

Giant Leap's short journey & experiences

Posted by Giant Leap - 06 Mar 2010 00:36

Hi everyone.

I felt a calling to write some thoughts that I had about my ups and downs. Prior to Purim I had some difficult battles with the Yetzer and often fell. My computer is protected with the K9 filter, but my phone does not have a filter, and was my tool for lust. Because of my consecutive falls, I was in a downward spiral and felt somewhat depressed. I could not focus in prayer and had little interest in becoming shmirat habrit. However, I often would drag myself to mincha/maariv services, don my grad (hat and jacket) and squeeze out a lingering hypocritical prayer. To this date, joining the morning minyan is still a difficult task and I feel that being pogem has made that difficult, especially that being pogem has made me more tired, irritable, and sad. On the other hand, I was extraordinarily happy on Purim, but fell that Sunday night. I felt so down that I could not take it anymore; I was angry. It may be a surprising thing to say, but I was angry at Hashem that He gave me this challenge. Questions like, why did He chose me to have this addiction? What do I have to always feel bad about myself after the falls? Why do I "somewhat" understand that I am doing something spiritually wrong, and yet I still get hooked on lust?

However things changed. Since Purim I am still clean, and it has been five days. I also have made many improvements. I got rid of my Youtube account (I am partly sad because there were many Torah videos and Jewish music on my account), but I needed to make a leap for purity. Additionally, I took off the internet option on my phone and only use it for productivity reasons, and never for leisure. Thereafter, I take the internet option off after I am done. All this change for the better has now made me more happier. Hashem has given me His sword for a bit to weed the garden clean from the YH weeds. I do not feel like a hypocrite anymore, and I have developed a new mental framework on battling with addiction and living to the fullest. So, thats why I wanted to come here and share some thoughts that I had after my struggles.

1) Give yourself a L'chaim.

Pamper yourself for your successes, even if you believe that they are miniscule. If you under the age limit for a l'chaim, treat yourself to something you would like, ice cream, a delicacy etc.

2) My Personal meditation while reading the Shema.

First some brief background. I have been reading the book Light of Ephraim (I highly recommend it for all on this site). In one of the dialogues, the rabbi taught his student who had issues with shmirat habrit that when he was younger and had trouble with lust, he would focus on the Shema, and each time he read the word "levavecha" he would meditate on the two vavs in the word. The two vavs represent that we as Jews have to utilize both chambers of the heart in serving Hashem. As an explanation, the Tanya, as I understood it explains that the Yetzer sits in the left ventricle of the heart (where the blood is) and he wants to conquer the heart and brain completely. The right ventricle is where the good part sits and it has to dominate the entire being so that we can serve Hashem. We have to utilize both ventricles, the entire heart our service in Hashem. Just to note, I am not all that learned and am a BT. Anyhow, I began to read the Shema more carefully and meditate on the word or words that had levavecha in them. I found that there were 6 similar words in the entire Shema. Then I remembered an interesting fact from the site called JewishSexuality - another website on Shmrat Habrit. The author wrote the following: Six represents Tikun HaBrit (the sefirah of Yesod, the sixth of the lower sefirot-channels). So when I read the Shema, I meditate on the 6 words of levavecha and tap my heart (like in viduy-confessions) as a meditation and remembrance of my goal to be shmirat habrit.

Lastly, in the last two days, I have read some articles and postings by various Yidden on depression , so I wanted to post it here.

Here is an article on depression written by Rabbi Dr. Abraham J. Twerski I found on VosizNeias. Entitled: Understanding Depression In The Jewish Population (March 3). Link below.

www.vosizneias.com/50538/2010/03/03/new-york-understanding-depression-in-the-jewish-population

On facebook, I am friends with a very special Rabbi (I wont mention who he is). He utilizes works from the Lubavitcher Rebbe, R' Twerski and others. Here is what he wrote on depression, the other day.

Depression is forbidden completely and utterly

One of the distinguishing qualities of the path of Chassidus is the focus on constant joy, and in Tanya (ch. 26), the Alter Rebbe explains that only at auspicious times designated for a personal

spiritual reckoning may one bring oneself to bitterness over one's sins. The rest of the time, however, one must serve Hashem with joy and completely disregard any sadness that comes from thoughts of one's sins .

