

**Ur-a-jew's Thread**Posted by ur-a-jew - 22 Jun 2010 17:29

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My name is Yitzchok and I'm a lust addict.

I first started masturbating in the shower probably when I was around 10 years old. At the time I had no clue that I was even doing something wrong. While I may have occasionally seen naked images as a kid and young teen my interest was I believe no different than any other teen. I think masturbation was common for me during high school. At some point someone taught me the halachos but at that point it was too late. It was some time in my mid-teens that I started actively pursuing lust. For example, my mother liked to read novels and I would read the books she had just to find the sex part. Eventually, I knew which authors were more descriptive and I would go to the used book store and buy other books by that author. While I wouldn't buy a playboy or the like I would look in Vogue or GQ for a naked image that I typically could find. At the same time we had a VCR and my parents were often not home so I would rent Rated R movies and just fast forward to the sex scene. I remember that the video store had on the regular display a video with a note not rentable to under 17. One day I decided to rent it. I came home watched about 10-15 minutes felt too guilty and ran back to the store to return it claiming much to the ire of the proprietor that I had mistakenly picked up the wrong video. When the local supermarket also started renting videos I started renting there and a couple of times took out x-rated videos. While I would at times watch the whole movie I would typically first just forward to the sex or nudity scene. Any opportunity to watch I would grab. When one summer I had my brother's empty apartment which had cable I would go to his house until the early morning hours trying to get in whatever I could. When we went away for Yom Tov and were staying in an empty house, I figured out that if I flipped the channels back and forth between scrambled channels enough times I could unscramble it for several minutes.

When I was turning 20 the age when you're accountable for misa b'yedei shomyim, I resolved to change. I don't how long it took me to get started again but it obviously did. I got married at a relatively young age.

After marriage masturbation stopped, but the lust was still there. I believe there was always some issue in the bedroom that I wanted sex more than my wife. I probably pressured her too much, we were young she wanted to make me happy and the result of it is that now I believe she has an underlying resentment when I get overly in the mood (which one can say is always) which can cause her to shut down completely. My wife has always been complaining to me that sex is always on my mind and she is right.

A lot of my addiction is a blur to me. I know that the advent of the DVD and the internet were

further pitfalls for me. For example, my wife would go up to the country and the times when I was home alone I would rent movies and go back to my bad habits. The Internet didn't help especially when I was in the office. For the most part I have been able to keep my problematic internet out of my house. Moreover, I guess you can say fortunately for me, either because I didn't have the money or because I was worried that it would be easier for me to be caught (other than renting movies) I have never spent money to fuel the addiction. So I never did the phone-sex or have gone to XXX establishments. Unfortunately, with the internet paying for pornography is not necessary there is so much available for free. When I get into my binges and would feel guilty looking at porn I would then look for erotic stories. Even when guilt overcame and I resolved to stop, in the back of my mind I would think to myself: if I would have done this or that I could have probably found something else.

Another problem for me is that I don't need the internet, at some point in my career since I am very computer saavy I had to for my job examine computer hard drives relating to cases I was working on. Generally the first thing I would do is examine the drive for pornographic images. When I had to go away for business it would be back to the same movie habits. Staying up practically all night long just to get in another movie and perhaps another glimpse.

I don't think a Yom Kippur has passed in the past 20 years where I have not made some sort of resolution to stop looking at ma'aros assurim. Yet I also don't think there was a year that has passed that I not in some way broken that kabbalah. Some times have been worse than others. When I was younger, I would often stay late in my office, browse the internet or watch late night cable television sex shows. The guilt was many-fold the watching itself, the not working when I was supposedly working and the coming home too late and therefore not being there to help. For the past five years at least, I have been able to control myself enough to avoid the staying in the office too late problem. But that would just mean that I did what I needed to during the day.

Prior to last Rosh Hashana, the situation with my wife was getting very frustrating and I realized that this was crazy. When I was a teenager I had a chasidische rebbi I used to learn with during the summer. Two things that he had told me that had always stuck with me. First, that it was a chesron in emunah to watch a Rated R movie and second that he was involved in the preparation of shabbos food packages which required him to drive a truck to the city. He said he never drove alone since the temptation of a hooker was too much for him. I always felt guilty about the former statement since Rated R would generally be good compared to what I was watching. At the same time I could never believe that he would actually be tempted to go to a hooker. This past year I finally realized that if there is someone that I could talk to it was him. I told my wife that I was going to speak to him about the lust issue but the real reason was to finally admit to someone that I had a problem with porn and to get an eitzah. Just revealing the problem to someone was such a relief. He told me that how he also had temptations but his wife was his masgiach and he (with her help) planned his life in ways to avoid temptation. Since that time I don't think that I have sunken as low as I have in the past. The addiction has not

stopped. For example, my facebook account under an anonymous name has all sorts of unbecoming "friends." While there is generally no outright nudity they are pretty close to it and I'm always on the look for it.

