

Trying and struggling

Posted by shevayipolvkam - 19 Feb 2012 22:38

I wanted to start this forum so that I could receive help for my personal struggles. In a way I feel that writing on a forum about struggles that I have, about my relationship with hashem, being public although anonymous, isn't tznius. Yet, I've been trying for so long to stop and I just don't know what to do. Maybe speaking to others and seeking advice will help. So here's my story (presented in my best attempt to be tzanua):

I'm currently somewhere between 20-24.

I began to struggle with this in grade 10. I was always warned about how bad it was, that I would lose my olam haba, chalila vchas. The first time it happened, I can still remember the video online. I cried.

Then it happened again... and I cried. And again... but I didn't cry.

I remember it became frequent, like once or twice a week. I felt terrible and wanted to stop. I remember writing on a sheet of paper things to discourage me from giving in. I wrote about how bad it was, what it did to my soul, what I would feel like afterwards. I wrote this list after falling and I could sense myself crying out to myself to stop. I looked a couple times at the sheet and it actually worked. The problem was, the urge would usually lead me to not look at this list lest it stop me. I have a more elaborate list nowadays. I always try to avoid looking at it. Not because it may get me to stop. I have a fear that I may read it, give in, and then feel even worse about myself.

This continued throughout high school, becoming more and more frequent. Eventually I was falling once a day. I sinned beyond count (it hurts to write that).

I looked forward to studying in Israel for the year – I thought that would finally help me get over my problem. There was no internet where I went. There were times when I struggled anyways but I succeeded in stopping. But when I would have internet access I would immediately fall again. I'd see an attractive picture somewhere, and the ability to access the internet would instantly trigger strong desires to give in. When I returned to my home, I began failing again on a frequent basis. I was totally broken. I thought I would be cured. This is when I learned that I can only get better if I overcome the temptation, not merely avoid it (although I should never intentionally seek out a situation where I'll struggle).

I give in now about once and sometimes twice a week. It's hardest when I know I'll be alone.

For some reason I just don't try. I tell myself, you must try! I prepare myself, and cry out to hashem to help me. I learn a lot of Torah every day. Mussar every night. I try not to overindulge. But when I'm in the moment of the struggle, nothing matters. Sometimes the struggle becomes very intense and I give in. But so often I give in with practically no fight. Maybe I'm afraid to try because of how unpleasant it is (even though I've tried to internalize that every moment I withhold is a moment of unbelievable dveikus bakadosh baruch hu, but I just don't think clearly, maybe I should work more on that). Maybe it's because I don't believe I'll succeed anyways

(even though I tell myself that only today matters). Maybe it's because I don't have enough yirah or emunah. Maybe it's because my ratzon isn't strong enough. Maybe it's because deep down inside I don't fear the consequences because of the ability to do teshuva (the irony being that then I won't be able to do teshuva). Maybe it's because gye tells me I'm an addict, undergoing an addictive pattern, and therefore I feel like it's not my fault (even though I know that isn't an excuse). Maybe it's because I've failed so many times before I think that it doesn't matter anymore if I fall again (although I know it matters immensely). Maybe it's because I've become like two different people. Maybe it's because in a moment of temptation, all the messages, lessons, and motivations become de-internalized and fail to speak to me. I become blinded by desire, and become drawn after worthlessness. I tell myself it won't give me real pleasure. I tell myself how bad it is. I tell myself how much it ruins my relationship with G-d. I tell myself it's an illusion. I tell myself no. But it doesn't sink in. I ignore myself.

Afterwards I become saddened and regretful – I want to prove that I can succeed! I question if I really have emunah. I feel like I just want to be alone, like I want to run away to some mountain top and become a different person. I feel like I need to change myself entirely. Yet, I have nothing concrete to really do. Slowly though the sadness lifts. Then I start thinking of a secular world. One little thing and a thought is triggered in my mind that maybe not being religious would be more fun. I see a mad world around me of people who chase their sexual urges with no reserves and no guilt. I find it hard to really feel like being Jewish is more pleasurable (although I know it is). I know that sounds extreme, and I'm confident I'll always remain a religious Jew and I'll always believe in hashem (who showers his kindness upon me even though I sin; who gives me another day to live, proving that he still has confidence that I can succeed). I don't want you to get the wrong impression. I know I'm not a terrible Jew. Aside from this one struggle, I really feel like I'm on the right track. However, as the Ramchal writes, even just one sin (especially one this bad) is very serious and severe. It's a scary thought not knowing what hashem thinks about me and my struggle (and no one can claim that they really know). Then, as this fantasy of a secular world pops into my head, I lose focus on my avodas hashem. My guard goes down, a temptation comes up, and I fall. Then the cycle begins again.

I don't know what to do. I've tried a lot (but maybe I could try better). I've taken a neder not to eat if I mess up. It hasn't worked yet...

Where do I go from here? What do I do? So here I am, writing this, putting myself out there. Please help me. I just want to be a good Jew. I just want to be able to have a vibrant relationship with hashem.

=====
=====

Re: Trying and struggling

Posted by kidushashem - 20 Feb 2012 07:40

Your story resonates with me so much. This is the same story that everyone on GYE has, with your own variation.

Be assured that you've come to the right place, many people have begun their journey here and have grown tremendously. I have been here for a while and have been growing and learning about life. Best of all, I have learned to accept my struggles and even to embrace them as opportunities for growth.

The more you put in, the more you will get. Find people who you admire and make contact. Seek advice from those who have advanced in their recovery. Find friends who you can relate to who are holding where you are.

Welcome!

=====

Re: Trying and struggling
Posted by DesertLion - 20 Feb 2012 11:03

Hi Sheva,

Have you tried reading the GYE Handbooks yet? I found the attitude booklet particularly useful and it gives you great insight into breaking free. When I was at rock bottom several years ago, I'm not lying when I tell you that I wanted to commit suicide rather than go forwards and pick up the pieces. So you're already a lot better than I was!!!

I remember 3 main obstacles stood in my way:

- i) The thought of life without the pleasure of orgasm was unbearable
- ii) The realisation that breaking free would entail an amount of work that even Hercules would be scared by
- iii) The fear that despite my best efforts I could never achieve and regain what I could have had I never wasted so much time, energy and opportunities being addicted.

However, I was saved by my sheer physical cowardice, because I didn't have the guts to blow my brains out, hang myself etc. I'm still battling 6 years down the line, but things have got better

in every conceivable way. There is hope! And, most importantly, I know that the YH was playing with my mind. At the end of the day it's just getting past this moment, this hour and this day one day at a time. Put them all together and we have a lifetime that we can be proud of.

So my advice, is talk to people with experience, read as much that's relevant as you can and take the first step.

BW,

DL

=====

Re: Trying and struggling
Posted by tehylimzugger - 20 Feb 2012 12:00

[shevayipolvkam wrote on 19 Feb 2012 22:38:](#)

Aside from this one struggle, I really feel like I'm on the right track.

You're definitely on the right track as far as this struggle is concerned! Welcome to the most amazing holiest website in the world! and KOP [Keep On Posting]!

=====