

making the silent battle...not.

Posted by silentbattle - 04 Dec 2009 04:12

Because isn't that why I'm here? And silent battles are always more difficult to fight. There are very few people in the "real world" (you know, the one where people lie, cheat, steal, and are) that I can talk to about this - so this is my chance, I guess.

I'm in my late 20s, single. I learned in Eretz Yisroel for a bunch of years, and had tremendous success, both in learning, in middos, and general personal growth.

When I came back to america, though, things were different. I didn't have the same social framework of the yeshiva that I'd gotten used to. Most of my friends were married, in a different country/state, or both. And the few friends who were still around were crazy busy with their own things. So there I was, lonely, without any support system to speak of, having trouble with dating, and full of the standard drives that guys have. And no real outlet for any of my emotional and physical needs.

Speaking to Uri and reading his posts, yes, I suppose I have a deeper neediness, and to me, "loneliness" includes that - the feeling of not having people to rely on, not feeling wanted, needed, etc.

So I started going to various websites - I started by using them as fuel for fantasies, but eventually ended up meeting women in real life. And while I was honest with them, and made sure they were aware that it could never become something truly serious (how ironic, that my being frum influenced me even while I was doing these terrible aveiros!), I got involved in one unhealthy relationship after another. They provided a fleeting comfort, and even some support, but nothing lasting, and in retrospect, it's no surprise that my dating wasn't very successful (even though I wasn't in any other relationships at the time of dating, I just wasn't in a very healthy place overall).

And then...Hashem helped me. I'm very close with my rebbe, but I could never bring myself to tell him about this, even though I wished he would somehow find out. Well, he did - and I was horrified, but amazingly relieved at the same time. He directed me to a therapist, and the therapist mentioned this website - so here I am.

So, the major issue I'm dealing with is not meeting people in real life - but while I'm at it, my therapist recommended trying for complete abstinence - and I thought, "why not?" After all, if I'm looking to improve myself on a ruchniyos level, then I should try to stop mz"l too, right? And, so far, so good. Clearly, Hashem has been helping me. I've been clean over a month from unhealthy relationships, and something like 11 days on the WOH.

Thank you, everyone, for being part of this group.

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Re: making the silent battle...not.

Posted by an honest mouse - 22 Nov 2010 22:14

sb, thats so true, we are not trully alive while involved with the drug, we are in an alternate reality which doesnt actually exist and real life just passes us by and moves on without us...

a scary thought... hopefully a *sobering* thought!

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Re: making the silent battle...not.

Posted by silentbattle - 23 Nov 2010 06:12

You might want to ask Dov through a PM, especially since he didn't originally post that here. I think, though, that part of what he meant is like this:

Superman appears from nowhere to help the helpless. In contrast, we're trying to connect with Hashem and always be close to him, always reliant on and aware of Him. It's not just a sudden cry for help, it's a relationship that we're constantly working on.

That said, I'll second your question - Dov, am I close?

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Re: making the silent battle...not.

Posted by Dov - 24 Nov 2010 01:44

Look at the context of that quote if you want to really understand where it was going...I don't really remember!

But the problem with a 'superhero' view of Hashem was first shown to me by *Rav Noach zt"l*, when he told the story of a bike rider who visited Aish once and heard a talk about what yeshiva is about: getting a relationship with G-d. He confronted Rav Noach and told him that if that is all yeshiva is about, then he, of all people, does not need yeshiva! For he already knows G-d exists and that He is all-powerful. He then described a *neis* that occurred for him once while biking - a real outlandish miracle that saved his life from a long fall. He had no doubts about G-d's total supernatural power, now...

*Rav Noach's response to him was this: "If G-d is that powerful, then why did He allow you to fall off the cliff in the first place? Is G-d like 'Superman' who, shocked to see a horrible accident about to occur, desperately 'rushes' in to 'save the day'? That's just plain ridiculous if He is all-powerful, no? So....Why did he make you fall in the first place? **It seems the Almighty really wanted your attention!** He must want you to go to yeshiva to learn how to know Him!"* Rav Noach knew how to 'go in for the kill', indeed.

The frum yid who sees a progressive, destructive, and insane addiction to lust as simply "a battle with the YH" may be relegating Hashem's role in the struggle to that of Superman: "Hashem has no *plan* here, I mean, it's bad, no? He is 'crying' when he sees me looking at porn, no? He'll do anything, just to not do that *zera levatola!*" - He just *happens* upon the poor yid and sees the guy is in a pickle, so He 'saves' him from the masturbation- if the yid is 'good' enough/tries 'hard' enough...Gevald. If I am really powerless, then I need Chessed, not *s'char* - I cannot '*deserve*' His help! That is why it is called, "Chessed". True, I need to be open to it, otherwise I'll throw it back every time...but it sure isn't based on my chastity!

....what about the cycle, the mental illness, the twisting of all my relationships and yiddishkeit into a knot with my lusting?! Nu. "You gotta believe" (hey, I'm a Mets-fan!). In other words, being that I am an addict, there is just no way that I could ever try hard enough - if there were, then I'd have quit years ago! So I need a gift. And I have to be ready to take it and **keep it a gift**.

To me, the other way - that if 'I only really try hard enough, I'll do it on my own' - is what the Torah calls "im tailchu imi **keri**"....pun intended.

It is taking G-d right out of the picture - and parroting the words, "I am doing it with Your help!", is just plain worthless.