Then I found GYE. I found tools and friends and a system. And while it has only been some two weeks (since I discovered the site) my life is changing. I am not embarrassed to work through the program. I have a forum where I could just speak out my feelings and desires and get encouragement. Everything that I do has GYE in my conscience to try and evaluate whether I am doing the right thing. I am forever grateful to everyone who started this site and to Hashem because for once in my life I actually feel there is hope.

While I sometimes question whether I am addicted or maybe just normal, after all I have never done, and I am not tempted to do some of the things that others here have done. What makes me sure that I am an addict, is the inability to stop despite the fact that I know the damage that it causes to me. I may be a smaller-time addict, but I am an addict nonetheless and I realize that I can't go on living like this.

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Re: Ur-a-jew's Thread

Posted by ur-a-jew - 25 Jul 2010 18:24

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After today's call I think I got a little clarity in what Dov was trying to get at. The question we should be answering is what needs are we looking to *lust* to fill, as opposed to having our *higher power, i.e., Hashem* fulfill? Whatever those answers are, in essence we are making Lust or whatever else we are looking to satisfy those needs into gods, in the sense we are worshipping them to satisfy our needs, instead of worshipping Hashem to satisfy our need. So while most of know that we make Lust, Money and Kovod into gods. The question that we're looking to answer here is *to what end* are we making those into gods. What do we think they will give us.

As for myself. I find it very difficult to answer why I turned to lust when I was a teenager. It was just too long ago. I'm guessing that it was probably a need for companionship. My parents used to travel alot. I'm not such an outgoing guy. Lust occupied my time and gave me a feeling that I was doing something through the excitement that it brought on. In essence that is why I still turn to lust. I look to lust to fulfill a desire for attention and appreciation. I want my to be noticed and appreciated first and foremost by my wife and thereafter by everyone else. When I don't get it I turn to lust. The silly thing is that looking there is no connection between the porn and the need I'm looking to fulfill. Meaning since I don't generally interact with others when I'm acting out. There is no way that porn or the like could even answer my needs. It occurs to me

that this may be why the creative search for porn is part of the excitement to me. It provides my with a sort of interaction with myself. In essence I'm saying to myself: Look your good, look how you were able to find this or that. And I'm using that fulfill my need for attention.

The more difficult area is when I lust after my wife to satisfy that need. There it is very hard to recognize that her submission to my desires will not bring me fulfillment.

The other need that I look to lust to fulfill is as an escape from reality. When I feeling stressed out from financial burdens or otherwise. I have used lust to smooth me. While here at least one can envision a scenario where lust will help. It doesn't since it usually just brings on more depression because it creates an notion of expectation and need which then always remain unfulfilled.

The bottom line is. I know deep down that the only one that can fulfill my needs is Hashem either by causing others to satisfy my wants or needs or by taking away the cause for the want and need itself.

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Re: Ur-a-jew's Thread

Posted by Ineedhelp!! - 26 Jul 2010 00:49

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I am still not seeing the clarity in this excersize for a few reasons.

We are supposed to figure out what we want/need (is there a difference? which are we supposed to use?) in our Higher Power. I know that I shouldn't b questioning the program. I have come to terms with that and dont care why or how it works. I do, however, question this excersize (which is not an official part of the program). Why is it important for me to figure what I need in a God. My whole life I have ben told what God is and to live life accordingly. All of a sudden I am told that I get to decide what it is that I want to serve. Who am I? God is what He is. He is not what I choose Him to be.

Another issue I have is ok lets say I can choose what God is, I dont want in God what I find in lust. What I get from lust is a self-centered physical pleasure. None of which I want from God. What I ultimately want is to realize that I really dont want that. I want to become a person who

relies on God and for it to be a giving and non physical relationship with Him. How do I deal with that?

