

15+ years of battle - The Final Battle that will lead to victory

Posted by Ykv_schwartz - 08 Feb 2009 21:10

I have been battling this menuval for over 15 years since the age of 16. For the first time in my life I have a social network to reach out to and connect. I have made many attempts to breaking this terrible habit. But I will now once start from over again with what I hope will be the final battle that will ultimately lead to victory. Anyone reading this who feels moved or has encouraging words or words of advice, please share them with me. It will give me chizuk to know that I can give chizuk to others. It gives me chizuk knowing that others want me to succeed and want to give me chizuk. So please do not refrain from even the smallest comment. You never know how far your words can reach.

I have been clean now since Feb 4. I spent last night (Feb 6, motzai shabbos) and today in intense teshuva. For the first time in a long time, I felt the signs from Shamayim that I will be accepted back again. I was so encouraged by these signs it made me focus more on how to continue to work on myself to rid myself completely.

Here is my declaration of Teshuva(based on chovos Halevavos)

Today I am doing Teshuva for the terrible sins of masturbation, spilling seed, gazing at inappropriate material, and all other related sins. I realize full well that I have done these terrible acts. These acts are disgusting and despicable in the eyes of Hashem. Hashem despises them being done. They taint the body and soul.

Great Punishment awaits me for violating these prohibitions; I am afraid of your judgement. And although Hashem has not already meted out retribution for my sins, my sins are still preserved in the book of iniquities; nothing is forgotten from Hashem. I should not think that the reason I have not been punished already is because Hashem let this one slide. On the contrary, He know full well of my deeds but delays retribution to give me a chance to do Teshuvah. This is done out of the the great Chesed of Hashem. For according to the attribute of justice, I deserve to be punished immediately. But, Hashem in his great and infinite chesed gave me a chance to do Teshuvah. I thank you Hashem for granting m such privileges, for creating the concept of Teshuvah. I CAN FIX MY WRONGDOINGS!!!!

But not only this Kindness do you do for me but countless amount of kindness do you shower upon me. But in return for your graciousness I rebelled against you, while in fact I should be praising, thanking and be pleasing in your eyes.

Woe to me for committing these Sins. For instead of receiving great reward in this world and the next I am receiving just a minute and temporal amount of pleasure for my sins. And although I received at least this little amount of pleasure, I will be receiving great amounts of pain due to the punishment in this world and the next.

I, Therefore, take upon myself to remove myself from these sins and return to you Hashem. And although, I realize from the beginning that this will not be easy and I will have to face tough battles with the Yetzer Harah, I am willing to fight and I will never ever give up, no-matter what happens, and I am confident that I will win.

And I end with a plea to you, Hashem. For I realize that without your help I am unable to properly do Teshuvah. I therefore ask of you that now that I have pierced a hole the size of a needlepoint, you widen it like the opening of the Ulam.

May we all be Zoche to Teshuva Shleima

-ykv

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Re: 15+ years of battle - The Final Battle that will lead to victory

Posted by 7yipol - 05 Aug 2009 13:06

Not only is R' Yaakov pure gold, but each reply post is another gem on the chain!

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Re: 15+ years of battle - The Final Battle that will lead to victory

Posted by Binyomin5766 - 05 Aug 2009 13:55

Dear YKV,

Mazel Tov! Mazel Tov! I do not post much these days, but I must post now. Your journey has been an inspiration to me, and this most recent post is pure gold. Enjoy the great simcha of your BBQ and know that I am rejoicing with you from afar.

Ben

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Re: 15+ years of battle - The Final Battle that will lead to victory
Posted by kutan - 05 Aug 2009 13:57

MAZEL TOIV !!!!!

And thanks!

Today is proving to be a spiritually hard day here, nisyonos at work are popping up right and left...for the first time in a while.... and I needed a really inspirational daily chizuk email.

Well, Baruch Hashem you provided it!

I am going to laugh at my 'small' nisyonos... if you were able to look gehinm in the face and fly upward!

HUMBLE and happy

HAPPY and humble,

kutan

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Re: 15+ years of battle - The Final Battle that will lead to victory
Posted by hoping - 05 Aug 2009 16:41

Mazal Tov Yakov!

I should have given you a mazal Tov the day I joined the forum because your posts were so inspiring and really brought me to commit to change. At the time I could not have realized what a extreme change it would have on my life. So I give you a double Mazal Tov. One, for your personal success, and two, for the profound way you are influencing others.

