

A baal teshuva's perspective

Posted by bochur28 - 04 Dec 2008 21:41

For ba'alei teshuvah, like myself, one of the hardest things to change and to grow in is one's hashkafos; the way the one sees the world, the way one thinks, and the way one feels. My parents were always very open about 'sexuality' and the like; not wanting to 'shelter' me. I had very little, if any innocence in this regard, even though I sometimes pretended I did. Being children of the 60's who supposedly matured, they thought the 60's attitudes were normal; really, the goyishe world took them on as normal, so this is not too surprising. They would unabashedly answer questions I would ask, and they themselves (especially my dad) would make jokes about sex sometimes - even when I was as young as 7, I would do the same. I grew up thinking this was normal, and for years, I would sneak off for long periods of time to read my father's stash of filth magazines - this was when I was maybe 6 or 7. Sometimes I would tell my mother I found one and then throw it out, to sort of give the appearance that I was more moral than I was. He wasn't aware of this, and neither was my mother, but they were 'normal' by secular standards, and I'm sure they would have done something about it if they found out. I had a mischievous friend when I was 10 or 11, a Russian boy in my class (I was in public school then), who told me about *hota'az zera levatalah, rachmana litzlan*. From that point on, I would be pogem at least once a day, up until I turned 17, last year. For so many years, the filth was being pumped into my head..it took a lot of *siyata dishmaya* to snap out of it, and break the habit. I had many up's and down's, many times even recently when I felt like going back, throwing in the towel, and doing it 'just this once'. It felt so painful at first, to break myself away from that pit. My whole body was aching. I had headaches. I felt very depressed, and anxious; the chemicals in my body weren't used to such a quick riddance of the toxins created when one is aroused. In the beginning, I had stopped masturbating, after falling about 3 or 4 times after my initial decision to stop. But at that point I hadn't stopped looking at forbidden images yet - whenever I would look at them, I would get such pain, since I wasn't able to release the hormonal surges, but I had made a firm commitment to give up masturbation, and that I wasn't going to break it. I made this commitment after seeing the *kitzur shulchan aruch*, the *breslover seforim*, and many others which explained how terrible it is to be pogem one's bris. Finally, out of desperation, I imagined babies being killed, having their throats slashed (this was the most extreme thing I ever did to fight off the *yatzer*) I told myself 'THIS IS WHAT YOU'RE DOING EVERY TIME YOU'RE POGEM'. It got to me, it was like taking a shot of chemicals that made the drive disappear. I use it as my secret weapon sometimes even now, but it is dangerous; it can make you feel nuts if you do it a lot. Plus, if you're the guilty-type, it isn't the best idea, since if you end up doing it after thinking this way, it will make everything much worse, it only helps if it works immediately, which for me, it does.

To show how low one could go, this is a brief background of some of the behavior I was involved in: At one point I was interacting with people online in the most unspeakable ways - *nivul peh*, exchanging pictures, and so on. I already knew was assur; I even knew the *gemora* which says that 70 years of *brocho* can become curses if one is oiver on *nivul peh*, but it didn't stop me, the 'self-esteem' boost I thought I was getting made it too tempting. The funny thing is, as I was about to do it, I was 'paskening' which *aveirah* was worse, understanding somewhat that if you're making others sin, your sin is far worse and is actually worse than murder. That

