

My days (even more then 90)

Posted by needtoquit - 10 Jan 2013 09:02

I have been working on the Wall of Honor for 6 months now. On my first try I reached 90 days, but then over Succos I fell (hard as is always the case) a number of times. I have since been trying to regain my ground but been having a hard time. I made it to 5 weeks again and then about a month ago I fell again and have been staggering around since. See [here](#) for more of my story.

I have finally started up again strong at the very end of December and am now on day 17. One idea which I saw and liked was the \$90 for 90 days. So I am doing it with a twist. If I don't finish the 90 days I will give a dollar for each day which I stayed clean to a "tzedaka" which I really don't support. (It is a valid tzedaka just one whose mission I disagree with.) I have been starting to have a hard time the last few days and thought that posting was in order. So, I decided to make a real log of my journey. But not just 90 days clean but Biezas Hashem for many more.

Thanks for reading and Hatzlacha to you all.

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Re: My days (even more then 90)

Posted by needtoquit - 19 Jun 2013 07:22

In other news, I spoke to my Rav again about my TV/Movies issue. We agreed that it's poison) But he was supportive as always telling me about his challenges in quitting smoking. He recommended that when I have the urge to watch something I should just go to sleep. That will get me out of it and a little extra sleep never hurt anyone's will power.

I was listening to tons of *The Shmuz* recently. (I love the Android app.) Over the last few days I listed to [#143](#), [#144](#), & [#145](#) which are about "Stages of Change." I highly recommend them, along with many of the other ones especially those that deal with our type of struggle. Much of what he said really hit home. He lauds the 12 step programs in general as well as certain parts in particular and mentioned many tools and tricks which I hope to try out successfully.

Hatzlacha to us all!

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Re: My days (even more then 90)
Posted by gibbor120 - 19 Jun 2013 20:13

[needtoquit wrote:](#)

I hope that this perspective which you have helped me gain will help me really escape my problems by not escaping my wonderful life and just living it.

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Re: My days (even more then 90)
Posted by sonofthe king - 20 Jun 2013 00:32

People on the boards here are discussing what means they should use when dealing with these temptations. I just wanted to point out a few things that is found in all the holy seforim.

1) We are not to view the battle with the temptations as something as a battle per se (in a negative form) as that is what it seems on the surface, (which is itself is a tool that Hashem gave to the koach hatuma to have us think that way in order to overcome that way of thinking and get rewarded for that) but in its deeper form and at its essence, as a holy and sweet OPPORTUNITY to cleave to Hashem (in a positive form). We are not to view the temptation as something evil that we have to overcome but to see the holiness hiding within the temptation which is none other than Hashem himself. We are to WELCOME the temptation the more we view it as a mask of Hashem in the form of temptation, yetzer hora, addiction etc. Only sweet and holy things exist in this world as Hashem would not do otherwise- and when we think we see otherwise, we dig deeper and find out the above holy yesod with time. It takes time, as this is the whole point in life, to tear the mask away and consequently loving Hashem and doing his will more and more in quantity and quality. That is why it says - tov -is yetser tov, (tov) meod- is yetser hora. As that is in essence and inherently the ultimate and greatest good.

2) On the same note, when we know that Hashem knew in advance that there will be "evil" in the world- be it in the form of people being "evil" or in the forms of sin and the like and even so thought it was worth creating the world with all of the seemingly negative stuff- we get to the

next point.

When a yid succumbed to temptation- he is to know the following.

The almighty knew about the fall in advance and that still did not make him want to stop with his plan to bring this jew into the world with all his falls. To the contrary- EVERYTHING is going according to plan.(Free will is only prior to the fall)This is the mightiest tool the yetser hora has at his disposal to make the jew think otherwise.

As the seforim explain how that is the only way a person merits to fulfill his mission down here. Only via falls. Sheva Yipol Tzadik- is the only way to become holy as all the Seforim explain. It is not that we have to "overcome" our fall but rather to the contrary- this "fall" was precisely what I needed as part of my lifes work. One of the many ways to understand this is-

3)After a "fall" a person naturally feels dejected.There is nothing sweeter to hashem than a jew who naturally(aka a tool of the yetser hora for us to overcome)does not feel like he is succeeding spiritually and still continues trying to be a good and devoted son to hashem. This beautiful and sweet devotion is by far sweeter to hashem in some ways than that of someone that is on "streak" of holiness and is actually feeling good about his spiritual standing. The mesiras nefesh of the former jew is incomparable to that of the latter one.Only thru a fall does hashem get this special nachas from a yid.There are no words to describe the greatness of such an act over and over and over again. Than can only happen after a "fall". We are not privy as to why hashem in his infinite wisdom chose some pepole to be the of the former and some of the latter type, but that does not concern us at all.

