

how to judge a fall

Posted by strugglingandstrivngBT - 01 Jan 2012 19:59

So I have been doing fairly well but the last day I learned how to unsafe search my search engine and I slipped. I wanted to see if I could find something and typed in an innocent enough inquiry yet sort of trying to slip, yet I didnt want to. I saw one quick pic and immediately closed the browser. I dont know if I should count this as a slip or a fall. I am so close to 30 days and I would feel horrible if I fell off the streak, but I'm not sure I can honestly say I have had a month streak when I get there. My whole plan was to reward myself with something (techeles) when I hit 30 days and there is an annoyomous person helping me with it (he likes when people take on thigns to grow in avodas Hashem). I feel really bad and wont do it again. I know the point is to just want to stay clean, and not slip, but this is how I push forward. I'm not sure what to do. what do you yall think?

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Re: how to judge a fall

Posted by gibbor120 - 03 Jan 2012 16:49

PM, email, then phone, then possibly even meet them. Sounds scary, doesn't it... but it works!

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Re: how to judge a fall

Posted by obormottel - 03 Jan 2012 23:29

[strugglingandstrivngBT wrote on 03 Jan 2012 16:45:](#)

this is an annoyomous internet forum for people with a common goal. how can i find people here to have in person relationships with?

At one point in my life, a whole 5 months gao, I found myself desperately wanting to quit masturbating and watching internet porn. I found myself wanting a real "relationship with Hashem".

It took over twenty years of active addiction to this stuff to realize that my "relationship with Hashem" is the same false god as naked ladies on the computer screen.

I couldn't begin having a relationship with real G-d until I reached out to real people who told me I was insane but that there was hope and that they were a living proof of it.

Although making fast friends on campus sounds like a nice idea, you know that it's not what Gibbor and Dov et al are talking about. We need friends who understand the urge to reach into my zipper and pleasure myself against my better judgement and religious conviction.

You can make this forum work for you, but in my opinion you'd need to spend all your time on it to benefit. Not if you meet/talk on the phone to someone real.

In my opinion.

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Re: how to judge a fall
Posted by strugglingandstrivngBT - 04 Jan 2012 02:12

I speak for myself when I say that porn and masturbation are not my problem-they are a result of my problem. What exactly my problem is, I'm not sure. guess I gotta figure that out.

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Re: how to judge a fall
Posted by gibbor120 - 04 Jan 2012 17:02

[strugglingandstrivngBT wrote on 04 Jan 2012 02:12:](#)

I speak for myself when I say that porn and masturbation are not my problem-they are a result of my problem. What exactly my problem is, I'm not sure. guess **I gotta figure that out.**

No, you gotta **talk it out** with someone else. Sorry to be so bossy. I can be quiet now. :-X

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Re: how to judge a fall

Posted by obormottel - 04 Jan 2012 23:37

I am sorry, too, for what I am about to say, but I'll say it anyways:

What you **want** to do is to continue masturbating and not feel bad about it.

What you **gotta** do is to stop masturbating (using a myriad of tools available here, and the ones you keep ignoring in your desire to control and enjoy your masturbating habit), and then, when you're sober, get to the bottom of the underlying issues.

You can spend twenty years soul-searching aand "getting to the bottom" of your defects, and not move an inch closer to changing your life.

In my not-at-all humble opinion, you have to take proactive steps **FIRST** to stopping drugging yourself, and only once you've got some tangible sobriety, you can work up the nerve to **figuring out** what your *real* (read: perceived) problems are.

And in case you're feeling particularly slow today, let me repeat what I just said:

If you want to stop masturbating compulsively, first thing you need to do is stop masturbating. You can then take your issues to the therapist. Not the other way around.

And in order to do this first thing, you need to realize that you alone are entirely INcapable of stopping yourself (as your experience shows; please don't remind me that once you stayed stopped for 9 months; once you fall, your clock is reset).

