

Real Life Lessons

Posted by BenHashemBH - 24 Jun 2024 17:14

Every experience can be a teaching instance. I'd like to share those AHA moments when I've learned something by internalizing and growing from even seemingly mundane circumstances. Hopefully others would also like to share some observations, thoughts, and chizuk from their day-to-day journey's.

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Re: Real Life Lessons

Posted by BenHashemBH - 17 Jan 2025 14:09

***** TRIGGER WARNING *****

Warning: Spoiler!

What you are about to read was heard in a Shovavim shiur given by Rav Meir Simcha Sperling.

Mah Tovv Ohalecha Yaakov - the tent entrances didn't face each other. Beautiful tznus.

Says Rav Matisyahu Salomon, the real mailah isn't that they have privacy so people shouldn't look in. That's a pretty normal. What Klal Yisroel had was a mailah that they didn't look out. They didn't want to know everything that goes on in everyone else's lives that's not my business. They lived inwardly, without basing my status in life off of comparisons.

Rav Meir Simcha was focusing on social media and how being obsessed and consumed by externals is the root of what ruins people's lives. How that connects to inyanei kedusha - when we look elsewhere then we can't see and appreciate what's right here. Constantly chasing, running in a race that has no inherent value (and no end) makes it impossible to be satisfied and find peace.

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Re: Real Life Lessons

Posted by BenHashemBH - 21 Feb 2025 16:53

Smile at the Satan

I find myself inside the ring,

On my hands, two gloves to swing.

What's going on? I am not sure,

But it all feels very insecure.

There is this man across the way,

Staring me down, like some kind of prey.

He approaches, confident and strong,

Did I just hear the sound of a gong?

BAM! He hits me under the chin,
And everything around me starts to spin.
Can't think straight, tell left from right,
About to fall down, how can I fight?

Reeling from his powerful blow,
Things start to move really slow.
Dropping down onto one knee,
Eyes rolling back, darkness I see.

Is this the end; am I out?
A single hit to end this bout.
Numbers counting down from ten,
The guy stands poised to hit me again.

No time left to make a decision,
While I'm about to lose my vision.
Do I get up to suffer more pain,
Or got to sleep? All is vain.

Wait, I don't like either choice,
Who is that inner, limiting voice?
Telling me to hurt or give in,
Why, it is the master of sin!

For there is another thing I can do,
I can pay this man his due.
Sure, he landed a solid shot,
But do I wear these gloves for naught?

Deliberately, I start to lift my head,
As my doubts begin to shed.
Staring right into his fearsome eyes,
I rise.

Blood is dripping from my teeth,
Staining the distant floor beneath.
Of all the things, I crack a smile,
Not how he thought I'd handle this trial.

Bring it on, I felt what you've got,
Now it's my turn, is it not?
I've got something for you too,
A force like something you never knew.

My holy Neshama you have awoken,
When you had me nearly broken.
Almost missed it in my distress,

Tapping into this force that I possess.

You'd better run, you'd better hide,

I don't appreciate that you lied.

You spoke in my head, choose A or B,

When there really was an option, C.

Oh now I'm done, and so are you,

Pleased to see your plan fall through.

There will not be another chance,

Since I've uncovered your phony stance.

I'm knocking you out of this cage,

I'm in control, this is my stage.

You've got no more power here,

At last, at last, my vision is clear.

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Re: Real Life Lessons

Posted by BenHashemBH - 05 Mar 2025 15:04

Golden message from the Maggid of Mezritch on Yosef's temptation by Eishes Potifar and how he recognized and thereby overcame the nisayon.

1:05-1:13 in rabbi YY's speech on Torah Anytime

Addicts Can't Find Healing in Temporary Pleasures

Rabbi YY Jacobson

<https://torahanytime.com/lectures/225388>

The problem is not the addiction. The urges are genuine and the void is real. I'm not a terrible person for the pull. My challenge is that I yearn for wholeness and I don't know where to find it or how to feel it. So I ascribe power and value to false things that either temporarily substitute for it, or numb me from it. I've read here b'shem Rabbi Daniel Kalish that "pornography is a bad answer to a good question". That's why the solution to addiction is not sobriety, rather it is connection. Don't throw away the question, dig deep for the real answer - that's where you will discover your shleimus. When that happens, those same pulls will bring you closer to yourself and to Hashem.

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Re: Real Life Lessons

Posted by BenHashemBH - 13 Mar 2025 13:31

We say in every weekday Amidah in Shema Koleinu, umilfanecha malkeinu reikam al tishiveinu - don't send us away emptyhanded.

In Avinu Malkeiun we say na al tishiveinu reikam milfanecha - please don't send us away emptyhanded.

We already petitioned that Hashem should please listen to and accept our tefillah, and we know that no tefillah goes unanswered. So what could this mean to be sent away emptyhanded?

