

Method or Madness?

Posted by Mevakesh Hashem - 12 Aug 2008 16:33

After my last post, the moderator of this wonderful forum posed the following question to me:

"What would be really beneficial for us to know is, did you use any specific methods to break free of your sexual addiction or was it simply a very strong determination? Did you use any therapy, group support, medications, specific methods, Rabbanim, Mentors, anything? If yes, please share them with us, and if not, what practical steps did you take to ensure that you wouldn't go back to your old ways?"

OK, I will try and respond to this as best I can.

My initial reaction to your first question was to say that it was simply a strong determination. But on further introspection, I realized that to say that would not be 100% true. Fact is, I did have a very strong determination to stop. But much like a smoker's determination to stop smoking, the determination alone didn't translate into stopping! Since I was about 11 or 12 years old, I was a very curious boy. This curiosity led me to various bad places, which had very negative effects on my life. Sure, it started slowly and subtly, but before I knew it I was intimately familiar with my bris, and was an expert at pleasuring myself in all different places, in various different methods, and at all times of the day and night.

Though at the time I began masturbating I had no idea I was transgressing a sin (or at least I didn't have an idea of the severity of the sin, and how I was ruining the Kedusha in my body and for the future generations that were to come from me), still it became second nature to me, and by the time I was mature enough to know that what I was doing was terrible, it was too late (or so I kept telling myself)

Yes, I was determined to stop. No, my determination alone wasn't strong enough for the over two decades that I fought this horrible addiction.

Deep in my heart, I knew that I had to grab the bull by the horns and stop this! I knew it just wasn't the way to live my life. It was having a negative effect on my life in so many different ways, but I still felt trapped by it and continued living that dark and secret life.

My family, my wife, my friends, my co-workers, and everyone that knew me, all thought I was a normal, healthy, religious guy with perhaps a "fun streak" in me, but none of them in their wildest dreams would ever imagine that I was a person with dark demons deep within me, who possessed me down to the core of my soul!

Noone would have ever dreamed that I was a person capable of bowing to the whims of those demons, regardless of what they asked of me!

I think they would all fall off their chairs if they ever knew that I spent many hours a day engrossed in my darkest desires and steeped in the lowest of the low places. It wasn't enough for me to simply masturbate every now and then (which is bad too). No, I had to have every sinful fantasy of mine fulfilled! At first it was the chatrooms, where I got to know like-minded women who were also entrapped by their Yetzer Hara.

First it was cybersex. that blossomed into phone sex. From there I graduated to meeting women in the flesh. one thing led to another, and one woman led to another, and my life was consumed with real, hardcore sex affairs!

Nothing was taboo (I am embarrassed even to write these things, but as I said previously, if my story can help even one other Yid, it will have been worth writing it)

Most of the women I was with (besides the last woman I was with, for whom I had real, not just sexual, feelings for, yet have no contact with anymore since I started doing Teshuva) meant nothing to me, other than being a vehicle for me to fulfill a sexual fantasy.

Each time I sinned, I knew it was wrong. Deep down, I wished I could stop, but I rationalized it, and blamed one thing or another for my failures, and continued doing it.

I even asked G-d on more than one occasion to help me stop (but, in retrospect I realize that those prayers weren't totally sincere, as they were not for the right reasons). yet, I continued becoming an even bigger sinner.

On the outside, I looked like a typical religious Jew, but on the inside I was fast approaching the 50th level of impurity, from which there is no escape (even though according to the Ohr HaChaim and others, after Matan Torah, there is ALWAYS a way out of Tumah, even if one reached the 50th level. So nobody out there think that they are beyond Teshuva!)

I did not seek therapy, medication etc. , as I don't think they would have helped me. Every person needs to know what works best for them, and for many people therapy, medication, group support etc. is imperative, and they should indeed pursue those options if they find themselves G-d forbid in such a predicament.

As far as I am concerned, and I think I know myself very well, the only thing that works for me specifically is to combat Tumah with Tahara.

I knew from past experiences, and from past chapters in my life, that whenever my situation of Tahara (i.e. Torah study etc.) was elevated, my Tumah was weakened.

~~After I found myself~~ After G-d placed me at the crossroads, and I found myself having to confront my demons, that I have been hesitant (or perceived as unable) to confront, I went on a drive to clear my mind.

I shut the radio. I was driving in silence, but my mind was filled with noise. Very loud noise.

My mind was racing with all sorts of options for the path I would take for the rest of my life.

Was I ready to give up sin?

Would I survive a life without masturbation and illicit sex?

Would I manage to never again watch TV or movies?

Was I ready to finally commit to Hashem after all these years for real?

Would Hashem even accept my Tefilos and my teshuva? I was after all a soul that was filthy and ruined.

Would I have the guts to tell the woman I was "in love with" that i would never speak to her again?

My mind was hoping for the answer to all of the above to be a resounding "YES", but the Yetzer Hara (who of course came along with me for the drive) was tapping me on the shoulder and trying to tell me to just give it all up, and forget Hashem, and go live a "good" life of sin.

I cried like a baby on that car drive.

