

To sobriety and beyond!

Posted by obormottel - 02 Nov 2011 07:09

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Ninety one days ago I was miserable and despondent. I was in a relapse from an attempted (and quite short-lived) sobriety effort. As always, the renewed filth-a-thon was dragging me deeper than ever before, forcing to search out darker and darker fantasies and visions. The lowest point of that particular escapade was arguably from the lower ones in my adult life: the night before, I got up in front of the whole shul and made a public "siyum" on a maseches I haven't finished learning. And it hit me really hard: the realization that I had no integrity left, that I can lie to dozens of people who are my friends, my Rabbis, my sons' teachers; that I can say the wonderful words of Hadran Aloch and know that I am lying....and all because pictures and videos of people doing all kinds of deviant acts take up so much of my life, that I am only faithful to god of orgasm. That is my only true commitment, for which I would lie, deceive, manipulate, throw a fit over, neglect responsibility, assign blame.

By then, I have already instinctively made the first step: I acknowledged my problem for what it is, admitted that I am powerless to stop it, and wrote to my Rebbe begging for help. I may have davened that day for Siyata d'Shmaya, too: because while browsing some Israeli website, I saw a GYE banner.

Ninety one days later, I am, by the Grace of G-d, ninety days clean from intentional watching of pornography and masturbation.

Poischim b'cvoid achsanya: I owe hakoras hatoiv to the Riboinoi shel Oilom and Rabbeinu Guard Meshichoi, and the GYE family. I love bickering with Dov, shmoozing with Bardichev, exchanging thoughts with Alexeliezer, ZemirosShabbos, Gevura shebeYesod, Gibbor120, Yosef Hatzadik, Shmeichel.....and everyone else whose name is omitted solely due to space constraints. Thank you! Thank you to Mordechai, who pledged \$90 to GYE if I stay clean for 90 days. Thanks to our newest moderator, UAJ, for a consistent flow of good ideas.

Thanks to all the new guys (can you even see me, I'm so high up in the clouds?) for letting me rant and vent on your threads.

Originally, I was going to wait till the end of ninety days and refer back to the handbook, and to the "GYE in the Nutshell" for whether I need additional help. Thank G-d I realize now I will always need additional help.

So I hope to use this thread as an interactive journal (like so many people here have) and take you guys with me to

SOBRIETY AND BEYOND!

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Re: To sobriety and beyond!

Posted by Dov - 09 May 2012 20:15

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Mazel Tov on the sober time you've been given!

How often per week do you actually go to meetings? Do you have a home group?

I agree 100% with you that there are times when **living** sober is more important than going to a meeting. But for me it depends on what else is going on in my life.

1- I only go to one or two meetings a week. So:

My independence from my wife might actually make it more important that I **go** to the meeting rather than cow-tow to her requests! To my surprise (and hers) the most powerful medicine for *her* return of trust in my sincerity and sobriety - was my faithful attendance of SA meetings. To me, my sobriety comes **before** her comfort - and certainly before **my** comfort. The sooner my wife learned that the better things became. Though it hurt at first, she grew to respect it.

But on the other hand, being of loving, free service to **her and my family** is without any doubt the *main* reason I was put on this planet, and our relationship is the bellweather of my very *sobriety*...but feeding the dependency relationship with her, will kill me. Hmmm...a little dilemma (only if I remain really honest with myself!).

That's one reason I have a sponsor. After the first couple of times talking it over with him, I got a sense of what was right for me and could judge better on my own, and remain self-honest. And my experiences over the ensuing day or two would teach me the rest...

2- If you are going to four meetings a week, then I'd say there is little shaylosh of what you should do. Your wife (and then the kids) comes before any other person or hobby in your life. And a phone call might do the trick for today...tomorrow's meeting will be fine.

3- Mazel Tov again on your chip! Don't eat it....

- Dov

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Re: To sobriety and beyond!

Posted by Zemiroshabbos - 11 May 2012 17:38

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mazel tov on the chip, the job and the honesty!

your fan

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Re: To sobriety and beyond!

Posted by Shteeble - 11 May 2012 19:03

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congrats on the chip.

yes, it is a chizuk to others.

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Re: To sobriety and beyond!

Posted by Yosef Hatzadik - 11 May 2012 21:16

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kotaecadlswv

[obormottel wrote on 09 May 2012 18:36:](#)

...I had to tell her that it's not a problem, I can definitely afford to skip a meeting. The only reason for me to attend meetings is in order to stay sober. But if we both agree it's not a priority, *I'd be happy to launder the children, water the dishes, and wash the garden.* Let me just zip up....

Laughter is **priceless!!!!**

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Re: To sobriety and beyond!

Posted by obormottel - 11 May 2012 22:05

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Well, thank you all. However, Hayoim Yoim One.

Here goes:

I have been majorly unsettled this past week, with the new job, and a change in my routine. I felt restless all week.

