

Hello

Posted by teshuvahilaah - 06 May 2010 01:19

Where do I begin... and how do I keep from crying?

For years, I have struggled with my impulses. It hasn't been easy, however, it wasn't always hard. The problems compounded when I got internet, and, as Chazal teach, the aveiros, being done so often, become as permitted and so easy to slip into, again and again. If only I could say my sins were limited to images and m____. Things became worse and this is why I am here.

Let me tell you a little about myself, please. Firstly, I am not Jewish. I am nearing the end of a conversion period that has lasted several years. Most of my life, since I can remember, I have been a very spiritual person. Most of my life, I have been locked into the joy of being close to G-d, honest with G-d, loving G-d... in the way of our fragile humanity, I have also crumpled before the pressures, usually those of my impulses. How many times have I wondered at my actions? Cried? Too many times. And too many times I have dipped again into darker places.

I live in a major metropolitan city. My friends, particularly at my shul, love me. And I love them. How grateful I am to have found such a wonderful and warm family. My words cannot do justice. Can you imagine my deep regret over my latest actions? My lusts had driven me - to the pit of hell and beyond.

This great error happened over one week ago. I am having a very hard time writing this. One of the reasons I am here writing this at all is to thank every single person on this site. I do not know how I stumbled onto this site, but I did. It has helped me immeasurably, bringing me back to a sane mind. Reading the many experiences here has given me much hope.

I really wanted to just tell someone what has happened. Reach out to another human being. I have since done a lot of soul searching, teshuvah. I feel human again. Just a few short days earlier, I was contemplating the worst, so great was my aveira. So fallen was my sense of self worth, so completely destroyed.

Somehow, I live. I still hope. I am making teshuvah, one moment at a time. I am tempted to be ashamed to say that someone like myself can do teshuvah, but I cannot say that. The reason is that what I feel is genuine. I realize I have a home, afterall.

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[For tznius reasons, I have edited this, my first post. I came to this decision after having scoured the Internet for similar life experiences among frum Yidden and not finding any. Being that this is a public forum, I feel it better not to publicize my error in detail, even the limited detail/intimation to which I had limited the original relating of events. When I first posted, I was desperate to hear another voice, a Jewish voice, a Jewish heart, that would help me in my shame. B"H, so many have leant there hearts to my support. For that and so much else, I am grateful beyond my ability to express. My aim is to join a support group, where I can air out what is inside, heal and grow. Thanks again to everyone. Edited 05092010.]

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Re: Hello

Posted by teshuvahilaah - 06 May 2010 01:41

These are poems I wrote in my pain. They are more simply words than they are poetry. I share them as a warning to others of what pain is like.

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I have been told that shame is dreadful, and this I know

without a doubt

there are worse things, I know

but this is sufficiently bad

my pain is constant

and I am not sure how I will

continue

what has become of me?

it is one thing to have hell land on ones lap-

it is quite another to welcome it,

to go to it

and the burning hurts so bad

I only wish I had known

I only wish I had never stepped foot into this terrible place

of my own doing

O G-d, spare me, please

have mercy on me, I am only flesh, blood and a soul totally at your mercies

O G-d, please, have mercy

my pain is too great

I do not know if I can continue

much longer

...

Who am I to request of you forgiveness? Peace? Respite?

but I am dying in my sorrows

I do not see a way,

where can I go?

I have turned my back on your tents

now, who will let me in?

Tell me, please-

who will let me in?

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Re: Hello

Posted by teshuvahilaah - 06 May 2010 02:04

Thank you, Rage. Just reading a reply from a fellow human being has me in tears. I have felt so cut off from everything and everyone I love, everything I have worked so hard for. The last few days have been better, with doing teshuvah. And when I wrote my post the pain of all I have done was (and is) slowly slipping into the past. I thank G-d for that. But you are the first human being to hear of what I've done and to wish me well. And all I can really do with that is cry. Thank you for being who you are.

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Re: Hello

Posted by Ineedhelp!! - 06 May 2010 03:26

You are truly a gibor for coming out like this. It aint easy, I know, but youve done the really hard part. I admire what youve done. Welcome aboard!

-Yiddle

PS feel free to PM, email or gchat me at yiddle2@gmail.com

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Re: Hello

Posted by teshuvahilaah - 06 May 2010 04:20

Thank you, Yiddle. As I mentioned above, the last few days have helped me tremendously to come to terms with my error. I don't remember when or how I broke down and began to do teshuvah, but things have become steadily better since. Today, I am not the wreck I was just a few short days ago. I was at a very low point, lacking completely in any sense of self worth. And that is a very, very dangerous place to be.

