

Seeking Help-A Crisis of Meaning

Posted by time2win - 20 Feb 2025 19:40

Hi Holy Chevra.

This is going to be a long post(s), but I need help. Please share your thoughts.

I want to cut through all the superficialities and talk tachlis. **Why do I turn to P and M? Because I have a crisis of meaning.** I feel like my life doesn't *really* matter. There is a gaping hole deep in my soul, my consciousness that I can't seem to fill. All I can do is dull the gnawing emptiness with P & M. (In theory, it could be with drugs or alcohol, but P is free and more easily accessible and side effects are less noticeable.)

Some background:

The world can roughly be divided into 2 categories of people, the big people who make a real impact and the small people who just kind of well...live and die without really doing anything grand in between.

Examples of big people:

Philanthropists, Askanim, Scientists/Inventors who work on impactful technology, Marbitzei Torah (people who find inspiration in Torah and share it with others.) Rabbanim, Mechanchim, Authors, Comedians, Founders of successful non-profits, accomplished professionals (e.g. Doctors who make an impact, Buisness Leaders), Jewish celebrities (e.g. Singers who bring joy to the masses). etc. etc. In essence, people who have a big circle of positive influence.

Examples of small people:

Adam the accountant. Ed the electrician. Joe the engineer. Carl the computer programmer. **Me.** In essence, people who have a small circle of positive influence.

To elaborate-It's not that my life is totally meaningless. After all, I have a wife and kids who love

me and need me. I find meaning in supporting them and helping raise our children. I pay taxes and give some tzedakah (not as much as I wish I could), am a contributor to the economy/productive member of society. I give a smile to my coworkers, the cashiers at the store etc. and try to make the world a little better however I can.

Nonetheless, despite my best efforts to be big and accomplish something great in life, **I feel so, so small. And that is deeply, excruciatingly painful.** So I turn to P to numb the pain. Until I can fill the hole in my heart, I will never achieve true sobriety from my addiction. (Not incidentally, this is the root cause of my fallout with frumkeit. I have a hard time believing in a God, or at least relating to a God, who created me to be an absolute nobody.)

There are a lot of wise people on this forum. Please share your thoughts. Hope to hear from you soon.

With thanks from the bottom of my heart,

Time2Win

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Re: Seeking Help-A Crisis of Meaning
Posted by kavey - 28 Feb 2025 10:50

fwiw per R' Avigdor Miller in Chovos Halevavos recordings (haven't learned inside) the desire to give is essentially equivalent to giving. There's an interesting anecdote he shares about R' Yisroel Salanter talking to a poor old man about the importance of giving to yeshivos. When his talmidim asked why he wasting his breath, R' Salanter gave that explanation.

As an aside, the book Your Designed Body (by Christian authors so with added benefit of bathroom reading) really helped me crush any blind watchmakers who wanted to take up lodging in my brain.

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Re: Seeking Help-A Crisis of Meaning
Posted by fighterwithfire - 02 Mar 2025 12:14

Hey brother.

It's scary to see someone echoing eerily similar sentiments to those my old self used to ruminate on ("Who am I? Why am I here? What benefit do I bring to the world? Why did Hashem create a hopeless, handicapped, insignificant loser like myself?"). Makes me all the more grateful for who I am today. And if I got out of hell, anyone can.

I was a 17-year-old with overpowering OCD, anxiety and almost nonexistent self-confidence when I discovered pornography. To make a long story short (full story in signature), I was addicted for 5 years. During that time, I went through more emotional pain than I ever thought possible, beat myself up repeatedly (loser, bum, failure, disgrace, pathetic fraud, lowlife, liar--you name it, I thought it), questioned Hashem repeatedly for why He created such a miserable existence such as myself, and was actually angry at Hashem for "putting me" in the situations that I was in (given that I was such a hopeless lost cause, why couldn't Hashem just at least make it easy for me?, etc.).

With enormous pain, countless tears, shame and humiliation, mental self-torture and self-hatred, and many, many mistakes, I eventually learned the truth.

We don't always know why Hashem gives us the challenges and occurrences that we encounter. That comes down to Emunah and Bitachon.

But whatever the situation is, ***our purpose in life is to react to those situations by emulating Hashem.*** We can't choose what happens to us in life, ***but we can choose how we react to it.*** We know the truth-that Hashem is the Almighty, one, true G-d, that he knows what he's doing (because in the words of Abie Rotenberg: "It's His world, after all"), that He has a master plan that involves each and every single person (even if we have no clue how!), and that he put us in our specific roles for a reason (which we are not privy to know, because otherwise there'd be no such thing as "Emunah"-everything would be undeniably obvious). Our job is to keep emulating Him and walking in His ways, 24/7, regardless. Because ultimately, what defines success is not wealth, or fame, or social acceptance/recognition; nor is it even the amount of times we make Siyumim or finish Shas.