I usually go to meetings three-four times a week, sometimes five. So this week I went on Sunday, and then on Tuesday (as mentioned in my prev. post). By Thursday I was very much on edge, I was tired, angry, feeling inadequate and unaccomplished, lonely and frustrated with how this week has gone.

So I slept in on Thursday morning ( the new job runs three days a week and starts at 6am; so I was home on Thur and recuperating).

Instead of getting up in a reasonable time, davening with the minyan, and getting my arse into the noon meeting, I stayed in bed, wallowing and knocking myself for all my shortcomings, including an inability to earn a living, laziness, etc.

So soon after getting up, I was on the computer, searching for images of "people wearing almost nothing" (actual search phrase edited to protect the innocent).

I spent good 15 looking at whatever images my filter let through, and that was plenty.

I later fessed up to my wife and to my sponsor about it, and spent twenty minutes or so working with my sponsor.

Well, within a couple of hours I was back at the computer, this time the search phrase was much more explicit and so were the images that came back. As soon as the first image popped up on my screen, I was unzipped and touching myself. I caught myself in under two minutes, closed the browser, jumped up and down in frustration, and after washing my hands, begged Hashem to releive me of this obsession just for today.

However, according to the rules of the 90-day chart, since I was intentionally watching inappropriate websites, I FELL.

And so although I am technically sober in SA, and what I watched wasn't technically pornographic, I have reset my sobriety count on this site. I am ready to start over, and I am grateful to G-d for a clean streak of 281 days for the first time in my life.

Two questions:

1. Sould I disclose to my wife what happened? I told her about the first incident (which also should have thrown me off the chart since it was clearly "inappropriate" for a Chassidisher Yid I pretend to be; but it wasn't nearly as explicit as the second incident and I didn't touch myself).

2. I promised myself that if I act out without doing A first, I should do B as a "knas".

However, I didn't technically act out. Should I still pay the knas?

Gut Shabbos,

Mottel

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Re: To sobriety and beyond!

Posted by Gevura Shebyesod - 11 May 2012 23:20

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Well it WAS an amazing streak, and all those nice shiny days are still there for you. Now get back in the Truck!!!!!! Nehag VaLeich!!!!

Uh oh....

Have a great and clean Shabbos!!

Gevura!

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Re: To sobriety and beyond!

Posted by Shteeble - 13 May 2012 02:01

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i feel your pain.

try to work on those things in your circle of influence (the things you can control).

Things will BE'H get better for you.

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Re: To sobriety and beyond!

Posted by Dov - 13 May 2012 06:11

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The idea of the extra pressure of having two religions, with two gods to pay up to, and two gehinnoms to end up in, with the rules that accompany each one....well, that's too much for me to imagine.

What is this business about having to fit into both these recovery "standards"? I don't get it. I mean, I get the friendship, the frum thing...all that. But I have plenty reallt frum friends in SA, for example, get together with them face to face once or twice a year at a shabbatom with over 200 people all frum, and maintain frum SA connections all the time...but my recovery has nothing to do with Jews. Its between Hashem and me. Is Hashem a Jew? Does He keep two days yom tov? Does He 'hold of the eiruv'? OK...went overboard a bit, but you get my point, I guess.

Having two sobriety standards is like poseyach al shtei has'ipim, as far as I can see. "Pick one," I say (for whatever it's worth to you). You deserve better than trying to dance at two weddings all the time.

The entire thing is silly, really. If I **keep** my "SA definition" of sobriety - but am feeding my lust - then I **will** lose my sobriety, *guaranteed*, sooner or later. "Sobriety" is all just a platform, in AA/SA - it is not the definition of success, at all. That's why celebration of anniversaries is a bit more played down (at least, by me). For we all know that there are plenty dry drunks walking around!

So, in the "GYE definition" there'd be a mechanism for accounting for that - restart your count if you violate Chaza"l, etc., even if you are "still sober per SA definition"...what? Is there "tzidkus standard" here? Is this suddenly a *Jewish* problem? Your mental, emotional, and spiritual disease that is progressive, chronic, and fatal - like cancer - is suddenly converted from an addiction into a religious issue? How did your battle with it go all the years before, when you were convinced it was not an illness, at all, but just a zera levatola and lo sasuru issue that you had to deserve Hashem's favor to save you from, through your doing teshuvah ila'ah, or something?

How do you expect to ever get progressive - not perfect, but *progressive* - real recovery, if your focus is on *two* sets of 'rules'? The program is Derech Eretz - Torah is Torah. They are two standards, with two different goals. Program can *lead* you to Torah...but pretending they are the same is twisting your Torah with Derech Eretz standards and goals, and stunting your Derech Eretz development with irrelevant and prideful standards, I think. Humility is the issue, really.

Please consider patience.

If you stay sober, and recover through your stepwork, then you will become the mentch who can be a good yid, guaranteed...if that is what you want. A sponsor will help you with G-d's help, one day at a time. And isn't your sponsor the one to whom this issue can be addressed? or does he not even know about your GYE-recovery? How do you expect to succeed with him if you can't describe this big chunk of your recovery to him?