Somehow, I am here. Alive. More than that, I can smile again. Being afforded rest after the hell I've been through makes telling about it a not so difficult enterprise. Again, thank you. Your encouragement is part of my rest.

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Re: Hello

Posted by bardichev - 06 May 2010 04:52

GevaldigGggggggg

Keep on truckin!!

And living!!

Bards

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Re: Hello

Posted by silentbattle - 06 May 2010 05:43

First of all, welcome. If you've been here for a little while, then you've seen that there are lots of incredible people here - and I hope you realize that you're one of them.

We've all been doing things we're not proud of. We've all felt that experience of hiding things from others, of those deep, dark moments when we realize how far we've fallen.

I have incredible respect for you, because you pulled yourself out. I realized how deep in I was,

and I couldn't even stop myself without help. But that's the beauty of GYE - there are so many wonderful people here to offer support, advice, and help. And they care. We all care about you.

Coming here was a great first step - I would recommend that you continue to post about your feelings, your struggles, your successes, and yes, even your falls. What's happening, how you feel...write as much as you feel comfortable writing, but I know that for me, opening up was a big part of the healing process, it enabled me to face my demons.

Before I came here, I would never have imagined how much I could grow - I hope that this holy place, this holy group of warriors, is able to help you, too - help you continue to do what you've already begun.

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Re: Hello

Posted by Chazak Amenu - 06 May 2010 14:19

Welcome! you are amazing! you came to the right place! post as much as you can ask questions give advice where you can! you absolutely can beat this addiction!

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Re: Hello

Posted by the.guard - 06 May 2010 21:16

Dear teshuvahilaah, precious soul,

I am the admin of this forum. Welcome to our community!

Beating this addiction has nothing to do with religion. We have a few non-religious people on this forum too. An addiction is a disease, which manifests itself in many levels, physical, emotional and spiritual. I would like to suggest something which is hard for me to say, and probably a lot harder for you to hear. Hashem has seen your sincerity in wanting to be a holier person and especially in wanting to become part of the holy nation, Klal Yisrael. And I believe

that is why he brought you to our network... However, I believe that before you complete your conversion, you should aim for a significant period of sobriety from this spiritual disease. You may decide that 90 days is enough, but I might even go as far as to suggest a year of sobriety. You see, once you are Jewish and have committed to keeping Hashem's Torah, it is like a marriage. It is a very strong commitment. And falling back into the addiction after your conversion would be much more severe - almost like a "breach of contract"... And they generally suggest that an addict not get married or committed to someone else before they have a year of sobriety under their belt (no pun intended). This is just a suggestion. You may do as you feel fit, and others on this forum may disagree with me on this... I'd be happy to hear other people's thoughts (as well as yours).

Scientific studies have shown that it takes 90 days to change a neural thought pattern that was ingrained in the brain through addictive behaviors. Did you join the [90 day chart](#) on-line? Sign up [over here](#)...

Make sure to install a strong filter. It will be almost impossible to break free of this while having all the garbage within a mouse click away. See [this page](#) for one good filter option, along with instructions on how to install it best - and give away the password to our "filter Gabai"... See [this page](#) for another 20 (or so) filter ideas and information...

And that is why we created the GYE handbooks (links below). If you read them well, from beginning to end, slowly, and try to implement what you read, you will find the answers within them to enable you to completely turn your life around. **You're worth it.**

Also, join the [daily Chizuk e-mail lists](#) to get fresh chizuk every day, and post away on this forum. You will get tons of daily Chizuk and support. This disease can't be beat alone. It works best when you get out of isolation!

GuardYourEyes also offers various free anonymous phone conferences, where you can join a group of other from Yidden, along with an experienced sponsor. See [this page](#) for four different options. Our conferences are taking place daily, throughout the week... This would be a tremendous step in the right direction for you and help you learn freedom from this addiction. Not only will you learn the secret of the 12-Steps - which is known to be the world's most

powerful program for beating addiction having helped millions world wide, but joining the group will be another way of GETTING OUT OF ISOLATION and connecting with others who are going through what you are.

Let me tell you a little about the two GuardYourEyes handbooks. They lay down the cornerstone and foundation of our work, and they make our network much more effective and helpful for people.