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Re: Ur-a-jew's Thread

Posted by The Never Believer - 26 Jul 2010 01:35

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yiddle, god is capable of anything, right? like the manna which was capable of tasting like anything. so pretend youre about to eat some manna. you are asked to pick what you want it to taste like. same here. god is kol yachol. now what do you need him to taste like?

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Re: Ur-a-jew's Thread

Posted by Ineedhelp!! - 26 Jul 2010 01:42

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So am I supposed to 'make' God what I **want** Him to "taste" like or what I **need** Him to taste like?

I'd like a medium t-bone steak but all I need is bread and water...

Also, what I look for in lust, I dont want to find in God. I dont want the self-centered physical pleasure that I find in lust. I want to be able to have a normally anxiety-filled situation and look inside myself and say "well its up to God so i am going to leave the worrying to Him".

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Re: Ur-a-jew's Thread

Posted by ur-a-jew - 26 Jul 2010 01:58

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[Yiddle2 wrote on 26 Jul 2010 01:42:](#)

Also, what I look for in lust, I dont want to find in God. I dont want the self-centered physical

pleasure that I find in lust. I want to be able to have a normally anxiety-filled situation and look inside myself and say "well its up to God so i am going to leave the worrying to Him".

The point is you're looking to lust to fill a need. In that sense you are making lust you're god. Were you not making lust you're god when you had that need you would turn to Hashem. The point of the exercise is to show you precisely that.

Because Hashem is your higher power and he is kol yachol, he can fill that need for you, by giving you self-centered pleasure or by removing the situation that is causing the anxiety in the first place. Either way God has the ability to take care of the situation. So next time when you get into a situation that in the past caused you to turn to lust, don't because you know from your first step that if you do it will make you're life unmanagable and you know from the second step that Hashem can get you out of the problem.

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Re: Ur-a-jew's Thread

Posted by ur-a-jew - 01 Aug 2010 15:13

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In thinking about the third step here is one of my issues. I'm having a hard time making conversation with G-d. I get the feeling that all I'm doing is asking Him for more and more favors. Now in a sense its humbling since you recognize that all your needs are dependent on Him but at the same time I feel like, you're talking to Hashem and this is what you're asking Him for. Can't you ask for something meaningful. Have more thoughts on the subject but I got to go now.

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Re: Ur-a-jew's Thread

Posted by ur-a-jew - 02 Aug 2010 16:25

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Dov, thanks as usual for the guidance on the call, i.e., to focus our tefillos on others and with respect to ourselves to just daven that Hashem give us what we need to do His will. One nuance that I don't believe wasn't discussed with respect to our own tefillos (maybe because its obvious but something worth reminding at least myself) is that there presumably is a difference between asking Hashem for "stuff" which we really may or not need (even if we want them) and asking him to save us from situations that will result in violating His will. This latter category of tefillah I imagine is to be encouraged. Indeed, sometimes Hashem sends us certain nisyanos just so that we should daven to Him to save us from them. If we take the initiative in davening to be saved from them first, we can avoid the need for Hashem sending us the nisyaoon in the first place.

Now, on the topic of talking to Hashem, I have to tell you all something uplifting that happened to me this morning. I think I've heard it being referred to as an A&W moment, which I think stands for an Awe and Wonder moment. I went to learn this morning before davening and there was someone there that had a horrible cough. It was non-stop, the type that you wanted to tell the guy maybe you should leave, try a drink, cover your mouth, etc. My chavrusa and I were having a hard time concentrating because it was so disruptive. I was particularly troubled since he was sitting at the table where I usually sit for davening. After seder was over I happily sat in someone else's seat at a different table who didn't show up. So I'm about to start davening and I said to myself what should my reaction be to this situation. I recalled yesterday's conversation and I said a small tefilla to myself to the effect of Ribono Shel Olam please help that individual there stop coughing. In middle of davening I realized that the person had not coughed once the whole davening. And it continued throughout the whole davening even when others around him starting coughing (that is notwithstanding the yawning effect). I just smiled to myself thinking this is clearly a sign from Shomayim as to where I need to be focusing my tefillos.

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Re: Ur-a-jew's Thread

Posted by Dov - 03 Aug 2010 04:20

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Beautiful story.

Now I will ruin it with this joke:

A fellow was.....oh, never mind.

Nice story. That's all.