In the letter below, the Previous Rebbe warns a chossid not to engage in any inappropriate sadness:

I have heard that you are worried and sad, and consequently you are neglecting your health and proper behavior in your eating, drinking, and sleeping. This is obviously disturbing your work to disseminate Torah and strengthen those who engage in Avodah [character refinement] and study Torah.

All those who study the teachings of Chassidus know that the worry and depression, even when it stems from concern over one's spiritual level, is a wicked trait. Not only should one distance oneself from it, but one should uproot it at the root, for it opens the way for all kinds of evil.

Our sages have said: "Such is the craft of the evil inclination" (Shabbos 105b). The bestial soul [another term for the evil inclination] is a seasoned craftsman, and his craft is to come to each person with a different tactic. To the small, the average, and the great—each one he approaches on that person's level.

Sometimes the bestial soul comes wrapped in a Tallis not his own—with the appearance of the good inclination. He reminds the person of his personal faults, and rebukes and torments him. He advises the person to study works of mussar and threatens him, and his entire goal is to degrade the person and distract him from the tasks that he needs to do.

This is the entire intention of the evil inclination—to preoccupy and distract the person from engaging in good things. When he sees that he can only accomplish this through a method that apparently stems from fear of Heaven, he will slip on this garment in order to perpetrate his wicked scheme. This is why he is called a craftsman, for his enticements are committed in such a way that when he reprimands and torments the person for something not good, or bad, it is impossible to recognize his true face—that in reality this is the evil inclination.

Therefore our holy fathers, the Rebbeim, decreed that worry and depression, even from one's

spiritual state, is a wicked character trait, and they forbade it completely and utterly. They sentenced it to the four death penalties, that it be banished from the domain of chassidim, and uprooted until no minute trace remains, for even that brings great damage. .

Igros Kodesh Admur HaRayatz, Vol. 4, pp. 356-357.

The Rabbi's response to a commenter:

There is nothing as whole as a broken heart. Chassidic saying

Depression is not a sin; but what depression does, no sin can do. Chassidic saying

Is sad bad? Chassidic teaching differentiates between two types of sorrow: merirut, a constructive grief, and atzvut, a destructive grief. Merirut is the distress of one who not only recognizes his failings but also cares about them; one who agonizes over the wrongs he has committed

, over his missed opportunities, over his unrealized potential; one who refuses to become indifferent to what is deficient in himself and his world. Atzvut is the distress of one who has despaired of himself and his fellow man, whose melancholy has drained him of hope and initiative. Merirut is a springboard for self-improvement; atzvut is a bottomless pit.

How does one distinguish between the two? The first is active, the second—passive. The first one weeps, the second's eyes are dry and blank. The first one's mind and heart are in turmoil, the second's are still with apathy and heavy as lead. And what happens when it passes, when they emerge from their respective bouts of grief? The first one springs to action: resolving, planning, taking his first faltering steps to undo the causes of his sorrow. The second one goes to sleep.

Hope this helps. Thanks for reading. ;D

Giant Leap.

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Re: Giant Leap's short journey & experiences
Posted by Giant Leap - 14 Mar 2010 22:49

I like your idea, Yosef Hatzadik. I will try it out till the omer ;D which is a huge tikkun for our issue. What about the minor bumps along the way? I'm feeling that it will be hard to keep from falling or being tricked by the yetzer along the way, in between the two designated allowance periods. Brilliant! Your saying that we need to delay the fall. Your post came right in time. I just read a chapter in *The Light of Ephraim*, (I think the author is gonna start paying me royalties for quoting his book too much), were the author taught that we must fight the yetzer slowly *-leat leat* which has the numerical value of 80, the same numerical value as Yesod- foundation, the sefirah that parallels the male sexual organ. Starving it, makes it all better.

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Re: Giant Leap's short journey & experiences
Posted by silentbattle - 14 Mar 2010 23:49

Interesting - don't know if that would work for everyone, but if it works for you - fantastic!

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