

Back to absolute square one, need some advice

Posted by Bilaam Harasha to Yosef Hatzaddik - 01 May 2022 00:22

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I've masturbated 3 times this week and I feel like I've hit absolute rock bottom. I'm becoming religious but that's been stagnant recently because I've been learning by myself and at home with no connection to a Jewish community at all. I actually went to a sephardic community right before pesach and I got the contact info I need to go to a community and to meet a rabbi but I've been hesitant to call because of this struggle. I don't feel like I can show my face to a rabbi with me looking at what I do. Should I schedule an appointment with the rabbi or not? I know the answer deep down but I just need a justification for doing so and anything would help.

My mom also wants me to go to college this year so I have to if I'm going to live with her and this is going to be absolutely terrible and I feel myself already going back to how I used to behave and think like when I was in a goyish environment. I feel myself sinking back into physicality like those goyim are and I know it's only going to get worse. I really have no idea what to do at this point, but I guess this is justification number one as to why I should call the rabbi.

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Re: Back to absolute square one, need some advice

Posted by TheYoungerTwin - 01 May 2022 02:34

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i can relate to the struggle of calling a rabbi to get more connected... im in a similar situation as well.

just want to point out that it's a yetzer hara tactic to tie wrongdoings (or even a struggle - like shmirat habrit) to our very self worth.

We are not our sins. Our value is not determined by our mistakes.

Then again, this is difficult to deal with. I'm sure many of us (if not all) have felt "impure" and "not worthy" at times, refraining from engaging in things we deem "too holy" for us. Recognize that this is a fallacy. We all have the spirit of Hashem within us. It is a pure core that we can always connect to, no matter what we struggle with, no matter what mistakes we made.

Another way to think about it is in terms of direction. Like the sign in the mall, "You are here". You did what you did. Now you are faced with a choice: you can go towards more kedusha, or less kedusha.

As for college, idk where you live, but there are definitely ways to get college degrees without doing the full "college experience". There are jewish colleges and online options.

Hatzlacha rabba, my friend. Hope you get this all sorted out!

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Re: Back to absolute square one, need some advice  
Posted by committed\_togrowth - 01 May 2022 05:19

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Hi, I don't want to call you by your username because in reality you're not changing from Bilaam Harasha to Yosef Hatzaddik, the truth is you are a tzaddik. These are big life questions you mention in your post. I hope I can share a couple of helpful things, but first I want to acknowledge that there is a lot on your plate! Life is constantly moving forwards and we're thrown from one phase into the next, and growing in Yiddishkeit while navigating this labyrinth is a big challenge! Avodas Hashem is a constantly moving target, and you're doing an unbelievably chashuv thing by wrestling with it like you are. With that said:

1) I would first focus on the fact that you are not back at square one. I don't know your religious journey (although I would love to hear about it and can share my number in a PM), but I'm guessing there was a time where maybe you didn't know G-d existed, maybe you didn't know that G-d is the source of morality, that the Torah is true, that our purpose in life is to connect to G-d and that the vehicle for that is the mitzvos. These are huge and invaluable revelations, and once you have them, they don't leave. They are a paradigm change in how you think and understand life. So, if you've gained those understandings and you didn't have them before, that is an unbelievable, huge step upwards in life and you aren't going back down. Feel special about that!

2) I remember earlier in my own journey, after reading some things online about shmiras habris I asked my rabbi about the issue. He was very very strong in telling me not to overthink or over focus on this issue. I know that this site exists for us to work on this issue and of course it needs to be addressed at some point. But, my rabbi said when he is being mekarev someone, he specifically does not introduce students to this issue, because you can get stuck, or worse you can be broken and feel negative about Judaism. In fact my rabbi's rabbi (an unbelievable person) once said the reason why America is struggling to produce talmidei chachamim is because of guilt over this issue. He told me that just like you would ease into other aspects of your avodah in a gradual and stepwise manner (thinking becoming shomer shabbos for instance), that's how you should approach this issue. Rather than launching into full shabbos observance by fully refraining from malachah, davening, all three seudas etc. it might really just

start with turning your phone off on Friday nights and lighting candles (that's how I started). Just as you can take small steps with shabbos and not feel racked with guilt (actually you feel positive), so too you can do it with this issue.

3) Another point specifically about being a baal teshuva (in the modern sense of the word i.e. one who didn't grow up religious). I heard this one from another excellent rabbi who prefers to call modern baalei teshuva baalei gevurah. Because, the truth is if you didn't grow up religious then how can you say your past was sinful? If you discover Torah later on, turn towards it, and work as hard as you can (not being perfect, just trying your best) to change your approach to life, then really you are a tzaddik! On this note, related to the analogy of becoming shomer shabbos, I think it has to be a fundamental assumption in your religious journey that Hashem is absolutely fair. He doesn't expect you to do what you cannot do. If you spent around two decades non-religious, it really will just take time for you become a full-fledged Torah Jew. There is no button to press to become an instant G-d fearing Jew, it takes time and work (for non-baalei teshuva too). Your growth is not going to be linear. There will be times where you are on fire and connected, there will be times where you are ice cold and want nothing to do with it. Working through this ups and downs and going deeper into discovering who you are and what life is about is all a part of your avodah. But, know that this is the path Hashem wants you to take. He placed you in a non-religious upbringing, He knows the complications that come with that, and He knows this is the path best suited to you. The highs and lows are all a part of the plan.

