

SonicReducer's story so far

Posted by sonicReducer - 04 Jan 2010 17:16

Evening all (;

I only discovered GUE a few weeks ago, but it's been such a huge help to me. I thought I'd post my own story.

I'm a baal teshuva, and I've been shomrei mitzvot for about 5 years. Becoming frum has been both the most fulfilling and difficult journey I've ever undertaken (still on it!). Although it can be very hard day-to-day, and I've had more than a few moments where I wanted to throw off my yarmi, the Aibishter has helped me to keep going.

My family emigrated from Johannesburg, South Africa, to London when I was about 14. This move was very, very hard on me, especially socially. I left behind a lot of my friends I grew up with, and struggled to rebuild in the UK. For the past ten years (I'm 24 now), I've been quite lonely, and my self-esteem took a lot of big hits (although Baruch H-Shem therapy has helped a huge amount). I was unhappy with my situation, and unhappy with who I was. I think I used p**n and shfichas zera as a pick-me-up, and as an attempt at some kind of intimacy, besides the usual urges and curiosities of a young man.

This continued when I become frum, although frequency decreased (and guilt increased). University was a very difficult time, fashions left very little to the imagination, although I managed to avoid getting involved with all the shmutz that goes on.

I spent a year at a well-known baal teshuva yeshiva after uni. This was to be my greatest length of shmira - just over a year. I fell badly when I came home for pesach - after 9 months in Yerushalayim, the fashions and posters in the UK were just far too much to handle, along with my PC that I had left behind.

Since then, I've really fought (and fallen), and GUE has given me a lot of inspiration. I was quite happy to realise I had been mechavin to the Guard Your Eyes Handbook already about 3 years before I had read it! My browser opens onto the chizuk list, which is really handy.

London is a tough place for shmiras eynayim, and I really daven hard that H' should help me. Baruch H-Shem I'm usually ok but sometimes the y'h just gets too much. My recent best period is about 6 weeks. I found a good filter and I'm really considering accountability software, but I'll see how the next few months go.

A big challenge at the moment is shidduchim - I'd really like to get married (and feel emotionally I'm finally in a good place to deal with it properly). I don't fit in very here - I'm too 'modern' for a chareidi girl, but too chareidi for a modern girl, so it's been hard meeting girls that are shayich. That sneaky y'h gets me here a lot - telling me that it will be years before I find someone and in such a tough environment, who can blame me for giving in? Positive thinking and bitachon are really my biggest weapons here, but they don't come easily.

One thing that really surprised me reading others' stories is how widespread these struggles are, and how wide a cross-section of yidden it affects.

May the Ribono shel Olam give you all the beracha and hatzlacha you all deserve for your truly super human efforts!

sR

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Re: SonicReducer's story so far
Posted by sonicReducer - 14 Feb 2010 07:07

Have been meaning to post for a few days, but haven't really had a chance.

Baruch H-Shem, things are really starting to settle down, so last week was okay.

My time in Israel is pretty quick - I land Monday night, am free Tuesday day, friend's wedding

Tues night, and then fly off late Wednesday afternoon. I figure a lot of time will be spent catching up with rabbonim and mates from yeshiva, so won't have much chance for site-seeing, but will try to get to the Kotel and a bit of shopping in Guela (tzitzis, new yarmi, maybe a set of Mishna Berura, stuff like that).

I'm looking forward to going, but I hate flying.

Last few days have been pretty hard. Still clean, but I've been wrestling the y'h more than I'd like.

I'd be interested in having someone else keep my filter password for me. Is there any way to arrange that?

Also - quick question (bit embarrassing maybe). If I have keri on a Friday night, is there anything to worry about in terms of not being able to go to a mikveh / shower? I make sure to say Tikkun Haclali, but I usually spend the whole of Shabbos feeling dirty and not really wanting to touch anything, not sure if this is a good way to view it.

Thanks guys, hatzlacha rabba

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Re: SonicReducer's story so far
Posted by silentbattle - 14 Feb 2010 07:29

First of all - you rock!