didn't stop me though, because I didn't understand that I was hurting myself, and corrupting my mind, as well as my neshoma. No one needs their respect; for all I know, the people I was interacting with could have been insane, or sexual predators, or, r"l, homosexual men, posing as teenage girls. Plus, the fact that they were on those sites should have made me lose respect for them, and understand that I was getting involved with very lowly, unholy people. When I was 15, I got involved with a prutzah, whom I now refer to as 'the zonah', not because I paid her, but because she took something else as payment for her services; instead of money, she accepted neshomos that were lost, and my kochos that I wasted, in conversation, and in worrying constantly that my rebbe would find out. At this point my parents were still encouraging me, with my father being proud that I had a girlfriend, since he never was able to have one when he was my age. Now, baruch hashem, his attitude is changing, and my mother is a total tzenuah who thinks like a heilige yid throguh and through. The egregious chillul hashem I caused by walking with her (the prutzah) in the streets with my yarmulkah on in full view, juxtaposed with her pritzus, not to mention introducing her to my supposedly frum friends I had at the time, wasn't enough. A few months ago, I saw someone who seemed to be in the same predicament I was in, a guy who had his yarmulkah on, walking around with a prutzah - it showed me what I must have looked like back then. I rationalized that I was doing 'kiruv', trying to expose her to yiddishkeit..it was so stupid I cannot believe I thought that way. The only rational explanation is that it was the yatzer hora messing with my head, making me think a post was a man and a man a post, as the mesilas yeshorim says. I broke the relationship off with her after something happened to me in a hotel. I was with my parents for some convention in a goyishe hotel, complete with typical frozen, tasteless kosher meals (the airplane type), and I brought along some silly novel I was reading, which in my gaiva, I thought was good, since I never was into reading before this time. Now I can see the hashgacha pratis working - Hashem put into my head to read this shtus story about a 9th grader's courtship with some emotionally-unstable girl, because when I was reading it, I felt the same feelings I felt with 'the zonah' for this fictitious girl in the book! It hit me then the feelings must be fake, since if I can feel this way about something false, then the feelings I thought I had for 'the zonah' were just as false! I met with her one last time, and then broke up with her over the phone.

It hit me also, that maybe some of the passions I was feeling for pornography were also fake; based on fiction. For some reason I was pulled after realistic pornography; it seemed more tangible and real for some reason. But I realized later that these too, were fake, made by fake people, broadcast by the soton on a screen; no more real than the tiny light-bulbs that made up the image on the screen were. These may have been real people who videoed themselves, as it seemed, but they were truly actors, the same as the actors in the professional dirty movies, except these were merely performing directly for the soton, and not for a director.

I first became frum when I was 13, baruch hashem, and I am now about to turn 18 - from when I was 14 on I knew hotza'as zera levatalah was an issur gamur, but I didn't know how bad it was, and I didn't understand what made it so bad. For me, it was like eating, literally - a fact of life that I felt was 'natural', due to my background. It took me a while to see that it was interfering with my learning, and, as the seforim say, being 'oiker daas' - I felt my cognitive abilities weakening. I was brainwashed as a child to think that only 'prudes' worry about sexual

indiscretions, and even though I knew it was wrong, many, many times I would daven in the morning, with my tefillin on, thinking to myself about what I planned to do on the internet when I finished, but there was my neshoma which would say 'you're davening now, at least wait, and maybe, when you daven, you'll have your mind taken off of it' - this was the tayna of my yatzer tov, but it never worked out the way I planned, i always ended up falling again, and in the back of my mind, when I made up my mind to give in to the taiva, I heard my father's religion of amorality in my head, saying the behavior was healthy and normal, but now those thoughts make me want to spit in disgust. I then realized that I had in fact been brainwashed by society, my parents, and the media, all my life. I had to set out on a mental journey - one I'm still on, to break these middos and make my way of thinking as close to the torah as possible. I've been clean of pgam habris since January, and free of pornography since february - new worlds have been opened up for me in my mind; I'm able to feel things now that I never felt before. Now, I'm proud to be a yid, I no longer look for ways of avoiding the so-called 'prudence' of Torah like I used to, I no longer am afraid of sounding 'fanatical' - I know now that THEY are the fanatics, they, the dirty goyishe world, are fanatically anti-kedusha and anti-holiness. Everything they do is for taiva - the internet, in all its filth, was made for taiva, hollywood, the type of clothing they make, the newspapers(even 'respectable' ones advertise bras and pritzus), the television and music - it's all a massive campaign against kedusha and taharah. When I first saw the breslover seforim saying this, I thought it was an exaggeration, but now I see it's 100% emes! the world truly IS against us and G-d, knowingly or not, they are our enemies, and they are agents of the sitra achra.

Knowing that I was made with a tzelem elokim and a holy mission in this world - it's one of the devices I use to keep myself away from taivos, that this is not fitting for a person, any person, but especially not a Jew. Another idea which helps is understanding that whatever I'm attracted to, is only because my brain was wired a certain way, either when I was a kid and someone saw a certain type of woman and said 'wow, she's beautiful' or something along those lines, either way, it's all a facade and an illusion. If I was born in kenya, I would think fat, dark women are attractive(african kings have disgustingly fat wives who they hold are beautiful). If I were born in asia, I would think short, straight-hair women are attractive, and so on - none of it really means anything of mamashus. This is what the Ibn Ezra says on the mitzvah of lo sachmod - how can the torah command us to not be jealous? it's a middah that's very hard to break, and so easy to stumble in, how can it be a mitzvah? The terutz is, says the Ibn Ezra, that just as a pauper knows that it's not shayach for him to marry a princess, and hence he does not desire her, so too, each one of us must not desire things that the ribono shel olam has not given us, since it's not shayach for us to have them, and if we in fact had them, it would not be good for us anyway. This idea helps, understanding that at the root of the taivos, is kinah(jealousy) - uprooting kinnah, at least for me, is easier than hand-to-hand combat against taivos, and much less painful.

