

A Rasha Gamur

Posted by ploni.almoni@gmx.com - 29 Oct 2013 06:31

I had a conversation with another fellow. We were talking about the method I have been using to stay clean, and I said this method gives you your choice back. Using the method I have been using the yetzer ha-ra gets downgraded to a lower level, like the desire for shell fish. When I desire shell fish I feel like I have a real choice. Then he asked me if I masturbated while I was using this method, and I said "yes, several times." Then he said that if I have a choice and I still chose to masturbate I guess that should imply I am a "rasha gamur."

This is such a central problem. The reality is that "tzadik" is about behavior, not thoughts. The word "tzadik" describes a person's measurable behavior. It's like when the mishna says that you can tell what a person is like from his purse, his cup, and his anger. Meaning: you look at a person's actions. So what is the difference between this guy and me? The answer is: absolutely no difference. But he tells himself that there is a difference. He sees himself as "a tzadik, except for this time and this time and this time." But this is just air. There is no practical difference. He is just soothing himself (and go ahead and soothe yourself if it hurts, please.)

Even though "rasha" is a label and is therefore irrational because it paints an entire person with one color, the real problem is something else. I am a rasha because in actual fact I do act out sometimes, *and therefore* I should feel bad about it. The problem is the "therefore."

The right way to look at it is that this world is compared to the darkness. In other words, it's a case of garbage in, garbage out. Because we don't know how to think reliable thoughts (though the skills can be acquired,) we conclude that porn and masturbation are best.

But the labeling and the badgering and the bullying is popular because it *motivates us* to be frum. As the Torah says, Avraham avinu said "how will I know?" and Hashem "don't worry about it, because I will make them slaves in a land which is not theirs." The concept of the slave is that the slave believes he is second rate, and he knows this. He has as low an opinion of himself as it gets. He doesn't think for himself, because he quickly learns that thinking for himself gets him lashes. So he loses the *das*, the arrogance that we all have, and the ability to look at something and to make a call, thumbs up or thumbs down. Hashem saw that this was good and this was good. And we also want to "be like Elokim," we want to feel like we can have opinions. The slave does not have opinions. He just serves the strongest master. Now it's parah, now it's Moshe, and now it's the golden calf, it's all the same to him. But in each case he is reliable, he does what a good slave *should* do.

The thing is, when you are frum because *you should be*, because a *good, lovable Jew does the mitzvos*, it doesn't cut it. It's a low level. The moment a temptation gets close enough (your computer screen?) you bolt. You run to the porn.

In the end you have to be like Shlomo ha-melech. He tried everything, all the possible aspects of this world, and by paying attention he saw that the Torah *really is the best for the Jew*, in the next world but in this one as well. The other stuff is sort of empty, it's pointless, it's like chasing your own tail. What do I need to spit on myself secretly and do porn to secretly boost myself up so I don't have to see how low I see myself, if I can just stop spitting on myself? What's left is the true good, having a relationship with others, raising children, davening, learning Torah. The rest is air. It's there to fix something which was never supposed to be broken in the first place.

I should add that if a person can choose between being a rasha and an "addict" he should choose the former. Because a rasha can change, for good, but an addict is stuck on his high horse for the rest of his life, even if he is clean and sober and recovered.

So to answer the question: yes, I am a rasha. I don't have 20/20 vision yet. Do you have a problem with that?

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Re: A Rasha Gamur

Posted by Dr.Watson - 30 Oct 2013 02:51

sounds like you deal with a difficult situation in a selfless and mature manner, that is very commendable, you should be proud of that.

How does it feel to you to make such a sacrifice? Do you have someone to talk these thoughts through with?

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Re: A Rasha Gamur

Posted by ploni.almoni@gmx.com - 30 Oct 2013 03:58

It's not a sacrifice because there are no other options. But if you tell yourself it's a sacrifice you will feel really bad. You choose your feelings with how you view reality. I am not really being selfless either, I am just acting rationally.

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Re: A Rasha Gamur

Posted by Dr.Watson - 30 Oct 2013 13:02

I think you're dealing with things very well, and that is to your credit. There's nothing wrong with being human and feeling bad from time to time. A human being is not all-capable as CBT says, there are things a person finds hard, cos it is hard. There's nothing wrong with feeling the pinch or admitting that you're dealing with a lot.

I really feel that you should have someone you can talk these things out with. Not necessarily a therapist or even a Rav, just another person (not your family) who can listen and share your burden. In England we say "a problem shared is a problem halved". There's nothing wrong with accepting help, you don't have to deal with everything by yourself.

Maybe you see it as a weakness, but there are lots of stories of gedolim sharing their troubles with other people, and it only made them greater. Hashem gives nisyonos but if can do something that would make it easier, that's not part of the nisoyon, Hashem wants us to do everything we can to live life properly. Even Avrohom Ovinu, the master of nisoyon-passing, spoke to people before doing his bris. I'm sure there are lots of people in your community who would be happy to lend a listening ear in complete confidence and if you gave it a try I think it would only help.