Chazak V'ematz

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Re: 15+ years of battle - The Final Battle that will lead to victory
Posted by Pintele Yid - 05 Aug 2009 18:26

Heiliga Reb Yakov,

I was going to write something but after reading the holy fire's post, I see that I have nothing to add ;D

Yasher Koach and Mazal Tov! Hashem should give you the strength to continue until you greet Moshiach with your holy eyes!

Love,

Pintele Yid

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Re: 15+ years of battle - The Final Battle that will lead to victory

Posted by Ykv_schwartz - 05 Aug 2009 20:53

A deep and sincere "Thank You" to my dear friends, bardichev, 7up, Noorah, Dov, Ben (missed ya Ben, good to hear from you), kutan, hoping, pintelle, and anyone else who read with an open heart. I have read your replies over and over again. Each one meant so much to me. I literally cried over each one realizing how much ahavas yisroel there is on these forums. As I told a few of you in private, it is this kind of friendship that will hold us over in the long run.

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Re: 15+ years of battle - The Final Battle that will lead to victory

Posted by battleworn - 06 Aug 2009 15:48

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??? ??? Reb Yaakov!!!

???? ????? ??? ?????? Reb Yaakov, your way is the way of truth, the way of ahavas Hashem, the way of chochma and the way of ?????? ?????? ???????.

Since you choose to use Hashem's very own prescription for Teshuva=Recovery, you can't go wrong-- ??? ??? ?????? ?????? ??? ??

You are on the path to ever growing Gadlus and I consider it a great zechus to have a connection to you. My main brochoh to you is that everyone should learn from you. I beg Hashem with my whole broken heart, that all the addicts of Am Yisroel should learn from you how a Yid can turn his whole heart and all his passion to Hashem; and how rewarding it is to do so. They should learn from you what a yiddishe neshomoh is; they should learn from you the power of Hashem's prescription for Teshuva. They should learn from you the meaning of ???? ?????? ?? ?' ??????? **And they should learn from you the power that Torah and Mitzvochs have, to take a person from the depths of sin to the heights of true Kirvas Elokim.**

Reb Yaakov we need you! You are the light that shows the way - the Torah way. Please keep

the chizuk coming all the time!

P.S. sorry I'm late

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Re: 15+ years of battle - The Final Battle that will lead to victory
Posted by the.guard - 06 Aug 2009 16:26

Rabbeinu Battleworn,

First of all, welcome back. We've missed you recently...

I can read so much pain between the lines of your congratulations to Yakov. (I am more preceptive than you think). I wish I could help you understand that GuardYourEyes agrees that the "Torah way" is the only way, but the problem is only that we often don't know HOW to internalize the Torah way today without the help of the 12-Steps, especially not addicts. In the Hamodia a few weeks ago, Rabbi Twerski wrote an article that explains this a bit. I scanned it in and put it up on our site [here](#). Please read it. This is the GYE approach.

I fully agree with you, and I wish all of us could INTERNALIZE the Torah the way Yakov does!!

With love and respect,

Guard.

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Re: 15+ years of battle - The Final Battle that will lead to victory
Posted by Efshar Letaken - 06 Aug 2009 22:57

Reb Ykv Reb Ykv,

We say "Better Late Than Never!"

First of all MAZEL TOV! on this milestone you have reached.

May Hashem be at your side for the rest of your life.

You have started giving me endless input into what the Torah says about the subject we are dealing with.

I have seen the beginning but I can't see the end. (for all Reb Shlomo stories fans you know what I mean, it's deep)

I come to the Beis Medrash looking for the continuation of your Gevaldiger shiurim but "Ein Kol, V'Ein Oneh!"

The Silence Is Deafening!

So Please! I ask you a personal favor, Please enlighten me further with the Orr Hatorah you have within yourself.

Heiliger Battle Never Worn,

You have unfinished business to do.

Please don't let me down.

Both of you have helped me out more then you will ever know.

I don't take "NO" for an answer!

E.L.

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Re: 15+ years of battle - The Final Battle that will lead to victory
Posted by Ykv_schwartz - 07 Aug 2009 09:12

HaRav Battleworn,

Your guidance and chizuk throughout my journey helped me enormously. Your understanding in times when no one else did is what encouraged me to to continue. You help me ignore the criticism and mock of others. You comforted me at those times that I felt isolated and lonely. I am forever grateful.