We have nisyonos. That's good - tells us we're alive! I think there's an official filter gabbai here, somewhere. Otherwise, if you have an accountability partner, that's a good option.

We pasken that you don't have to go to the mikva. Going is certainly a nice thing, I'd say feel positive. I think that when we start getting clean, at least initially, we have more of a problem of keri at night. I'd say that feeling dirty probably isn't a good thing for right now...Just my opinion, though.

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Re: SonicReducer's story so far
Posted by briut - 14 Feb 2010 12:45

So happy to hear that you're continuing in the adventure so well. (At least, it sounds like, really well!)

Some responses: No, I don't believe there's any need for mikveh - I won't pasken but that's what my LOR (local orthodox rabbi) has paskened for me).

And HELL NO, I don't think there's any cause for feeling bad re: keri -- the goal is to get on with your life b'simcha. I've never found self-inflicted pain to be a very positive (or effective) motivator. I'd say this even about a big-time slip and fall, I'd CERTAINLY say this if you're referring to a nocturnal emission that isn't even run by our conscious minds. Enjoy the holy air of E'Y and smile. Every four steps you walk is a mitzvah.

Please post when you return and tell us how you got chizuk from your 'mates' (oh, how I love you Brits and your funny use of our American language), and from the chasuna itself, and from the tefilos you offered at the chasuna and the kotel and anyplace in the Holy Land at all. And I hope you'll consider my earlier advice and remember some things to say "thank you" for when you meet up with HKB'H.

Gut voch. Marbim b'simcha!!

PS: When I've lived in E'Y, I found one special thing helpful in avoiding falls: wanting to keep the holy soil of E'Y pure from the (physical remnants) of a (sexual) aveira. I could never even bring

myself to SPIT in Israel. Just a thought.

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Re: SonicReducer's story so far

Posted by sonicReducer - 14 Feb 2010 16:08

Shameful confession: just spent the last 10 minutes trying to get through my filter. Saw a couple of small pictures briefly. Otherwise it held up.

I feel so burnt out from the last 3 weeks, emotionally exhausted, bored, frustrated.

This trip tomorrow is coming at a really good time. I really need to just get away from everything

I see girls in the street and my reactions tend to be a mixture of:

- I really wish you weren't here
- I really wish you had dressed properly this morning
- I wish I was married
- I'm scared of getting married
- I don't know what H' wants from me

I don't even like looking at p*** but I don't know what to do with myself! I find it vile but I just keep pushing myself back to it. I was on my father's computer this morning to print out my ticket for tomorrow and it was a real struggle not to start looking at things.

I know if I fall I'll feel awful (y'h double whammy). I hate this teivah, and I'm worried that I'm setting up marriage in my head to be a blissful problem free solution.

sR

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Re: SonicReducer's story so far
Posted by Ineedhelp!! - 14 Feb 2010 16:17

You should be thanking Hakadosh Baruch Hu that He saved your life!!!! You were on the edge of the cliff and Hashem pulled you away from the edge and let you walk on flat lands.

-Yiddle

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Re: SonicReducer's story so far
Posted by sonicReducer - 14 Feb 2010 18:51

Today's been really touch and go, not my best day ever (not my worst either at least)

My filter really proved itself tho (could use a couple more tweaks tho)

Pretty scary how much of a doorway the y'h gets through feeling down and boredom

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Re: SonicReducer's story so far
Posted by sonicReducer - 14 Feb 2010 19:51

I admit that I fell.

Today was too much. Dark, depressing, boring, long, frustrating. I wrestled for a few good hours but it became too much.

48 days clean, over one of the most difficult periods of my life. I think I collapsed a bit emotionally today, I felt awful the whole day.

The challenge I have most in times like this is not to get down - a part of me (well, the y'h) starts chirping "you're dirty, awful, disgusting, how could you do that, you're an animal. how can you daven, bentsch, put on tfillin after what you did?"

But, in the words of one of my rabbonim after discussing falling: VEITER!

Onwards and upwards. I regret what I did, but I couldn't fight anymore. Hopefully H' will help me to get going again and push to an even longer streak.

