

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 skeptical - 30 Oct 2013 23:58

Wait a second.

This forum is not solely for people working the 12-steps. It is a community of people doing and sharing what works for them.

People can pick and choose what to try and then evaluate if it's working, and try something else if not.

Everyone on here has the ability to read and see clearly that some people have extraordinary circumstances, so their advice is not necessarily for them.

There's really no need to get so excited.

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Re: A Rasha Gamur
Posted by ploni.almoni@gmx.com - 31 Oct 2013 01:56

Dr. Watson, thank you for that clear explanation.

Funny, I also feel like I am getting shot at.

I don't know why you would think that the method I am using does not work. I use it everyday, and I am very happy with it. I wonder if you are saying that you will never fall. Isn't this forum full of people who fall and then they get back on their feet? Didn't you tell me that you plan to use your method many times? I wonder if you are jumping to conclusions.

Anyhow, I get your point, thank you for this brilliant metaphor. How about if I just don't post on other people's topics unless invited, and just keep to my own threads?

As I recall I have some posts with thankyou's from other users.

Btw you can also surrender your resentment. I used it a couple of times when I had panic attacks.

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Re: A Rasha Gamur
Posted by tehylimzuggger - 31 Oct 2013 04:00

Dudes. I didn't read this thread, only the first post.

What?

I mean like, Dude?

What's going on here?

Tzaddik, Rasha? What the gehennom you guys talking about?

Anyone available to give me hebrew [or maybe Tanya] lessons?

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Re: A Rasha Gamur
Posted by ploni.almoni@gmx.com - 31 Oct 2013 04:45

Don't remind me. I am still getting over it.

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Re: A Rasha Gamur
Posted by Dr.Watson - 31 Oct 2013 19:09

I want to take the opportunity to publicly apologise to Ploni for things I said that were hurtful. It was a long debate and clearly we don't see eye to eye about some things, but there was no reason for me to say anything that could hurt or offend you and for that I am sorry.

I've always said I think you're a good guy and I still think that. Your perseverance in

tackling this problem is inspiring and the patience and kindness you show to your family is extraordinary. I do believe you are a tzaddik and I am sorry for offending you.

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Re: A Rasha Gamur
Posted by ploni.almoni@gmx.com - 31 Oct 2013 19:30

No apology necessary, see my response on the other thread.

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Re: A Rasha Gamur
Posted by Pure Daniel - 01 Nov 2013 05:12

I think we should change the title of this thread to 'Confused Tzaddik'

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Re: A Rasha Gamur
Posted by ploni.almoni@gmx.com - 01 Nov 2013 06:28

I am opposed to that because it legitimizes the erroneous idea that a tzadik is someone who **holds that nice Jews are frum**. This type of person will be motivated to be frum, but if he sins he will not have access to true tshuva because the alternative is too horrible to contemplate. That's why when you desire porn sometimes you feel like you are dying, right before you take the plunge.

In truth a tzadik is a Jew who is free of sin. But he is not born free of sin, he gets there after decades of work. That means for most of his life he is not a tzadik, he is a rasha. And it's derech erez to treat others and yourself with regard during that entire time that they are reshaim.

The reason we have the fairy tale definition of a tzadik today is because today people honestly believe that the nations of the world are better off. The odds against a frum life are overwhelming, so when someone thinks nice people are frum we give them a free pass. He is a

tzadik right out of the gate.

I have learned on my own skin that lies and inaccuracies are bad for my sexual sobriety. Let's be reshaim and remind ourselves that the Torah is for our benefit, it is "the whole of man," and let's pursue it vigorously because we want the best for ourselves.

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Re: A Rasha Gamur

Posted by yonatan - 01 Nov 2013 07:23

This is been a very moving thread. Ploni, I admire you greatly. I have learned that life is about making choices and living with them the best we can. We're free to make our choices but only Hashem knows what the end result will be.

I've made choices in life not in keeping with Torah. I may have thought they were right at the time but only much later did I lean that the consequences weren't so great. But I live with my choices and now I'm inching my way back to a Torah filled life one mitzvah at a time. And that my take me the rest of my life. So be it. Hashem diyan haemeth.

Much hutzlucha to you. Be well

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Re: A Rasha Gamur

Posted by gibbor120 - 01 Nov 2013 18:45

The definition of a tzaddik is one who has more mitzvos than aveiros.

Since we have no idea how mitzvos and aveiros are calculated (as one of my rabbeim used to say "I'm not a celestial accountant") we do not know if we are tzaddikim or reshaim.

The Gemara tells us that we should view ourselves as beinonim.

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Re: A Rasha Gamur

Posted by Tosfos - 01 Nov 2013 20:07

[gibbor120 wrote:](#)

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I completely agree with what gibbor120 has said here.

In fact, I have found that one of my biggest hang-ups is trying to "keep score" or "officiate" my different actions, good or not so good. And I have to remind myself that in this "game" (my life), I am a player, and the only One who is qualified to officiate is the RbS"O. And l'havdil, just like a player in a sport will likely get in trouble and not play his best if he worries or complains about the referee's calls, so too I will get in trouble and not be the best *me* that I can be (as per the rulebook of life, i.e. Hashem's Torah), if I don't concentrate fully on right now, what I should or should not be doing.

A great Shabbos to everyone.

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Re: A Rasha Gamur

Posted by ploni.almoni@gmx.com - 02 Nov 2013 00:24

I was taught that a tzadik is someone who is clean of sin, as in step 3 in the Mesillas Yescharim. He doesn't have to be a genius, he "just" has to do everything according to the Shulchan Aruch. It was a Rabbi who taught for twenty years in a yeshiva, and he was considered one of the stars there, so I took it as a reliable source. It makes sense too.

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Re: A Rasha Gamur

Posted by Pure Daniel - 03 Nov 2013 00:25

It's all semantics really. You can call yourself a plankjopiter if you want. As long as it makes you feel good and motivates you to become a better person.

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Re: A Rasha Gamur

Posted by ploni.almoni@gmx.com - 03 Nov 2013 04:56

I don't motivate myself by what I call myself any more.

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