

New Guy

Posted by BruceWayne - 26 May 2009 17:22

First, let me explain the name.

I once read in some stupid magazine that if a guy says his favorite comic book hero is batman, then it means he is reserved, keeps his emotions to himself, but he has a strong sense of justice and it will take time to get him to open up in a relationship, if you can even get him into one to begin with. It'll become clearer later on.

Anyway, here's my story:

I am 22, male. I come from a broken home. I was first exposed to porn at a young age, around 10 or 11. Maybe even 9. I honestly don't remember. I remember once in seventh grade someone brought some pages from a magazine to school and we looked at them, but I wasn't like the other guys who could just look at them, enjoy them and then forget about them. I enjoyed them, obviously. That's normal. But I also wanted to keep them. I wanted the girl to come to life out of the page and be mine. In short, I was obsessed. I latched onto it very strongly. That was a pattern that would repeat itself for years. I couldn't really understand why the other guys didn't like it as much as I did. I thought maybe I had reached a later stage of puberty than they had or that they might even be gay! I didn't understand until much later that my obsession was a serious problem. It did not really manifest itself badly until relatively recently.

I remember in high school I would spend all day looking at porn if I stayed home sick. Once I came home in the middle of the day to get something for school and I told myself I'd just sneak in a quick peek. I did, for maybe 5-10 minutes, but I was surprised when I ran into my stepfather on the driveway as I was going to leave. Apparently, he had left something as well! That was close call, and that's the first time I can remember almost getting into some major trouble with this.

You have to realize that in those days (only 5-6 years ago) internet technology was not nearly what it is today. I looked mostly at pictures, and I tried like hell to find free video. Back then it was mostly stuff you had to pay for. But now there are plenty of sites with streaming, high quality videos of anything you can imagine. Like Youtube for porn. That wasn't around back then so it's much easier to access now. Plus I have my own computer now. All I can say is thank G-d that stuff wasn't around back in high school or I would be even more messed up.

Why am I so obsessed with porn? Truth is, I don't even like it anymore. I've become so desensitized, that I don't even get aroused unless I stay away from it for 3-4 weeks at least. At this point, I'm basically addicted in the physiological sense. Neurologically, I am chemically dependant on it the way a crack addict needs crack to keep functioning, if you can call it that. I want to stop but I feel like I can't. The longest I've gone free, that I've counted, not counting my 2 years in Israel where I went clean for nearly 10 months straight (mostly because I had no choice), is only 42 days. My high school coach used to say it takes 21 days to break a habit. I'm betting that's just an average...

So why the addiction? I have no idea. Obviously it's strange for a normal male to not like porn at all, but it's strange to be addicted too.

I think a lot of it has to do with the way I grew up. I live with my mother and stepfather when I'm home, which isn't much these days. Maybe, just maybe my addiction is more than just a corruption of the normal male sex drive. It is also a corruption of the need for love and to be loved. It is a fleeting attempt to plug the hole in my heart where love goes. You see, when you grow up without ever being in a home with both of your birthparents, and without seeing or feeling any hint of affection between your parent(s) and stepparent(s) in the way they look at each other or speak to each other, without ever receiving positive words, encouragement, and warmth, or any kind of clear direction in life, and instead seeing your parents fight and yell at each other like children and receiving negative criticism for everything you do, then you develop incompletely and awkwardly. You have no self esteem whatsoever. You hate the world. You hate yourself. Some people turn to drugs. Some just kill themselves. Others channel their rage into hard work towards breaking free of the chains of the home and eventually saying "look at me now, no thanks to you. I told you so.". And others turn to porn. I have chosen these last two.

