

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 Pidaini - 29 Oct 2013 14:28

Firstly we all need to remember that this is a public anonymous forum, hashkafah should not be taken from just anyone.

Secondly, I happen to know the person you are talking about, I know him personally, we've met and talked a lot. He is a person who has tried verious things to stop his lusting and when he saw that they didn't work, he looked for something else, because he is not trying to be honorable, or have a good self esteem, or be able to have choice, he is trying to do what Hashem wants of him. Hashem wants him to stop looking at porn and masturbating, period. He is trying to change, he is a tzaddik. (really not relevant, but he doesn't look at himself as a tzaddik at all.)

Are you? You have used a method for a year and it's not working, are you willing to let go of your ego and your mind in order to do *the right thing*? or is your "right" to have choice more important to you than to actually stay clean?

As for the rest of things you wrote, they are the opposite of what I have seen in many seforim, if you are interested you can PM me, there is no use in the public reading through it all.

ploni.almoni@gmx.com wrote:

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.

Don't understand that either, if the way I am going to stay clean is by admitting I am an addict, why do I care to have that label? if I'm clean I should be happy that the label addict is stopping me.

So to summarize, why are you here?

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Re: A Rasha Gamur
Posted by ploni.almoni@gmx.com - 29 Oct 2013 16:36

You sound really confident. But it would be foolish to think that you can prove your positions beyond the shadow of a doubt.

I am happy with my recovery method and with the people on the forum. I wish you lots of sexual sobriety and recovery.

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Re: A Rasha Gamur

Posted by MJB - 29 Oct 2013 17:29

I don't know from personal experience what the atomic structure of water is. I have never looked under an electron microscope and saw the components. I have never worked on a particle accelerator, so I don't have any personal information on the makeup of neutrons and electrons. I have never done experiments to verify the weak and strong nuclear forces. I can write a whole encyclopedia of things that I have never personally verified, yet still hold to be true because enough people who have done the work have told me it is true.

Yankel's positions and beliefs associated with sobriety have been tested and proven over and over again by hundreds(?) of thousands of people who have gone through some 12 step program and recovered. Dov is the forum mascot of what you can achieve in sobriety through 12-steps. There are many others here who have seen success for the first time in their lives as they start to incorporate all or some aspects of the 12 steps in their lives.

Does it have to be proven beyond the shadow of a doubt for you in order for it to work? Physicists have not proven the nature of light beyond the shadow of a doubt, but I can still use fiber optic cable. No one has any certain idea of how to combine quantum mechanics and general relativity, and yet black holes exist.

(I am not sure why I am so stuck on particle physics for my analogies. Anyway...)

12 steps may not be for everyone. If CBT works for you great. But the only proof of my ideas that I care about, is am I getting better. That should be the ONLY thing you care about proving. I have some notions in the beginning that I let go of. Things that I have learned along the way. There is no and will never be a 1 size fits all solution. What is working for YOU? If it is working, that is all the proof you need.

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Re: A Rasha Gamur

Posted by Dr.Watson - 29 Oct 2013 18:29

Ploni, I think you're a great guy and you're trying your best, as we all are. In my opinion, some of what you write on the forum is so misguided it's difficult to know where to begin.

May Hashem guide you along the right path.

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Re: A Rasha Gamur
Posted by ploni.almoni@gmx.com - 29 Oct 2013 19:43

I agree. My method works me. I have been masturbating since before I knew how to tie my shoes, and I have tried several successful recovery methods. As far as I can tell surrender works, SA works, and the latest method I have been using works as well. Dr. Watson asked me if I masturbated while using this latest method, and I said I did, but I deliberately did not explain the context. I do know the context, and I am comfortable with the choice I made at those times, and given the same situation I would choose to masturbate again.

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Re: A Rasha Gamur
Posted by ploni.almoni@gmx.com - 29 Oct 2013 19:50

Thanks for letting me know what you really think. Thanks to your feedback I am able to see that my different experience can be offensive to other addicts. I hope to remind myself of this here and there and mindfully keep more to myself. I can post my own topics, as I did here.

