it doesn't mean she thinks I am bad, and that even if she thinks I am bad she could be making a mistake, and that even if she were right, I can still have a great day as a bad person, the desire for affection goes away. The lust I turn off by reminding myself that I don't need it and testing whether I am right. As long as I have fresh data, I choose not to lust.

Then I think I can hold her and give her what she needs and have a happy wife, which keeps me happy.

I am actually anxious right now. I think deep down I am mad as hell at her for interfering with my path to happiness, and since I can't bite her head off it's coming out as anxiety.

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Re: Hello

Posted by gibbor120 - 22 Oct 2013 20:38

ploni.almoni@gmx.com wrote:

Just trying to "lead the witness". Many of us have come to the realization that we would be in trouble even if acting out would be muttar. It would still consume us and ruin our lives. That realization goes a long way towards accepting that we cannot afford to lust because it makes us crazy. It takes the "blame" away from the Torah.

In a similar way. Many come here and say "if my wife would only ... everything would be ok". As long as the blame lays in the Torah's "demands", my wife not "doing what I want", etc. etc. recovery cannot begin.

If the problem is some external force, why should I change? Change happens when we realize

that there is something inside of myself that needs fixing, and life is unpleasant enough to motivate us to do something about it.

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