

KaNesher's Journey

Posted by kanesher - 12 Aug 2009 20:39

Hello friends.

Here I go. I'm finally tired - no, better yet, exhausted. I'm sick of it. I'm sick of making commitments I know I'll never keep, of seeking admiration in others eyes and knowing that it's lies. Worse, I'm sick of buying into that false image that I present to others so well - that of the brilliant Talmid Chacham - the Ari Shb'chabura - and buying into so completely, because I've given up on real truth so long ago. But eventually the lies must, the music stops, and eventually we are just left with ourselves, starring at ourselves in the mirror and wondering *Master Of The Universe, when did this all happen?*

Bosti V'Nichlamti, L'Harim Roshi elecha

But I've made a commitment - this time, I'm tempted to believe it. Let me explain. I had a horrid childhood. Details perhaps I'll speak of later - but now I that my parents were sick people themselves - perhaps as I am today. I wonder if they ever got a chance. And so , it was passed to onto me. One cannot live a lie to their children.

I was walking with my one and a half year old the other day - and I realized - if I don't conquer this - myself, my essence, my addiction - my own pain - then who knows what I will pass onto to my children.

So it's enough. It's not about me anymore.

Friends, I beg for your help. In none can I confide. Interestingly, it says in Iyov that the ribono shel olam gave the satan reshus to take everything from Iyov save his life.

And so, Iyov's children died. His fortune was taken, and merciless boils covered his body. But oddly enough - his friends - remained unharmed. The answer is clear in the Gemara in Bava Basra (end of HaShutfin) - *Oh chavrey k'chavrey d'Iyov oh misusah.*

I hope that you will be those friends from far off.

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Re: KaNesher's Journey

Posted by Eden - 14 Aug 2009 13:53

Welcome Kanesher,

I wish you complete success!

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Update

Posted by kanesher - 16 Aug 2009 01:48

Slowly but surely. Thank you for all your chizuk. I've hit 3 days, and it feels wonderful. A Chut haMeshulas - and I had a wonderful feeling during Rosh Chodesh Bentching today in shul. Every Elul, I always felt horrid, because I felt powerless before the Yetzer HaRa in this inyan - I had fought so hard that it got worse, so I stop fighting - and in a way it got better - but still, assur is assur. And I felt I couldn't even be mataken anything else, because I knew, that my avodah was not another hour of learning, but of vanquishing this demon.

And finally, I felt - win or lose - I'm doing exactly what Hashem wants me to do. This is my Avodah. This is my Elul.

I read the translation of "The first day of the of the rest of my life" and it is absolutely beautiful. The concept of - frustration, of lack, of trying to reach the stars on a single leap - and that frustration fueling the Yetzer HaRa spoke to me deeply. I'm trying to rearrange myself for the coming zman - to truly figure what Hashem wants me to do this time around, and try to release some of that energy - I've felt stagnant in my growth for a while, and it's all been one horrible cycle. And I intend on breaking it.

I've also read "the big book" over shabbos - it's fascinating. And the underlying yesod - of letting of the grandiose plans and focusing on the here and the now - in form of "What Does Hashem Want?" It removes the lachatz, the tenseness - and opens us up to true and natural

avodah - and let's us finally achieve our goals. The "lack" is gone - or better yet , filled. A quote, from *Zen and the Art Of Motorcycle Maintenance* which I can't resist posting:

"...Phaedrus wrote a letter about a pilgrimage to the Holy Mountain...in the company of a holy man and his adherents. He never reached the mountain. After the third day he gave up, exhausted, and the pilgrimage went on without him. He said he had the physical strength but physical strength wasn't enough. He had the intellectual motivation but that wasn't enough either. **He didn't think he had been arrogant but thought he was undertaking the pilgrimage to broaden his experience, to gain understanding for himself. He was trying to use the mountain for his own purposes and the pilgrimage too. He regarded himself as the fixed entity not the pilgrimage of the mountain, and thus wasn't really ready for it.** He speculated that the other pilgrims, the ones who reached the mountain , probably sensed the holiness of the mountain so intensely that each footstep was an act of devotion, an act of submission to this holiness. The holiness of the mountain infused into their own spirits enabled them to endure far more than anything he, with his greater physical strength, could take.

