

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 battleworn - 11 Jan 2010 19:03

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Reb Dov, you quoted me and addressed (Tomim and) reb Yaakov, so it's not clear who you mean.

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Re: Rational Recovery (RR) and Torah

Posted by the.guard - 11 Jan 2010 20:06

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I actually had a long talk with Tomim and Yakov Shwartz recently on the phone, and it seems ).

Bottom line. Let's stick to:

- 1) Sharing our **own** personal experience - and what worked for **us**.
- 2) Sharing the way we view recovery, not why someone *else's* view on recovery is "off".

I think everyone agrees that this is best for everyone.

A big thank you to all my beloved brothers in the trenches.

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Re: Rational Recovery (RR) and Torah

Posted by Dov - 12 Jan 2010 02:53

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[battleworn wrote on 11 Jan 2010 19:03:](#)

Reb Dov, you quoted me and addressed (Tomim and) reb Yaakov, so it's not clear who you mean.

Oops! I had intended on a third piece to you, but 1:00 pm rolled around midway in the second part and I finished it up and logged off cuz lunch at work was over. Then, after 5 I had to respond to a PM. Now it's so late again!

I'd really rather talk on the phone, just to feel more clearly what a wonderful person you are. Knowing someone better helps make the my communication more to the point, and it may help wash away misconceptions I may have gotten from the wording of some of your posts.

It seems to me that you have very strong opinions about addiction and recovery that are firmly and clearly based on the Torah, while all I have is experience. I can't instruct anyone about recovery, I can only share my recovery with them. Nu.

You know the adage about people who only have a hammer in their toolchest? They view every problem as a nail, and then they just hammer. In my post to Tomim above about AA I wrote about the difference between trying AA recovery and considering it from the outside as a drunk. Totally different. Perhaps you heard me. In the same vein, I can't be responsible for folks who only see "*telling*", as all there is. They will see my sharing of experience as 'telling' and 'truth-spouting', just as they see AA as some sort of ultimatum. I sincerely hope that nothing is further from the truth. When I say the words, "my experience", I *don't* mean anything like, "Hey, I'm telling you it's the truth/the right thing to do/what you need to do - after all, I experienced it myself!" Quite the opposite, I mean to admit that I know nothing but what worked for me. So I can't *tell* you anything - I can only share with you. If you want what I can share with you how I got it. That's all "sponsoring" is, as far as I am aware. There is no teaching, per se. This idea is repeated in AA literature many, many times. The only reason I see fit to share it here os GYE, is that I have seen that it works for others who were interested, too. So if guys post that they have a problem with something I had a problem with, I share what I did to get better. Torah I love sharing because I believe it's the truth for everyone. Recovery is totally different. The 12 steps are just suggested *actions to take* and motivations that recovering people can *use* to get better. And that's why I share my recovery with anyone *who wants it*. People in similar trouble as mine, have been helped by this. I do not tell them what to do.

Please reread your two posts to me above (replies 31 and 32). Your noting how happy you are that I believe in this or that, for example:

If you agree with that, I'm overjoyed.

seem irrelevant to the recovery that I am familiar with. Aren't you just saying that *you* know what's objectively right and true and are happy that I fit into the truth as you see it? It sounds nice of you, but is not the way I approach anything *in recovery*.

I do not doubt your sincerity *at all*. I do not doubt that the Torah you teach is true, at least factually. I'm here to explain why I have come to choose a different approach than yours in *how* I post, and *what* I post.

I have heard so many addicts share that they have come to see that judgementalism of themselves and others has been a great part of their problem. I have met very few guys with many years of sobriety who are sure about so much stuff. Especially about something outside of their own experience. That attitude tends to get folks like us in trouble.

Do you post about your past and recent struggles, be they with lust or other stupidity (character defects) on a regular basis? I have to. Because I am not a teacher, rebbe, nor an authority. I share my faults and foolishness along with the free gifts of Hashem and my successes, and it all helps others stay sober.