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Re: A Rasha Gamur

Posted by MJB - 30 Oct 2013 13:18

Ploni, I find you completely insufferable on occasion, and then there are times like now, when I read your words and they give me a ton of chizzuk.

We really do have a bit in common. The state of intimacy in our marriages are very similar it seems, at least on the surface. I never make advances on her, I haven't had sex in over 2 and a half years. She hates when I kiss her. I massage her almost every night to go to sleep. She is fine with me touching her for the most part, that is a huge improvement, but she almost never touches me. The I think the difference between us, is my wife used to be capable of these things, but she has been shutting down over the last 6 years. Many of the thoughts of how you deal with the situation are things that I use as well.

I will share one thing that has helped me recently. I love my wife very much, and I love sharing my life with her. I used to translate the lack of physical connection between us to mean that she doesn't love me back. I have come to realize that is just the lust addict talking, demanding validation in the form of sexual expression. I have since started to open myself up to the non-sexual ways that she expresses her love for me and it has made me so much happier for it. I no longer think of myself with self-pity and I stopped considering leaving her. I don't stay just out of obligation, but because I know that we have a relationship where we can both be happy and therefore raise a happy family. I stop thinking about what could be and come to appreciate and be happy with what IS.

I know why you do the cost benefit analysis, but maybe instead of doing that which is always focusing on both the good and the bad, maybe you should focus more on the good.

Eli

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Re: A Rasha Gamur

Posted by ploni.almoni@gmx.com - 30 Oct 2013 13:23

I could, I have some friends that I could talk to. The reason I don't go down that road is because I may need to reflect at any time of day or night, and usually I do it at 4:30 am. I can't call someone at 4:30 am every day. A couple of weeks ago I had to go for a walk in the neighborhood at 10 pm to talk to myself and stop myself from desiring my wife. If my system had been to call someone on the phone I would have been out of luck.

Also I know that ultimately all my feelings are the product of my own thoughts. For example I know that no one can upset me. If someone wants to upset me they can succeed if I agree with

them. This is hard to accept because we don't want to acknowledge that we agree with other people's negative ideas about ourselves. We want to think we are right! However once we accept that our thoughts are often off the mark or entirely baseless, then it becomes easier. I could agree with the guy who wants to upset me because I am not seeing it right. If I reflect on it, maybe I will see that there is a more objective way to look at it. But there is a skill to be picked up here, out of the box people cannot usually stop their inner thoughts in their tracks. It takes a lot of practice.

The Mesillas Yescharim says that talking to yourself is okay, and it's known that the Chofetz Chaim talked to himself. We have a big tradition of talking to ourselves.

What emerges from all this is that a man must constantly - at all times, and particularly during a regularly appointed time of solitude - reflect upon the true path (according to the ordinance of the Torah) that a man must walk upon. After engaging in such reflection he will come to consider whether or not his deeds travel along this path. For in doing so it will certainly be easy for him to cleanse himself of all evil and to correct all of his ways. As Scripture states (Proverbs 4:26), "Consider the path of your feet and all of your paths will be established," and (Lamentations 3:40), "Let us seek out our ways and examine them, and we will return to God."

I think this time-tested way of reflecting is not accessible to a lot of people today because we are *afraid* of what we might find. I think we have picked up from the surrounding culture a belief that it's not okay to *have* a yetzer ha-ra. Having an *interest* in money, fast cars, movies, porn, etc. makes us second-rate. If that is what we think we cannot achieve mindfulness. Then maybe calling someone on the phone is the thing to do, they can *tell* us to be honest.

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Re: A Rasha Gamur

Posted by Dr.Watson - 30 Oct 2013 14:32

yes, but I mean talking to someone else as well as that, at a scheduled time, not one or the other.

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Re: A Rasha Gamur

Posted by ploni.almoni@gmx.com - 30 Oct 2013 15:09

Sometimes I think about going in for a tune-up. I could also do it to cross-check my considerations with somebody more experienced. Or maybe read some books.

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Re: A Rasha Gamur

Posted by Pidaini - 30 Oct 2013 17:17

As MBJ wrote, at times you frustrated me, but reading the latest posts has shed a new light. The fact that you have left behind your old lifestyle, the courage that is probably took, is truly amazing. But I would like to point out two things.

ploni.almoni@gmx.com wrote:

I could make certain changes in my life that would ensure that I am sober for years on end (the longest run I had was a few years) but it doesn't seem sensible. I have things I am working on which are worth a lot more than protecting every little drop of sperm.

Again, I may have misunderstood you, and if I did please correct me.