To the untrained eye ego-climbing and selfless climbing may appear identical. Both kinds of climbers place one foot in front of the other. Both breathe in and out at the same rate. Both stop when tired. Both go forward when rested. But what a difference! The ego-climber is like an instrument that's out of adjustment. He puts his foot down an instant too soon or too late. He's likely to miss a beautiful passage of sunlight through the trees. He goes on when the sloppiness of his step shows he's tired. He rests at odd times. He looks up the trail trying to see what's ahead even when he knows what's ahead because he just looked a second before. He goes too fast or too slow for the conditions and when he talks his talk is forever about somewhere else, something else. He's here but he's not here. **He rejects the here, is unhappy with it, wants to be farther up the trail but when he gets there will be just as unhappy because then it will be here. What he's looking for, what he wants, is all around him, but he doesn't want that because it is all around him. Every step is an effort, both physically and spiritual, because he imagines his goal to be external and distant".**

Now just take out mountain and put in learning. Davening. Avodas Hashem. And of course, Chazal taught this long ago. Chazal teach in Mesechta Sanhedrin, that one who learns as "Chavilos" will never succeed. But does that mean that one should not have sheifos? Rather, of course one needs to have plans. But when one learns - it is this line. This moment. This sevara. Not "this blatt". Then he will never succeed.

"... So when I start to climb—especially when I'm on a big wall, whatever difficulty—I am so concentrated that there is nothing else existing; **there's only a few meters of wall where I am hanging and climbing**; and in this concentration, everything seems quite logical. There is no danger anymore. The danger is gone . . . But the concentration is absolute..."

-Reinhold Messner (Climbed everest without bottle oxygen solo.)

Now how to apply it. Ideas, chevra? How can I "let go" and climb?

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Re: KaNesher's Journey

Posted by Noorah BAmram - 16 Aug 2009 02:32

Beautiful. And well written!!

Thanks for the story of the mountain climbers, it was talking directly tooooooo me - eynei ksill bktzei horetz -

. But does that mean that one should not have sheifos? Rather, of course one needs to have plans. But when one learns - it is this line. This moment. This sevara. Not "this blatt". Then he will never succeed."

Emes lamito!!

Keep posting! You are my rebbi;)

Noorah

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Re: KaNesher's Journey

Posted by hoping - 16 Aug 2009 13:35

Welcome Kaneshher-

Seems to me that you have hit the nail on the head. I relate to your story very well. I too had an outward appearance that was envied by many and was severely lacking on the inside. What works for me is to be aware of my need for Hashem's help with everything I do. Just pondering this daily over a period of time has helped me internalize it. The most difficult part of this (for me) was admitting that until now I have been severely lacking in Bitachon. Once I acknowledged this, I had the ability to focus on my relationship with Hashem. With a stronger relationship, it is more natural to rely on His help with regard to my addiction.

Hope this helps.

Your friend,

hoping

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Re: KaNesher's Journey

Posted by the.guard - 16 Aug 2009 14:24

How can I "let go" and climb?

Ah, that's easy. I just looked at your name and knew the answer. **Kaneshher**. Let go of the "mountain-climbing" and effortlessly climb to thousands of feet with a few beats of your powerful WINGS.

The Zohar says that the wings of the Mitzvos are Ahavah and Yira. Without those wings, we are like that arrogant man on the pilgrimage to the holy mountain. :D

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Re: KaNesher's Journey
Posted by aaron4 - 17 Aug 2009 16:42

How can I "let go" and climb?

I believe that after you've put some distance between yourself and the Y"H (nothing impossible, just to the point where you find yourself wondering about how to fill the precious time and brain power you used to give him and now find "available"), the real work begins. The challenge is to build yourself up internally and connect with Ruchniyus. Do this by trying different areas of learning and Avodas Hashem until you find something that resonates with you. It has to be "Libo Chofetz", something that you find stimulating and fulfilling on an emotional level.

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Re: KaNesher's Journey
Posted by kanesher - 18 Aug 2009 11:29

Nail on the head. Indeed - I have had dreams that I've been putting off in favor of what "I should be doing". As this Elul Zman approaches, I am trying to make those difficult decisions - to listen to that libo chafetz. But external pressures are very real; but I see I have no choice.

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Re: KaNesher's Journey
Posted by aaron4 - 18 Aug 2009 13:31

Kanesher, I am working on this too. Let's help each other. What do you mean by:

I am trying to make those difficult decisions - to listen to that libo chafetz. But external pressures are very real; but I see I have no choice.

As for me, although I grew up frum and went to frum schools and I did pick up valuable skills in learning that I am very thankful for, I feel like I'm starting from scratch when it comes to true appreciation and understanding of Yiddishkeit. I felt like an observer for most of my life - watching other people grow and change from experiences but remaining unaffected myself. Instead of feeling and reacting to real life, I developed an alternate, separate and hidden life with lust at the center. Now that I'm aware of this and slowly clawing my way back, I am beginning to experience real life for the first time. While it's exhilarating, it's also challenging. Libo Chafetz finally means something to me, I CAN feel Ruchniyus. And I'm determined to do so. But finding the "perfect" thing that provides a constant stream of emotional fulfillment (lehavdil, the way lust used to do, albeit in a false and destructive way and only until the inevitable crash) is proving to be difficult and I suspect not realistic. Intellectually I know it takes persistence, through thick and thin, whether the feelings are there or not, but that level of commitment takes time to build up. I'm working on it. For now, I've been listening to shiurim, mostly on hashkafa and mussar, on my MP3 almost every day. I also have a seder for 45 minutes at night. But I know I can do a lot more and look forward to getting there.