Your posts above you say that you know what an addict has to do in order to recover, and what they must not do "or they will be in trouble." You also write a good bit of strong opinion about AA.

I know little of your story, but have never before felt the need to ask you: Are you an addict, Battleworn?

Also, do you you have any experience in AA recovery?

I cannot speak to RR because I have no experience in it. I'm not a shrink, just another lust drunk who was helped to find a way to start getting better, and discovered (as have many others I know personally) that this recovery opens his life of yiddishkeit to become what he (and his spouse) always dreamed it could be, and better. A few months ago I spent a wonderful Shabbos with over 150 chassidish and yeshivishe yidden, rabonnim and otherwise. All 12-step lust recovery men with their wives. The wives with their recovery, too. They do this twice per

year. Attendance has tripled since few years ago when I first went with my wife and it will continue to grow be"H. The recovery was incredible there. We didn't tell eachother what to do there. We didn't lecture about what we think everybody else needs to do. We just shared our pain in addiction, joy in recovery, what we have been shown through each, and listened to eachother. We also had a great time.

Even AA and SA groups themselves have no central authority or leaders - we vote and *agree* on a text that shares our experience, we listen to speakers share theirs. Isn't a Torah lecture is about the Truth? We heard that before we were in recovery, too. You don't seem to hear or make much of this point: What we never had was the *truth about ourselves*. Once we started to get that, we could begin learning how to live with the Torah. It seems to me that most other folks don't absolutely *need* that process. I do not pity them at all. To each his own, and how can I ever measure the *significance* or beauty of anyone *else's* avodah? Do you know any non-addicts who understand addicts? "Addicts helping addicts" is how I've heard old-timers in AA describe AA.

It means something very similar to the Torah concept of the Halocha being decided after the basroi. (Besides being shayich to Malchus (halocha) being connected naturally to the "end", perhaps.) Isn't the main idea of it that application of Halocha must be done through the people of that generation because *they experience that generation*. Isn't that why *Eliyahu* answers the questions, cuz he's *here* even now?

In my rather unlearned opinion, this is similar to the success of AA - addicts seem to understand eachother - at least my sponsor understands me. I see it and hear it in the guys at meetings.

Did you develop any personal experience in AA or SA? Not as an observer, but as an addict who feels he honestly tried to use it?

Feel free to let me know.

I am fully aware that you have the right to an opinion about AA, SA, recovery, or anything. But I hope that I have clearly shared a bit of my own experience in recovery with you. Perhaps you may now consider the benefits of sharing *yourself and what helps you recover from your own addiction* with others, rather than chiefly instructing them in what you know the Torah says they must do and why.

If you hear me in this, then you may also see Rav Schlachter's advice that you referred to earlier, in a different light. I assume that it's not that he believes it's a good idea for people to masturbate, but that he knows - as AAs have shared with me - that if someone is an addict, they must discover the true nature of their own problem themselves. They can't be told. It does nothing for them in the end, for they don't yet understand in their hearts that they have no other choice but to stop - even though they feel equally sure that they *can't* stop. (Perhaps this is a

nice application of Mishlei: "tyachas g'orah b'leiv *meivin* - meyhakos ksil meyah" - and if I remember the Gm' in B'rachos on that speak this idea out on that posuk, in my opinion). If they still need to experiment, we have no choice but to wish them the best, to have any chance of reaching the goal of seeing that strange and horrible "choice" that so many addicts I know have come to. Mm"n, all the speeches in the world *not* to drink, will not get them to really stop, anyway - if they are addicts. Any addict that I know has agreed with this attitude, completely. We have found that, sof davar, we don't actually *help* addicts by reminding them about "what's right". In fact, in the case of so many who I know personally, the finger shaking only added more pain that needed to be covered up the only way an addict knows in his heart - to act out some more. Eventually they come to see that they must be ready to pay the piper and their own bris with Hashem quietly and devastatingly calls out to them from their own insides: "Ani Yosef. Ha'od Avi chai?"