Ever since I was old enough to understand how messed up my home was I wanted to break free from it. I am absolutely obsessed with being the best husband and father I can possibly be, because I know the pain and the suffering--the absolute hellish anguish--that comes with a broken marriage and a broken home. I don't want my kids to go through what I did. I don't want my wife to be unhappy the way my mother is. It's not her fault either. I want to be everything my stepfather isn't. I am mature enough for marriage, which has been on my mind lately, but there's at least one giant monkey wrench stopping the whole thing. First of all, I am absolutely terrified that this addiction will not be abated simply by getting married, and I'm sure it won't be. I fear that it will rise up again and challenge my marriage. But more fundamentally, living with this problem is living with a character duality. I appear to be a decent guy to most people. I'm not the frummetest guy ever, but I try my best to be a good person and to avoid making enemies. People like me. I learned in Israel for two years after high school. I am intelligent, and I suppose I am at least moderately good looking and I keep myself in shape. So, on the surface I would appear to be an all around good guy and a "good catch". But I have this dark side that no one knows about. And that, combined with the way I grew up, makes it very hard for me to have any kind of normal relationship with people. I just don't open up people. I guess partly because I am

inherently distrusting of them (upbringing) and partly because if I let people into my little world they may see me for what I really am. Of course, you can't live that way forever and eventually I'm going to crack. Secondly, **how can I marry someone with all those images burned into my eyes and my brain?** Won't it seriously detract from my relationship? It's like I will have an emotional relationship with one woman but a sexual relationship with hundreds (actually probably closer to thousands). How will I do it? I have never even kissed a girl nor had a girlfriend but at the same time it is as if I have been with thousands of them. What do I do?????!!! Would it be hypocritical to want to marry a virgin after all I've done? Wouldn't it be unfair to her in some ways?! There are many other issues that I need to address before I can even think about marriage, but this addiction is one that has broad repercussions, with regards to marriage and many other aspects of my life. It is perhaps the most fundamental of them all. If I fix this, then it might be easier to fix the other problems. Maybe. But I won't talk about them here (if I do, people might find out who I am).

So after rambling like a madman (I am usually very terse), it comes this: I must stop this behavior. Rationally, I know it must be done. But there is a part of me that says no. And there is a part of me that wants to push me down that road, that ends with being on the other side of the camera (at least with regard to the general behavior, not necessarily literally). But I know that is wrong and I know it won't do anything positive for me.

So, how do I start stopping?

=====

Re: New Guy

Posted by the.guard - 27 May 2009 19:17

Oh, you didn't mention that it would cause you to lose work. That's why I thought the answer was obvious...

However, if it causes you to lose work - well, I think you should **still** make the internet go off

earlier, until you are confident that you have better control over yourself. If you read the GYE handbook, tool #3, you might learn some good ways to get more in control. Once you have better control, you can allow the internet to be on for longer. (Remember, losing work is not as bad as losing Olam Haba :-)

=====

Re: New Guy

Posted by BruceWayne - 28 May 2009 17:47

OK, time to play devil's advocate.

How is porn wrong?

What about premarital sex? Is it really wrong for two consenting people to have relations if they aren't married to each other or to someone else?

Moreover, it is not natural to abstain from sex for years after sexual maturation. Can you really expect someone to wait until he's, say 30 years old, far past his sexual prime, without going completely crazy? Nature always wins. If you are hungry then you will eat, or else you will die. It's just that there are many ways Nature can "win" when it comes to sex. Porn, masturbation, and the like. However, it seems to me that those are poor substitutes for actually being with a woman (I would assume--I have absolutely zero experience here). That would eventually happen sooner or later.

Also, marriage is not for everybody. There are those who just should not or cannot get married for whatever reason. It's just their personality. So are you going to tell me that these people should abstain their whole lives? That's nearly impossible.

As far as I know, the prohibitions against porn and all this stems from religion. Now, if a religion preaches a certain set of rules, it only makes sense to follow those rules if the religion is legit. Since the rules all supposedly came from G-d, then step 1 is to prove if G-d exists or not, and then figure out which of the religions that believes in G-d is correct. The problem is that you can't prove the existence of G-d, and many people are not prepared to take a blind leap of faith. They require proof.

So basically, in the absence of any proof of the existence of G-d (not to mention His making our rules etc.), there is no compelling reason to choose one value system over another. So all of a sudden, premarital relations, porn, adultery, and pretty much all the things we consider "wrong"

really aren't. They are only wrong if you choose an arbitrary value system that says they are.

So, how do you prove step 1?

