

with Hashem's help

Posted by ahavas hashem - 25 Jul 2013 19:33

There are so many things that are racing through my head that its hard to put them into words. I'll start with explaining why I started this thread on the forum. I first came across GYE about three months ago. I have been slowly exposing myself to the various tools that exist on this site. Initially, I found it to be overwhelming, but decided to utilize one thing at a time. I have read through part of the handbook and am still working my way through it for the first time. When I saw that I was still falling, I signed up for the daily chizuk emails. Then, about two months ago, I started my journey on the 90 chart. In the last two months I have learned a lot about my problem and am hopeful that the chizuk, suggestions and companionship in this area will help me find my way. Like I said, my thoughts are all over the place right now so I don't want to get into the struggles I've faced in the last few months. Over the course of time and the more I post, these things will iy"h be spelled out.

I do want to declare what my acting out problem is. It took me a long time to finally realize that I have a serious, chronic (possibly addictive, but I'm not there yet- maybe I should be) masturbation problem. I have been masturbating since I was 13 and there have been certain tekufos of my life when I was masturbating almost every day and sometimes multiple times a day. This, I believe, is my main area of struggle. I have as a teenager and single bachur occasionally viewed pornography. This is not something that I have done in a long time and it was not something I did consistently enough to become a real problem.

I know that there is probably a lot that should be included in this introduction that I am leaving out, but this is a very hard thing for me to do. I am not the kind of person that turns to others for help and I rarely share personal information with others. However, I believe posting on the forum and learning to share with others is a necessary step in my recovery. Hopefully with Hashem's help I will begin to truly live life.

And today is day 1! And [b]today[b] I will not fall!

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Re: with Hashem's help

Posted by Dov - 30 Jul 2013 20:59

Sweet!

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Re: with Hashem's help
Posted by ahavas hashem - 31 Jul 2013 17:13

things have been really crazy here so, once again, i didnt get a chance to post last night. but bh i made it through day 6. im looking forward to today to reaching a week one!

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Re: with Hashem's help
Posted by Dov - 31 Jul 2013 22:54

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Re: with Hashem's help
Posted by inastruggle - 01 Aug 2013 09:31

cause of this right?

"Part of the beauty of Judaism, and surely this is so for other faiths also, is that it gently restores control over time. Three times a day we stop what we are doing and turn to God in prayer. We recover perspective. We inhale a deep breath of eternity."

-Jonathan Sacks

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Hope u r not holding your breath.

Re: with Hashem's help
Posted by Dov - 01 Aug 2013 14:38

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Re: with Hashem's help

Posted by ahavas hashem - 01 Aug 2013 16:20

Dov- Im taking a friends advice and taking my first step toward a real recovery. Im making sure to time every day to write an inventory of every incident and event related to my problem. I dont know what the next step is yet to keep my head above water, but im trying not to worry about that. For today, I will continue writing my inventory list and stay clean!

inastruggle- like dove said: ?

Yesterday I completed my first week of sobriety!

In other news: I am going out of town for the weekend and will not be back til Monday night. I will probably not have access to the internet while I am away so I will have to wait to update until I return. Now that I am thinking about it, this doesnt sound like such a good idea. Maybe I will get in touch with someone I recently met and spoke to about my problem and make sure that I check in with him during the weekend. Yea, that sound better. A little more accountability because I know I cant be trusted:P

Anyway, good Shabbos all!

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Re: with Hashem's help

Posted by gibbor120 - 01 Aug 2013 17:14

[ahavas hashem wrote:](#)

Dov- Im taking a friends advice and taking my first step toward a real recovery. Im making sure to time every day to write an inventory of every incident and event related to my problem.

How does that help? What type of stuff are you writing?

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Re: with Hashem's help
Posted by tryingtoshteig - 01 Aug 2013 17:17

AH:

I think that I get what Inna & Dov are trying to tell you (I hope). I am not completely sure if you are understanding them, maybe you are, but maybe not. I will try to explain in a way we all can).

"Holding your breath" means that you are trying super-hard, in an unnatural way, to keep your one-day-at-a-time sobriety, without dealing with the underlying issues in your life. Not that Dov or anyone else has anything against staying sober, or even against taking life one day at a time, BUT the bigger question is, what is now filling the "hole" in your life that your acting out used to occupy? Or, put another way, how are you dealing with the issues (stress, boredom, anger, etc.) that you previously used to medicate with your drug of choice? Are you bringing Hashem into your life in a more personal way? Is your davening more meaningful now? Not just davening for sobriety, but davening that every little (and big) issue in your specific life is resolved in the most optimal way (which ultimately is the way He thinks is the most optimal, even if you don't understand it)? Are you working on "feeling" Hashem following you around (or leading you around) when you go to the grocery store, the bank, work, school, yeshiva, home, everywhere, 24/7/365?