How is finger-shaking going to produce that? It seems that I and every other addict I know needed to be absolutely *forced* to admit that their own only tools that they rely on, don't really work after all. And I have only seen it come to us through trial and error. Eis la'asos laShem heifieru Torasecha may be what is happening here, sad and tragic as that is. I thank the Ribono shel Olam that I and many of my fellows in recovery do not need to go through any more experimentation today, in His great Chesed.

Ah gooteh nacht, chaver. (never wrote that before...)

- Dov

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Re: Rational Recovery (RR) and Torah  
Posted by the.guard - 12 Jan 2010 12:24

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Perhaps these sentences sum up Dov's Megillah best:

What we never had was the *truth about ourselves*. Once we started to get that, we could begin learning how to live with the Torah.

As far as Reb Shlachter's sometimes "strange" approach:

It seems that I and every other addict I know needed to be absolutely forced to admit that their own only tools that they (had come to) rely on, don't really work after all. And I have only seen it come to us through trial and error. Eis la'asos laShem heifieru Torasecha may be what is happening here, sad and tragic as that is.

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Re: Rational Recovery (RR) and Torah  
Posted by Kedusha - 12 Jan 2010 17:12

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I think we all should feel (if not express) a great deal of Hakaras HaTov to Dov for spending several extra hours at the office to get out that heartfelt post.

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Re: Rational Recovery (RR) and Torah  
Posted by me - 12 Jan 2010 17:48

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As I see it.....for myself, the pilpul approach just isn't working anymore in this... our dor.

Everyone agrees that we are in Ikva D'mashicah. This is the darkest of times. This is the hester B'toch hester. This is the time that chaz"l have spoken about: that in the end of days, everything will be so upside down, and yet the moshiach will suddenly come, and without ANY warning what so ever, and at a time like this....a time when we would least expect it.....he will suddenly make his debut.

There is just no more time to think it out, to work it out. We have to take what ever we can, and any way we can and.....RUN. (we can talk about it later)...if there is still time.

Dov has found what has worked for him, and he would be negligent to leave it, in order to try something else.....to try a "better" approach. In this dor, to escape the dirty clutches of the big Samech Mem, with the internet, and it's.....it is absolutely a CHIDDUSH to escape this tumah that we all have/are experiencing.

I have always been against fast food preparations, especially using microwave ovens which can affect the nutritional quality of the food. I bought one about 23 years ago, and then sold after a few months. I haven't used one since. BUT, BUT today. Things have changed. We no longer have time to cook our food in a normal oven. No, No, No, we must shove it into that micro wave, give up on the nutritional losses,(if they exist), and Run, Run, Run.

We are now in the generation of fast food!!! Take your mitzvah, take your avodah, take your

teffilah, and just DO it, and run with it. No more time to talk about it. The only pilpul we have left today, is hot red tomali's.

Each, and ever one of us is M'choiv to save our skin, and our neshomah that is beneath it. What ever we can/need to do. But, do it quick.

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Re: Rational Recovery (RR) and Torah  
Posted by the.guard - 12 Jan 2010 21:04

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maybe the answer to the addiction, al regel achat, is to distract your mind from the addiction...everything else is mefarshim...and everyone gets distracted a different way

That's very wise.

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Re: Rational Recovery (RR) and Torah  
Posted by Kedusha - 12 Jan 2010 21:18

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[guardureyes wrote on 12 Jan 2010 21:04:](#)

maybe the answer to the addiction, al regel achat, is to distract your mind from the addiction...everything else is mefarshim...and everyone gets distracted a different way

That's very wise.

Thank you dear particularly deranged individual

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Re: Rational Recovery (RR) and Torah

Posted by me - 12 Jan 2010 21:57

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maybe the answer to the addiction, al regel achat, is to distract your mind from the addiction...everything else is mefarshim...