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Re: KaNesher's Journey
Posted by nezach - 18 Aug 2009 13:41

great thread. easy to relate to what keneshher wrote. thanks

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Re: KaNesher's Journey
Posted by kanesher - 18 Aug 2009 16:16

Aaron -

I've been doing a lot of reading and thinking these past few days - a sort of twilight before the beginning of the new Elul zman, letting myself feel what I've really been feeling - what my soul has been trying to tell me all along - in fact, let me share a beautiful vort (R' Avigdor zt"l said this vort in his Pesicha shiur to Bava Kamma).

The Mishna in Bava Kamma - teaches us that there are four main categories of Mazikim - one being the Mavui. What is the Mavui? Rav teaches us a few blatt later - Mavui Zuh Adam. And he brings pasuk - Amar Shomer, Asa Boker, V'Gam Lilah, Im Tavun Bayun.

A pasuk which speaks of Moschiach - he came - but your were asleep. If you desire him - if you seek him - he will come. And hence, the Mavui is an Adam. We are seekers.

The question arises - and that is man the damager? That is man of the Beis Medrash! Are there not a hundred other way to refer to man?

R' Miller brings the famed Medrash in Koheles Rabbah - the union of the soul and the body is comparable to a country boy who marries a princess. He brings her to his hut out in the forest - and she looks around and begins to sob.

Why is she sobbing?

Why is she crying?

Perhaps the pork is well done enough? No problem. He takes his shotgun and shoots another one, smiling. And she only cries harder. Perhaps her bed wants new straw? Perhaps...and so he runs and runs, faster and faster, seeking all that his farm can offer to satisfy her cries...and so she cries only harder... *Fool! She is from the palace! She yearns for the Majesty of her father's court - for the endless splendor and glory of the castle - and you go there - shooting another boar? Do you think that will satisfy her? She will only be satisfied when you return to whence she belongs - to the magic and royalty of the highest aristocracy!*

And so we run about our lives. And the princess cries - our souls wail for the heights. And we medicate, for so often all we hear is crying and can't place it. Some of us try hard drinks. Other overeat. Us? Lust. We care about nothing - *for God's sake! Just stop the crying!!! STOP!!*

And so man the seeker - if he can't answer that seeking properly - is indeed, the zenith of destruction, one of the four primary damagers.

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I am in Kollel, successful at that. Yet, for how long have I been frustrated with the way I am learning - but the monetary pressure is great, and is the Rosh Yeshiva with whom I am close. Yet I must move forward. How long have a pushed off projects I knew I was capable of because of the pressures of " the chabura" - the frustration of having learned and not coming to clear conclusions, of learning and not reviewing - yet "we are going vitir, and so must you".

No more. Do not worry - I will do everything within reason; I am not going to quit friends and sanity and find myself a cave in Tzefas. But within the realm of what is practically possible - I am going to try to listen to that princess.

You are right; constant fulfillment isn't possible, but we as people are designed to have it either. But the void - the deep lack which feeds our addictions - comes from a constant emptiness. And as has been said again and again - usually the greater a persons potential the greater his "void" is. Complexity comes with it's prices - but it's worth it. Perhaps we could we simpletons, and watch our country wife happily nibble on the freshly slaughters boar ... ah friends, but we married princesses. It will cause shalom bayis problems - but ultimately she drag

you to Palace! You just to let go of your pork....

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Re: KaNesher's Journey

Posted by aaron4 - 18 Aug 2009 16:58

Kaneshher,

I hear you crying out. You're quite poetic, your meshalim are right on target. I'm more of a left brain person, focused on the bottom line. If I'm reading you correctly, you're struggling with 3 things:

- Frustration in learning
- Monetary pressure
- A feeling of emptiness that brings on the urge to medicate through lust

Let's look at each one.

Frustration in learning seems to be, in part, due to not reaching clear conclusions; of learning and not reviewing. And you're a person of great potential, so you feel like you're falling short. Even if this may be ok for others, you can do better.

I felt that way too (and still do, but I'm working on it). I think the answer comes from setting proper expectations. The same way that relief from the addiction can only be obtained in small doses, one day (or hour) at a time, so too clarity in learning should not be the goal (I hope I'm not offending or worse, wrong about this). Rather, the goal should be to utilize the moments that you're learning properly – just learn, don't measure against an ideal. So you don't have clarity – who says you ever will (sorry for being so blunt), does that diminish your use of that time? So you don't review on a regular basis because it's not exciting. IY" H you'll come back to this sugya in 10 years, and will be slightly more familiar with the concepts than you would be had you never learned them before. Bite size goals, proper use of time (time = life), staying in her Father's palace, that's all the princess wants, she loves her husband with "only" that.