I listened to some wonderful CD's of Rabbanim discussing Teshuva etc., and it felt as if they were talking directly to me and giving me the courage to go with what i always wanted deep down in the depths of my Neshama.

By the time that drive was over(it was many, many hours of driving) I had made my decision, and there was no turning back.

I came home and went directly to my computer, and deleted any email addresses, blogs, or other accounts that I had that were in any way related to sin.

I slowly started purging my home of any influences of sin. I got rid of Movies, magazines etc.

I started davening with Kavanah, and I started learning a lot of Torah (though it is far from enough)

I installed a filter on all my computers, and started seeking out sites of interest to replace the sites of sin that used to fill my down time. (which is how I found this site, Baruch Hashem)

One thing i will tell you, which is how the Yetzer Hara tries to re-trap us back into his miserable world of sin, dont assume just because a website is "Jewish" that it is kosher! It is far from the case. many "Jewish" sites are full of Lashon Hara, lack of modesty and no Torah ideas. Just be careful, and verify before surfing.

When I walk the streets, i try to the best of my ability to not look at any immodestly clad women (unfortunately this isnt easy today, as many of our dear sisters, daughters of Hashem go dressed worse than the non jews, and cause many people to sin. ay Hashem cause them to see the error of their ways and do teshuva)

Am I perfect? Not by any stretch of the imagination! However, I do aim for perfection, and that is what our task on this world is, to try our best to do what hashem wants us to do, and not be discouraged my the naysayers (who often are our best friends)

The main thing to remember is a) to never trust yourself totally (as the Mishna says) and always be on the lookout for the Yetzer Hara's new trap and b) Hashem loves us more than we can ever love him (so says Rav Moshe Chaim Luzatto), and he wants us to do Teshuva and will wait our entire lives for us to do it.

I am sure that many people who know me (or those who I no longer allow to know me) say that i went mad! Perhaps.

But I will take being mad and following in Hashem's path anyday over being "normal" and following in the Yetzer Hara's path.

May Hashem give me (and all of you reading this) the inner strength to persevere, and be

amongst the select few who merit to join Mashiach in the rebuilding of the Bais hamikdash and the glorification of Hsshem's name very soon

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Re: Method or Madness?

Posted by me - 13 Aug 2008 12:52

I was considering not to post this, out of embarrassment, but we are all here to help one another and this forum is anonymous.

Mevakesh, your post was unfortunately a "turn on" for me. Of course you did not have this intention, but all of us have different experiences, different backgrounds, and are all holding on different levels within this taivah.

For example: I B"H throughout my battle with this taivah, have never ever resorted to masturbation. I learned many many years ago how severe Sh"zal is. I am married, but you can still have an idea of someone who was enveloped with porn, and without the outlet of masturbation must have had some incredible built up explosive energy inside of them. Of course with this taivah, it seems to be a stirah how one is a tzadik and makpid not to be motzei zerah levatalah, yet on the other hand destroying their eyes etc, etc, and almost ready to do anything else. But, with yetzer harah, there is no sechel or chachmah.

So, I also opened up the special mailboxes, and eventually began to look for females that were sick like me, etc. One side of me hoped that I would never find them, and the other was hoping that I would! In the end, I had some close calls, but B"H I never had any meetings or relationships. I would thank Hashem who really saved me many times from being "matzliach", then when I would begin to feel my spiritual madregah begin to fall, a few weeks later I would open new mailboxes, new accounts in place of the ones I closed, and start all over again.

So, B"H it has now been a few weeks since I cut off my access to porn, and I have been feeling fine, but when I read your post that you were so "fortunate" to have actually experienced the fulfillment of your "fantasies", (granted you did not go into any details), but the fact that here is someone who DID succeed in tasting those forbidden fruits, well I started to feel some sort of excitement, and a voice, (we all know who's) said to me, too bad you too couldn't have a good time, and THEN do your tshuvah. For a few seconds I really had a desire, a thought to go back into the darkness, "just one more time", (as the yetzer was telling me), just so I too could actually taste those fruits. You know how the yetzer says "you lost an opportunity", if you do tshuvah now, you will loose the opportunity to finally fulfill those fantasies. I have developed many fantasies over these years, and I never ever fulfilled one of them. So, here my yetzer harah is m'kanah you for "having had such a good time".

So, I am asking her the administration, you and others in this forum about perhaps setting

some guidelines about our posts, and perhaps keeping them as parve as possible. I know that this is complex, but it is a bit like a mussar shmues, the Rav comes in, and with his shmues he raises up half of the shiur, and the other half he kills.

What does everyone else here think?

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Re: Method or Madness?

Posted by Mevakesh Hashem - 13 Aug 2008 13:57

In response to "me":

Fisrt of all, I an bot sure what to make of your reply to my latest post. Though I feel terrible that my words may have caused you to get "turned on" (as you put it), I don't think it makes sense to apologize for posting details of my struggle with a sexual addiction, on a forum specificaly intended for posting details of struggles with sexual addiction.

Secondly, you have no idea how fortunate you are to have never sinned in actuality with another person. Though it sounds fun, exciting, enticing and like a grand old time, believe me when I tell you that it is the worst thing that can happen to a person. The excitement lasts for 30 seconds (if that) and the guilt lasts forever. The pleasure lasts for a few moments, and the Teshuva for it is long and tedious.