Deranged or DeRAGED?

Exactly! And until one has found HIS own way to distraction...there is NO time for the mefarshim.

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Re: Rational Recovery (RR) and Torah

Posted by battleworn - 13 Jan 2010 16:35

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My dear Reb Dov!

I want to thank you very much for taking the time to write all that. I agree that it would probably be a very good idea to speak by phone.



For now, let me try to give you an idea of where I'm coming from. If Hashem gives me success in expressing myself properly, I'm sure we will all benefit.

Although I did post my story and updated it with my more recent struggles, I'll try to summarize it over here and also add somethings that I left out so I shouldn't be identified.

I was an addict from a VERY young age (to young for me to remember how old I was) for about 20 years. During that time, I was under constant stress from the addiction and -for most of the years- it totally dominated my life. I would get triggered from something I saw - or from nothing and the feeling was completely overwhelming. It completely took over every fiber of my body and I was liable to risk my life to get my fix.

{For ex. I was walking with a friend in Yerushalayim late at night and a car stopped next to us. The people in the car were really rowdy - probably drunk and an innocent little yeshiva bachur is obviously quite scared of such people. Someone called out to us from the car "Interested in sex?" My friend acted disgusted, but I was instantly on fire. I knew that if I would have been alone I would have been in that car in a second}

I was forever trying desperately to stop, but I didn't seem to be getting anywhere. I often thought about suicide, but I didn't think it would help me since it would just be another huge aveiroh that I would have to face the consequences for.

I'm a very strong believer in Truth, so I was always desperately searching for the truth. I knew in my heart that obviously something is wrong here, and I was searching to find what it is. When I learned that Chazal say that anyone who is alive can't complain, because it's enough that you're alive, I asked what is a life of sin worth. And I asked it again and again.

When at 18 years old, I started to get some proper perspective, things started to get a little bit more bearable. A few years later I began to understand that:

Life is not about how good I am, how bad I am, how successful I am, what people think of me, what has happened to me in the past etc..... Rather it's about DOING what Hashem wants me to do each second.

That it's not sin I need to fight but rather lust.

That it's not 'me and the lust' with Hashem somewhere out there getting angry at me; but rather it's 'Hashem with me' with the lust trying to get in between.

And I began to understand many other truths.

At that point my addiction began to disappear. The more my life got clear direction and the more I developed a very personal relationship with Hashem, the more the addiction cycle disappeared.

There were ups and downs. I went clean for a few months or years and then I fell. But when I fell, I didn't fall back in to the cycle(it was a gradual change). I did get back up as a bigger and better person than I was before.

There's no question in the world that R' Tzadok's "Tzidkas Hatzadik" and R' Tzvi Meir's shiurim, changed me in to an ex-addict, by changing my perspective on Hashem, on myself and on the y'h.

Nothing that I see nowadays, can fire me up or take me out of control. But that doesn't mean that the battle is over.

Almost five years ago, after a good few years of being totally removed from this stuff, Hashem turned my life upside down. I'll just write a few of the things that happened. A close relative of mine, that I was extremely close to, went from being a happy successful "top-notch" bachur, to a lifeless mess. The way it happened was extremely painful and I took it VERY hard. At the same time, four of my kids were suddenly in crisis (emotional or spiritual or medical) with their problems ranging from major to critical.

Then I was blessed with a set of twins. One of them passed away at about one month, and the other one is very handicapped (At four and a half, he can hardly see, he can hardly eat, he can't talk or walk or stand or crawl.) A few months later, my wife informed me (after I was away for a few days) that life is better without me. [Our marriage is absolutely beautiful now B"H, since I learned not to rely on my wife for anything - including receiving my love or doing her part in raising the children.]