So if you are unwilling to use the fences you imposed on yourself; unable to stay stopped on will power alone; and refuse to employ other self-help methods available on this website; I wonder what will it take for you to come to a meeting of a group of guys who struggle with the same issues, and beg for help?

Love always,

Mottel

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Re: how to judge a fall

Posted by strugglingandstrivngBT - 05 Jan 2012 00:56

I think we may both be right. I definitely don't agree that you have to stop acting out (whatever the symptoms are, masturbation, drugs, food etc) before dealing with the issues. particularly because one is never fully clean. what i mean is the risk of falling always exists. so when I act out now, how is that different in this prescribed schedule from when I act out after 2 years. can I never work on the underlying problems. further, working on the problem causes a cessation in the action. I am not disputing that I need to work with my fences (and they are TIGHT right now, at least for my internet), but i have been doing a lot of soul searching and I think my problem is really a deeper one. I used religion as a catharsis and in my imagined paradigm I needed to stop masturbating to feel spiritual, and i needed to feel spiritual to feel happy. now I am rethinking that. I'm not saying its wrong, but I would like to psychologically reassign certain things. I would like to say I am unable to control myself unless I stick to these halachic measures that ensure that I won't fall, and part of that is shmiras aynayim, but I am not convinced that is true. although on some level i guess I know it is true. I feel I'm not expressing the breakthrough I had last night well.

on a side note, I have been doing exercises in therapy "talking" to people. I did my ex the other week and I'm doing myself this week. it helps get emotion out of me, where im usually more numb, and true feelings. its definitely a step towards real people...

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Re: how to judge a fall

Posted by Dov - 05 Jan 2012 10:10

Some things I have come to learn, be"H:

1- 'Halocha' *cannot* save anyone from falling. Only (a simple but true relationship with their) G-d can. That is clear.

2- I do *not* need to be a tzaddik to be close with G-d, nor to be happy, nor to be spiritual. That is poshut (and Chaza"l teach this many times, so does common sense - for we are never fully *righteous*, as you said "we are never fully clean"). I cannot ever really be 'good' enough to truly deserve *anything* - **anything**.

3- You may be right, that you can work on many problems even while *not* being clean or sober. But I think that OM's point is not that you cannot do it, but that it is much less likely that you will be matzliach -and it will be a much harder and lonelier walk. It is like the guy going to work and throwing money out the window of the train on the way to work every day...yes, he will get more money and remain in the black...but it for him will be a harder struggle to be financially OK. It's

just a pity, for it'd be much easier for him to get wealthy would he just keep his cash. He's just taking the slower and harder path to the same goal as everyone else on the train...and really for no reason.

4- Giving up my lust is really not going to hurt me, at all. This is easy to say, but hard to believe. Until I met other sober guys, I never ever believed this fact, and was sure that as wrong as it was, sex with myself was a *necessity* for me, and *not* optional. But sex - even sex with myself - is totally optional. Hashem says so, too, cuz He makes it an aveiro, which means that humans (except addicts, of course) have a choice in the matter - ie, that it is optional.

If you still do not know that you are powerless, then you need to keep trying to stop and see how it goes. If you succeed, then you are right - if you fail, then the only shaylosh is this: how many more years will be necessary for you to finally give up and say that you can't do it?

And when you use the tools of recovery offered to you and *succeed*, will you then say, "Oh, never mind G-d, I got this one without You, apparently, but thanks anyway!" Or will you **retain** the faith that you could not succeed without a brocha of true Chessed from your G-d - and that logically it will always be that way.

So many here have a week or month of clean time - then lose it...over and over again!! It is obvious that **so** often it is because they *start* humbly, with some sort of sweet dependence on their G-d, seeing thir vulnerability...but when they 'achieve' some success, they soon flip back into the old way of self-dependence - for after all, **now** they obviously have a '*madreigo*', no?

The joke about the guy praying for the parking space, mamesh.

A pity. Eidus Hashem ne'emonoh, machkimas pesi.

Hatzlocha!!!