If you feel the responsibility to post a disclaimer such as "forum users, you should all know that I consider Ploni's ideas counterproductive for you, he can't get past his ego and is just fooling himself" you should feel free to do that. I understand why a person with your views might feel impelled to do that.

I will not however argue my point with you if you do choose to post such a disclaimer.

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Re: A Rasha Gamur

Posted by Dr.Watson - 29 Oct 2013 20:01

ploni.almoni@gmx.com wrote:

I am comfortable with the choice I made at those times, and given the same situation I would choose to masturbate again.

That is totally insane.

My feeling is that you are in extreme denial of some things that are obvious to everyone else. I think maybe it's a psychological issue rather than a logical one.

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Re: A Rasha Gamur

Posted by MendelZ - 29 Oct 2013 21:21

Its not my place to suggest anything here but I'm going to do it anyways. (I have an ego problem just like the rest of you.) Honest, open discussion is great and no one should feel that they can't be speak up about what works or doesn't work for them. That being the case, I doubt that anything good will stem from a discussion such as this. But what the hay...

Ploni, by all means do your best at what works for you - as it seems you have been trying to do. Does anyone have a problem with the fact that you are a rasha, as you put it? Yeah. I would hope so. But as long as YOU have a problem with it and are continuing to strive and do what you can to the best of your ability to bring a real, live Hashem into your every choice, who can ask more? In your heart of hearts you know if you are honest with yourself regarding the nature of your reliance on and relationship with the Creator. You and maybe a good, close friend could help figure that out. The other clue is your actions. Judaism is ultimately about action. Do your daily activities and the way you go about them reflect full, rich, joyful, authentic Torah living? I'm sure ain't pickin' on you and would ask these same questions to anyone here, myself included.

The likelihood is that very few people on this forum will buy into a "method of recovery" that doesn't involve complete surrender to Hashem. Of course, I can't speak for anyone else but I'd be surprised if the oilam here disagreed. Coming to terms with the fact that we are utterly dependent on Him in everything - not just regarding lust - but in everything, is absolutely imperative for true, Torah living - for normals and addicts. Thanks to addiction, the ideas espoused in SA help people do that. If your method is allowing you to truly, honestly experience Hashem's unique sovereignty over the universe from the largest aspect of creation to the most minute detail of your own self, moment by moment, and to thereby humbly submit the way you think things should be into His care and His care alone, and to allow you the option of making good, inspired choices about what you should spend your life doing and what would be better to stay away from, then keep at it.

No one has to be an addict forever - even the die-hard SA guys who are convinced that this their lot for the rest of their lives. BUT, it is worth being okay if the truth is that I can't trust myself with something that I like to do which is wrong. Why play with fire and see if your koach habechira will kick in in time? What in the world could you possibly gain from such an exercise?

I am open to the possibility of one day realizing that I can lust freely and not get out of control. At that point, I still wouldn't want to because of the issurim and selfish, animalistic nature of it. Right now, though, I just don't want to live the life of lust. I don't really think about why. If I CAN'T because I am an addict and it will ruin my life or I DON'T WANT to because life is better both humanly and religiously without it, it doesn't matter. One thing that I clearly *do* see is that the less I am into myself, the better it is for my life's potential, my family, Hashem and, ironically, my own self. Lust is just the area that I am most into myself about - its the thing that draws me further away from real living and further into my own needs and ego. To me, that is the one litmus test that really matters. How much do I need to engage my wants and needs in order to get through the day? To that extent will I open to having the life Hashem is giving me and to making sense of it in a useful, valuable way.

Sharing from experience, nothing else,

I wish you a productive day and siyata dishmaya in your journey!!

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Re: A Rasha Gamur
Posted by ploni.almoni@gmx.com - 29 Oct 2013 23:51

Hi MendelZ, you have class. Thanks for posting on my thread.

I do not seek out lust, because I know that if I use it I will start believing that I *have to* use it, and then it will stick to me again, so to speak. I have a Rabbi who is haredi and a known posek with broad shoulders who is aware of my problem and my wife's problems. I am not telling you my wife's problems because security is a way of life. The less you reveal, the less the likelihood of a breach. It's not because of I am ashamed, I'm not.

