

Running Away

Posted by TalmidChaim - 27 May 2014 18:02

I suffer from OCD. In the past, especially when I was in my late teens and early 20's, the condition was downright crippling. I couldn't leave my room for hours on end, barely slept, and led a private life of not-so-quiet desperation (I yelled at myself A LOT). One of my compulsions was finding a benign program on which to shut off the TV at night. The show had to have nothing negative in it, nothing I considered upsetting or unsettling. Of course, in my OCD-brain, *nothing* fit that criteria. I was able to glean something negative and unsettling from a TV test-signal, let alone the rest of the garbage on late-night TV. Sufficed to say, I stayed up until the wee hours of the early morning, surfing through the channels, looking for something, anything, that would allow me to turn off the TV and go to bed. More than once, I simply passed out from exhaustion.

Anyway, I finally admitted my problem and went for therapy. I also went on Zoloft, which I think really did the trick. A therapist I was seeing also made this recommendation to me, which I think lends itself well to any form of compulsion (lust, included): *run away*. If you find yourself in an environment that is fostering some compulsive activity -- in front of a TV late at night, in a dark room with a laptop, etc. -- literally, get up, and *RUN* out of there. He emphasized the running part, as silly as it may seem. In my mind it was almost like pulling off a Band-aid, or pulling the lever on a jet-fighter ejector seat: dramatic, fast and effective. RUN AWAY.

Now, this doesn't mean run away in the metaphorical sense, as in, running from your problems. Those have to be addressed very directly. Rather, it means that if you find yourself in the heat of the act, in the grips of compulsion, a dramatic escape might just do the trick. So much of addiction is centered on the act itself. Heroin addicts present physiological addiction symptoms from seeing images of needles. As lust addicts, we have our own set of banal triggers.

So, if you have the precious presence of mind to see yourself acting out, *RUNNING* out of the room, as simple and silly as it sounds, might be enough to avoid that particular misstep. It's worked for me in my OCD, and I'm planning on trying it with my lust compulsions as well.

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Re: Running Away

Posted by Machshovo Tova - 27 May 2014 18:11

Run away. That's what Yosef Hatzadik did when faced with a strong lustful trigger.

Great idea!

Hatzlacha,

MT

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Re: Running Away

Posted by TalmidChaim - 27 May 2014 18:19

But lest you think it's easy, it does require some mental preparation, like installing the eject lever on the jet-fighter *beforehand*. When you're not in the grips of lust, you have to tell yourself that this is what I'm going to do if/when I'm in the throws of compulsion, and keep it mentally handy.

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Re: Running Away

Posted by Machshovo Tova - 27 May 2014 18:30

Yeah. Like the story of R' Akiva who was being tortured to death by the Romans and yet he managed to recite the Shema with great mesiras nefesh. And when his students asked him how he reached such an exalted level, he replied, "All my life I practiced and anticipated this moment".

Hatzlacha

MT

Haha, so it is. So we have who to rely on

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Re: Running Away

Posted by cordnoy - 27 May 2014 18:51

Did he say "practiced" as well?

Do you know which "moment" it was that he was anticipating or longin' for?

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Re: Running Away

Posted by Machshovo Tova - 27 May 2014 20:20

See Tzetel Koton (chapter 1) where he explains that by imagining the act of mesiras nefesh for kiddush Hashem we are actually practicing the mitzva.

What do you mean "which moment"? Obviously, this moment which he was currently experiencing, i.e. the fulfillment of the mesiras nefesh for kiddush Hashem which he yearned for all his life.

Unless you had some other insight - please share.

MT

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Re: Running Away

Posted by TalmidChaim - 27 May 2014 20:29

Very interesting, MT. It's an aspect of the Holy Rabbi's martyrdom I never really thought about it, though probably learned many times. I always remember how Rabbi Akiva told his students that

he *yearned* for the moment, but that he practiced for it? That's amazing, and really makes sense. Thank you!

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Re: Running Away

Posted by cordnoy - 27 May 2014 20:38

[Machshovo Tova wrote:](#)

See Tzetel Koton (chapter 1) where he explains that by imagining the act of mesiras nefesh for kiddush Hashem we are actually practicing the mitzva.

What do you mean "which moment"? Obviously, this moment which he was currently experiencing, i.e. the fulfillment of the mesiras nefesh for kiddush Hashem which he yearned for all his life.

Unless you had some other insight - please share.

MT

the commentators ask: Where does it say that one should long for mesiras nefesh? the torah states: v'chay bahem!? If it happens, one should give up his life willingly, but to anxiously await for it!?

Rather, the Rebbe (forgot which one) says that he was waiting to be mekayem the mitzvah of kerias shema and ol malchus shamayim. R' Akiva knew that if he would have full kavanah in this mitzvah accordin' to his level, his soul would depart this world. He therefore had to refrain and hold back from that kavanah, and on his level, he was never mekayem the mitzvah of shema and kabbalas malchus Shamayim to its fullest.

At the time of mesiras nefesh, he was able to.

That is why it says "yatzah nishmaso b'echad" -- his soul departed by echad. The Romans didn't kill him....his soul departed by itself.

b'hatzlachah

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Re: Running Away

Posted by Machshovo Tova - 27 May 2014 20:50

Thanks for sharing such beautiful pshat. As they say, the Torah contains many many interpretations.

Hatzlacha

MT

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