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Re: how to judge a fall

Posted by gibbor120 - 05 Jan 2012 15:32

[obormottel wrote on 04 Jan 2012 23:37:](#)

You can spend twenty years soul-searching aand "getting to the bottom" of your defects, and not move an inch closer to changing your life.

Yup, I did that very well indeed for about 20 years. I've changed more in 6 months on this site than in those 20 years :-[.

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Re: how to judge a fall

Posted by strugglingandstrivngBT - 05 Jan 2012 15:47

I understand youre right, but my biggest issue right now is NOT porn and masturbation. I am being driven nuts by a yetzer hara that screams stop doing all of this, and I dont know how to stop. i dont feel like I believe in anything right now, and I dont know if that is really how I feel or just the result of too much time numbing myself to keep from thinking about the bad I've done (ie the result of porn and masturbation). I really want a relationship with Hashem, but I am so afraid of it and really dont know how to do it. I want certainty, and I'm just never going to get it. it doesnt exist. and that scares me. I started doing recovery similarly based on what you are explaining and then I sort of took a different turn and just became frum. it had a similar effect, with some undealt with issues lying underneath the skin. I dont regret anything I did, but the more I deal with the issues, face them, the more, as you say, I feel I dont need what I started doing. but I know I need a relationship with Hashem, its a matter of what that means that I am unclear about. does He want me to just work on developing a relationship with Him via recovery methods and attempt to be a spiritual human being, or does He want me to be "religious", halachic if you will. the nefka mena being (besides the obvious) I wouldnt need to do recovery for porn and mastubation, because I dont have a clinical addiction-I have an emotional problem that needs to be dealt with in the same manner and manifests itself in me doing things that I feel are wrong. I'm reaqlly confused right now, and a bit scared. I miss my God and I miss myself. i think I'm going to read some essays on the matter and hopefully gain some clarity. I'm sorry if I'm missingthe point or in denial. i can only explain what I understand as I understand it...

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Re: how to judge a fall

Posted by obormottel - 05 Jan 2012 16:34

[strugglingandstrivngBT wrote on 05 Jan 2012 15:47:](#)

i can only explain what I understand as I understand it...

That was a packed post, and I hope people on this forum will address all of your points. Thank you for your honesty.

And your confusion is totally understandable.

Among the essays you may be reading, the chapter We Agnostics in the Big Book of AA may be very enlightening to you. While in order to get to know the G-d of Abraham you need to talk to a Rav/Mashpia, and follow the halocho closely, in order to get into a relationship with Something that is Greater than you, it seems to be enough to find a G-d of your understanding.

I'd love to see you stay frum. But I think that you will still be a precious Jew if you pledge allegiance to the G-d of your understanding, and take His helping hand to pull yourself out of the garbage.

I wish for you that the G-d of your understanding should eventually morph into G-d of Avrohom, Yitzchok, and Yankev.

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Re: how to judge a fall

Posted by gibbor120 - 05 Jan 2012 17:45

SSBT, using porn and masturbation is coloring your relationship with Hashem. Yes, the underlying reasons why you do it are important, but UNDERSTANDING them is not as important as you think. You are trying to THINK your way out of this. Dov has quoted this line a couple of times and I think it fits here well.

"You can't think yourself into right living, you can only live yourself into right thinking"

As I wrote a few posts ago, thinking and thinking for years and years ultimately got me nowhere.

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I *think* you need to work on right living BEFORE right thinking. But that's just what I *think*

Re: how to judge a fall

Posted by Dov - 11 Jan 2012 01:45

[strugglingandstrivngBT wrote on 04 Jan 2012 02:12:](#)

I speak for myself when I say that porn and masturbation are not my problem-they are a result of my problem. What exactly my problem is, I'm not sure. guess I gotta figure that out.

So. The alcoholics say like you:

"Our alcoholism is but a symptom of our disease, and not the disease itself."

So, one more angle on your post:

Treatment centers all basically use one tool. They keep the drug away from the customer (patient) for a long time. After a day or two, it's not so bad, and the patient usually is irritated at the demeaning insulting insinuation that the "**no alcohol in here**" policy makes: that he can't get along without booze.

