

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 Pidaini - 08 Oct 2013 23:18

Seems like you're in a tuff spot, like a catch 22.

What do you do to keep clean from acting out, i.e. watching porn, masturbating, etc.?

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Re: Hello

Posted by ploni.almoni@gmx.com - 08 Oct 2013 23:28

Neither of us wants to go through that again. I don't believe in sending people into therapy. I accept who she is, but I am not sure she is equally content. If she wants better results she will have to challenge herself. In the meantime I plan to make the best of what I have. A lot of things that people think are needs are really not.

In the past Hashem helped us with issurim that showed us the way. That will probably continue.

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Re: Hello

Posted by reallygettingthere - 09 Oct 2013 00:03

ploni.almoni@gmx.com wrote:

Neither of us wants to go through that again. I don't believe in sending people into therapy

Ok, so look at it that you are sending your marriage into therapy.

It sounds like to me that your are saying, "things are hopeless. I'll settle on surviving".

Or am I misunderstanding.

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Re: Hello

Posted by ploni.almoni@gmx.com - 09 Oct 2013 00:33

You could look at it that way, but usually I don't label my life as "surviving." If I did that I would get bad feelings. Maybe we would be better off divorced, but I think it's better not to do it. The real love that matters is being loyal, watching out for each other, building something together. So I am not so sure I am missing much. But it's easy to think that happiness comes from being loved.

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Re: Hello

Posted by skeptical - 09 Oct 2013 00:50

Do you feel that the communication in your marriage is good?

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Re: Hello

Posted by ploni.almoni@gmx.com - 09 Oct 2013 02:30

I think much of the time I am somewhat withdrawn, since I get my validation elsewhere.

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Re: Hello

Posted by SIB101854 - 09 Oct 2013 03:52

For starters-I don't think that dismissing and being dismissive of therapy will help you.

I think that marriage without any emotional commitment is not only just going through the motions and externals of marriage, but it also adversely affects your quality, quantity, enjoyment and degree of physical intimacy, and puts you at risk for being addicted to porn and masturbation. Take it from one who only recently acknowledged his addiction and has been clean since Motzaie Shabbos Nachamu-there is no substitute for physical intimacy with your wife, and there are therapists who can help you and your wife.

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Re: Hello

Posted by ploni.almoni@gmx.com - 09 Oct 2013 04:10

You are right, I should never be dismissive of anything, because everything has to be considered carefully. I have had therapy in the past, and in some areas it really changed me. For example I crafted this past sentence using something I learned in therapy. My own therapist advised me that our marriage would have limited success, and my wife's therapist did the same to her - independently. I guess it's a free country, so we are still at it.

I think your description of marriage is indeed discouraging. I don't *describe* my marriage to myself that way though, so I am not as discouraged as you might be under the same circumstances.

You are right that there is no substitute for physical intimacy. I am over the hill already, I have had several women in my life, and physical intimacy is indeed a beautiful thing to have. However I think you will have difficulty proving that if you don't have sex you must be sad. Rav Moshe Feinstein did not have relations with his rebbetzin for 11 years in Slutsk because the police followed his wife everywhere to find out where the mikveh was so they could shut it down. I am sure it was not what they both wanted, but they kept on trucking anyway.

The bottom line is that you feel the way you think. I learned that in therapy.

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Re: Hello

Posted by SIB101854 - 09 Oct 2013 05:05

I think that the example of Rav Moshe ZTL, the Gadol HaDor, who was confronted with literally Shas HaShmad during the reign of the Communists is of limited application to you or anyone else on this board. That's like R Akiva not eating because of his inability to wash Netilas Yadayim. Rav Moshe ZTL and R Akiva are judged by the standard of an Adam Chasuv. I don't think that any of us are on the madregah where we can be mvatel mitzvas onah-even on a limited level and even after our wives are past their childbearing years.

I still think that going to a therapist together or seeing the same therapist separately would be more helpful than by denying the odds predicted to you by your therapist.

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Re: Hello

Posted by SIB101854 - 09 Oct 2013 05:17

Do you have children? Even with "being loyal, watching out for each other, building something together", without an appreciation of physical intimacy, your marriage sounds like there is no communication and that you act like a monk and a nun-don't take it from me-look at the Ramban in Parshas Mishpatim on Mitzvas Onaah and such works as Baalei HaNefesh and Igeres HaKodesh which were authored by the Raavad and/or the Ramban-physical intimacy is an integral part of one's marriage.

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Re: Hello

Posted by SIB101854 - 09 Oct 2013 05:27

If someone has a link to a shiur by R T Hirsch Weinreb given for the Baltimore Mikvah about marital intimacy and Shalom Bayis could they please post it here? Thanks !

