

From a deep pit to a tall roof

Posted by qi - 05 May 2013 15:38

Hello all,

I'm in my late 20s and have been masturbating since I was 12. By the time I found out it was wrong I was so used to it I couldn't stop. I saw lots of pornographic pictures online but wasn't addicted until I discovered pornographic videos. I tried hundreds of times to stop but when the inevitable fall happened I despaired of ever fully recovering. That changed about a year ago when I started really trying to stop and when I fell I got right back up.

However, I'm far from recovered. The longest I've gone is 40 days with no P or M. I found GYE a few weeks ago and joined last week. I think it's fantastic that we have a frum site on this. And, it's much better organised than goyishe equivalents.

So here I am trying to kick the habit of a lifetime for a lifetime. I'm interested in the 12 steps although I don't fully understand how they work. But here goes:

Hi, my name's Qi and I'm a porn addict. Porn has damaged my life considerably. It affected my school work when I stayed up till 2 am looking at it. It affected my learning when I needed to leave mid seder to M. It affected my shidduchim in a profound way. It made me depressed when shidduchim were hard. It affected my shteiging because nothing else matters compared to this. It affected my moods. It affected my relationship with my family. It affected my relationship with HKBH.

When I first found out it was wrong I still didn't know how bad it was. I'm ashamed to admit this but I actually masturbated on Yom Kippur once. HKBH please have mercy on me and forgive me.

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Re: From a deep pit to a tall roof

Posted by me3 - 04 Sep 2013 01:50

Your list is great, but from where you are holding (according to your previous post) it'd destined to fail. You need to think of trying far more modest goals.

How about? 1. Davening Shachris with a minyan and making sure to daven mincha & maariv.

2. Learning 10 minutes a day on days that your Chavrusa isn't there. 3. Learning mussar once a week (on Shabbos?). 4. A shiur once a month. 5. Shmiras Aynayim that one go all out on, make that your real Kabala

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Re: From a deep pit to a tall roof
Posted by cordnoy - 04 Sep 2013 02:10

I was thinking of writing something similar, but I got distracted at work

Doc, whadya think?

Thanks me3!

b'hatzlachah

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Re: From a deep pit to a tall roof
Posted by Dov - 04 Sep 2013 02:46

Sorry this is a megillah. But it is Rosh Hashonoh so forgive me!

[Dr.Watson wrote:](#)

The only area of **avodas Hashem** I've been working on this past year is porn and masturbation. I know how bad this aveiroh is and I felt like nothing else mattered for much if I'm still

masturbating...etc.

...And now we're coming to rosh hashona and I'm **scared** of what Hashem will think of me....etc.

...In feel like the battle-lines of **avodas Hashem** have moved inwards and surround me very closely, almost trapping me....etc.

...I want to roll up my sleeves and get to work but I don't know where to start to really make a difference.

The Divrei Chayim hakodosh writes that the best derech of general avodah is to work on mizvos, not aveiros. He writes: "with the rise of the kodesh, the tomei will fall away."

Now, how to apply that? *Ignore* aveiros? Never do teshuvah on them? What if we are sinning like crazy? And lying and faking to everyone in our lives, too? Keep right on doing it and just keep learning?

And what about the breaking of the luchos? Many hold that the ikkar reason that Moshe rabbeinu broke them was to show Bnei Yisroel in the eyes that "No, you *can't* serve avodah zora and do pritzus **and** Hashem, too!" So what about the Tzanzer Rov's suggestion?

OK. First back to the reality for many of us: recovery; and a suggestion to answer the above be"H, at least with respect to recovery:

I want to share some thoughts about your personal situation, Doc. Thoughts that are not so Hey, what's new?), so please don't strangle me. Thanks.

It's obvious that you sincerely want to be an eved Hashem, but I suggest that you were really not dealing directly with avodas Hashem in your past year. It seems to me that at some point

you decided that your status as a good Jew was defined by your pornlessness and that all the rest of your real avodas Hashem *must* be put on hold until you are tahor from the porn and sex with self. When you did that, you switched from serving Hashem - to serving your own image of who you wanted to be. That is not avodas Hashem, but avodas atzmo. It is self-serving. "Hashem would be served, sure - *after I satisfy myself!*"

I suggest learning how to serve Hashem without any self-respect at all. Just let go of self a bit. Hachno'oh. Yes, that may indeed be a bad starting point for a normal Jewish child or ba'al Teshuvah - but I think it is a fine starting point for an addict. Perhaps it is *the only* starting point for us frum, chronic masturbaters and porners.