Deeper: It's not about how the poor yid perceives the *lust problem*, or *lust* - it's about his entire perspective on his relationship with Hashem. To me, it is a childish understanding of G-d. But worse, it is the very understanding of Hashem that we *used* in order to fertilize our addictive thinking during our teenage years when our problem (and often, our yiddishkeit) was developing! Thoughts like "He will definitely take revenge on me; I'll daven extra hard to escape the bad influence of my acting out; I'll be extra good to make up for it; I'll punish myself enough - so that He won't need to; and I am a hopeless rosho - human garbage," infected our developing yiddishkeit - and they do not go away easily. They became coping mechanisms for our acting out, itself. Pretty shocking, if you ask me.

All those *dead ends* made us miserable and desperate for the wrong things, like G-d's 'Favor'...kind of like a purely religious or philosophical struggle. It's really a cop-out, for all we really want is to escape paying any *real* price for our craziness. We do not absolutely *need* to stop till there is a real price to pay. 'Gehinnom' just doesn't cut it.

At their very best, these ways of thinking kept **us**, instead of Hashem, at the center of our lives and avodah. They caused us to need lust even more, because they made it possible to keep on going without paying any real price - whenever necessary, we just punished ourselves mercilessly with the whip of guilt...

Our castrated way of *using* yiddishkeit made it impotent as a sobriety tool, because **it was part of the cycle!** It was part of the problem, not the solution.

The Alter of Slabodka (I think) said that we need to spit out our "mothers' treifeh milk" - meaning, the old, childish ways we understood Torah - and relate in a mature way to everything we ever learned.

For me, this is a kiyum of his idea, and we need S"D to do it right.

(Hi! to the coolest ninjawarriordude!)

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Re: making the silent battle...not.
Posted by silentbattle - 24 Nov 2010 06:18

Thanks, Dov - and hi, right back atcha!

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Re: making the silent battle...not.
Posted by KiviYVY - 24 Nov 2010 14:52

Thanks Dov. I don't think I need to see the context to get your point. What you said now fits perfectly into the quote. Besides the fact that I can't find the original context when using the Search feature. Your perspective is beautiful. I've heard that story of R' Noach before but I was younger when I heard (ironically considering what you said) and it didn't hit home until you explained it now. I might have to start calling you Rebbi!

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Re: making the silent battle...not.
Posted by silentbattle - 25 Nov 2010 06:14

We all do! :D

Just wanted to thank everyone who joined last night - and everyone here on GYE, too, for being part of the system that helped me get to where I am!

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Re: making the silent battle...not.
Posted by 7yipol - 25 Nov 2010 09:35

SB, you are an inspiration.

Really.

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Re: making the silent battle...not.

Posted by ZemirosShabbos - 25 Nov 2010 16:21

Mazel Tov SB!!

you are truly an inspiration and a real force for the good here on GYE!

much much continued hatzlocha

zs

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Re: making the silent battle...not.

Posted by Eye.nonymous - 25 Nov 2010 19:11

[silentbattle wrote on 25 Nov 2010 06:14:](#)

Just wanted to thank everyone who joined last night - and everyone here on GYE, too, for being part of the system that helped me get to where I am!

THANK YOU!

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Re: making the silent battle...not.

Posted by silentbattle - 28 Nov 2010 20:43

Thank you, ZS and 7up, for your kind words of encouragement. The truth is that i have no idea where I'd be right now without all of you wonderful people here on GYE.

A few thoughts. I was just thinking about the practice of counting days, and I realized there are (at least) 2 different ways of looking at it. One way is counting days, as if "seeing how far I can get." This seems, to me, to be a bad idea. On the other hand, there's a more positive way of looking at it - simply a way of keep track of an accomplishment, a way of seeing how much distance you have from the disease. A way of remembering how much of the impossible has occurred!

In other news, I was walking down the street, and saw a possibly triggering woman approaching. I could have looked away, but i decided that I wanted to put myself out of any position where I'd need to be powerful, so I took my glasses off until after I'd passed her.

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Re: making the silent battle...not.

Posted by Eye.nonymous - 28 Nov 2010 20:48

[silentbattle wrote on 28 Nov 2010 20:43:](#)

On the other hand, there's a more positive way of looking at it - simply a way of keep track of an accomplishment, a way of seeing how much distance you have from the disease. A way of remembering how much of the impossible has occurred!

Another way to look at it--how much time until the next GYE party!

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Re: making the silent battle...not.

Posted by silentbattle - 28 Nov 2010 21:08

;D :D ;D :D ;D :D

Yes, that too!

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Re: making the silent battle...not.

Posted by silentbattle - 29 Nov 2010 06:10

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After reading some posts in the ezras nashim, i was reminded of just how good hashem has been to me. After dating for years, I got engaged to the first girl I dated after i got clean. Coincidence? I don't think so.

Here's the key, though - i don't think that means that every single guy that's clean will immediately get engaged (although it will likely help, for a whole bunch of reasons, spiritual and practical), nor do i think that every married guy will immediately have yeshuos from any troubles he has as soon as he gets clean. I don't even think it will necessarily work for me (although I'm).

What I need to remind myself is that when I work on myself and improve myself, Hashem sees it, and loves it. It makes Him happy. I may not always see the results in my life immediately, but the changes I make, the things i do, are important, and Hashem notices.

I'm not alone.

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Re: making the silent battle...not.

Posted by installed - 29 Nov 2010 10:26

Hey SB,

Just curious, do you feel that you would have declined your wife for physical reasons prior to becoming "clean"? In other words, did you "compromise" in the looks department because of your "cleanliness"?

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