Or are you just staying sober, one day at a time, but in the meantime your stress is festering inside of you with no healthy way of treating it in the absence of your old drug? If that is the case, after a while you might turn blue in the face from holding your breath for so long, and you

understand (if that's possible

In other words, it not just about SOBRIETY one day at a time, it's also about living your LIFE one day at a time in the presence of Hashem, who knows what is best for you. It's like being at

batting practice, swinging at your pitches one at a time, knowing that G-d Almighty himself is on your team, he is you Batting Coach pitching to you, and is sending you some fastballs, some curveballs, some outside corners, some low and inside, some right over the plate, because He knows exactly what you need to work on.

And speaking to Him regularly, both through davening and outside of davening, is a way to tune into this reality, and breathe fresh oxygen. That's what the quote from Rabbi Sacks was about.

Does this make any sense? Is this what you guys, Dov and Inna, were trying to tell him?

Have a great Shabbos!

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Re: with Hashem's help
Posted by cordnoy - 01 Aug 2013 18:01

home run by me

I like it!

now, I gotta do it as well.

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Re: with Hashem's help
Posted by inastruggle - 01 Aug 2013 20:28

Well that's what Dov was trying to say, I was trying to make a joke....

Obviously that didn't go over so well.It's one thing if no one laughs, a whole nother story when it become a mussar lesson...

Anyway, I like the lesson,and i'll KOT till i find a good joke.

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Re: with Hashem's help
Posted by Dov - 02 Aug 2013 20:21

'Holding our breath' is a totally different experience than recovery offers. This story illustrates what 'holding breath' is:

The Steipler zt"l was once on guard duty in the Russian or Polish army on Shabbos - and his coat was in a tree, so it would be assur for him to take it down and use it! He decided to stay in place the entire shift without his coat. But it was terribly cold and driving him nuts. How could he stay put?!

He told himself that he could withstand the cold for just a minute (or hour?)...and he did! When that minute was over, he told himself that he just proved that he can tolerate the bitter cold for just a minute. So here before him is: a minute! He then waited a(nother) minute. When it was over, he thought: here before me is another one of those minute-thingies. I can definitely hang on just a minute! So he held on, and tolerated the cold for just a minute.

Etc, etc, and the entire night passed! Amazing. Beautiful.

AND THAT IS NOT AT ALL WHAT 'ONE DAY AT A TIME', MEANS! For what the Steipler did was a gimmick. A mind game. And it worked for him, for one night or day...it may work for more than one day - it may even work for a lifetime, who knows? And if I could stay sober that way for a lifetime, *I would probably not take it.* It would be gehinnom, would keep me good-and-miserable/crazy, and would generally...suck. I would surely eventually run to lust again just to get out of such a stupid (but kosher!) life. Yup.

But: the Steipler *could [b]not[/b]* have actually held his breath all night using this gimmick. Correct? After a few minutes (about 2-3), a human knows he must breathe, period. So what would you do if someone told you he would give you a million (yep, a million!) bucks if you held your breath for two hours? Would you breath deeply and go give it a try? Silly, of course not. Why suffer for no reason and nothing in the end, anyway?

People who are not sincerely giving up lust for today are just sitting ducks. They are just holding their breath and 'holding back' one day at a time. It does not work. Eventually they *will* have to breathe. And Hashem knows this. It is a twisting of the meaning of 'one day at a time'.

I know they will say 'vatishlach es amosoh - she sent forth her arm' and all the sweet, encouraging droshos on that. But for an addict, *it just does not work here!* And in the meantime, the marriage and family are brutalized. Yuch.

[A nasty little digression :pinch:

When B'nei Yisroel (on Rosh chodesh Nissan) went to take the korban Pesach (in four more days!) Hashem writes: "[i]And Bn"Y went **and did** as Moshe commanded them.[/i]" Rashi brings that they went with the intention, knowing that come the 10th of Nissan, they'd take the goat/lamb, and come the 14th, they'd shecht it, etc. In their hearts, it was a done deal. So from right then, Hashem says He considers it that *they already did it all!*

Sadly, the converse is also true. We all know in our hearts that we cannot hold our breath forever. So, as inspired as we may be to hold our breath and resist getting that sweet orgasm/fantasy/porn joy we need...we are full-aware that we *are* eventually gonna pop. We have not given it up at all, see it as an eventual necessity, and a masculine right. The only guarantee, then, is that we *will* need to act out when the maximum tolerance of # days clean is reached. So it is almost as though they are already masturbating, in some respect. By the Korban pesach it means they are given over to G-d and committed to doing His Will - and by lust, it means they are given over to lust and committed to doing nothing *real* about stopping. So what's the use? May Hashem save me from making this mistake and being in that category, one day at a time.