Surely, in order to serve Him, Hashem does not need you to be a tzaddik (or even *not a rosho*). He has plenty nachas from plenty of losers. And I apply the Tzanzer's teaching this way: Do good, and the bad will fall away. Focus on positive sobriety - living sober rather than on 'not looking'; on taking actions of love toward the precious people in my life and toward Hashem and toward myself - and the garbage will fall by the wayside. Road-kill. It is a good path for the losers like me, for addicts.

Think it over with Hashem's help. Daven over it. Ask Him to help you, *no matter what you 'owe' Him*.

Is this making any sense to anybody here?

The posuk says "*Rabim mach'ovim lorosho - v'haboteyach baShem, Chessed y'sov'venhu*", and Chaza"l ask why the posuk compares a rosho with a boteyach baShem and not with the more obvious opposite - 'tzaddik'? They answer that the end of the posuk is also referring to a rosho, and they (incredibly) say: "***afilu rosho, uboteyach baShem - Chessed yisov'venhu***"! In other words, Hashem loves the rosho who trusts Him, even (obviously!) imperfectly. Chessed is Love. As R' Shlomo of Karlin said referring to the Maggid, "I wish I loved the generation's greatest tzaddik a fraction of how much Hashem loves the generation's worst rosho." See Tomer Devorah for more on this general idea.

Chessed *cannot* be deserved - **by definition**. If Chessed (love) is given or gotten because it is deserved, then it is just reward...and that's Din. That's not Chessed at all, but actually the opposite of it. Right?

So...the Divrei Chayim hakodosh is surely right. Hashem does not need us to *deserve* to serve Him. We serve him as tzaddikim, as beinonim, and if we are c"v resho'im (which we surely are not) - we can serve Him, too.

It's just impossible for a screwed-up person like me to survive at all in early recovery with a focus on getting cleaned up, on being fixed. Yet that's all many people with our struggle do! They want to figure it all out and beat it, they want to change now so that 'I will never want to use porn again!', Teshuvah is not enough - they need, absolutely demand of themselves that they are the RMB"M's 'ba'al Teshuvah gemurah. One who Hashem Himself bears witness that he will never return to this sin again. Oy vei, where is humility? Where is hachno'oh? Not there. It's avodah derech atzmo, not direct avodas hashem. It's childish self-serving avodah...and we **all** have called it 'avodas Hashem'. And it does not work.

OK. So to end, I will say that your posts have shown a different Dr Watson. No, you may have not 'made the grade', and have not won the fight. But you are clearly a growing person and have come a long way.

That is clear.

Have a great Rosh Hashonoh. And may we sweet losers, Hashem's most loved children, all leave the next year completely and totally to Hashem. He will make it just, just right. He knows we want to be good. It's hard not to cry when saying that.

Hope that was not melodramatic, dear Doc.

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Re: From a deep pit to a tall roof

Posted by ?????? - 04 Sep 2013 04:48

thanks Dov, you opened up my mind a little bit, i have the same issues as DR describe, although i am clean for 6 days, but haven't improved in any other matter, your post changed my mind.

thank you again.

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Re: From a deep pit to a tall roof
Posted by cordnoy - 04 Sep 2013 15:48

I think (and I have read this several times) what Dov is saying is as follows (and please correct me if I am misinterpreting): An addict thinks that he can only serve God if he is completely cleansed from his porn addiction. This, although it seems like humility, is in fact haughtiness and self-serving. Who are we to say how we should be in order to serve Him? We are to serve Him no matter what level we are on. So while all of us must rid ourselves of the bad eventually, we are not on that level at all. We should commit to that, and at the same time, focus on the good which we are doing. Commit, and let God (for we indeed are powerless) take care of the difficult parts for us.

Again, please correct me if I am wrong. I will also edit it out if that is so.

b'hatzlachah

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Re: From a deep pit to a tall roof
Posted by Dr.Watson - 04 Sep 2013 20:51

I want to respond but I'll have to be quick. I appreciate everything you're all saying and there's truth in all of it.

me3, I appreciate your feedback and you're right, I shouldn't be makabel too much at once. What you suggested is good. I'd like to see it as a minimum though, I feel like I should be much higher than that. I mean it's not like I'm coming from nothing, a year ago I was learning much more than an hour a day but I've lost my madreigo and I want it back. Not a bit at a time, but right now. But I want to keep actual kabolos small.