I believe the feeling of emptiness is really caused by the same issue - expectations that are too

high. Lowering your expectations does not lower your potential and mean that your time is wasted (which leads to the empty feeling). Quite the opposite, it allows you to conclude that your time is well spent. Before we became addicted to lust, we made small, harmless decisions to view inappropriate material. At least the first time, we had a choice. But we made the wrong decision. Not because we wanted to sow the seeds of our own destruction (although we did) but rather because we believed the Y”H who told us it was no big deal, it’s just once, it’s not that bad, etc, etc. But look where it led. Likewise, making good decisions and utilizing even one moment doing what we should, whether the results are to our liking and meet our standards or not, is **GUARANTEED** to bring us to the Kisei Hakavod even if we don’t think so. **It doesn’t matter**, we don’t control the outcome, He does.

As for monetary pressure, that’s a tough one. It’s a personal decision. The balance of hishtadlus and bitachon is different for every individual (I think). If you feel pressure, try to think of ways you can make more money (again, I hope this advice is not plain wrong and apologize if it is) or spend less. Are you familiar with the Mesilah program?

Looking forward to your response.

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Re: KaNesher's Journey
Posted by mggsbms - 18 Aug 2009 17:01

Well said "kenesher" I could resonate fully with what you are saying here, there is a great void and emptiness that I feel due to the fact that i”m being constraint in my growth in ruchnayes due to certain circumstances, and I can”t be my own person, by you it”s the kolel and by me it”s the position i am in, as I mentioned before on this forum I had never had a nisayon in these matters till I was 30 + married with 5 - 6 children, it started creeping on me when I lost my independence and started feeling trapped that was when this y”h popped up obviously as an escape route (imagined), but this is making things even worse the guilt and the shame is just unbearable.

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Re: KaNesher's Journey
Posted by mggsbms - 18 Aug 2009 17:14

Aaron4

your right with your analysis about expectations etc. but there could be a person who is in the wrong place it is not suitable for him and he just doesn't have the guts to make the right decision, i feel that if a person could point to a certain pressure that is causing him such frustration that is causing him to act out, (it's tricky because sometimes it's just an easy excuse and change of circumstance won't change anything), he should take action and move on and try something else or somewhere else.

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Re: KaNesher's Journey

Posted by kanesher - 18 Aug 2009 18:39

Aaron,

Thanks for the intelligent reply. Let me deal with each point -

1) Learning - you say I should lower my expectations. I disagree with you there; battleworn's Torah Approach thread deals with this as well, and I think I appreciate where he's coming from - we need to remove the hechrech - the desperateness to our goals, but not lower them. The ikar is to focus on the effort, and not the result - but our efforts must be pointed towards the goal of actualizing ourselves. But I think this machlokes is also on he had with Dov, both very intelligent people.

In my case, it's more been a shaala of "not getting it together" - and not focusing on how to express my strengths. I'm pretty sure that's where to start, rather than staying where I am and saying "well, I'm not playing chess" when I see a path to change and now realize how important that is - how important expression is. If it's in my grasp - even with effort - why not take it?

You are correct though, I should be "giving myself more credit" for what I do do.

The Ribono Shel Olam created this feeling of lack so that we should, so that we should grow and not be satisfied with whatever. The simple are happy with simple lives; often the Ribono Shel Olam wants more - and we're suppose to fill that lack. Is the answer to convinced ourselves there is no lack? Of course, some of us may have an unhealthy feeling of lack - but often from what I've been - on the boards and off - we need to start thinking about our lives and on what is on that list of things to do before we die.

2) Monetary pressures - you misunderstand me. In my situation it means leaving a well paying kollel for a program that I find fulfilling. Will I starve? Nope. Just, the money is certainly enticing especially when you need it, but while that will bring money, I wasn't getting fulfillment in my learning. When I realize I need fulfillment as, I can be mevater on the money (B"H it's not a leave Kollel question. If it were, the shaala would be different, although I suppose the conclusion would be the same). Agav, I am familiar with Mesilah, and that's probably one of the reason I'll be able to make this change and be able to continue learning (that and the meshugena who gave me \$5,000 for explaining a tosfos to him. I'm not kidding. But more nissim later). Financial management is important to me, and there is a mehalach to having a steady income even in Kollel (note: marrying a rich girl does not count as financial management. It counts as full-time employment).

I am looking forward to your thoughts!

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