In addition to the advice I wrote above, other things that help include:

-Thinking of my hebrew name

-Thinking of my rebbe standing right next to me

-Thinking that by resisting, I'm saving my children from being tempted with this problem(maysah avos, siman lebanim)

-Thinking that flesh is the same as the chicken I ate last night for supper, and that it's just a bunch of chemicals that G-d put together in seamless fashion, to protect our bodies, not to hurt our souls

-Thinking about olam haba, and how the kav hayashar says that your limbs in the next world are affected by what you do here, so if you look at bad things, your eyes will be gauged out, and you will walk around with them hanging from their sockets

-Thinking about the damage it does to my avodas hashem, and my learning

-Knowing that torah and taiva are enemies; one forces the other out, and they cannot coexist

-Thinking that the prutzos are meant for the goyim, and people who are lowly; not for the loftiness of klal yisroel

-Knowing that when moshiach comes, or when, after 120 years, I stand before hashem in Din, there will be no excuses

-Thinking that a tzelem elokim, a piece of G-d himself, cannot be submerged in this tumah - it must leave when the tumsh comes in

-Thinking of the 'ohr haganuz', the hidden light for people who control themselves that is promised in olam haba

-Having the privilege and zchus to be among those of klal yisroel who are fighting the good fight for kedushah

-Thinking of the kav hayashar that says that when you look at a girl, she robs you of your kochos; I need my kochos for learning and davening; I'm tired enough as it is in shiur, I can't afford to give up any more kochos!

-Two words: Yosef HaTzadik

-Imagining what they're saying in shomayim, besha'as maysah, and imagine what they'll say if you try hard not to fall!

-Sheva pa'amim yipol tzadik, vekam - the letter from Rav Hutner about this helped me incredibly, imagining that I've fallen so many times, again and again, even when I was trying, and yet, I can still be a tzadik, there's always still hope! And it is bedavka because of the falling that when I rise, it will be all the better!

I hope someone will be helped by my story; many others here have been through worse than mine, but I felt that being a baal teshuvah made things different for me; I'm sure there are other baalei teshuva online who need help, and I hope this will reach them.

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Re: A baal teshuva's perspective
Posted by the.guard - 04 Dec 2008 22:54

After seeing what this boy writes here, I can't believe Hashem doesn't bring Moshiach right now! With all the terrible darkness in the world, there are still blinding rays of light and kedusha - like this holy, holy Jew. Happy is the king who has such servants! Happy are we to be part of this great nation!

The material in this e-mail will make some AMAZING Chizuk e-mails!

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Re: A baal teshuva's perspective
Posted by mevakesh - 05 Dec 2008 15:30

Hi Bachur,

Thank you so much for sharing your story. I personally can relate to many of the ideas that you have presented and am inspired by your success up until this point. Keep strong and thank you for the inspiration!

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Re: A baal teshuva's perspective
Posted by battleworn - 07 Dec 2008 12:34

Thank You so much for your powerful story! It is a tremendous chizuk to all of us!

Be sure to keep up you're guard, the wicked menuval never gives up (particularly now, because -I can assure you- he's very upset about your post, which by the way is the greatest tikun of all for your past.)

Make sure to keep going higher and higher, the best defense is offense. Kedusha is by far the strongest weapon against tumah.

HATZLACHA RABA!!

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Re: A baal teshuva's perspective

Posted by Mevakesh Hashem - 07 Dec 2008 15:37

To the new "Mevakesh" on the block:

Welcome!

May Hashem give you the strength to turn your Bikush into true Aliyah!

Chazak V'Ematz!