Dov and Cordnoy, thank you for addressing my position in avodas Hashem, I sure need all the help I can get. From my perspective today I don't care about being perfect, or being a tzaddik, or even about the addiction, I just want to be a half decent Jew. Yes, that might be selfish and self-serving, but honestly, I don't think Hashem minds that much. Hachno'oh is important and in a way it's the whole point of r"n, and part of being a half decent Jew is doing things that I can't be bothered to do just because Hashem said so, which includes porn and masturbation I'm sorry to say.

I'm not sure if we're saying the same thing or not. If you think I'm going wrong please tell me, I always appreciate all the feedback I get, even if I don't always show it. I ask for mechila if I've upset anyone, I didn't mean to.

kesiva vechasima tova to everyone.

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Re: From a deep pit to a tall roof
Posted by Dov - 05 Sep 2013 00:00

I sincerely doubt that I am a half-decent Jew, myself. Last I heard, even our holy tzaddikim said of themselves that they were the lowest, sinners, etc. Just look at our selichos - are they kidding
Just look at Dovid hamelech:
"m'roshi v'ad ragli, ein bi m'som," "(my sins) robu mes'aros roshi," "anochi tolo'as, v'lo ish." Was he delusional? Playing the humble groveller? Just in a depression?

C'mon.

Yes, on some level we are *indeed* pathetic before Hashem. All the time. But we are also **accepted and cherished**, as we say in the beautiful piyut, "*Asher Eimos'cho*". Remember?

They tell of Rav Sa'adia Ga'on (others say it about the Chofetz Chayim, probably goyim tell it about Ghandi...) that he stayed at an inn for the weekend and didn't tell the innkeeper who he

was (a very big Rabbi), and he got a regular room. Sunday, he was checking out and a visitor whispered to the owner, "Hey, do you know who that guy there *IS*? (and he told him)" Needless to say, the owner was mortified. He grovelled before R' Sa'adia and fell to the ground weeping, "Had I known you yesterday the way I know you today, I'd have treated you so much better than I did! Please, please forgive me!"

Silence.

The owner looked up and saw - no one! R' Sa'adia was laying on the ground near him and weeping, too! After a while, he asked the Rabbi what's doing. R' Sa'adia explained: "I have grown today, as I do each day, so I know Hashem a bit better now. When I heard your words, I realized: based on my understanding of Hashem *today*, my avodah yesterday was such a shame! I must ask Him for forgiveness, for He deserved so much more love, fear and attention than I gave!"

So **was R' Sa'adia a failure as a Jew?** I doubt that. Humility obviously includes accepting the reality that we will never - can never 'deserve' to live and be close to HKb"H.

But here is the really Big Question: How about **today's** avodah? Shouldn't he pay it forward - *why not cry in shame about TODAY'S avodah (and all my future avodos) because they will **all** be not enough?*

It must be that such a perspective would be nuts. Truthful in a way - but nutty. You just can't live that way. There needs to be a realization that we are here to do the work. It's **HIS** job to have the nachas, or not. That's not our field.

Does anyone hear me? This is very important to me. Thanks for bringing this out of me and helping me admit it to myself, Doc, especially in preparation for this Rosh Hashonoh.

Love,

Dov

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Re: From a deep pit to a tall roof
Posted by Dr.Watson - 08 Sep 2013 00:51

I hear what you're saying Dov but there is a very big difference between R' Saadia Gaon and me. Maybe on his level he felt like he wasn't serving Hashem as well as he should but I don't think he would say he wasn't fulfilling his basic obligations as a Jew. On the other hand, I have not been keeping to clear instructions set out in the shulchan oruch. My feeling bad about that and admitting it is not piety, it's reality.

I was thinking about what you wrote during mussaf both days. The first day I was davening with more kavonoh than usual (which is to say with some kavonoh) and a porn image popped into my mind, just like that. There I was davening such a holy tefila in such a holy place on such a holy day and all I have in my mind is porn?! And I remembered what you said as clarified by Cordnoy and realised that yes, Hashem wants me to daven now, even with all the shmutz that I carry around in my head, He still wants to hear from me, so I carried on as best I could.

The next day it was coming up to kedusha and I was thinking about how many malochim there are waiting to say kedusha and they're not allowed to until little me has said kedusha and I felt thankful to Hashem for caring so much about my kedusha. Then I realised that I was being extremely arrogant about the whole idea, as if I felt that my kedusha was really 'better' than the malochim's. And I was thinking these 2 thoughts all the way through kedusha and then realised that I hadn't actually thought about a single word of it. I'd said it all but I hadn't really davened and I felt bad that I had been so arrogant. Then I remembered what you wrote and thought yeah, I was arrogant, and Hashem still wanted to hear me even though my tefila was far from ideal.

kaboloh-wise I've decided that my kaboloh will be to try and take tefila betzibbur more seriously. I've not been mekabel to always daven with a minyan, but that I will put more effort in and not feel like minyan doesn't apply to me, as if I have some special petur in this area.