My days were taken up with caring for my baby all day, leaving me no time to learn and almost no time to daven. I definitely didn't have the mind or heart for davening or learning. I had to

spent weeks at a time in Tel-Aviv (where they give out free porn mags outside of stores). All this happened after having the best six months in my life. I felt so beaten, it can't be described. I don't have to tell you what I would have done if I had still been addicted when it all happened. What actually did happen was that my *shmiras einayim* was blown away, and I acted out a few times in a few years.

When I found that I wasn't safe with a computer, I searched for help and found this holy network. I began to share my story and share the truths that saved me and I saw that it was very helpful to people. It was also very helpful to me. Others were doing the same and things seemed to be getting better and better.

All I knew about AA beforehand was that they concentrate on the solution instead of the problem and I thought that's great. When I saw the 12 steps, I didn't care to analyze them at all. Basically what I saw was a program that is meant to make a major change in your life and that seemed to fit with my experience.

Then a 12 stepper started posting stuff that was very insensitive. (If you want to know what I'm talking about I can send you the link privately.) This was a big surprise to me because for me working on my *midos* was a very central part of my recovery. But I figured it was just his personality. Then another 12 stepper started harassing one of our greatest and most successful warriors.... Then I read a book written by a frum 12 stepper and while I was very impressed with his *chochma*, I was very disturbed by many things in his book. Then another 12 stepper started posting that the Torah doesn't work for addicts. I now know that he didn't mean to say that, but the message that many people get is the same. I'm concerned about what it does to the people reading it; not about the person writing it.

I don't judge anyone. In-fact I understand very well that there are people that searched for the Torah's answer as best as they could, and when they didn't find it they concluded that it doesn't exist. I think they had every right to come to that conclusion because they had every reason to believe that if the answer was there they would have found it. So there's no issue of judging here at all.

Please reread your two posts to me above (replies 31 and 32). Your noting how happy you are

that I believe in this or that, for example:

Quote

If you agree with that, I'm overjoyed.

seem irrelevant to the recovery that I am familiar with. Aren't you just saying that you know what's objectively right and true and are happy that I fit into the truth as you see it? It sounds nice of you, but is not the way I approach anything in recovery.

My dear Reb Dov, recovery is not everything. You wouldn't send your child to a doctor that is going to convince your child to stop putting on tefilin. It makes no difference if he's an eye doctor, dentist, cardiologist or psychologist. If it's *pikuach nefesh*, then you might be stuck, but if someone sees things differently than you, you wouldn't even be able to discuss the problem with him. The reason I would be overjoyed has nothing to do with the effectiveness of your approach; it does have to do with the question of whether you and I have a common language.

[It also has to do, with how [b]![/b] approach everything in recovery. To me, recovery is all about the true meaning of *ubicharta bichayim*.]

The reason that this is so important to me, is because I think that there is so much that can be done to improve the effectiveness of the forum. I feel that if we can understand each other, we can give so much more.

I have a lot more to say and to listen, I hope we can speak soon.

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Re: Rational Recovery (RR) and Torah  
Posted by Dov - 13 Jan 2010 18:08

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[battleworn wrote on 13 Jan 2010 16:35:](#)

The reason I would be overjoyed has nothing to do with the effectiveness of your approach; it does have to do with the question of whether you and I have a common language.

[It also has to do, with how [b]I[/b] approach everything in recovery. To me, recovery is all about the true meaning of *ubicharta bichayim*.]

The reason that this is so important to me, is because I think that there is so much that can be done to improve the effectiveness of the forum. I feel that if we can understand each other, we can give so much more.

Thanks so much for sharing so much with me, Battleworn, and so clearly, too. Your entire story is precious, of course, as painful as it may be. I feel that you helped open up my heart: always a good thing.

What you are saying in these last sentences means this, to me:

You look more at the result, or product, of true recovery and define it that way. I focus on the process, rather than the result.

For example, though we may have other fine differences in sensitivities and methodology, we both see that the ultimate, end result of freedom from lust is: successfully being a Torah Jew.