It's whether we fulfilled our purpose in life by responding to the situations we were put in with Emunah and Bitachon, or not. It really is that simple. The Ramchal writes in Derech Eitz Chaim that if a person goes through life without ever thinking: "What am I? What did HaKadosh Baruch Hu put me here to accomplish? What do I want the end result of my life to look like?", it is impossible for him to be successful, regardless of whatever happens to him externally, because he has no chance at recognizing his individual purpose. (And anyone who says "There is nothing I'm here to accomplish. My existence is meaningless" is a Koifer. Just say it like it is. They're claiming that they know better than Hashem, who sees everything and created them to begin with, and that His creating them was meaningless. That's called ??????) And it's not a question any person can know the answer to immediately. But it's up to us to provide the answer, and we do that by reacting to life the way an Eved Hashem does. With ??????

Today, Chasdei Hashem, I am happily married to the most incredible woman in the world, living and learning in Eretz Yisrael, and living a beautiful life. But the best part of it is that B"H, I now

look back and see that every situation, every ounce of pain and torture that I was in was perfectly designed for me by HKB"H to make me into the person that I am today. And while I would never want to relive it, I'm so grateful to Him for every bit of it.

BE"H, you should merit to have that same feeling soon. Keep grinding. It'll come.

Love you brother. All the best,

FWF

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Re: Seeking Help-A Crisis of Meaning
Posted by odyossefchai - 03 Mar 2025 13:09

To my holy brother, I only come to add and agree with what has been written above.

Firstly, when one is stuck in the PandM cycle, it is hard to feel the connection with other people. It keeps us in our misery mindset.

That should be a first goal of yours-to get clean and free

(But even until that happens, the other things I will write are 100% relevant)

You wrote about feeling needed because you aren't an 'asken'

Firstly, I have many gripes with so called askanim. Many of them are money and power hungry people. Don't be like them.

Also, you wrote how you can't give as much tzedaka as 'gvir' so you don't feel important.

Well who says he gives as much tzedaka as he should! You claim to give tzedaka. Wow. You take your own money and share it with those that have less. That itself is a great thing.

And now for my final point.

Let's say that Mr askan/gvir/doctor etc was really helpful to others, but was not a good

father/husband/community member. Would you consider that to be a good thing?

Of course not.

You know in your heart that the most important thing for you or anyone is to be primarily a good husband and father, to get up and go to shul in the morning, have a chavrusa, accomplish at work etc.

What if you went to work, did basically nothing, accomplished nothing, lazed around, but made a good salary, would you feel good about yourself? I doubt it.

Your main focus has to be yourself. Doing the things that are important.

I'll bet if you wrote down a list of what is truly important in life, being wealthy would be very far down the list. Very very far.

As a suggestion, if you want to feel more needed, get involved in your community. Go pack boxes for tomchei shabbos, join hatzalah/chaveirim/misaskim, find out who in your community needs help (new mothers, people struggling for jobs) and help them.

If Hashem didn't make you 6' 8", he probably doesn't want you to be a starting center on the Lakers. If Hashem didn't give you \$100m, it's because he doesn't want your name on a yeshiva building.

I think you've narrowed down what your fantasy has told you means 'accomplishing' and now you can't live up to your fantasy.

That's only going to hold you back.

I would love to keep this conversation going.

May Hashem give you the eyes to see what is actually important in life and give you the strength to go out and accomplish it.

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Re: Seeking Help-A Crisis of Meaning
Posted by hashemyeracheim613 - 05 Mar 2025 02:58

This is in response to the post that stated that the Askan needs the Nebach, the Singer needs the crowd, and the ensuing conversation.

I feel that the writer's point was missed. The nature of the world is that there are givers and takers. Most of us have probably been one or the other at some point in our lives. We strive and hope to be on the giving end, but if one finds himself as a "taker", or just not as much as a "giver" that he would like to be, he shouldn't view that as an aberration, but rather as a part of the earthly cycle. To take this notion even further, the premise that fulfillment will only come from being a big person, i.e. a Gadol, Askan, Gvir, etc. is what was being disputed. The idea that the only life worth living is that of a mover and shaker does a disservice to the 99% of people who aren't. Most people can't and won't be those things. They are still entitled to a life of fulfillment and accomplishment.

That being said, I think Time2Win's point is still valid. He feels that he personally isn't living up to his potential and that he has much more to offer the world than what he is currently doing. He wasn't trying to say that everyone has to be a superstar. I believe there is a balance between feeling the need for self-actualization, as Time2Win expressed, and being content with our current position, even if it doesn't fit with our perception of what our potential is.

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