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Re: Ur-a-jew's Thread

Posted by ur-a-jew - 09 Aug 2010 00:49

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Today's call was good (as usual - thanks Dov). If nothing else its nice to know that I'm not the

Dov's eitzah (a gratitude list) of how to deal with the feeling of letdown and sleeplessness when, for example, you think you're wife is in the mood and you think you're going to have sex that night and then it doesn't happen. It's very easy to say that if it's Hashem's will that I shouldn't have sex that night then obviously its not what's best for me at that particular moment, it's only a grown man who has a fear of going into a dark basement alone, another thing to actually believe it and then be comforted by that thought. I will try the gratitude list and see how that works.

Finally, the explanation that giving over my will to Hashem means, that I am not going to believe that I am in control and that if I don't take charge of a situation than it won't happen, and that this extends to such simple things like missing a light, brought a little more clarity to me. The truth is this past week, I've been trying to implement on my commute to work something along these lines. Rather than constantly running to make the bus (which runs on a erratic schedule) I've taken to walking clamly with the tefila "Ribbono Shel Olam if my making the bus right now will bring about kvod shomayim please let me make it." I find that it's less anxiety producing (and generally I've been pretty good at catching a bus shortly after I arrive). I developed this tefilla before hearing the giving over my will explanation, based on last week's discussion that tefillos for ourselves should generally not be directing G-d to do things, since who knows (other than Him) what's really best for us. I figured that bringing about kvod shomayim is certainly good for us and He will know whether this particular task will do it. Based on today's discussion, I see that the essence of such an approach is that we are giving over our will to Hashem. Hashem knows what the best outcome for us, and if something that we perceive we would want to happen doesn't happen we should understand that it is His will that it shouldn't happen.

Now off to the not simple task of actually living with this frame of mind.

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Re: Ur-a-jew's Thread

Posted by Dov - 09 Aug 2010 20:54

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Thanks for making it so clear, I will try it, together with you and the rest of anshei shlomeinu.

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Re: Ur-a-jew's Thread

Posted by ur-a-jew - 10 Aug 2010 23:16

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In light of Dov's recent suggestion concerning a gratitude I was particularly happy to learn today a Rashi in Megillah (18a). The gemara is explaining why birchas cohanim comes after modim and not immediately after the brocha of avodah. The gemara answers that logically the brocha of modim goes together with the brocha of avodah since they are "one" which Rashi explains that modim or gratitude is a form of avodah. In other words, everytime we make a gratitude list we are in essence bringing a korban.

To give a little deeper meaning (this is my own pshat) the point of a korban was for the person to view himself as if the animal being slaughtered was himself. When we show gratitude we slaughter our "self" through the humility that comes from the recognition that we are dependent on others.

One of my reasons for writing this whole megillah is to thank Hashem for getting through today. As I explained to some nice GYE'er who checked on me today, in the past a day like today would be the perfect recipe for disaster. Not so busy at work, a wife who is acting stressed and kvetchy and probably not in the mood for me, a wedding which will just make me in the mood because my wife will be all dressed up. Fortunately, I had the site and a network to keep me occupied during the day and a call that I hope to make tonight. Thank you Hashem.

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Re: Ur-a-jew's Thread

Posted by Dov - 26 Aug 2010 11:54

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Re: Ur-a-jew's Thread

Posted by ur-a-jew - 27 Aug 2010 20:43

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That's because I'm having a hard time finding the time to sit and do the fourth step. I imagine its not going to be any easier once I sit down and do it easier. Hopefully before Sunday's call.

Good Shabbos to all.

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Re: Ur-a-jew's Thread

Posted by ur-a-jew - 30 Aug 2010 03:56

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I finally sat down today while waiting for an oil change and started the step four chart. Wasn't as hard as I envisioned. But before I get to that I wanted to share what I guess was a step four moment I had this shabbos. I cam about 20 minutes late to shul. At exactly 8:30 the gabbai motions to the chazzan for pesukei dzimra to finish causing him to walk away even though he wasn't even up to nishmas. I felt myself getting all upset why do they have to be so yekkish. What's wrong with a more heartfelt pseui dzimra that takes 33 minutes. Then I caught myself and realized why are you getting so upset. He didn't do anything wrong. You're the one who came 20 minutes late. If you had come ontime you'd be finished and probably not concerned that they are starting borchu on time. Its your own selfish feelings that are causing you to be upset. The thought process helped and I did not get upset.

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