Point number one is from a Jewish standpoint, We were given a Torah, it tells us how to lead our lives. This Torah must be kept in any given situation, The Chafetz Chaim writes in Hilchos Lashon Hara that a person needs to give up everything in order not to do any single "little" aveirah. **everything** except his life, everything.

Saying there is something "worth a lot more than protecting every little drop of sperm", makes it sound as if it's not that terrible, maybe a nice minhag, a chassidishe thing. That is not the case at all, Hotza'as Zera L'vatalah is an Issur, It is a safek d'oreisah, and it has one of the worst punishments. There is no one that can be matir it. (There are specific medical cases that the poskim argue whether they are considered L'vatalah or not, but other than that it is completely Assur) Would you say "there are things much more worth it than not eating a little bit of ham"? I hope not, and I don't believe you would.

So why is this different?

(and that is all assuming that you indeed only have two choices, let's say losing your job or masturbating, but being that my imagination is not all that great [except for when it comes to lusting], I cannot see such a situation where it is either masturbating or losing something very important)

Have you discussed your halachic ruling with da'as Torah?

The second point is from a GYE standpoint.

You have written that there are other things that you feel are more important, I can respect that. That means that you are not giving stopping to lust your "all", you are ok with where you are at and are not looking for ideas to get even better. Again, please correct me if that is not correct.

If that is the case, why would you be on GYE which is a place for people who are trying to completely stop porn, masturbation, and lusting? As you are not a bad person, and you do believe that most people (basically everyone besides yourself) should stop entirely, then it isn't to give your method over for that hasn't stopped people from stopping entirely?

As GYE is a place of friendship and caring, I am trying to understand a fellow poster and struggler.

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Re: A Rasha Gamur

Posted by ploni.almoni@gmx.com - 30 Oct 2013 17:58

I used to have precisely the approach you describe. Find all the violations I am aware of and correct them as soon as possible, by any and all means.

The problem with this approach is that it takes a lifetime to see all your violations. The mesillas yesharim says that nekias is a different step from mindfulness, because a person can be mindful but have blind spots that he doesn't want to see. It can take a long time for a person to get clean that way, and I don't know anyone who is. So basically what happened is that I corrected the problems I could see but I had some very significant problems that I did not want to see so I didn't correct them. On the surface I was clean but I had lots of arguments with my wife, and I felt that I was always right because I could easily convince myself that I was right. A dry drunk, so to speak. And I was very dry for many years.

That is why mussar does not work for an addict. A wet drunk might just hurt himself, but a dry drunk will definitely hurt the people around him.

There are two solutions. Most people need the belief that they *must* observe. This is the only acceptable approach for the masses. This is why Hashem said "you will surely know, because they will be slaves." A slave *must*. What it really means is "if I *don't* think I must, I am second-rate." It mattered greatly to Avraham Avinu because he spent his life *schmoozing* people into taking the right path. Given how hard it was, he asked "how will I know?" i.e. "how the heck are you going to make me a *whole people* who want to keep the Torah?" Answer: they will tell themselves that they *must* do it.

But this approach requires a lot of acceptance. Because when I tell myself I *must* do something, I make the error of thinking that "if I *must* do it, it's not for my benefit." Since I am always right, this must be correct, and I feel a tremendous desire to rebel. Enter the group, surrender, etc. etc.

But there's another approach. *Remind yourself* that you don't understand. Your feelings are not even reliable, they are just a result of whatever you are thinking, which is usually off. You *can't* read the other guy's mind. If you are going to take action, you must *inquire*. You *don't have to* lust when you feel it's overwhelming. If you mark the moment and you check later, you *may* find that you didn't lust. This refutes the con "I am out of control." It's *not rational* to think that things *should* be any other way than they are. *Remind yourself* that Hashem gave us the Torah because our minds are broken, and the true chochma is found there. Therefore, go learn. Etc.

And yes, my Rabbi told me to go home, even though it's not an ideal situation. Rabbi Miller says the same thing: be realistic, staying is better than leaving. And the gemara says that a husband betrays his wife when he leaves her.

And I am here because I belong here, I am a sex addict.

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Re: A Rasha Gamur

Posted by Pidaini - 30 Oct 2013 18:51

ploni.almoni@gmx.com wrote:

But this approach requires a lot of acceptance. Because when I tell myself I *must* do something, **I make the error of thinking that "if I *must* do it, it's not for my benefit."** Since I am always right, this must be correct, and I feel a tremendous desire to rebel. Enter the group, surrender, etc. etc.