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Re: Hello

Posted by ploni.almoni@gmx.com - 09 Oct 2013 05:43

Definitely I don't have to be concerned about such things as chassidus, I didn't even go to yeshiva, I have only been frum for ten years, and my learning is very limited. And indeed I am not concerned with such things. But I know what you mean, I think. Before I accepted who I really am I would try to do those things to tell myself that I was a special person, so I could deserve to exist, so to speak. Now I just try to exist until I no longer do, whether I deserve it or not.

These days I am just concerned with my own happiness, the well-being of my kids, and the well-being of my wife because it's my job to make sure she's okay. I owe her a lot, and she is a special person, partly as a side effect of her problems. She thinks like a little girl, she never speaks lashon ha-ra. I would *make love* to my wife, but she has problems in that area, and problems in the sexual area are difficult to get over. Hence, it will likely not happen in the foreseeable future. As I said, qualified therapists have looked into this too.

She has no interest in *making love*. When she kisses she feels like she is suffocating, as a result we have only kissed for about four weeks out of almost ten years of marriage. It's only when she get turned on by mistake, so to speak, then she is like a tiger and she comes on top of me and she climaxes all on her own. That's not making love. So it's not smart for me to go down that road. I am there for her when she feels scared, etc.

Part of the problem is that the natural behavior in this case is to get the marriage annulled right away. I like getting involved in special and unusual things, so I didn't. I used to be pretty proud of myself that thanks to me she was able to get married and have kids. Overall, she is pretty happy. We have both made great progress over the years and the last thing we need I think is to start a kind of industry of self-improvement and therapy. I know what it was like when they dragged me in front of the rabbi and the therapist and I am not doing that to anybody. You want to make bad choices, be my guest.

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Re: Hello

Posted by ploni.almoni@gmx.com - 09 Oct 2013 05:59

Yes, we have a number of children, B"H. A lot of screaming matches but it was worth it.

I completely agree, marriage includes sex. And you should do it if you both enjoy it.

This is one of those cases where knowing a lot of Torah can obscure the logical conclusion: don't have sex with your wife if she doesn't like it. And if you are not going to have sex with her, don't get turned on, so you won't touch your member to get relief.

I think the normal approach in my case is to get a divorce. But I am not leaving her on her own. I am going to stick around to make sure that she is happy. She got a raw deal as a kid, and I won't stand for it. But I am not a malach either.

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Re: Hello

Posted by ploni.almoni@gmx.com - 09 Oct 2013 06:32

[Pidaini wrote:](#)

Seems like you're in a tuff spot, like a catch 22.

What do you do to keep clean from acting out, i.e. watching porn, masturbating, etc.?

Hey, sorry I didn't notice when you are asking me this earlier. It's been a while since I saw Monsters, Inc. I just remembered the picture, so I picked it as an avatar. Billy Crystal is so funny, isn't he?

So to stay clean I make a list of pros and cons of acting out, and it depends on where I am in my life and what I am thinking about at the time. I think where this helps is that if I am looking at ten pros and ten cons, I see that it's a complex decision, and I won't argue with myself when I get an urge.

To fight urges I use an evidence-based method. My rabbi said that the yetzer tries to sell itself

as more than it is. Basically the tree of knowledge tells me that I am weak in the area of lust. Even though I am absolutely positive of this, so much so that I feel fear, I think through the feeling, and I tell myself that maybe it's not quite as bad as I think, and then I start doing something, like immersing myself in some activity. Then when it happens again I remember the last time (say five minutes earlier) and the fear has gone down a bit, I don't believe I am as weak any more, because of the evidence of the last five minutes. I do this every day. In the morning I am pretty uneasy and by nightfall I feel a lot more confident. So in the morning the yetzer has a whole army division, and by the end of day it's just one little guy.

There is a warm-up period which I hate which takes a few weeks when the yetzer feels more like an aircraft carrier battle group, ten army divisions, submarines, chemical weapons and trident nuclear missiles. When I start getting sober I feel like my change of success is zero. But I can't deny what I know I have done in the past.

I think the longest I have been clean with this method is about three months. Usually something happens, I decide to act out again, and then slowly I come to see that it's time to do another cost-benefit analysis.

I also have a filter.

Some things that I had to come to terms with are that I do not *desire* to be frum. I want to be frum because I learned that good people are frum, and I want to be a good person. But I do not at first, without analysis, desire the Torah. My first impression (in the recesses of my mind) is that good people have the Torah, and bad people have fun! It's only if I reflect on it that I think I am *better off* with the Torah. Absent that, the only pay-off is the pat on the back that I am one of the good guys, and that's not enough to stay clean. So I decided I am not going to buy into the good guy / bad guy idea. After this I had a period where I sinned b'mezid and then the light bulb started to go off that I can do better than this.

Another thing I realized is that I mistakenly believe that it would be terrible if I don't get everything I want. When I was a little kid I threw tantrums, and now I don't like the feeling of being helpless and needy so I play certain other behaviors, like being proud, demanding, resentful, angry, etc. to *sell myself* on the idea that the world is wrong when it's not the way I want it. So I discarded that. But now and then it comes back and I have to fight it off again.

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