I wish everyone hatzlacha rabba wherever you all are holding right now

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Re: SonicReducer's story so far
Posted by briut - 14 Feb 2010 19:54

The Y'H is crafty in every area of life, not just GYE. The harder the Yetzer sets a bar, the more H' will rejoice in your athletic ability to clear the hurdle. And giving in to sadness or depression just makes that Yetzer clown stronger. Get up and get back in the game, as fast and as much as you can. (Note: Hashem's not even asking to do this 'back in the game' stuff perfectly, only that you try to avoid despair.)

I'm sorta grasping at straws here, but I'm trying to think of something that might keep you going for a while. I don't believe in trying to NOT do something: it merely energizes that "something" into an ever-increasing big deal. So I'm trying to think of something ELSE that could be both a distraction AND something that satisfies your body's call.

Maybe, and once again this is grasping at straws: making yourself a little "brochos party" to smell some delicious scents. Some nice cinnamon or something could give you some olfactory pleasure that might maybe quench some of the desire for other pleasure. Or some other special food or smell or something else that wakes up OTHER senses. Maybe they'll fill some of the spot where the Yetzer is trying to invade with "other" senses.

Maybe another tack: ask yourself, "if your brought you to haRav haGaon Elyashiv for a bracha" during your visit, what would you be thinking about while waiting in his parlor." I bet it wouldn't be any of THOSE thoughts! So imagine you're there right now.

Even if I'm off-base, and I acknowledge that I probably am since I don't know you that well, please take in the fact that there's folks here on the Forum, like me, who'd like to stand with you on this.

Go team go.

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Re: SonicReducer's story so far
Posted by sonicReducer - 14 Feb 2010 20:53

I agree with your 'not trying to do something' idea - sometimes that forced ignorance just blows up the attraction / attention of the thing / act that we're trying to ignore.

Will speak with my rav in Israel about this - he's very perceptive and experienced, and knows me well, so a bit of eitzah from him would be good.

I struggle a lot with guilt in times like this. I heard from Rav Leff shlita that there is a big difference between a person doing an aveira because he doesn't care or doesn't believe its wrong, to someone who admits that though H' doesn't want him to do it, its a struggle for him and he admits he's doing wrong. My rav also expressed an idea that the 'punishment' (if that's the right word) is kind of inversely proportional to the challenge of the aveira - ie the bigger the challenge, the smaller the consequence.

I have a tendency to be very hard on myself and knock myself a lot when I do something like this (and getting back up takes longer). I tend to forget that I had 48 tough days that were nevertheless successful, and allow it to be completely outweighed by 5 minutes of the opposite.

Anyway, onward.

thanks for your kind words Briut, powerful and helpful as always

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Re: SonicReducer's story so far

Posted by silentbattle - 14 Feb 2010 21:23

I think you have a good balance - realizing the severity of the aveirah, but also seeing your tremendous success, especially in such a difficult time for yourself!

Focus on how good it feels to be clean. Enjoy your time in Eretz Yisroel.

On another topic - of course getting married is scary. It's scary for everyone, and doubly so for ~~people with our issues~~ ^{batzlacha rabba: all} people with our issues, and multiply that by some *ridiculous* number to count in the fact that your parents are in the middle of a messy divorce!

You are a holy jew, growing day by day. Don't let the yetzer hora tell you otherwise.

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Re: SonicReducer's story so far

Posted by Holy Yid - 14 Feb 2010 21:32

SR being hard on yourself is the YH best trick. Don't fall for it.

Also check out the meditation download on Elya's page. That will help with stress. Here is a link loyaltycoach.com/audio/Serenity/

quote from his page- Mindfulness of the present moment is the key to sobriety and serenity. Download these audio files, which are actual exercises to walk you through learning how to focus your mind and not get distracted easily.