4)after a "fall" - the angels dance in heaven when the yid summons up all of his efforts and tries to the best that he can to regain simcha to being a jew.(as if nothing happened)It is unnatural and is superhuman and it is God that helps the yid in doing that.There is no holier work than this form of selfless and(and at first and superficially,emotionally unrewarding) unnatural serving of our father in heaven.This another reason why hashem made him "fall"- so that he can bring this special incomparable nachas to hashem over and over and over again. This is what will bring Moshiach to an extent more than someone who did not have this work cut out for him.As the big Rebbees used to say - that the entrance to the holy depths of what it means to be a eved hashem is as follows: One who his knife is still dripping with the blood of chas vsholom another jew that he has just killed rachmono litzlan and cannot summon up the energy to daven mincha with a zeal and fire like that of the holiest jew(after doing teshuva)- has not BEGUN to taste the sweetness of our holy Torah.(the yetser hora has at his dispoal(for us to overcome) the tool to confuse the person about the above concepts with the thought that this is somehow contradictory to the mitzva of teshuva etc.and contradictory to what he has learnt all his life about how serious it is to sin and the subsequent punishment etc.

That is all for the person to think before the sin. NOT about the sin he has already committed.

5)The yetser hora has at his disposal in order for us to overcome the other weapon:

after a "fall" the person thinks - I messed up again. The comedy and genius of this thought is that this thought that the person is thinking stems from a holy place in his soul is so plainly a thought from the yetser hora himself(in order for us to overcome)

As there is not SUPPOSED to be a the letter/word I in a yids life. Its all about hashem. If you are thinking that YOU messed up, apparently you think that this journey has something to do with you. aka arrogance.(for us to overtome that thought)This is another reason for the "fall" happening to you- so that you can work on the holy mida of humility.The thought that should accompany you after a "fall" is how you repent for the pain of the shechina when a yid was destined to cause the pain of the shechina.It is a thought that makes us CLOSE to hashem. Its a thought that makes us feel GOOD to be so close to him that we care about his pain kvayochol.This is yet another reason for the "fall"- so that hashem wants to reward you for doing teshuva over and over and over again. The time to do teshuva is a time of simcha. It is the holiest mitzvah to repent and worry about HASHEM and our neshomo with is part and parcel of that.The yetsher hora has us confuse that with doing the exact opposite- thinking how WE "messed up" and feeling bad and sad about OUR shortcomings- when its not about us at all. As the seforim write that ANY thought before, during or after a "fall" that makes us feel bsimcha is holy and if it makes us feel bad- it it the yetser hora camaflouged very skillfully to reward us for overcoming.

All of the above is to be studied repeatedly and slowly to be absorbed into ones self for his entire life as it increase the love to hashem and kamayim ponim el ponim will be reciprocated via loving hashem and wanting to do his will.

The yetser hora fights with all the might that hashem gave him (in order for us to overcome) to have us not realize all of the above, and its our holy lifes work to slowly and with patience and knowing with bitochon that ALL is well right now and will continue being so until we will all see it so plainly and clearly with moshiachs arrival soon iyh.

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Re: My days (even more then 90)

Posted by needtoquit - 25 Jun 2013 18:16

I would like to share an email conversation which I had with Rabbi Shaifer of *The Shmuz*. I hope that it's helpful. (I edited out some parts to make it a little shorter but it's still quite long, sorry.)

Dear Rabbi Shafier,

Recently, I listened to the Stages of Change series. It was very insightful and I listened to it again to better absorb it. It seemed to me like you approve of the 12-step programs. I wanted to double check your thoughts on them because I have some questions on their hashkafic acceptability and it may have a real impact on my life.

Let me tell you a little about myself. I am a bachur in my mid 20's. I went to a good Day School and good Yeshivas. Although not the best in my shiur, I had and continue to have a good reputation, B"H, as an upstanding and frum individual. However, that is just one part of me. I am also (maybe) a lust addict. From hashchasas zera, to staring at women, to imagining, to pornography, to erotic literature, to looking where I really really shouldn't be.

