

Yiddishe Guilt

Posted by reuvenshimonlevy - 23 Jun 2019 15:12

Here is an interesting thought that can give *Chizzuk* to those of us who feel guilty about the *Aveiros* we do. Just to clarify before we get started, this is in no way a *Hetter* to do *Aveiros*! It's simply *Chizzuk* for when one falls. It's perhaps an easier way to get back up and move on forward.

Here goes...

Guilt is actually good! Huh?! Hang on and I'll explain.

People who do *Aveiros* feel guilty. Obviously once you become accustomed to doing *Aveiros* you won't have that guilty feeling as much. The reason for that is because you become numb to that feeling of guilt and pain. *Chazal* call that "*Naseh Kiheter*" (you make it as though it were permissible). So in actuality it's better when you feel guilty because that means you didn't do that *Aveirah* as much. That guilt is *Yiddishe* guilt. It's guilt that *Hashem* wants you to have. When we feel guilty *Hashem* is happy because then He knows that we care about what we did, that we do not like what we did and that we want to do better!

Many times we feel guilty after seeing something inappropriate, being *Motzee Zera Livatala* or things of that sort. That feeling of guilt is actually a good sign. We certainly shouldn't be doing those *Aveiros*, yet the actual feeling of guilt is a good thing. It means we aren't numb, or we weren't "*Naaseh the Aveirah Kiheter*". It means we care that we acted out. If you wouldn't care, you wouldn't feel guilty. Now *that* would be a problem. That would mean you've done that *Aveirah* so many times that you do not feel that feeling of guilt anymore. However when you do feel guilty, that's good.

When you fall and feel guilty, be happy. Well, okay, not happy happy! But happy. Know that you care. Know that your not numb. Know that you want to do better and therefore you're already on the right path. *Hashem* loves you because you have *Yiddishe* guilt, because you care and feel bad about what you've done! Yes, *Teshuva* must be done. But your a great person! So don't be hard on yourself. Relax and carry on. Your an amazing person and you are going to conquer your *Yetzer Hara*. It's hard, cuz feeling guilty is yuck. But that's the feeling you should have. It means your on the right path.

and know that *Hashem* loves you and your heading
in the right direction!

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Re: Yiddishe Guilt

Posted by tzemach - 24 Jun 2019 04:55

I also had a thought on this maamor chazal:

Sometimes too much (unhealthy) guilt causes *naaseh lo kiheter*. Such feelings have many names: The Abstinence Violation Effect, Breaking the Rule Effect, or the What the Hell Effect.

It's the feeling that I fell of the 90 day chart anyway, I may as well watch porn for a few more minutes, or a few more hours, and start fresh tomorrow or next Sunday... ????? ?? ??????.

What leads to such thinking? Too much guilt. ???" ? ??????.

Here's a good quote on the topic:

Why Guilt Doesn't Work. [...] Welcome to one of the biggest threats to willpower worldwide: the "what-the-hell effect." First coined by dieting researchers Janet Polivy and C. Peter Herman, the what-the-hell effect describes a cycle of indulgence, regret, and greater indulgence. These researchers noticed that many dieters would feel so bad about any lapse—a piece of pizza, a bite of cake²¹—that they felt as if their whole diet was blown. Instead of minimizing the harm by not taking another bite, they would say, "What the hell, I already blew my diet. I might as well eat the whole thing." It's not just eating the wrong thing that triggers the what-the-hell effect in dieters. Eating more than other people can create the same feelings of guilt, and lead to eating even more (or bingeing later in private). Any setback can create the same downward spiral. In one not-so-nice study, Polivy and Herman rigged a scale to make dieters think they had gained five pounds. The dieters felt depressed, guilty, and disappointed with themselves—but instead of resolving to lose the weight, they promptly turned to food to fix those feelings. Dieters aren't the only ones susceptible to the what-the-hell effect. The cycle can happen with any willpower challenge. It's been observed in smokers trying to quit, alcoholics trying to stay sober, shoppers trying to stick to a budget, and even child molesters trying to control their sexual impulses. Whatever the willpower challenge, the pattern is the same. Giving in makes you feel bad about yourself, which motivates you to do something to feel better. And what's the cheapest, fastest strategy for feeling better? Often the very thing you feel bad about. That's how eating a few potato chips becomes looking for crumbs at the bottom of an empty, greasy bag. Or how losing

\$100 at the casino can trigger a gambling binge. You say to yourself, "I've already broken my [diet, budget, sobriety, resolution], so what the hell. I might as well really enjoy myself." Crucially, it's not the first giving-in that guarantees the bigger relapse. It's the feelings of shame, guilt, loss of control, and loss of hope that follow the first relapse. Once you're stuck in the cycle, it can seem like there is no way out except to keep going. This leads to even bigger willpower failures and more misery as you then berate yourself (again) for giving in (again). But the thing you're turning to for comfort can't stop the cycle, because it only generates more feelings of guilt. *McGonigal Ph.D., Kelly. The Willpower Instinct: How Self-Control Works, Why It Matters, and What You Can Do to Get More of It (pp. 144-145). Penguin Publishing Group. Kindle Edition.*

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Re: Yiddishe Guilt
Posted by Readyforhelp - 25 Jun 2019 00:10

The first step to teshuvah is charatah so the guilt means your on the right path!

There was a email broadcast recently called from R YY Jakobson talking about the 2 different guilt's.

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1EqJSyDcmhpP3Ya1DEFpp4DNaJsBFcL1D/view>

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Re: Yiddishe Guilt
Posted by reuvenshimonlevy - 25 Jun 2019 12:18

Tzemach,

I love what you wrote! So true! Too much guilt can have the opposite effect. The "what the hell" concept is great!

Im truth, you got to make sure to take the middle route. As the *Mishna* in *Avos* says (*Perek Beis Mishna Aleph*) "What is the proper way that a person should go in? The way that is good for the one doing it and the one who is getting affected by it". The *Raav* explains on this that one should never be too much one way or too much the other way. He explains it as follows:

Never give all your money away (even to a good cause) because that will not be good for you. And never keep all your money for yourself because that wouldn't be good for other people (i.e. poor people, *Tzedakos*, organizations). The best is to give some and keep some.

The same holds true here (and everywhere by the way), never feel too guilty but never feel too perfect. The middle of the road is definitely the healthiest!

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