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Re: A baal teshuva's perspective

Posted by eme - 07 Dec 2008 20:53

Wow. You dont seem all that young. You have some excellent advice and ideas in your post. Thank you very much. Hatzlacha

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Re: A baal teshuva's perspective

Posted by bochur28 - 08 Dec 2008 01:54

Thanks for all the support! I wish more yidden knew about this site - everyone has nisyonos in this area on some level, and can use the chizuk - yasher koyach to the makers of this site for doing a true service to klal yisroel!

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Re: A baal teshuva's perspective

Posted by Mevakesh Hashem - 08 Dec 2008 14:34

The more WE spread the word, the more yidden will learn about and join this site! The more yidden that join, the quicker Mashiach comes out of hiding! Simple as that!

Chazak V'Ematz!

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Re: A baal teshuva's perspective

Posted by strugglingwoman - 25 Jan 2009 13:59

Okay - here is where a woman's perspective differs -

I commend you for the changes you have made. However, from a woman's point of view - I really take exception to you referring to another bas yisroel who may suffer from the same issues that you did as "The Zonah."

I have personal experience with this because of an inappropriate relationship I had with another Yid. He too had sex addictions and watched pornography from a young age. He finally had the strength to break our relationship off when a mutual friend found out about us. Although we were BOTH involved in the relationship, suddenly history changed and I was the temptress that

had led his poor innocent soul astray. He left me feeling so badly about myself I considered suicide.

To that attitude I say - own your own actions! It might help you to move on by thinking you were victimized - but by doing this you are actually victimizing "The Zonah," who is also has a neshama and is Hashem's child. You were both at fault.

I also take exception to this line -

"Thinking that flesh is the same as the chicken I ate last night for supper, and that it's just a bunch of chemicals that G-d put together in seamless fashion, to protect our bodies, not to hurt our souls."

Every part of a human being is holy. We are not the same as chicken flesh! The act of sex and sensuality is intrinsic to being human - our bodies are beautiful and perfect - however these energies of the flesh must be channeled in the way Hashem tells us. The flesh becomes holy when we use it for the intended purposes.

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Re: A baal teshuva's perspective

Posted by the.guard - 25 Jan 2009 14:18

1) Who knows if the "zonah" was even jewish?

2) What you mean to say is, that sexuality is not meant to be about "lust". That is true. But what we feel in the addiction is "lust", and lusting for flesh is like lusting for chicken. So it's Ok to think of it as "chicken flesh" to turn off false and poisonous lust.

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Re: A baal teshuva's perspective

Posted by bochur28 - 25 Jan 2009 15:33

guard is right - I meant the moshol of chicken flesh in regards to one who does NOT sanctify his body - if he doesn't, it's the same as chicken flesh, but obviously if it's made holy than that is a whole different story.

The girl I was talking about was in fact, jewish, but she had no addictions, she was basically an average girl her age in this society. if she were a person who had any inclination of wrongdoing or the slightest bit of contrition or at least recognition that she did anything the least bit wrong, over what she did and continues to do, I surely wouldn't refer to her as that - but she doesn't, so I feel no qualms about insulting her, just as I'm sure no one here would have qualms about putting down women or men who appear in pornographic videos or the like. It's also a tool of negative association which works psychologically to help one break attachment to something. Sorry if I offended you however, strugglingwoman - I suppose men and women need different tools to combat the yatzer.

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Re: A baal teshuva's perspective

Posted by strugglingwoman - 25 Jan 2009 18:05

Ok, I understand better what you were trying to say - comparing cravings for food to cravings for sex.

However, I still differ with your opinion about putting down your ex-girlfriend (who IS a fellow Jew) or actors in the pornography/sex industry. I have done extensive reading about people in those lifestyles, and most of them were sexually abused as children and also suffer from drug/alcohol addiction. They are just being further exploited in these industries, as they believe this type of "success" is all they can achieve.

I feel sorry for these people as I do for all of us - the difference is we on GUE are fortunate to have the pintele yid to pull us out of our nasaiyon.

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Re: A baal teshuva's perspective

Posted by the.guard - 25 Jan 2009 22:45

You are right, struggling woman, that the evil is not in these people, the evil is in our own addictions. But still, it's Ok to talk derogatorily about these people, as they embody the corruption of society and are tools in the hand of the Yetzer Hara. Yes, there is nothing evil in the "tools" per say, but it helps bash our own Yetzer Hara's when we look down at all that is associated with him. (Don't worry, it won't hurt their feelings. They'll never know, unless they join

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this forum