I believe this is true for most ppl who take lots of half-measures and just 'fight it' (but see the exception below).

Therefore, only ***giving it up in our hearts one day at a time*** is useful and bears fruit, and that is the 12 step program way - not *resisting* 'one day at a time'. Get it?

There is one exception to this idea, and it is an important qualification: There are surely some

who do the TapHsiC, or 90-day wall thingy, or counting the days, etc...*holding their breath* all the way - and it works! Because they did experience abstinence from their prize, after all, and did not die. Amazingly, their penises did not fall off. And abstinence sometimes makes it clear to the person that *he does not, in fact, really need it at all!*

Surprise!

But I doubt that such things will work for most people in the long run - and certainly not for addicts. For when the day comes that they desire it again as strong as ever, they will be 100% convinced again that they can't live without it, period. Back to square one. But surrender one day at a time really does work for alcoholics and others, all over the world.

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Where were we?

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Re: with Hashem's help
Posted by cordnoy - 02 Aug 2013 22:18

Dov, I liked that a lot

the difference between holding your breath every moment and giving it up.

It is a crucial difference.

End of the nasty little digression.

How can one determine, however, what it is that he is doing?

I understand if a person has a desire to act out and doesn't, and has another urge and controls himself; he is probably holding his breath. But let us say that someone is not actually doing the 12 steps, but he has made up that this is not the life for him; it is no life at all, and he succeeds day after day, is he giving it up, or is he holding his breath?

thank you

id also question your comparison that if one will eventually masturbate, God considers it as if he has already done so. I know you know that machshavah ra'ah, ein HKB"H mitztaref l'ma'aseh, but you are thinking that here, it is inevitable, and he has done nothing concrete to prevent it occurring again. but how do you know that it is regarded as if he acted out already?

thank you so much

This post of yours was absolutely terrific!!!

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Re: with Hashem's help

Posted by Dov - 03 Aug 2013 02:40

Dear chaver, oh boy...so I made two edits in that post now, after reading your post and after some thinking before, and a third time!...it's funny. It is so rare that I ever edit my posts at all. They just flow. And here it's so different. Yuchhh. I am just too personally invested in this topic, I guess. That's not good.

But thanks. Your comments are so helpful!

1- If he or she succeeds day after day, then what's the problem? I am saying that if it does not work, or is getting harder and harder, or if they are miserable...then it's probably not recovery at all, but just holding of breath. We feel miserable then, not better. Not lighter, no continuous relief. And I do not mean to imply that people who are surrendering and giving up the fight and their lust, will never have struggles, bad days, or falls. Not quite. But I am saying that life should feel different, the struggle should be different, lust should **not** be getting harder.

Interestingly, when it comes to *other* areas in life - real life - many recovering people discover terrific pain in early sobriety! But not pain about lust. They feel more pain from their real lives, the things they were sweeping under the rug using porn and masturbation guilt. The real things that are troubling them are in their faces now. Sometimes that's terrible. Their relationships with

their wife, kids, religion, job (or R"l lack thereof) are not so good, after all.

And they are out of 'medicine'.

Fellowship becomes very important at that time, and many need therapy...probably most. Maybe all. Some think they can just turn to their wives...but if the wife could help them, their relationship would not be screwed up in the first place. Doctor heal thyself. Ein chavush (and that can be a couple) matir atzmo m'beis ha'asurim. We really need G-d, badly.

2- I do not mean that *halachically* it is as though they wasted sperm already, or anything like that. (I corrected it and changed the post just now, cuz of your point! Thanks!) I just meant as you explained, that it's a lost cause. I wish we would choose the easier path, even though it is hard.

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Re: with Hashem's help
Posted by Dov - 03 Aug 2013 02:48

One more way a person can know if they are really just holding their breath:

If they are not taking any real action. Nothing in the way they are living is really changed or changing. Things like using exclusively a fake (username) name with all recovery people. Things like not meeting anyone face to face at all for this. Things like not making the call when they are in trouble and falling back on old ideas - ideas that got them in this mess to begin with.

Those things prove that a person is not really doing anything, but just hoping, wishing, whining. This is a program of action, not of figuring it out and beating it.

Make sense?

Yo - good Shabbos!

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