I have never gotten a satisfactory answer to this, which is mind boggling. I don't understand how all these rabbis that I've asked have no clue as to this answer to this question and to many other fundamental questions that I've posed to them. How can you completely submit yourself to a value system without even questioning it and its fundamentals?

Any takers?

=====

Re: New Guy

Posted by Dov - 28 May 2009 18:18

Dear Bruce,

Are we really on this website because masturbation or porn is wrong? I think not. Either you accept it is, or you don't. If you are here, it is likely that it is because we have come to see that our attraction and obsession with porn and its corollaries has wrecked our lives.

For example - yes, in the Oxford movement (and in some small religious pockets of AA) the emphasis on abstention from alcohol was religious/moral - but not for AA! There is nothing at all morally wrong with drinking for the average AA. And - here is a hard point for many - in SA there is nothing necessarily, intrinsically, wrong with masturbation.

You are right, in my understanding, that this recovery thing is not based on morality. If it were, then recovering people would be walking around with a giant chip on their shoulders: Hey - **we** are dry! Guess what? They'd all be drinking in a week or less with that goofy perspective.

In other words, the compelling nature of step 1 stems from the fact that the drinking (or other acting out) is simply **not working**. It is ruining our lives. This has nothing whatever to do with religion, nor even morality.

If your own priorities/choices are *not* ruining your life and the only reason you are exploring 12-step recovery is because masturbation is an aveira, you are not referring to addiction as the 12 steps defines it. (I still wish you the best of luck!) Step 1 was not a preference for me, it was a necessity. Not because I am moral or good, but because I did not want to die. Do you

understand what I mean? With respect and admiration for you, a man who obviously wants to remain totally honest and open,

Dov

=====

Re: New Guy

Posted by Kedusha - 28 May 2009 18:25

Dov answered your question much better than the answer I was planning to give.

Let me share my answer anyway:

Bruce: There are a number of good resources out there (e.g. Lawrence Kelemen's [Permission to Believe](#) and [Permission to Receive](#)), but this forum, as I understand it, is for people who already believe in the Ribbono Shel Olam and Torah Misinai, and need Chizuk in properly observing this important area of the Torah.

With regard to sex before marriage, see, e.g. Gila Manolson's [The Magic Touch : A Jewish Approach to Relationships](#), as to why even holding hands before marriage is detrimental (besides being against the Halacha).

No one says it's easy, especially before you are married. I wish I would have done better myself in my single days (and after I was married as well). My longest period of sobriety as a Bachur was for about 3 years. I found that, if I avoided looking at improper things, and learned Torah regularly, that I was able to control myself, for the most part. My problems began when I allowed my eyes to see what they weren't supposed to. You have a big advantage, though: I had no one to share my struggles with, whereas you have the GUE forum!

Hatzlacha! Give sobriety a chance, and see if you still have the same questions. If you do, there are many people (probably not on this forum) who will be happy to try to give you answers.

=====

====

Re: New Guy

Posted by BruceWayne - 28 May 2009 19:02

OK. I said I was playing devil's advocate after all.

Now, maybe I'm confusing two different things. True, my problem really has nothing to do with religion. It has to do with keeping my life from being taken over by this. In that sense, I am an addict. But perhaps it's a bit confusing because everything in this forum is couched in religious terms. So it's really two different issues. One is the addiction itself, the other has to do with fundamentals of Judaism, which may not be for this forum. Does acting out excessively weaken one's beliefs or do weak beliefs cause acting out? I don't know.

Don't get me wrong--I am shomer shabbos, kashrus, and even shomer negiah (although my eyes need to catch up). I've read Kelemen's two books and I didn't see any real proof in there. He basically says it's more *likely* but he doesn't definitively *prove* anything. I don't think it's possible, and that's always been a huge problem for me.

I'll check out the Magic Touch when I can.

I remember it was really popular among the girls in my high school but I never read it.

Thanks for the help.

=====
====

Re: New Guy

Posted by Kedusha - 28 May 2009 19:16

You won't find real proof, which does not exist, because it would take away Bechirah Chofshis. However, Kelemen's books are written for those who would be willing to believe, but need "permission" to do so - i.e. they need to be presented with good evidence.