Perhaps there is a deeper message here. We don't say Hashem, please don't ignore me. The lashon is more like being evicted. You are done now, goodbye, next person's turn. But that's not right. What is really happening? I'd like to suggest that it is davka when we see our hands as empty, then it feels like we've been rejected. What I really need and what I'm asking of Hashem is to not view my own hands as empty. If I'm struggling and turn to Hashem, pleading for yeshuos, and it doesn't seem like anything is changing, then I may feel like He doesn't care CV, and then I may also care less. If I view my hands as empty, it will create distance between me and Hashem. Davening is supposed to bring us closer. When I'm going through a rough tekufah, it's imperative that I realize that my hands are not empty, and that I'm not being cast away. Every word, thought, and feeling is connecting me to Hashem. Something is in my hands, and I'm davening that Hashem help me to find what it is. I may not understand how it will give me what I need, but at least I can feel that I'm moving forward with a gift; the gift of knowing that I have a relationship with Hashem, and that I've not been forgotten.

Hashem, please help me see and value all the brachos that You give me, so I can feel our connection and know that You are with me at all times and in all situations. Then I can keep coming closer, even with the hard things, because I know You care.

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Re: Real Life Lessons

Posted by BenHashemBH - 20 Mar 2025 13:09

Had a pretty big challenge earlier this week in the form of a non-frum relative's wedding.

Discussed it with my Rav and mainly due to the likely chillul HaShem of family resentments if I excused myself from attending, and he added that it will be an opportunity to make a kiddush HaShem as well, he felt I should go. (He knows where I'm currently holding in shemiras einayim and generally sides with the approach of dealing with it when needed as part of accepting life, as opposed to extreme avoidance).

In any case, I went, prepared for the inevitable. I wore as simple a nice suit as I have, plain black, to avoid attention. I hovered near my relatives around the edges of the room, trying to face walls. Took my favorite spot at the chuppah - front corner seat. Got in my obligatory hellos, mazal tovs, and goodbyes, letting people know I couldn't stay late as I needed to get back home to my kids. That way I could slip out as the dancing started - which BH worked out pretty well.

Drove home and felt pretty ok about how it went, all things considered.

Alas, the next morning I had an image barraging my mind pretty relentlessly. Try as I might, my usual tactics failed to bring me peace. I was caught. Trying to stop thinking about it is still thinking about it. Since it anyways wasn't leaving me alone, I decided to face it. What is going on with this? Of the unfortunately 100s of not great things all around, what's so chashuv about this one (besides my own getting stuck with it)?

I don't know the answer, but as I contemplated how to try and let it go, a thought came. For all my preparation, following daas Torah, and not deliberately looking at anyone/thing, where was the power of this image coming from? Perhaps the same Force that made it so that the other 100 images stayed away. For all my efforts, which were present, important, and meaningful, it means nothing if I don't recognize where the true ability to succeed vs fail comes from. If He decides it should be, then a man can kill a lion or a fly can kill a man. I think that I slayed 100 lions? Here, have a fly and see that you are powerless against it.

Unfortunately, I neglected to daven properly and keep Hashem present in my mind before, during, and after the nisayon.

I asked for mechila, and davened that He should please remove the fly. I stopped trying to fight it myself, and gave it to the only real Power that exists. With His help, I was finally able to let go and find peace from it. His peace, not mine. What's the point of all this if it's just about me?

Thank you Hashem for this valuable lesson. Please help me internalize it. I'm living for You, otherwise I'm not really living at all.

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Re: Real Life Lessons

Posted by jollylemur95 - 20 Mar 2025 13:16

Blown away, my friend!!

Incredible!!!

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Re: Real Life Lessons

Posted by BenHashemBH - 23 Mar 2025 21:32

Learning from Rabbi Twerski's Haggadah and wanted to share his message from the son who doesn't know how to ask.

In chassidic lore there is a quote from Rabbi Hirsh of Rimanov. "Take my word for it. The one who does not know how to ask comes away with the best." Just what could he have meant with this?

At one week-end, dedicated to the search for spirituality for people recovering from various addictions, there was a session called "Ask the Rabbi." One Woman, Bernice, who had little exposure to Judaism spoke up.

"This morning I was frustrated, more than I have ever been in my entire life. I passed by the room where you were having services, and I saw all of you praying. I wanted to join you, but I don't know how to pray. It's not that I can not read the Hebrew, because I could read the English. It's just that my family was not religious, and we never went to Temple. I don't know the first thing about prayer. I stood outside the room, wanting to go in, but not knowing what I would do if I was inside."

Rav Twerski answered Bernice, "Let me understand this. You were frustrated because you saw us praying, but you did not know how to pray. That's how things looked in your perspective. But let us look at how G-d perceived this. When G-d sees us entering shul, He may see a group of people coming with various requests. But you, standing outside, heartbroken, wanting desperately to pray but not knowing how. That may be the most sincere prayer of all.