"Hah. Silly fools. I'll show them."

After a week, it's really irritating. The patient begins to feel his white knuckles hurting. He innocently blames it on the food irritating his stomach. After all, beer is missing from breakfast...

After the second week, he may use one or more of a few tactics, because this is really getting serious - he (just like we) truly, honestly believes in the depth of his gut that he cannot survive without a drink. And why do so many guys keep saying, "I have never gone more than x days."

Why do they (we) keep relapsing after "x days" passes? Because we actually, honestly believe in our gut that we need to have a feeding of porn, sexual excitement, or orgasm, or...or...or...or what? Will we die? What is it? It's hard to say. The bottom line is that no matter how well we know "b'veiur klal chovas ho'odom b'Olam" by heart from Mesillas Yeshorim, the (sad) truth is that we still really believe that we simply **cannot** do without it.

So what does the rehab center do about it?

Nothing, really. They just keep prevent the addict from getting any bit of his drug. As long as they do that, the scary, scary truth will **have** to eventually get vomited right out:

That alcohol was never really his problem in the first place!

He is afraid of people, afraid of the alone-ness of his own self, afraid of his own death, afraid of success, afraid of failure - that he is *terrified* of G-d. He can't love or be loved, for fear of getting attached and losing those people. Or because he cannot possibly be loved. He hates certain people to death, so he believes he is hate-able. He is filled with pride and really believes that life is essentially unfair - even though he knows the *words* "gam zu letovah" very well! He, like most of us - essentially believes that G-d screwed up, and continues to, daily in his life - it is not fair, at all. Deep inside, he sees that he really believes as most of us addicts do, "If only people (and G-d) **listened** to me and *my* directions, then my life would finally be as it should....but no, they all have to be stubborn!"

Or they say they will not pay for the treatment. Or they say they will have a heart attack.

Or they say that as they have not drunk a drop of liquor in two weeks, they are cured!!

Whatever.

Taking away the masturbation, the porn use, the active and exciting fantasy in our heads....forces the real things we were running from to come to the surface. It is often a bit ugly. To be painfully aware of the things that make the life we have unacceptable on life's terms - it's not *really* the masturbation that makes it unmanageable, after all. Actually, the lusting is the *coping* mechanism: I as an addict have learned to use lust to make my life acceptable.

It stinks..but there are the steps to help, and the experience strength and hope of many other hopeless but sober and growing addicts for those who want to be part of a 12 step chevra. Or there is therapy, or whatever works...who knows till it works. I just took the road more traveled, cuz my preferred, safe, and comfortable private road was too bloody already. After years of loneliness in the bitter struggle.

Hashem has harbei shlucim to breing refua'h to a sick mind.

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Re: how to judge a fall

Posted by strugglingandstrivngBT - 11 Jan 2012 02:23

that spoke to me more than the piece you had me read. my post remains, and I still dont know where to go from here...

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Re: how to judge a fall

Posted by Dov - 12 Jan 2012 18:03

Suggestion:

Stay clean. If you have a problem with that, like you think it is really unfair, silly, or evil, then say it. Open up about what you really believe about it. And if the only problem with it that you have is that it is hard for you, then get help and support to stay the course.

But that is just the ticket in, and probably not the help that you really need.

The help and change will start and grow *after* staying clean gets very hard...actually maybe impossible for you. If you stay the course, then it will be time for you to start **writing down** and then opening up with others and with G-d about what really makes life, people, or G-d *annoying* and/or *stupid*, to you. And that is what Hashem wants more than anything else. Chosamo shel HKB"H (is) **emess**.

BTW the steps are all about that, and nothing else. They are just a recipe for honesty and dependence upon your G-d, rather than just being 'good' or 'religious'. We've all had lots of *those* things, yet we are still here in this mess! Writing and openness are different. If nothing *changes*, then *nothing* changes.

Just a serving suggestion for life, for you. Take it. leave it, whatever you like. Nothing to lose by writing these things out and admitting them.

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