Does acting out excessively weaken one's beliefs? Only to the extent that the person becomes so depressed living a double life that he starts questioning the basic Mesorah. Do weak beliefs cause acting out? I don't think that's the problem. A person who does not have his desires

under control will not solve the problem by attending a Discovery Seminar (although he might be inspired to start working on getting his desires under control).

Have a good Yom Tov and Shabbos!

=====
=====

Re: New Guy

Posted by the.guard - 30 May 2009 21:55

Hi Bruce,

It's the admin again. I am so glad that Dov and Kedusha already gave you some good perspective. Dov made it clear that this forum is not for religious debate, but rather for people who feel that these behaviors are destroying their lives. (I think Dov was referring to step 1 of the 12-Steps, and you were referring to Step 1 of believing in a G-d, but minor
). And like Dov pointed out, you have millions of non-Jews in SA, SLAA, and even AA who aren't fighting their addictions for religious reasons, but because it is destroying their lives. And when you posted your story, it seemed pretty clear that you wanted to beat this for more reasons than religious. A LOT more.

See [this page](#) to see how even non-Jews describe the addictive nature and dangers of these behaviors.

Kedusha also made it clear that most of us on this forum **do** believe in Hashem and the Mesorah, and we use that to **help us** in our battle for our lives and for our souls. We are not fighting the Yetzer Hara **only** because we believe (although that is often a reason for some of us), but we use our beliefs to HELP us break free.

Does acting out excessively weaken one's beliefs or do weak beliefs cause acting out? I don't know.

Weak beliefs are often not the cause acting out. Many of us on the forum were big believers and very religious, but we were pulled into these addictive behaviors for various reasons and couldn't break free. It quickly becomes a disease. In your case, a broken home, difficult upbringing, etc... these are reasons that could cause even the biggest believer to be susceptible to addiction... As far as your question of does the acting out weaken one's beliefs, it is true that the Kabbalistically speaking, these behaviors cut one's soul off from spiritual sensitivity. This means that the more we sin in this area, the less likely it is we'll do Teshuvah. But once we know this is normal, we can fight to regain our spiritual connection again.

As far as your question of how it's possible to ignore this basic human need, I ask you to please read through these links from our FAQ page:

- 1) www.guardureyes.com/GUE/FAQ/FAQ1.asp
- 2) www.guardureyes.com/GUE/FAQ/FAQ17.asp
- 3) www.guardureyes.com/GUE/Tips/lfln.asp
- 4) www.guardureyes.com/GUE/FAQ/FAQ11.asp

Kedusha also brought up a very powerful point, and that is that you will NEVER find PROOF that G-d exists and that Judaism is TRUTH. Otherwise there would be no free choice and G-d wanted us to have free choice. So no matter how many amazing books you read and Discovery seminars you go to, if you don't WANT to believe, there will always be room to say "well, I just don't buy it".

But while we're on the subject of Emunah, I just want to quote from the "Preface" of the GYE Handbook:

The word "kofer" comes from the word "covered over" (as in the word "kapores"). The faith of even the biggest Jewish kofer is only "covered over". Every Jew believes deep down. It is an instinct that we inherited in our very genes, going all the way back to Avraham Avinu. And like birds that can fly thousands of miles back home without ever having learned how, all Jews find their way home if they just follow their hearts.

And I would also suggest one great book that can boost your Emunah (if you WANT it to):

"Rejoice O Youth" by Rav Avigddor Miller...

If you're the scientific type seeking G-d in the universe, [this page](#) could help... I particularly found Gerald Shcrouder's book called "The Science of G-d" to be a real Eye opener...

And if you're looking for inspiring articles on faith and Hashkafa, R' Ahron Moss is really good. See [here](#) for a bunch of his articles.

But again, you'll never find conclusive proof. If you DID, it would be a proof AGAINST the Torah. Isn't that funny? Because the Torah says "and you shall choose life" - meaning there must always be free choice. So if you found 100% proof of the Torah - that would be a proof against

See [here](#) for another addict who felt "cold" in his Judaism, and the answers he recieved...