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Re: Real Life Lessons

Posted by BenHashemBH - 02 Apr 2025 20:07

Not really sure where to put this, but I guess here works.

Came across an eye-opening fable (possibly adapted from Shmuel's story of the scorpion and the frog in Nedarim, but different lesson).

A scorpion asks a turtle if he may ride on her back to cross a river. She is worried however that the scorpion will sting her. The scorpion reassures her that he will not sting her, because he would drown if she died. Seeing the logic in this, she agrees. Part-way across the river, the scorpion tries to sting the turtle, but her shell deflects his stinger. Having known that he could not pierce her armor, the turtle asks the scorpion what he was thinking. His reply is that he acted neither out of malice nor ingratitude, but merely an irresistible and indiscriminate urge to sting. The turtle then delivered the following reflection: "Truly have the sages said that to cherish a base character is to give one's honor to the wind and involve one's own self in embarrassment."

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Re: Real Life Lessons

Posted by BenHashemBH - 07 May 2025 18:58

Just finished reading a book about confidence (and how to facilitate it your employees--of which).

At the end the author details a basic strategy for accomplishing goals by treating them more like a game - ie make it more fun and less burdensome. These strategies could be implemented for our battle too, and I hope others find them helpful. Kol Tov.

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A worthwhile endeavor can be defined as a winnable game.

1. You must clarify what game you are playing. The better the clarity on the game, the rules, and what it takes to win, the better the chances you can win.
2. You must acquire the skills and strategies to win. You cannot win until you have acquired the skills. It doesn't matter if it's sports, sales, chess, management, parenting, health, or any other games. You need to have the skills and strategies to win. You also need to practice those strategies and skills to become highly proficient.
3. You must win your internal game. Every champion is a champion in their own mind before they are a champion in real life. Everyone walks around with all kinds of "stuff" they have acquired throughout their lifetime. Some of it is helpful and serving them now. Some is not helpful and undermining them now, even though at some time it probably was helping them. The internal game needs to be tweaked so that you can win. See it! Visualize it! Feel it!
4. You must make sure your environment is helping to propel you to win at your game. Are the people around you supportive and encouraging, or are they negative and deflating? Is your physical space helping you or hurting you? Your environment is one of the most important things you control, and it can make the biggest impact on how big you win!
5. And finally, you must keep score. Just like any sport, a game without a scoreboard is not a game. So, too, must your game have a scorecard so that you know how you are doing and where you need to make adjustments. Keeping score is the way to stay on track to win.

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Re: Real Life Lessons

Posted by BenHashemBH - 08 May 2025 17:33

Back-to-back days posting here, but when life (read: G-d) throws you (what should it be instead of lemons?) fruit, one should appreciate it, so I'm sharing again.

Saying morning Brachos for the $[(2^8 * 5^3) + (3^4 * 2^2) - (7^2 * 11) + (13 * 19 * 2) - (17 * 23) + (29 * 31) - (37 * 41) + (43 * 47) - (53 * 59) + (61 * 67)]$ th time. ?????? ??????????????????
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And force our yetzer [hara] to be subservient to You.

Not to me. To You.

Hmmm . . .

Warning: Spoiler!

Kol Tov

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Re: Real Life Lessons

Posted by vehkam - 08 May 2025 18:43

[BenHashemBH wrote on 08 May 2025 17:33:](#)

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Kol Tov

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Re: Real Life Lessons

Posted by BenHashemBH - 01 Jul 2025 21:05

Helping my kids with sports, and when they are starting off, a little practice can result in immediate and significant advancement. The farther along they are, the worse that practice time to improvement ratio seems to get. It got me thinking . . .

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Why does progress sometimes feel like it tapers off as time progresses?

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Because I'm focusing too much on comparing results and not enough on the effort of each step in the right direction.

Because maintenance doesn't seem like a form of progress. Even if I appear to stay in the same place, it takes effort to stay here, without which I would be declining.

Because as I get into the fine tuning, the changes are subtle, and I need to refine my judgement criteria to reflect on the more nuanced growth.

Because it's harder to see what comes next, and I get stuck looking at my past, which contrasts a lot easier than my present.

Because there is an excitement that can wear off if I allow myself to forget how meaningful these accomplishments truly are.

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The prospect musician doesn't practice less because of his talents, he practices more – that is how he achieves his own greatness. Maybe I think I've learned how to play my instrument fairly

well. Maybe I feel solidly competent in some of the basics. But I've far from mastered anything. There is valuable work to be done. My song isn't complete. The tune will waver if I get complacent. The off-notes that escape will be jarring. For as long as the baton moves I must continue to play my unique sound. Perfectly? Perhaps never, and certainly not today, but what is more perfect right now than giving it my all?

One Monster Trucking Day at a Time

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