I was in denial, exactly as you describe it in [#143](#), for a long time. (In fact I was a big fan of a tape of your's from before you started The Shmuz. I believe it was called The Master and the Slave, and you discussed men who's heads would turn instinctively because they had given in to the Yetzer Hara so much. And it never occurred to me that just because I wasn't turning my head didn't mean that I was in such good shape.) Finally I made it to step 2 and then 3 but couldn't figure out an action plan for quitting. And then I found Guard Your Eyes. It is an frum organization devoted to helping deal with lust especially from the internet, from prevention to treatment and has been a super resource especially the forums which provide the support group element.

The 12-steps are featured quite heavily and for the year that I have been there I avoided them as much as possible. My main concern is this: Hashem put us here for a reason, to improve ourselves. He gave us the tools and strength to do that and He doesn't allow the Y"H more power than we can beat (Soton Out of the Box #43). How can we turn around and say, "We came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity"? That is a direct quote for the 12-steps found on [GYE](#). While it is true that He can, it is not His job. That is exactly the job which He gave to us. How can we so easily hand that burden off to Him. I find that quite a few of the steps are hard for me to swallow because of this problem.

Even if addiction is something more than regular Y"H and that makes it an acceptable solution to just say, "Here, Hashem, this is your problem now" how can one know that he is really addicted? I am truly not sure if I am a true addict or was just in the state of denial for a long time. The question of if I (or anyone else for that matter) am addicted takes on a much more serious tone if the result could be apikorsus. (I briefly thought that I had found the answer to my problem/question via in the difference between inputs and outcomes as you explain it in a few Shmuzen; the 12-steps is accepting that the outcomes are Hashem's while not giving up on my job of hishtadlus. However, I don't think that is really what they mean.)

I have had this problem/question with the 12-steps for a while. So, when I heard you talking about them, I thought this is my opportunity to try and find the answer.

Thank you so much for taking the time to read this,

(I hope you understand if I don't leave my real name but my GYE user name)

NeedToQuit

This is his response:

I want to encourage you to keep with the GYEs program. I took a few minutes to answer your question in a way that hopefully will clarify. Please offer it to GYE as well if it will help clarify for others.

Much hatzlacha,

R' Shafier

"We came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity"?

Question:

Hashem put us here for a reason, to improve ourselves. He gave us the tools and strength to do that and He doesn't allow the Yeser Harah more power then we can beat (Soton Out of the Box #43). How can we turn around and say, "We came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity"? That is a direct quote for the 12-steps found on GYE.

While it is true that He can, it is not His job. That is exactly the job He gave to us. How can we so easily hand that burden off to Him? I find that quite a few of the steps are hard for me to swallow because of this problem.

Even if addiction is something more than regular Yeser Harah and that makes it an acceptable solution to just say, "Here, Hashem, this is your problem now" how can one know that he is really addicted? I am truly not sure if I am a true addict or was just in the state of denial for a long time.

Answer:

First off, Yasher Koach and Ascherecha that you have the courage to actually confront this issue. So many people just run and hide (and suffer).

In terms of your question while it sounds valid, I think that if we look into things a bit more, we'll see things from a different perspective.

The Misilas Yescharim's description of the Yeser Harah is that he is a "Warrior, learned in deceit, and it is impossible to escape him except with great wisdom and a very broad perspective. And it is obvious that even if a person becomes wise to himself he doesn't have the strength to save himself, unless HASHEM saves him.

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It seems that the Misilos Yesharim is making exactly this point. That if left to his own devices, man against the Yeser Harah would fail. It is only with divine intervention that man can win. Which seems to be quite consistent with the first of the twelve steps.

How far this concept goes:

To see an example of how far this concept goes.

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When Rabbi Abahu was ready to leave this world, HASHEM showed him thirteen frangranced rivers. He began saying to his students, "Praise be those who are involved in Torah study". His students said to him, "Our master, what have you seen?" He answered, "I saw thirteen frangranced rivers that HASHEM has given me as the reward for my Torah study. I had thought my labor was for naught. But now I see that it isn't."

Question:

How could such a Tzadik entertain the concept that he had worked for naught?

That Anaf Yosef (one of the commentaries) explains in the name of the Rashis in Bikurim that since Chazal say that each day a person's Yeser Horah is Misgaber (vanquishes) over him and if it weren't for HASHEM's special help he wouldn't be able to win, so in a real sense each step of the way the Tzadik is assisted by HASHEM. If so, then his reward surely shouldn't be complete. It should take into account all the help that he had from HASHEM. Yet it is with special Rachmonus (mercy) that HASHEM doesn't discount from a person's reward because of that intervention.

We see the extent of the power and involvement of the Soton in our lives, and it is only with HASHEM's direct help that we can be saved. Which is basically what the first step says.