The Yetzer Hara is amazingly cunning, and he can even manage to convince you to think "see! It can be done! It can be great!" from reading a post from a guy telling you how bad it is and haow you should avoid it like the plague!

I think we need to look deep inside ourselves, and figure out how to channel our energies to be "turned on" to Hashem, at al times, especially at times when the yetzer Hara is trying to convince us to get "turned on" for znus.

I hope my response will serve to strengthen your resolve in your fight against our enemy #1: The Yetzer Hara.

Please feel free to contact me privately, if I can be of further assistance anytime.

Chazak V'Ematz!

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Re: Method or Madness?
Posted by me - 13 Aug 2008 16:49

Mevakesh,

I was in no way asking or expecting an apology. You did no wrong and had only good intentions. I was merely expressing my own personal weakness to your post, so that perhaps you, and others will consider the weakness of others. My post was not an attack but only to be informative for the good of the forum.

Now, your latest post above describing how terrible it was to actually go through with the aveiros. This in fact helped me, and to have more detail, as descriptive as possible concerning the bitterness, guilt, pain remorse.....you get the picture. This is what will help me personally. This will remove the temptations of the Samech Mem, when he tells me, "you don't know what your missing out on."

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Re: Method or Madness?
Posted by Mevakesh Hashem - 13 Aug 2008 16:52

me,

email me privately, and I will gladly provide you additional details that may be helpful in your personal fight against the Samech Mem.

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Re: Method or Madness?

Posted by the.guard - 13 Aug 2008 20:55

Mevakesh, why privately? I want to hear too!

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Re: Method or Madness?

Posted by Mevakesh Hashem - 14 Aug 2008 04:12

Because certain details of my struggles are still too sensitive to air in public, as the wrong parties may recognize me and cause me further heartache. May Hashem continue to give me strength to remain a true Eved Hashem.

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Re: Method or Madness?

Posted by the.guard - 14 Aug 2008 09:19

Can you CC me at least? I like to hear the type of things you wrote below:

"Though it sounds fun, exciting, enticing and like a grand old time, believe me when I tell you that it is the worst thing that can happen to a person. The excitement lasts for 30 seconds (if that) and the guilt lasts forever. The pleasure lasts for a few moments, and the Teshuva for it is long and tedious."

These type of words are inspiring and I can take quotes from them for the chizuk list and for the site occasionally (without compromising your identity at all - don't worry).

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Re: Method or Madness?

Posted by niceguy - 28 Aug 2008 08:23

Mevakesh ,

i've just read these older posts.i respect your ability to walk away from these things .your story has been mechazek me .

i would like to bring up an observation .After going as far as you did i was at first puzzled at how you just walked away from it .you didn't seem to mention outside help, therapy ,support etc.this would be and is completely impossible for me.its only through people being aware of my struggles and being in contact w/ them on a constant basis that i feel i can finally break this sickness of over 22 years. i know you mentioned that therapy works for some ect.

i know what i'm about to say is not true for everyone.but is it possible that sprecisely because you went so far it was in someway easier to break away? Now i'm not CH'V advocating going further with ones addiction until he's sick of it, b/c it might not ever happen . that's the way of the yetzer .He always finds a way to make it look new and exciting no matter how much you've seen and done.

but for others that havent gone as far there might be a different battle going on as well as the regular one.that is,whatever levels of tuma i haven't reached and sins i haven't done are really all the same emptyness as this or even worse.many peoplelike myself have for some reason held back from going beyond a certain point in sin .for some it's busha ,family pressure or deeply ingrained beliefs (like "me" who watched porn and never masturbated which i don't even understand,).but they have to convince themselves that more is not more or better it's less and worse.and that the fantasies they may have of really doing something are horrible nghtmares that they would never ever want .that's why it's so vital for people like that to hear the destruction it causes and where their own behavior can eventually lead .if i could hear some of the down side part as well it would help me a lot.maybe you could post me privately copies of some of what you sent "me".

i want to say again how much i appreciate you sharing this w/ us .it strengthens us and makes us feel understood and hopeful for success.

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Re: Method or Madness?

Posted by Mevakesh Hashem - 28 Aug 2008 14:23

niceguy.

First of all, I appreciate the fact that you got chizzuk from what I wrote, and I thank you for sharing that with me. It is my hope, and the reason I write here, that hopefully my terrible sins of

the past can at least in some way help others like yourself from falling any further and grabbing onto Hashem's outstretched hand and returning to Him.

What you suggested is interesting, and possibly has some truth to it, that I reached bottom with a thump, so it was easier for me (though still very hard, believe me) to bounce back up.

HOWEVER, do not think for a second that you cannot do it too! YOU CAN!!!

and dont think for a second that you are missing out an iota of any real pleasure by not sinning further. It is all emptiness, guilt and pain. Don't go there! No matter how enticing the Yetzer Hara may make it seem, it aint so!

Please feel free to email me privately anytime about any topic or question that I may help you with at

Chazak V'Ematz!

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