And since we brought up premarital sex, you might want to see some great articles that we bring on our FAQ page [here](#) by R' Ahron Moss on the Jewish approach to dating and marriage, and why it works SO MUCH BETTER.

But lastly, I just want to repeat. This forum is not for religious debate. (So no more of the "devil's advocate" thing here please :D)... But if you want to beat this addiction - which is destroying your life and has potential to destroy your future wife's life as well - you have come to the right place. Download the Handbooks that I mentioned above, and learn the tools you can use to break free.

it :-\ :X:
We will be here for you - for as long as it takes, G-d willing.

G-d luck!

=====
=====

Re: New Guy

Posted by BruceWayne - 31 May 2009 05:26

OK. Well, I am the scientific type. I take everything with a grain of salt until I get conclusive proof. I'm all too familiar with the argument that proof removes free will and all that. It still bothers me, and I'm just not the type to blindly believe something.

As for the link featuring "Josh"...The argument that masturbation is a corruption of the G-dly power of procreation bestowed upon man makes no sense. Animals can also procreate. So by that logic you also have to say that animals have a spiritual connection to G-d and that He gave them this Divine-like ability. But animals don't have souls the way we do. So either the ability to create another generation is a spiritual/divine power thing limited only to humans or it has nothing to do with spirituality so that it can apply to all organisms. I just don't see how it can go both ways.

But like you requested I will leave all that debate for another forum elsewhere.

I seriously need help. I actually fell tonight, right after Shavuous. Unbelievable, I know. I intend to get on the 90 day forum thing, but first I want to read through those handbooks. Maybe that will help me off to a stronger start. 90 days is long time....my record is 42 (actually longer, but 42 is the longest I've counted).

I think part of the problem is that I get REALLY into things when I get into them. I played varsity ball in high school, and I was always the first guy in the gym and the last one out. I lived in the gym during the offseason. I read whatever I could find on being a better player. I would go onto the court and repeat the same shot hundreds of times, all day. That's just how I am. I need to divert my focus back into the gym, but I haven't been able to until relatively recently. I feel that if I get back into working out, that will become my new, HEALTHY obsession. I just need to take that first step!

=====

Re: New Guy

Posted by the.guard - 31 May 2009 11:04

Again, if you found "conclusive proof" - which seems to be what you are looking for, it would actually be a proof AGAINST the Torah (like I explained before)... So you WON'T find it. Face

the fact. G-d wants our faith. He wants us to listen to our souls and strive to be more than animals. If we had conclusive proof and served G-d **because of that**, we wouldn't be any more than intelligent animals. It would all be about "self-preservation" and "self-interest". Think about

As Jews, all we have to do is just listen to our hearts... And you, Bruce, are already are doing that, because you said you keep Shabbos and Kosher.

that a little

I appreciate though, that you agree to leave these type of debates to somewhere else. Maybe I should start a forum somewhere else for general Kiruv and emunah issues ;D

About the link featuring "Josh"... If animals would abuse the sexual desire in the way man does, such as by becoming addicted to obsessive masturbation, sexual abuse, rape, molestation, etc... then yes, **that too** would be a corruption of the G-dly power of procreation bestowed upon THEM, i.e. the animals. It has nothing to do with spirituality. It has to do with using the powers Hashem gave to **all** life-forms, in the way that they were intended...

Rabbi Twerski once wrote (see [this page](#)):

Yes, we come into the world as animals, and we are to rise above the animal level. Animals are motivated only by their desires. No sense of duty, no sense of responsibility, no sense trying to improve oneself. Many people never rise above an animal level, and are nothing more than intelligent animals who use their intellect to gain gratification.

It is terribly unfortunate that some people descend to below animal levels. Animals have a sex drive and they gratify it, but they do not make an industry out of sex. They do not have perversions. They do not ruin children with pedophilic molestation. They do not exploit others' drives for their own profit.

90 days may sound like a long time, but if you take it "one day at a time" it will be easier. Also, if you believe in the scientific studies that show it becomes much easier after 90 days, you will be able to garner the inner strength to grab the bull by the horns and just do it - no matter what. Like Jack wrote to you above. See Jack's amazing time-line of 90 days [here](#). Jack basically didn't have even one clean day in 38 years - until he found our site. Today he's clean for a half a year

(with only one slip)!