I'm sorry, I do not understand, that is precisely the mindset that we need to change. To realize that we are not as smart as the All Perfect. The All Benevolent. He knows what is best for us, and even if we can't see it, we let go of our "marvelous minds" and humbly accept the wish of our loving Father. Which seems to me very similar to what you write afterwards.

ploni.almoni@gmx.com wrote:

But there's another approach. *Remind yourself* that you don't understand. Your feelings are not even reliable, they are just a result of whatever you are thinking, which is usually off. You *can't* read the other guy's mind. If you are going to take action, you must *inquire*. You *don't have to* lust when you feel it's overwhelming. If you mark the moment and you check later, you *may* find that you didn't lust. This refutes the con "I am out of control." It's *not rational* to think that things *should* be any other way than they are. *Remind yourself* that Hashem gave us the Torah because our minds are broken, and the true chochma is found there. Therefore, go learn. Etc.

But for those times that you don't have that clarity, we need to know that we *are not allowed to* lust. Period.

It would be great if we could have 20/20 vision all the time, but the way Hashem wants it is that we don't, and that we should realize that we don't always have it, and do something so that when we are in that state, we still will not act due to our sick minds.

and that is all from a Jewish perspective (I know it from chassidishe seforim), not even from a recovery standpoint!

ploni.almoni@gmx.com wrote:

And yes, my Rabbi told me to go home, even though it's not an ideal situation. Rabbi Miller says the same thing: be realistic, staying is better than leaving. And the gemara says that a husband betrays his wife when he leaves her.

I was asking in regard to masturbating, Did you ask your rebbe "If I go back I *have to* be Motzi zera l'vatalah, so am I still to go back"?

ploni.almoni@gmx.com wrote:

And I am here because I belong here, I am a sex addict.

That is true, absolutely true. But most people spend time somewhere for a certain purpose. I am asking for what purpose are you spending your time on GYE?

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Re: A Rasha Gamur
Posted by Tosfos - 30 Oct 2013 19:13

[Dr.Watson](#) wrote:

How do you feel about your wife not making love with you?

I'd like to respectfully ask if this is an appropriate topic of discussion (for both parties involved) for this forum. Thank you.

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Re: A Rasha Gamur

Posted by Dr.Watson - 30 Oct 2013 20:29

I think it's very important to differentiate between logical issues, emotional issues and psychological issues. What first appeared to me to be a logical debate now seems to me to be something else entirely. GYE and the 12 step approach helps many people, and has a proven track record of success, as well as being supported by da'as torah.

In the almost 2 years of being on various porn-addiction forums I have read countless ideas and recovery methods and tools that the writer strongly believes is the best way forward. Many of these ideas are on the same lines as has been suggested recently. I have had long email discussions with them and spoken to them on the phone and I have seen the progress that they made and how they constantly fell / relapsed but adamantly believed that their method really worked if only this or that or the other. On other forums, less than 1% managed to get to 90 days and most of them fell soon after. The few that didn't fall were in fact going to SA meetings as well.

If we were all talking entirely about logic and proof, I believe the debate run its course a while ago. If someone finds a different method that works for them, fine, but I seems obvious to me that it's not for most people and is therefore detrimental to GYE to debate it further. But I think there are other issues that need to be addressed and you're right, this forum is not the place for that. That's why I made the suggestion before about getting real help outside the forum. That's just what occurs to me to be what's best for a tzaddik in suffering. I just don't see any reason for a person to sit and suffer things by themselves without anyone to turn to for support. I don't think there's anything wrong with saying that something is hard and asking for help. It's not a sign of weakness but a sign of strength. That's just my suggestion.

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Re: A Rasha Gamur

Posted by ploni.almoni@gmx.com - 30 Oct 2013 21:54

Pidaini, as before you did not understand what I wrote. I will not make another attempt because as before (on another thread) your questions appear to be rhetorical, not informational. In other words, you couldn't care less what I think.

Dr. Watson, I think you don't like my method and you are politely asking me never to discuss it again here. You claim that it's detrimental, but you haven't brought any evidence to that effect.

I think you guys have been on my case long enough. It's well known that addicts have a lot of hostility, and you have been sending it my way. Find somebody else, or call your sponsor, or give it up to G-d. Keep surrendering! Keep up the good work. Keep on trucking.

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Re: A Rasha Gamur

Posted by Dr.Watson - 30 Oct 2013 21:59

it's detrimental to new members who don't realise at first that your message is so different from everyone else's and they'll get confused as to what the 12 step process really involves. That's why I'm asking you to stop.

Also, as I said, while it might work for you (still not convinced but whatever), I've seen many many people try your method and fail over and over again, therefore I don't think it's as good a method as the 12 steps and you're selling it as a viable alternative. That's another reason why I'm asking you to stop.

There are other porn-addiction forums where they use CBT and other suchlike methods. Why not go there and allow us to support each other in our method of choice without having you constantly sniping at us incongruously? Your comments are sometimes like trying to enjoy a tennis match with the person next to you telling you how much better football is. Can you see why that would be irritating after a while? Go and watch a football match then.

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