Thanks,

R' Shafier

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Re: My days (even more then 90)

Posted by needtoquit - 27 Jun 2013 08:34

Day 65

Sorry to all those who were scared off by my overly long posts. But such is life, there is much to say.

B"H I've been doing ok. This week has had some problems. *Motzei Shabbos* I wasted a ton of) Then watched some TV. Needless to say I didn't get much sleep and that through off my whole schedule.

Also, the weather has been such that I can't risk biking because of the rain, so I haven't exercised much. I had never thought I'd one day complain about my not being able to exercise. But it really has been helpful, and not just because it takes more concentration to ride a bike than a car and therefore I can't even considering watching the people (read: girls (read: lust

Also, I missed *Shacharis* and my seder with my chavrusa the last few days and am 3 days behind in *Daf Yomi*.

objects)) on the street.
I guess in reevaluating after writing all this maybe I'm not so ok. But with Hashem's help I will be. And I'm not too depressed which is important for me as that usually causes me to shut down.

In other news I'm almost ready to start working the 12-steps and PMed Dov to find out when his group is starting a new cycle. I'm still a little nervous but now it's only because it's something new and not that I'm not sure if I should do it. I now realize that I should so I just need to get up the courage and come up with a plan.

Hatzacha to us all!

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Re: My days (even more then 90)
Posted by gibbor120 - 27 Jun 2013 18:41

[needtoquit wrote:](#)

In other news I'm almost ready to start working the 12-steps and PMed Dov to find out when his group is starting a new cycle. I'm still a little nervous but now it's only because it's something new and not that I'm not sure if I should do it. I now realize that I should so I just need to get up the courage and come up with a plan.

Being nervous to do something is often a sign that it's the right thing to do.

Hatzlacha Rabbah!

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Re: My days (even more then 90)

Posted by needtoquit - 28 Jun 2013 08:52

Day 66 (by 15 minutes)

B"H today was pretty good. I made it to *Shacharis*, *Daf Yomi*, both of my *sederim*. It's always easier to stay sober on "good" days.

Yesterday, I had an interesting thought. I was looking for a letter that I thought was accidentally thrown in the recycling. Looking for it reminded me of how far I have come (or maybe more accurately how low I once was). I used to look through the recycling on a regular basis, but not for letters, for flyers and ads. I thought how ironic is it that some people have paper shredders to shred letters and just stick the flyers loose in the recycling. When, BE"H, I am *zocheh* to get married and have children I hope to have a shredder, but not for letters, for the flyers. As potentially dangerous as the internet is at least they don't deliver the pornography right to your front door. Why would I want to leave those lying around, if I even let them into the house? So, I).

A few nights ago I had a conversation with another member. He was having a bad day and we *shmuzed* for a while. (As an aside, I just want to say that as much *chizzuk* as I may have provided him, my providing *chizzuk* gave me more *chizzuk* than he probably received.) He was telling me that he's stuck between a rock and a hard place. For work he either has to take the subway into work, in this weather, or work from home, on his computer alone. As everyone knows neither of those are great options.

Afterward, I thought of the following vort: (I put it in a spoiler block below for those of us who find)

Warning: Spoiler!

Hatzlacha to us all!

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Re: My days (even more then 90)

Posted by Pidaini - 28 Jun 2013 13:40

Shkoyach!!

And i love the spoiler idea!! (as i am one of those that you mentioned!!)

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Re: My days (even more then 90)

Posted by yehoshua - 28 Jun 2013 16:51

caught in the act. Nobody knows this, but i take my comp to the bathroom and read gye. Hm.....

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Re: My days (even more then 90)

Posted by needtoquit - 28 Jun 2013 17:15

I suspected that I might not be the only one.

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Re: My days (even more then 90)

Posted by needtoquit - 02 Jul 2013 07:17

Day 69.

I just saw [this](#) and needed to post it so I can refer back to it.

It's quoted from SA, White Book, page 26, on GYE:

I see now that in all my religious striving and psychotherapy I was waiting for the miracle to happen first, that I should somehow be zapped or "fixed," unable ever to fall or be tempted again. I thought that if a person just had the right religious belief, he was automatically "a new creature; old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." That all thought of lust would be removed, much as a tumor would be excised by a surgeon. The "religious solution" was one of the subtlest strategies in my arsenal of denial.