4) About learning, it's awesome that you got contact info for a rabbi. Please I beg you, don't let this issue hold you back from taking the step of reaching out and getting set up with a nice chavrusa and getting involved in learning. Put this issue in a box for now. Feel really special that you have the fire of spirituality burning inside of you, and look forward to a life of growth and blessings. Learning Torah alone vs. with a rabbi or a knowledgeable chavrusa are categorically different experiences.

5) Last thing, for this we'd really need to chat over the phone but I've had quite a bit of experience carving out a path towards Torah while navigating the university system (graduate and undergraduate). It's very possible, there are many paths to take. If you want to chat further about this let me know.

I hope all this helps, excited to hear about your continued journey.

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Re: Back to absolute square one, need some advice

Posted by eyes - 02 May 2022 13:02

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Dear Yosef hatzaddik,

I hope you are doing well.

Good on you that you are finding your way to your Jewish roots.

You mentioned that you are coming religious. Just to let you know we are all working on being religious every day, that is exactly why we are all here. So you are no different. I am not sure where you live.

I am not here to promote any type of kiruv, but this may help you both at home and on campus. If you live in the states, Canada or perhaps anywhere in the world you may come across a group called chabad. They are literally in every state in the USA and on most university campuses. The Rabbi's are very understanding, no topic is too much for them, they have seen and heard everything.

So a good place to start would be is to go on [www.chabad.org](http://www.chabad.org) and look for you city and or place of residence. lots of chabad may have places for shabbos so you dont need to walk that far. Look into it, it may help.

Please dont call yourself bilaam harasha. That is putting yourself down. that is what bilaam harasha is trying to do, to make you feel like him and steep you more into the tumah. so jump out of bilaam harasha and only be yosef hatzaddik. HHM told me, putting yourself down and calling yourself names aint gonna help you. You are yosef hatzaddik and that is it.

you could PM me if you want to know more about chabad and what they do. There is also Hillel on most campuses as well.

Yosef hatzaddik girdle your loines and fight

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Re: Back to absolute square one, need some advice

Posted by 5Uu80\*cdwB#^ - 02 May 2022 16:35

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I would be wary of Hillel. Unfortunately, many campus Hillel's have anti-Orthodox/anti-Torah staff and/or leaders. Tread with caution or avoid Hillel all together.

You need to find a balanced, healthy Kiruv rabbi to help you grow in a balanced way. MEOR is a fantastic organization and is my recommendation, but there are some others too, depending on what city you are in. Don't try and make this journey on your own. Hatzlacha.

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Re: Back to absolute square one, need some advice  
Posted by Bilaam Harasha to Yosef Hatzaddik - 02 May 2022 20:00

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I was getting ready to call the rabbi today thanks to the chizuk you guys gave me, but I ended up falling again today so I'm think I'm going to hold off until tomorrow. I just don't feel like I can speak with him today but I'll see if I can later today. And thanks for all the advice, I can't really say how much I appreciate it from all of you. I cut ties with all of the goyim I knew and deleted social media a long time ago and the only Jewish friend I keep in contact with is secular so there's not many people for me to turn to in terms of things like this except here. I hope to change that soon by calling the rabbi and I'll give updates here as that happens.

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Re: Back to absolute square one, need some advice  
Posted by BT Again - 02 May 2022 22:40

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Tzaddik, best of luck to you and I can relate. You have many paths in front of you--I don't know your exact situation but you do have options. Do you need to stay with your mom? You can go to a baal teshuva yeshiva in Israel basically for free, if you want to do that. Even if that's not going to work for your situation, you have many choices; maybe living where you are doesn't work for being part of a Sephardi community, but you could be involved with any orthodox shul and just stay in that community on Shabbat while keeping the minhagim you prefer. (I second the recommendation of Chabad if that's your closest option.) Take it from me, trying to keep Torah in a totally secular environment is really really hard.

Also, I hope you can reach out to the rabbi soon. The idea that we can't face a rabbi or do any other good thing because we fell is a trick of the yetzer hara. Though I understand if you're not in the right place for it mentally. Please feel free to PM me if you'd like someone to talk to.

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Re: Back to absolute square one, need some advice  
Posted by Hashem Help Me - 03 May 2022 11:08

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Why would you avoid the rabbi because you fell? It is exactly the opposite. Because you fell, reach out for guidance. Hatzlacha buddy!

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Re: Back to absolute square one, need some advice  
Posted by BHYY - 03 May 2022 13:10

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I opened up to a Rabbi at the height of my falling and kept in almost constant touch with him through all my ups and deep downs. He provided warmth, guidance, and, most importantly, chizuk. He won't look down on you, quite the opposite, he'll look up to you.

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Re: Back to absolute square one, need some advice  
Posted by frankly - 03 May 2022 14:27

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Thank you for sharing your struggles here.

I would recommend: call the rabbi right now. It does not matter what you just did or may do again.

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