I do not want other people to use my method of recovery unless they have some special reason why they need it, so I am not concerned if it's popular or not.

I have been frum for many years, and for a long time I was committed to the mitzvos in the sense of "I *must* keep the mitzvos." Which means I am good person if and only if I keep the mitzvos. Now I don't approach it that way. I realized that one of my problems was that although I believed Hashem wanted me to keep the mitzvos, I did not believe that it was actually for my own good, kind of like the meraglim. And the problem was that I did not want to face this. Then I was shamed publically in my community, which I experienced like a galus or death, and now I don't think like that. I figured out that the Torah really is the best for me, and I am going to increase my observance for that reason. Recently I made some advances. I get up early to learn gemara, and I daven with a minyan. I sacrificed everything I had to make sure my kids go to cheder. My wife has problems, and I was advised by one rabbi and two therapists to get divorced, but my rabbi has broad shoulders and he told me I should stay married. I am comfortable with this choice and if my recovery isn't perfect and they leave me out of olam ha-ba I will be okay with that so that I can raise my kids and take care of my wife, which seem like good things to do.

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Re: A Rasha Gamur
Posted by Pidaini - 30 Oct 2013 01:18

[Dr.Watson wrote:](#)

ploni.almoni@gmx.com wrote:

I am comfortable with the choice I made at those times, and given the same situation I would

choose to masturbate again.

That is totally insane.

My feeling is that you are in extreme denial of some things that are obvious to everyone else. I think maybe it's a psychological issue rather than a logical one.

I had the same feelings, but someone reminded me that we may have misunderstood his post.

Ploni, do you mind explaining what you meant?

Do you mean that you really decided to masturbate because you thought it was the best thing to do - or do you mean that you 'would make the same mistake'?

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Re: A Rasha Gamur

Posted by ploni.almoni@gmx.com - 30 Oct 2013 01:46

Both. I did it because I was angry about the fact that my circumstances were way beyond what can reasonably be required of a yid. But I didn't binge, I didn't do porn and I didn't ask my wife for sex. I just let it out and got right back on my feet. I am talking about my most recent acting out.

The gemara says that if Chananya Mishael and Azaria had been tortured they would have bowed down to the idol. The chasam sofer asks "but why weren't they tortured?" The reason is because in that instance Hashem did not allow it. Meaning everyone has a breaking point. 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.

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Re: A Rasha Gamur
Posted by Dr.Watson - 30 Oct 2013 02:05

But Hashem didn't give them that nisoyon precisely because it would have been too hard. That's the lesson there, that Hashem only gives a person a nisoyon they can handle.

Being sober doesn't mean not acting out when everything's great, being sober means not acting out even during stressful times or difficult situations.

It sounds like you have things going on in your life that are very hard and you don't want to tell us about. That's fine. Just remember that Hashem loves you, He cares about you and always does what's best for you. If He's given you a nisoyon, that in itself is proof that you can pass it.

But that takes bitochon. Trust in Hashem that the way life is is the way it's meant to be. Hashem runs your life better than anyone could. By trusting in Hashem's plan for you you can let go of the delusion of control, you can stop trying to run things the way you think is best, but trust Him to direct things in the best possible way because He loves you and He wants to do this thing for you.

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Re: A Rasha Gamur
Posted by ploni.almoni@gmx.com - 30 Oct 2013 02:20

I think if you count all the times that I think of lusting and remind myself that I have a choice you would see a pretty impressive number. I am doing okay.

I also never ask my wife for sex, but I put her to sleep, hold her on demand. Do you make advances to your wife? And my wife does not make love to me, she can't kiss. Do you make love with your wife?

Despite all this I am happy. I have a house and working appliances, a cheder for my kids, and I have a job. We have heat, and we eat every day.

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Re: A Rasha Gamur

Posted by Dr.Watson - 30 Oct 2013 02:28

It sounds like you're dealing with a lot, that must be hard.

How do you feel about your wife not making love with you? Most people would probably be very angry with Hashem and resentful of life, their wife and other people who were better off than them. There's nothing wrong with feeling like that at times. How does it make you feel? How do you deal with it?

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