You see, until now, people would often get "lost" when coming to our website, not knowing what tips and techniques to try. For example, a beginner wouldn't jump straight into therapy or 12-Step groups, while on the other hand, someone whose addiction was more advanced wouldn't be helped by the standard tips of "making fences" putting in "filters" etc... So it was essential to develop a handbook which details all the techniques and tools to dealing with this addiction in progressive order. Now with these handbooks, anyone can read through and see what steps they've tried already, and if those steps haven't worked, they can continue on through the handbook where the steps become progressively more powerful and "addiction-oriented".

And the second handbook, called the "Attitude" handbook, can also help anyone, no matter what level of addiction they may have. Often people write in to us saying that had they only known the proper outlook & attitude that we try and share on the GuardYourEyes network when they were younger, they would have never fallen into an addiction in the first place! So we hope that through this handbook, many addictions will be prevented.

The handbooks are PDF files, set up as eBooks, and they have bookmarks and hyper-links in the Index, to make them easy to navigate.

Note: You might want to print them out to read away from the computer. Keep in mind though, that if you do this, you won't be able to click on the many web links in the articles. But you can always come back to them later. The truth is, it's anyway good to go through the whole handbook once without clicking on links, just to get an overview of all the tools available. Once you did that, you can start again from tool #1 and read each tool through more carefully, click the links and study each technique and assess whether you have tried it fully yet or not...

Right click on the links below and select "Save Link/Target As" to download the handbooks to your computer.

1) [The GuardYourEyes Handbook](#)

This Handbook details 18 suggested tools and techniques, in progressive order, beginning with the most basic and fundamental approaches to dealing with this addiction, and continuing down through increasingly earnest and powerful methods. For the first time, we can gauge our level of addiction and find the appropriate tools for our particular situation. And no matter what level our addiction may have advanced to, we will be able to find the right tools to break free in this handbook!

2) [The GuardYourEyes Attitude](#)

The Attitude Handbook details 30 basic principles to help us maintain the proper attitude and perspective on this struggle. Here are some examples: Understanding what we are up against, what it is that Hashem wants from us, how we can use this struggle for tremendous growth, how we can deal with bad thoughts, discovering how to redirect the power of our souls, understanding that every little bit counts, learning how to bounce back up after a fall, and so on and so forth...

May Hashem be with you!

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Re: Hello

Posted by teshuvahilaah - 07 May 2010 00:44

Guard, thank you. Your words are well taken. Right now, I am taking things one day at a time - I do not have much choice in that. Fortunately, I do not feel any inclination to slip up, and I know that can change, but that is where I stand. My greatest difficulty is with guilt and shame. I do not wrestle with it all of the day, but it is there. I have read through the handbook on "Attitude" towards this disease and it has helped me greatly. Without this handbook and several other similar books I have, words from Chazal as well as contemporary rabbonim, I do not know where I'd be. Most importantly, this process of doing teshuvah, as it is a process, has been keeping me in a sane mind.

One day at a time. I realize there is something terribly wrong deep underneath it all to have driven me to my error. At the same time, I realize one day at a time is my only option to

rectifying whatever it is. Thanks.

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Re: Hello

Posted by teshuvahilaah - 07 May 2010 03:10

Rage, thank you. As I wrote above, right now it is all one day at a time for me. To date, I have put nearly three years into this conversion process. I have literally put my life, my heart... everything has gone into it. At the same time, what life is it I now have in my hand? What life have I got to give? My heart hasn't changed but my life has. I still desire to continue, but I need to have command of the life I am living if I am to be able to live the life I hope to take up. It's been difficult, and that is an understatement, understated to the tenth power times a really big number most grown ups don't know (that was my attempt at injecting humor into an otherwise unhumorous situation; please feel free to laugh at your leisure).

In all serious, when I look at my fine mess, I am reminded that I am powerless but to take it one day at a time. Today, I daven as I always did. I find rest beyond description from simply speaking prayers in lashon kodesh. And rest is something I cannot do without right now. Regarding further off into the future, I only pray that I be honest with myself and G-d. I don't think there is any other way that I could move further and live with myself.

Oh... the puns are terrific. I neglected to mention how much I laughed with the first one. Damn. Thank G-d we can laugh at this thing, eh?

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Re: Hello

Posted by Dov - 07 May 2010 03:51

Dear teshuvahilaah,

Derech Eretz Kodma LaTorah. You are in a unique position to actually do this as mankind did during the first two thousand years of history. Having Hashem's help to sanity and some measure of peace with yourself - irrespective of whether you are Jewish - is a nice way to accept the Torah. Please consider cooling the sin talk and focus on being as useful as you can

be to Hashem and to people. Recovery today may be your best bet at being successful in your spiritual and religious aspirations tomorrow. Sounds like a fortune cookie, no?