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Re: SonicReducer's story so far

Posted by sonicReducer - 14 Feb 2010 22:17

Thanks again guys

Holy Yid - thanks for the links. I'm already popping them onto my mp3 player, so I'll have them for the next few days. Will be nice to listen to something useful and interesting on the plane.

silentbattle - I've struggled for a long time how to come to terms with this teivah and aveira. One the one hand I understand its very very serious and damaging, but on the other hand its my - and many other's - biggest challenge. Of course I accept that there will be consequences after 120, but at the same time I know H' doesn't expect *perfection*, but *effort*. I look at myself and although I still struggle with it, I'm a very very different person than I was 2, 3 years ago. I assume this is a process that many other's go through, although maybe with other issues.

Dating will probably go on hold for a while, until I feel up to it. Will bring this up with my rav too.

I hope the Ribono Shel Olam returns to you all the help and chizuk you've all given to me - seriously, this forum has changed the battle a lot. Before I felt like i was alone and struggling, but now I see I'm part of a great army.

Hatzlacha rabba, kol tov

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Re: SonicReducer's story so far

Posted by silentbattle - 15 Feb 2010 19:08

Hashem has already payed me back a hundred-fold - just by reading your thread, I get chizuk, and walk away feeling inspired!

You are indeed part of a great army - and remember that what makes it great is the fact that it's full of people like you!

[sonicReducer wrote on 14 Feb 2010 22:17:](#)

silentbattle - I've struggled for a long time how to come to terms with this teivah and aveira. One the one hand I understand its very very serious and damaging, but on the other hand its my - and many other's - biggest challenge. Of course I accept that there will be consequences after 120, but at the same time I know H' doesn't expect *perfection*, but *effort*. I look at myself and although I still struggle with it, I'm a very very different person than I was 2, 3 years ago. I assume this is a process that many other's go through, although maybe with other issues.

There's definitely a lot of truth to what you're saying, and I can't argue with it. I would caution you, though - when used in the wrong way, what you're saying can be used by your yetzer hora as an excuse.

In other words, you're right, but be careful about when you use that.

And of course - KOT!!!

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Re: SonicReducer's story so far
Posted by sonicReducer - 19 Feb 2010 16:12

Hi all,

Have been meaning to post for a while, but have been too busy or too exhausted. Thought I'd throw something up here quickly before Shabbos.

My trip was good, baruch H-Shem. I usually dislike travelling and flying, but this wasn't too bad.

My friend's wedding was very nice, although I wasn't feeling so simchadik. Considering what's been going on over the past few weeks, I'm pretty scared of marriage, so I was a little bit "aaagh! what are you doing!?"

Good to schmooze with my rabbonim who gave me some sympathy and a bit of eitzah - I sometimes need to hear that I'm going through hard times, as it lets me be a bit easier on myself, otherwise I treat myself a bit cruelly and push too far until I end up burning out. Also really good to see friends who are still shteiging.

Went to the Kotel on Tuesday and Wednesday for mincha. Usually going there is a bit of a mixed bag - I don't really know how I should be feeling and I half expect to have an epiphany (that never materializes). The old city was also packed with tourists, so it doesn't feel like such a holy place when you have French teenagers traipsing all over the place staring at you trying to daven. My 2nd mincha there was a bit better - I had an easier time just opening up to H' - and yes, I did try quite hard to make sure I said thank you for all the stuff that is going right. I started doing this after reading through Gateway to Happiness by Rav Pliskin, who says that a major

component of simcha is appreciating of what we have, even if its just working legs, eyes, hands, some parnasah, etc.

Have been okay with regards to looking at girls - being in Israel really just engenders a feeling of pity when I see girls there who aren't tznius, much more so than attraction (although frum pretty girls are actually far more of a challenge there - the y'h kinda goes "she's shayich, take a glance"). It just feels like a bit of a chaval. And I've been either exhausted or (today) feeling sick, so I basically have not had any teiva.

Going back down to the bottom of the 90 day chart had been a little disappointing - I have to keep reminding myself that it's not a new start completely, but rather only 1 fall in 7 weeks, and that in itself is something to be proud of, considering my environment and what's been going on.

Not feeling dispondent after a fall is sometimes a much harder challenge than preventing the fall itself (as many have mentioned).

Anyway, hope everyone has a good Shabbos, kol tov

sR

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