The other thing I really want to do is start going to a weekly shiur, either halocho or lomdus or something I can't really learn myself. The problem with this as a kaboloh is that most weekly shiurim are suspended until after succos, by which time I might have forgotten all about it. So I'm writing it here so that if I don't go after succos someone will tell me off.

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Re: From a deep pit to a tall roof
Posted by Dr.Watson - 10 Sep 2013 01:32

It's nice to see so many new people here at this time of year. B"H what a brocho the yomim noroim are that they wake up the yiddishkeit in us!

I just wanted to share something that worked today b"H. My problem changes it form every so often just to keep me on my toes. Recently it's been in the toilet where I have privacy and no pants on. The y'h was waiting for me in there and I noticed our little bottle of air freshener in there. It sends a spray high into the air so I pressed it, imaging it was like a distress rocket they use on ships to signal for help. B"H Hashem saw the signal and sent a rescue team for me.

So that's how I look at it now, my own personal distress signal to Hashem. I hope that signals the last time I ever fall on the toilet.

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Re: From a deep pit to a tall roof
Posted by Pidaini - 10 Sep 2013 02:20

Wow! that smells great!!

KOT!!

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Re: From a deep pit to a tall roof
Posted by gibbor120 - 10 Sep 2013 22:56

[Dr.Watson wrote:](#)

kaboloh-wise I've decided that my kaboloh will be **to try and take tefila betzibbur more seriously**. I've not been mekabel to always daven with a minyan, but that I will put more effort in and not feel like minyan doesn't apply to me, as if I have some special petur in this area.

The other thing **I really want to do is start going to a weekly shiur**, either halocho or lomdus or something I can't really learn myself. The problem with this as a kaboloh is that most weekly shiurim are suspended until after succos, by which time I might have forgotten all about it. So I'm writing it here so that if I don't go after succos someone will tell me off.

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Seriously though. Why not make a more specific and concrete kaboloh? Maybe to daven with a minyan on Sunday mornings or during the week for mincha, Something you can measure. "to try and take ... more seriously" is not making a committment at all.

The same goes for a shiur. Why not make a kaboloh to find a shiur by a certain date (2 weeks after sukkos for eg.) and then to attend.

The more concrete and specific, the better. It can be small, but should be concrete.

Doesn't this belong on the "kaboloh for the masses" thread
Let us know what you decide.

Hatlocho Rabboh! The small kabolos are the BIG ones!

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Re: From a deep pit to a tall roof
Posted by Dr.Watson - 11 Sep 2013 23:41

Warning: Not to be read if you're easily triggered by reading things.

OK, I'm deeply upset by what happened today, the more hours that pass the more upset I am. I had an appointment today for a scan of my testicles. I went in and there male doctor doing the scan and a young female doctor observing. Right now I am so angry and upset with myself that I didn't make a fuss but at the time but I just thought she's a doctor, she's there to help me she's not interested in me, which is true. But when I was being scanned and she looked at me there I knew there was no way I was not going to masturbate later which I did.

I don't even want to call it a fall because it's not a situation I'm in often b"H and by then there was no way I could have avoided it, but I'm really shaken by it. I just feel so stupid that I didn't see that that was the inevitable outcome and prevented it. I feel really stupid. And embarrassed.

Sometimes I feel like the longer I try to quit and b"H have some improvement, my y"h gets worse. I find myself triggered by things that didn't trigger me before. I look at women in the street differently now, like a pervert. I never used to do that, how I was online and how I was in the street were completely different, now they've merged into one, where my online y"h is better but my offline y"h is worse and they've mixed into one big problem. It seems harder to be sober now than before.

I do still think that looking at any form of porn is affecting my view of things in general and women in particular. I put the 'safe' mode on the site I used to use, but today I took it off to fall. So from now on, I'm not so much concentrating on not looking at porn, it's this simple, the safe mode stay on. If I take it off even for a second, I will write it here.

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Re: From a deep pit to a tall roof
Posted by gibbor120 - 12 Sep 2013 00:08

Thanks for sharing - KOT!

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Re: From a deep pit to a tall roof
Posted by skeptical - 12 Sep 2013 00:09

I'm sorry to read about your situation.

Let go of the past. All the coulda woulda shouldas can not be redone. It's done, just move on. You can learn from the experience to try to do things differently in the future, but beyond that, just let it go.

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