Love,

Dov

PS. A question I want to ask you cuz of your username: If you were given a choice of *guaranteed* sobriety but also to be limited to teshuvah *tata'ah*, would you take it? Or would you 'hold out' and wait for the teshuvah *ila'ah* even though it meant that you may not be guaranteed sobriety? In other words, what's more important to you: hope of expunging the sins of your past,) I am really, really curious.

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Re: Hello

Posted by the.guard - 07 May 2010 12:53

[teshuvahilaah wrote on 07 May 2010 00:44:](#)

I realize there is something terribly wrong deep underneath it all to have driven me to my error.

or being free of them today w/o any expunging? (definitely *not* for a fortune cookie

Do you get the daily chizuk e-mails? Yesterday's dose of Dov went like this:

Recovery can't mean just "not acting out"

In the groups we have learned, that professing one has "finally really hit bottom" is silly. The only time it becomes clear to anyone that a person has hit bottom is after they find they have taken real steps at changing the way they live. That is the closest thing to any proof to myself that I am taking my problem seriously. The day I start living life (in every department of my life) exactly as I did before - even without any shred of acting out - will be the day I sign my death certificate. It would mean that recovery for me means "not acting out". That lie was how I never recovered for decades.

The acting out is a symptom of living a sick life inside me and outside me, and I need to change my life, motivation, and behavior, beside the acting out, or else I'm doomed to the same slop. We simply cannot change our clothes while keeping the same exact body. That's why I instinctively slowly changed: including the way I spell my name, my nusach of t'fillah, and other things, to make a new life for myself from now on. Sounds like the Rambam's description of Teshuvah, but I don't care about that Teshuva business - it's not my affair. Whether I did Teshuvah or not is Hashem's business. You see, intentionally doing it for "Teshuvah" would mean that I have succeeded in proving something to myself or others, and that's a lie. I am still on the same exact road as before - nothing has changed. I have not "made it" and I do not consider myself as having done any shred of Teshuva. (How do you do Teshuvah for an illness, anyway?)

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Re: Hello

Posted by silentbattle - 07 May 2010 13:49

Thank you for the injection of humor - generally a good thing!

There is usually a period of time after joining when things get easier, and then, the urges do come back - although not necessarily as strongly as before. now is the time to start gettign healthy, working on the issues that need to be dealt with, nd preparing for the times when the urges will come, figuring out what to do then.

And, of course, keep posting! You seem like a truly incredible person, and we'd all love to hear more about you, to learn from you!

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Re: Hello

Posted by teshuvahilaah - 07 May 2010 17:05

Dov, Guard, Silentbattle... thanks for your support. Who did I miss? Thanks to everyone, really.

I read the above chizuk and it is a good read. I liked it. Trouble for me is that I have a hard time separating myself from my actions. This is not a good thing as, though there are lofty periods post-inspiration, depression has a way to come back in. And it is not a simple thing to fend off. I see my failure to disassociate myself from the past as the crux of the problem. Oh, mercy.

I also had (am still having) difficulty seeing this as an illness. Not because I know better, but because all these concepts and approaches to my problem are so new, so different from my previous self-image.

And this ties into Dov's question on sobriety/ teshuvah... I chose this username because it is something to hope for. I figure, as long as I'm aiming, let me aim for the best. What is actually going on under the hood of my life is me trying to be honest with myself and G-d. In answer to your question, Dov, I just want to be well. And I know the road won't be easy, and I know that if I look too far ahead I'll be too faint of heart to even stand on the ground underneath my feet. This why I am not looking to far ahead right now, because it hurts too much to do so.

By the way, yesterday was a great day. Somehow, I not only got through it all, but I had so many opportunities for chesed, both at work and away, and I was able to approach life with dignity. A thought occurred to me yesterday about something I had once read in the opening chapters of the Kitzur Shulchan Aruch. We are taught to have name of Hashem before us continually, as it is recorded in the Tehillim, Tes Zayin: Shvisi Hashem L'negdi Samid.

Can you imagine what holiness G-d has shared with us? We, who have populated our vision with less than desirable things - we are being invited to populate our vision with the holiest of names?

Today is Erev Shabbos.... Good Shabbos to everyone and thank you for your support.

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