If you can get yourself so involved in varsity ball, you can get yourself just as involved in recovery. This is your eternity we are talking about! Join an SA group in your area, if necessary. Read the handbooks (especially the GYE handbook) and find out what it takes. But remember, reading alone won't do anything. It's all about IMPLIMENTATION of the tools discussed therein. Read the SA literature, read up on it just as much as you read up on this sport you enjoyed.

We are here for you - and we'll cheer you on. Go for it Bruce, and get back your life!

=====

Re: New Guy

Posted by BruceWayne - 31 May 2009 18:43

Why 90 days?

I've heard from many sources that it typically takes 21 days to break a habit. I know from experience that 21 days is insufficient when dealing with the power of the sexual impulse, but why 90? Why not 100 or 50 or 365? I'm sure you have a reason.

Thank you for pointing out that animals are *unable* to corrupt their sexuality. I overlooked that.

Come to think of it, the addiction really began to take off once I was unable to go to to the gym anymore, which actually depressed me pretty significantly. I suppose it was a way of coping with the depression and of finding a new source for endorphin release. At least partly so--there are many other reasons why it happened.

And just to be a nuisance I want to point out that I have a problem with the "as Jews, all we have to do is follow our hearts" comment. After all, there are plenty of non-jews who suffer from the same problem and they overcome it, so "listening to your heart" is not an exclusively Jewish thing. It kind of smacks of elitism. You know, the whole thing that there are 5 orders of creation with Jews being on top, followed buy nonjews and then animals, plants, and inanimate objects. I

hate that crap, and other misinterpretations of being "the chosen people". The notion that we are inherently better is flat out wrong (remember, some guy named Hitler had a very similar idea about a different group of people). We are just different, not better. We have a different role, but that doesn't mean we are superior in any way. Just different.

=====

Re: New Guy

Posted by bardichev - 31 May 2009 19:10

dear bruce you sound like a real nice guy .I would probabaly love sitting next to you on a plane and shmoozing or even discussing or maybe even debating religion.

The home page of this forum reads as follows

A platform of recovery for believing Jews who find themselves struggling with addictions to pornography, masturbation or other sexual problems. Post anonymously about your struggles without fear of anyone finding out who you are.

Ask questions, post answers and be inspired! Get tips and guidance from the experts who monitor this blog, as well as from fellow strugglers who can use this forum to offer encouragement and advice.

This has nothing to do with elitism it is just one person (the guard) who gives his time, talent, and his heart to help believing Jews. It has nothing to do with elitism it is just his forum which he out of the goodness of his heart does. It is important to stick to the topic. If you were here posting cheesecake recipes and someone told you it is not the place for it ,I would not call that elitism.

There is a full potpourri of ideas and opinions here it is a mosaic of people dealing with the same addiction from their own perspective. But as the home page states it is a platform for recovery for believing Jews.

Please don't get upset I am not judging anyone's religiosity nor would I be comfortable if someone judged mine. I have utmost respect for any one that comes forward (even in an

anonymous way as in this forum) to deal with their addiction. Or to help others.

Final note Let's not debate religion Here.

humble and happy

bardichev

=====
=====

Re: New Guy

Posted by BruceWayne - 31 May 2009 19:45

I wasn't out to debate religion or take a shot at the mod. It's just that one of my pet peeves is people who take an elitist attitude towards their religion rather than focusing on the fact that every human being on the planet is a creation of G-d and that most of the major beliefs across the major religions are pretty much the same. So there should be no room for elitism. It's sort of like taking a group of athletes in different sports and they all argue about who's better. The answer: No one. The sprinter cannot run a marathon and the marathoner cannot run a 100 meter dash, the shotputter can't do Olympic weight lifting, the swimmer can't run, etc. etc. All excell at one sport and one area of athleticism and it's impossible to say that one type of athlete is superior. They are all different but they are still all athletes.

So you can all ignore that last post if you want to. It was just me venting a bit.