I didn't realize that the essence of being human is to have free choice. God doesn't want to remove from me the possibility of falling; he wants me to have the freedom to choose not to fall. I'd been praying self-righteously all along, "Please G-d, take it away!" not realizing my inner heart was piteously whining, ". . . so I won't have to give it up." There was belief in God without surrender. That belief availed nothing! I had never died to lust.

I think the key is the last bit. If someone want's Hashem to take away the desire, not only is he being foolish, but he's missing the boat. He doesn't want us to live on easy street, that's not growing. He wants us to "surrender" our lust, to say I really want to lust but You don't want me to so I wouldn't.

This is something which I missed for a long time about the "surrender" part. I always thought that meant I was giving the task over to Hashem (which sounded a little kefirahdik as my job is to live and grow and accomplish). It's the exact opposite, it's saying that You don't want me to do it, so I'm making the decision not to and handing you the keys to my enjoyment.

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Re: My days (even more then 90)
Posted by needtoquit - 03 Jul 2013 09:19

Day 71 here we go.

I really meant to post earlier today (i.e. before midnight and the next day arrived) because July 2 is a special day for me. Because 1 year ago on July 2, I opened an anonymous email account signed up for the chizuk emails and joined the 90 day chart.

That's right, today was my anniversary. One of the nice features on the 90 day chart is the Cumulative Days count. In the last year, 365 days, I won this fight on 347 days. That's a whopping 95%.

However, what is 95% compared to 100%. Clearly I need to do more. Yesterday's chizuk email had a great thought to remind us what addiction really is. How many of us had friends who weren't addicted to smoking. "I can quit smoking anytime I want - I've quit 5 times already...!" Standing on the other side of the cigarette it's easy to see the fallacy of that statement but we say the same thing. I'm on 71 days, and conveniently ignore the fact that 95% means that I didn't just quit; I quit a numerous times. By my "Sorry to hear about your fall" emails I count 10 falls. Honestly it was more than that but the point is I quit 11 times. I'm even worse then most smokers, I would venture to say.

On a more positive note, in honor of my anniversary I would like to make some thank-yous.

Firstly, to Guard and all his backers for creating this wonderful resource and opening it up to all of us. We all wish you much *Hatzlacha* in all your endeavors.

To all the members of GYE who populate this forum, keep the threads active and help each other out so often. Whether they be expert boarders like gibbor120 with 2369 posts or even the . They all form an essential group who help each other along this long road.

Thank you to my parents, who although they know nothing about this, raise(d) me, love me, and care for me to the extent that allows me to commit the necessary time and effort into this struggle.

And most of all to *Hashem*. For You are the Giver and Provider of all. You gave us life and You gave us this area to grow. You gave us goodness (even when we were undeserving) and You stand along side us in this battle. You are the One who is really winning the battle not us. We are just trying (hopefully) to serve You but we can only succeed with Your direct help.

Hatzlacha to us all!

NeedToQuit

P.S. Does anyone know what step the Big Book Study Group is up to and when they are starting another cycle? I tried to get in touch with Duvid Chaim and Shlomo but was unsuccessful.

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Re: My days (even more then 90)
Posted by gibbor120 - 03 Jul 2013 18:30

Beautiful post! Don't compare 95% to 100%. Compare 95% to where you would be without

P.S. Duvid Chaim will get back to you when he can I'm sure. He is very busy. You can just call in one day and see where they are up to. I'm not sure, but it may be ok to start in the middle.

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Re: My days (even more then 90)
Posted by needtoquit - 04 Jul 2013 07:24

[gibbor120 wrote:](#)

P.S. Duvid Chaim will get back to you when he can I'm sure. He is very busy. You can just call in one day and see where they are up to. I'm not sure, but it may be ok to start in the middle.

Shlomo got back to me today and told me that they are up to step 4 and I'm welcome to join any time. I'm just not sure if that is the best way to go about this.

[gibbor120 wrote:](#)

Beautiful post! Don't compare 95% to 100%. Compare 95% to where you would be without

GYE. I hope that makes you smile.

Yes of course. I only compared them to motivate myself to keep moving forward. Honestly, part of the reason for my desire to keep moving forward is because I feel myself slowly slipping backwards. For example, I find myself noticing things (i.e. people of the female gender) which I shouldn't be. I'm not looking a second time but it's still a problem. One might argue that it's normal to take first glances the people on the side walk. However, I suspect that this is more than that because based on the statistics of the people who I seem to glance up at, I would say In other words this isn't the normal human curiosity to see humanity as they pass by him. This is my addiction creeping up on me and causing me to look specifically at the potential lust inducers.

Hatzlacha to us all!

NeedToQuit

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