Only hatzlocha to you, long time chaver!!

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Re: To sobriety and beyond!

Posted by tehillimzugger - 13 May 2012 16:55

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Reb Mottel we all know what it feels like and we're sincerely hoping that your life eases up a bit soon.

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Apikores!

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Re: To sobriety and beyond!

Posted by obormottel - 13 May 2012 17:37

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Dov, cute.



My sponsor told me not to reset my SA length of sobriety. In fact, he is very skeptical of the GYE, and wants me to stop posting here. He's got a Big Brother theory that law enforcement is watching sites like this. Nu.

But I am sober in SA, according to their sobriety definition of "no sex with self or people other than one's spouse" and that is my main recovery program. As nice as GYE is, and as nice as my friends on GYE are, it has nothing to offer to someone like me in terms of long-term recovery. That, of course, is my opinion, and my friend Gevura SBY may prove me wrong one day.

So the double count stays: the 90-day chart is an honor system I subscribed to, and I fell off the chart (acc. to the rules of the chart), and reported it to the oilam here, as well as re-set the count. As for my lustful behavior, I discussed it with my sponsor, and reported it to my meeting, and I am moving on.

At the suggestion of my sponsor, I am going to start daily renewals (by phone, with two diff. people), and, of course, continue the step work and other program tools. He also pushes me to enter AA, as he feels my (quite moderate) alcohol consumption is getting in the way of my serenity. Again, Nu.

We'll see about that.

I am happy to share on this forum, and update my "image sobriety" with the fine folk here and on the chart. However, where it really counts is that I don't masturbate and achieve progressive victory over lust, and I found it is only possible with the help of SA. If someone sees it as a double-standard or what-not, for the third time: Nu.

I would really like my friends' input on whether I should disclose to my wife about resetting my count on GYE, and whether I should pay my knas even though I didn't take my fall all the way.

Considering that my sponsor doesn't hold of GYE, he had no opinion on these two issues, as he doesn't consider that a "fall" at all.

If any of my chaverim here have an opinion, I'd be happy to consider it.

Thanks,

Mottel

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Re: To sobriety and beyond!

Posted by Shteeble - 13 May 2012 17:51

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When you made the k'nass whas your daas on a gye fall??

as for the double program thing,

i think your goal is more the gye version,

and your strongest tool is your sa program.

sa has a very high success rate with the sa sobriety definition sobriety,

but keep your eye on the progressive victories over lust.....

that's really what u want.

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Re: To sobriety and beyond!

Posted by Dov - 13 May 2012 18:38

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Wow. That was interesting. Well, we can all probably agree here (as they probably do on the - lehavdil - "Christian's in Recovery" type websites), that becoming a tzaddik and all that goes with it, is our goal.

That's great.

But there is a problem, and that's the two gods I was referring to above. And I am not looking for a fight, at all. The problem is that for many, many early recovering addicts - say, in their first two years - there is a clear priority over *anything* that sound, smells or looks like yir'as Shomayim:

## Honesty.

It's the old "Derech Eretz" thing, again. For a *normal* Yid who is struggling with the fact that it just feels so good to look at porn and masturbate themselves (and it does), it's all fine to work on yir'as Shomayim...cuz that is what he (or she) needs.

But for the inveterate liar - the addict - self-honesty needs to become an integral part of his (or her) approach to living, one moment at a time. It is the thing all the sfarim will admit needs to be there **BEFORE** any real success with work on yir'as Shomayim...though they neglect to speak of it or write about it. They neglect it *because it is understood to already be there!* The steps are all about ego deflation, which is the humility to enable self-honesty. And it is understood from our experience that self-honesty does not come because we want it. It comes into us because we become progressively open and honest with others.

For a guy with a yir'as Shomayim problem, the problem is their YH, their desire, their wives, or women on the street - for the addict, the problem is **sobriety**. Living without their drug is just unbearable - life feels just plain *stupid* without it.

I sincerely doubt that a true addict can really "work" on both simultaneously without becoming all crazy and without his ego growing even *bigger* ("I'm managing my madreigah *and* my program, don't worry...if I try hard enough!"). I could not do it, and I have met many others who could not, though they tried. Eventually, ironically, they ended up sacrificing their sobriety for their 'madreigo'! Ironical, indeed.

Hatzlocha to all - whether they see what I pass along here as completely useless drivel or not. In the end, Hashem will help us all get what we need. No worries.

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Re: To sobriety and beyond!

Posted by obormottel - 13 May 2012 21:35

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Sometimes I wonder if you read the posts you're replying to...

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Re: To sobriety and beyond!

Posted by Dov - 14 May 2012 03:54

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Obbormottel, I was responding more to what Shteeble posted than to what you posted. Sorry I did not clarify that. Does that explain better?

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