ONE REALLY IMPORTANT QUESTION THAT I'VE BEEN MEANING TO ASK: What exactly are the criteria for "being clean" for 90 days? Is it not looking at porn, not masturbating, not looking at women in the street? Or is it self defined according to each individual's own personal struggle? For example, one can say that he won't look at porn for 90 days but say nothing about masturbation so that it is technically OK to do it according to his definition, and hope that the urge to do so will subside without the stimulus porn?

=====
=====

Re: New Guy

Posted by the.guard - 31 May 2009 20:20

On the weekly phone conferences, we had once an experienced (non-religious) sex therapist from the Healing center in Tennessee. She quoted some recent scientific study where it was shown that it takes 90 days for the brain to develop new neurological pathways that can actually change a behaviorally based thinking pattern. (It has nothing to do with Judaism, if that makes
).

If you have heard of other studies that show other time-frames, feel free. But ever since that was mentioned to us, we have begun a 90 day chart [over here](#), as well as a Wall of Honor [over here](#), for those who complete the 90 days. You also asked what are the criteria. So please see the "Rules" [over here](#).

As far as your "venting", I will answer you one more time here on the forum, but **I do not want you to reply over here please**. If you still want to debate, you can write me a private e-mail at eyes.guard@gmail.com and I can try to answer you further. I do not want this forum to become a platform for religious debate. But since you already opened the can, I will answer you here. But no replies on the forum **please**. Only by e-mail.

When I said "follow your heart" I was not talking about beating the addiction. That can be done by anyone, like you pointed out. I was talking about "**faith**", as I quoted from the preface of the handbook:

Every Jew believes deep down. It is an instinct that we inherited in our very genes, going all the way back to Avraham Avinu. And like birds that can fly thousands of miles back home without ever having learned how, all Jews find their way home if they just follow their hearts.

As far as your questions about Judaism being elitist, etc.. You compare Judaism to all other religions and ask why we are better. To ask the question in such a way on a forum of believing Jews is like asking a child why a million dollar diamond is any better than a marble. Obviously the child can't see the difference. But we believe there is. Again though, this all boils down to "faith". You either believe or you don't. We Jews believe that G-d appeared to 600,000 Jews on mount Sinai and gave us the Torah, after the rest of the nations of the world refused it. G-d spoke to us face to face, and this was passed down from father to son. If you don't want to believe that, you are free to believe as you wish.

Now let me explain why Judaism is NOT elitist.

The Sefer "Matan Torah" from the Ba'al Hasulam says that the Jews have a certain job in the world. Once they finish that job, the rest of the world will be given the opportunity to do the same job. But G-d needed to start with one nation, he couldn't start with all the nations - it just wouldn't work. Like a parable of a King who wants all his people to serve him, so he chose one group to be the "light unto the nations" - one group who wear special clothes and do special things that the king commanded them, so that all the other people in the world will learn that there is a King. Now obviously, as the king's chosen people, it doesn't mean they are intrinsically better, it just means the king gave them the mission of spreading the light and the knowledge that there is a King. And so obviously, these people will be **well rewarded** for this job. And if they fail, they are punished **far more** severely than the common folk who don't know about the king... You get the picture. So it's nothing to do with elitism. It is simply that the king chose us to spread the light, and therefore he gave us the Torah. One day, when Moshiach comes, all the nations will be given the opportunity to achieve what we did. But they will be starting where we left off.

If you want to debate this further, please - only by e-mail.

From now on, we will discuss here on this forum **ONLY** about beating this addiction.

May G-d be with you!

=====

Re: New Guy

Posted by bardichev - 31 May 2009 20:22

dear new guy

Have it any way you like. I personally love to discuss religion but not here.

The reason why there is a wisp of elitism here is because it takes a lot more work to be a KINGDOM OF PRIESTS (KOHANIM) AND A HOLY NATION.

I am holding myself back from debating religion ,so simply put it takes a lot more work to be a Holy Jew than to be an upstanding righteous non-Jew.

With the greatest amount of respect I will bow out of the debate.

humble and happy

bardichev

=====

=====