

Trying to make Teshuva

Posted by offthederech - 31 Mar 2013 03:01

I am returning to these boards after a departure of nearly two years. The story of the last few years is quite bad and I can only hope that I will actually be able to make Teshuva; and if I can't make Teshuva, then I must hope that Gehinnom will cleanse me and leave enough to be able to enjoy being in the presence of G-d.

I became a Ger about seven years ago and I am now in my mid forties. I began my sexual addiction with porn and masturbation during my early teen years, so this has been a battle for over thirty years. My wife was born Jewish, but raised in a "bagel Jewish" home with almost no education. She became a ward of the court while in high school and was influenced by a group home counselor to convert to xianity. We married as xians, and many years later we ended up in a "messianic Jewish" congregation. I won't go into all the details, but I became quite disillusioned with xianity, and I ended up moving toward Judaism. I studied for a year and a half with an Orthodox rabbi and converted before a beit din. I had thought my wife was agreeing with these changes, but I later learned I was quite wrong.

Immediately after my conversion, I was able to stay clean for quite a while. That was the first time I had made it to 90 days. I was doing a lot of extended business travel, though, and I fell during one of those trips, using porn and masturbating. I fought with this on and off over the next two years, but the desire to use porn was getting stronger and I was wasting more time on inappropriate web sites. My work suffered and I believe my employer became aware of what I was doing. I was also gaming a lot at the time, and that is all he mentioned when he fired me, but I have to believe that he was aware of the porn habit as well.

I managed to get another job relatively quickly and moved to a larger Jewish community than the one in which I had converted. The previous community was a small Chabad kiruv type community and the new one was a "full service" Jewish community with four shuls (plus one "conservadox" synagogue). During our residence in this town, I had my longest clean streak (over 150 days), but there were other pressures bearing down on me. My wife, it turns out, only followed me into Judaism because she was afraid of losing me. She had said differently before a beit din some years before, but now she tells me that she lied to the rabbeim. She became more angry and more depressed all the time and we began to fight constantly. To add to the problems, our marital life suffered greatly and I began acting out again. Fighting became the daily communication, and I have to confess that in many ways I was far from a proper Jewish husband and father. I was cold and distant from my whole family. While I remained fully observant, I began expecting less and less observance from my family. I didn't even ask them to keep Shabbat or keep kosher outside the home. All I asked of my wife was that she observe family purity, keep the kitchen kosher, and not use the TV or computer in front of me on Shabbat and Yom Tov. Things still continued to get worse between us, though. One day just

about two years ago, my wife walked into our bedroom to talk to me. Before she started, though, I asked her if she thought there was anything that could save our marriage. She said she didn't think there was, and I asked her if she thought it could be saved if I gave up all observance. She agreed to give it a try.

It only took a month or two and she began going back to church. As I suspected might happen, she began to pressure me to do the same. She had learned over the years how to pressure me and did so relentlessly. G-d forgive me, I eventually gave in. For a while, I just blended in and I even tried to believe it again for a while, but the same issues that disillusioned me about the church began coming up again. I just can't believe that yoshke is the maschiach (let alone a deity).

I began talking with my old Chabad rabbi about five months ago, now, and we are learning together on the phone. About the same time, I completely cut off all the porn usage. I am slowly (and covertly) trying to add Jewish practice back into my life. I am also trying to figure out a way to stop going to church with my wife without upsetting the apple cart. I recently began working through R' Arush's books (as translated by R' Lazer Brody), and that prompted me to try to get back on the purity wagon. While my wife has real issues (her childhood was so traumatic that she has had several counselors tell her that they never met anyone with a history like hers outside of a mental institution), I have to believe that the effects of my impurity on my marriage, especially after my conversion, were catastrophic. Being p'gram Habrit separated me from Hashem in a big way, and the complete selfish focus separated me from my family.

I am hoping for *much* mercy from Hashem, as my list of transgressions (especially over the last two years) is longer than I can possibly imagine, and the severity of many of them is such that I must be subject to kareis many times over. I have to admit at this point that I am more than a little scared of the response I might receive from the board since my username is really an understatement of my current circumstances.

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Re: Trying to make Teshuva
Posted by inastruggle - 31 Mar 2013 05:09

welcome back

i don't think i have anything particularly useful to tell you (seeing as i'm an unmarried ffb with a different set of problems).

The only thing i have to say is that hashem always loves us no matter what and it's never too late for teshuva.

i enjoyed this thread on the topic

guardyoureyes.com/forum/13-BEIS-HAMEDRASH/201511-Hashem-Loves-Us-Without-Boundries#203294

also check out gibbor120's vort on it

guardyoureyes.com/forum/4-Wall-of-Honor/115354-Home-of-Gibbor120?limit=15&start=285

hatzlacha with everything

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Re: Trying to make Teshuva

Posted by offthederech - 01 Apr 2013 00:13

Thank you, inastruggle, for the encouragement and the two links!

Good Yom Tov!

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Re: Trying to make Teshuva

Posted by Gevura Shebyesod - 01 Apr 2013 00:46

Welcome back, to GYE and to Yiddishkeit. Wishing you much success in all things.

Have a great Yom Tov!!

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Re: Trying to make Teshuva

Posted by alexeliezer - 03 Apr 2013 23:46

Welcome home!

Sounds like the beginning of an amazing story!

It ain't over til it's over...

R' Arush's approach to this, and to Judaism in general is probably a good approach in your situation. Lots of prayer. Turn it over to Hashem.

Don't be so hard on yourself. Keep moving forward one step at a time, one day at a time.

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Re: Trying to make Teshuva

Posted by offthederech - 05 Apr 2013 18:02

Thank you for the encouragement. I would like to write more, but I have a lot to do at work today. I will try to write more motzi Shabbos or after. Good Shabbos, all.

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Re: Trying to make Teshuva

Posted by offthederech - 07 Apr 2013 16:25

So I'm trying not to be too hard on myself, but it is difficult for me. Given the close tie between sexual addiction and depression, it will be no surprise that I have struggled with depression since adolescence. This is another reason I am focusing on R' Arush's approach: he has a strong emphasis on fighting depression.

Just to answer the question before it is asked: I am not currently on medication. Generally speaking, my depression has not been debilitating in terms of every day functionality. I was in therapy for about two years a long time ago when I was deeply depressed. And I was on medication for about a year when my family and my Jewish practice were falling apart.

At any rate, thank you for the welcome. I am glad to be reconnecting here to the chizuk and the words of Torah.

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Re: Trying to make Teshuva

Posted by alexeliezer - 07 Apr 2013 18:19

The best cure for depression is to think positive thoughts. Positive self-talk.

Focus on what's working in your life, in your body, in the world.

There's always much more going right than going wrong.

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