

About to Fall Off the Cliff

Contributed by Tzvi Fishman
Monday, 28 December 2009
Last Updated Monday, 28 December 2009

Question:

I had a great summer in Israel, learning about Judaism at a yeshiva for beginners, but ever since coming back to the US for my last year of college, I've been smashed by my yetzer hara (sexual drive) and I'm on the verge of giving in with a non-Jewish girl who's been making a pass at me for some time, letting me know that she's available to fulfill all of my fantasies. On the one hand, it's hard to keep close to the Torah here, and on the other hand, I can't stand feeling guilty for all of my passions and want to have some fun. And I've heard that the Torah prohibits marrying gentiles, but not necessarily having relations with them (I'd use a condom to avoid pregnancy.) I know that I'm playing with fire but what can I do? I've spoken to the campus rabbi about getting married but he says I'm too young.

Answer:

You seem to be weighing between the options: Do I want to spend 1000 years in the world to come in a microwave of 10,000 degrees F, or in a microwave of 20,000 degrees F?

Also, your sexual transgressions, and the spiritual and physical blemishes they cause, will be passed on to your children, adversely affecting their entire lives.

Yes, you may have some fun now, but even though you chose not to think about G-d, He is still there, and according to the system He has established, there is reward and punishment on all of our deeds.

Whatever rationalizations and false Torah ideas you have grabbed on to, the fact remains that sexual relations with a non-Jew is a serious transgression in and of itself, equated with idol worship. Furthermore, the use of a condom is a severe transgression, as with any spilling of seed in vain. As you probably know, premarital relations with a Jewish woman is also a weighty transgression, with the added gravity of the Niddah laws.

So what do you do?

Of course, getting married is the correct direction. If the rabbis discourage you from marrying and don't have any shiduchim for you, perhaps you should widen your circle of matchmakers and be a little more patient.

It would also help to be in a more religious environment, away from your temptations. Israel is the best place. People here get married early and there are lots of shiduchim and people to help. Since Torah study helps overcome the yetzer, you should be back in yeshiva. Being in a holy environment with other people who are trying their best to serve Hashem would give you added strength in the battle.

The Shovavim period (from the weekly portion of Shemot until Mishpatim) is coming up which is designed to rectify sexual transgressions, and it would be a good idea to participate in some group tikunim if you can find any, or get on a plane and come to Israel now. The more you give in to the yetzer, the harder it will be to do tshuva, so why screw up your life for a few fun nights and then be racked with guilt and all the other unavoidable consequences in this world and the next? You can still get back on the right path and rediscover the good feelings you had when you first got involved in the Torah. In the meantime, get a chevruta (Torah study partner) at your college and establish a regular daily regime of Torah study on a subject that you enjoy. The regular daily encounter with the Torah, even if it is just 15 minutes, is an influx of spiritual oxygen that can help you in your struggle.

The biblical Yosef beat the temptation and so can you.