I choose not to intentionally focus on that. Instead, I focus on what can bring me there, with sobriety as my guide. I have faith that doing that is my best bet at getting there, though it may not seem that way to all. So far, I believe that it's working, as I posted to you in a religiosity self-expose, many months ago.

It seems to me that Hashem has given me sobriety (and perhaps the addiction that led to it?) as **the** tool for me to draw and remain close to Him and His people. It's as if what you refer to as the YH, has become a foolproof tool for kedusha. Whatever he tells me to do, all I need to do is the *exact opposite*, and I will inexorably draw close to Hashem and my particular tachlis in life.

Again - I am focusing on the process, not the purpose.

In the past, when I tried to use Torah to do that, it was too complicated and never worked for me. To some extent it was in reaction to that that I was in so much pain that I needed to use a drug. In my case it was lust.

I saw *none of this* until after at least 7-8 years of sobriety and recovery.

Maybe we *can* talk the same language, Battleworn? Who knows....

But I do not foresee myself reverting to speaking in terms of Hashem's tachlis, tempting for me as it may be, as I see you *can* afford to. This is my honesty to you.

Was I clear?

ILY, too, chaver.

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Re: Rational Recovery (RR) and Torah  
Posted by the.guard - 13 Jan 2010 18:41

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Wow Battleworn, so much pain and suffering. Hashem obviously gave you a very great soul to be able to handle these difficult nisyonos in so many areas.

Who am I to even put my head between these two great mountains, Battleworn and Dov?

What Dov just posted is very, very deep. So deep in fact, that I need to read it a few more times to see if I really understand what he is saying.

Battleworn seems to claim he was a real addict once, yet today he writes:

Nothing that I see nowadays, can fire me up or take me out of control.

That almost seems impossible from a 12-Step perspective for a true addict.

I guess that's why Battleworn believes he is an "x-addict", while AA believes there's really no such thing.

Can it be true for some people?

I don't know.

Battleworn is sharing his experience, so I guess it may be true for some people.

And that's why it's great that he's sharing here.

Hopefully there will be **others** who will share his experience and become "x-addicts" as well through the yesodos he learned/posts.

Yasher Koach to both Battleworn and Dov for the heartfelt shares!

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Re: Rational Recovery (RR) and Torah  
Posted by the.guard - 13 Jan 2010 18:46

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Dov wrote:

I have faith that doing that is my best bet at getting there, though it may not seem that way to all. So far, I believe that it's working, as I posted to you in a religiousity self-expose, many months ago.

I'm pretty sure he is referring to Chizuk e-mail #518 on [this page](#).

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Re: Rational Recovery (RR) and Torah  
Posted by the.guard - 13 Jan 2010 18:58

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Let me see if I can understand what Dov is saying.

So far I'm pretty confused.

I guess my "Dovish" needs some brushing up.

Please Dov, you have to help me out here.

You are saying that Battleworn looks more at the result, or product, of true recovery and defines it that way.

While you focus on the process, rather than the result.

The end result of freedom from lust is: successfully being a Torah Jew.

You focus on what can bring you there, while battleworn focuses on what?

I'm a little confused here.

You see sobriety (and the addiction) as the tool for you to draw and remain close to Hashem and His people.

You focus on YOUR Tachlis as opposed to - **Hashem's** tachlis? Is that what you are saying, Dov?

Again, I'm a little confused here.

To you, the **process** is what counts.

To Battleworn, the **purpose** is what counts.



But what's the point of a "process" without a purpose? Isn't the **purpose** "remaining close to Hashem and His people"?

Using Torah as a "process" was too complicated and never worked for you? Is that what you're saying?

I do not foresee myself reverting to speaking in terms of Hashem's tachlis, tempting for me as it may be, as I see you *can* afford to. This is my honesty to you.

Was I clear?

Not enough, I guess :-[. Please explain more. I sense there is something very deep being said here, but it seems to be just out of reach to my little mind. (Maybe Battleworn will understand, but I want to understand more please).

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