As you know, one of the steps of teshuvah is working on humility. The Rabeinu Yona lists off three reasons why this is necessary for teshuva. Your kind and inspirational words have not helped in that regard. :D

With Love,

Yaakov

Reb Efshar,

Thank you for your kind words. I will try to resume next week some more lessons learned from succa. stay tuned. According to my calendar, we are expecting a BIG simcha from you in a few days. I bought new dancing shoes just for the occasion.

Rabeinu HaGuard,

Because this is my thread, I get the last word. I will not allow any more of this discussion on my thread. Last time we did that, you had to call in the surgeons (and that was back in the days before bardichev who was able to instantly solve all such problems) and to remove those posts that related to the topic you discussed and move it to another location. Any further discussion should be taken off-line or another thread. And please, no instigating words.

With that being said, my way is the GYE way. Batteworn's way is the GYE way. EVERYONE on this site who is working towards sobriety and committed to lifetime sobriety as they gain a closeness with Hashem is working the GYE way. The goals are the same. The definitions for success are the same. The methods are CLOSE ENOUGH to be called the same.

What R' Twerski writes about, is precisely what batteworn has been saying for a long time. If I did not know otherwise, I would have thought that batteworn wrote that article. With precision, and a clear-cut analytical mind, Batteworn has always been able to penetrate the truth quicker than most of us.

Allow me to digress.

Each person is unique. And each person finds precisely what works for them. Each person knows what his major issues are. We do not all share the exact same struggle. They are similar enough to share advice. But never the same to draw conclusions. Each person has different needs in avodas hashem. Each person will deal with recovery in a slightly different fashion. We need to be extremely careful when meddling with another yid's avodas hashem and not superimpose our experiences on others. This has been the message of batteworn from the start.

What makes us a wonderful family is that we recognize the unique facets of each individual. We try to encourage and inspire as it fits with the receiver. My inspiration for growth came from this site and all its holy people.

What we have built on this site is a very unique social network. The amount of emotions and concern for one another on a daily basis is unmatched. This is our success. As I wrote in my Ode, "when there is achdus, there is no yetzer hara." People can come here at all times of the day for chizuk. People on this site can post their feelings without having to wait their turn. There is always a listening ear. There is always a concerned spirit. There is always comfort.

Allow me to digress further.

For me the after-shock of recovery was far too massive for me to sit back idly. I needed to connect my spirit in a very real way. I needed to do something. I was desperate for maintaining sobriety. I let my soul lead the way. My neshama knew exactly what it needed. My hurting soul needed comfort and relief in a time of destruction. My soul was so happy to finally be allowed into my life. My soul was so happy to finally shine. When I felt pain, I was joyed. I understood that I was removing the outer layers that cover the spirit. I was getting in touch with myself for the first time in a long time. I was finally able to cry the way I cried when I was a youth beginning my battle 15 years ago. This was a sign that I was not 'cut-off'.

For the first time in my life, I was able to wake up in the morning and say Modeh Ani with kavanah. I thanked Hashem for real for giving me life back. I thanked him for giving me another day to live and become a greater person. For the first time in my life, I began to really appreciate life, with all its hardships and setbacks. All the knowledge that I have amassed over the many long years of struggling came rushing down to me with clear understanding. I was finally able to internalize all my knowledge and bring it to my heart, as the baalei mussar tell us.

I spent the first two months of sobriety in intense davening to help me. I set aside time each day for tehillim (and continue to do so) as I connected myself. [As an aside, if I am not mistaken, this has been the approach of the early AA's as well. They would encourage recovering addicts that after making a definitive decision to remove themselves from alcohol, they needed to spend time each day over religious work to connect themselves to G-d.] I NEVER EVER wanted to go back to that dark world again. I have fallen in the past and I knew it could happen again. I begged Hashem day and night for eternal protection. I did everything in my means to help myself. I understood in a very real way that help from Hashem will only come if you put in all your efforts. And all my efforts were exerted. The Rabeinu Yona tells us that a person who really wants, tries. He explains that is what bechira is all about. It is about putting in all your efforts as you express your true desire. If you want but do not do, then you do not really want. You only want to want.

I needed to rebuild my life from the start. I began implementing small changes that made a

huge difference to my day. I understood that without proper kavanah in Shemah, modeh ani and krias shema Al Ha'Mitah, I would never gain the proper perspective on life that I needed. I understood that without proper perspective on love and intimacy, I would never survive. I took what I always knew to be true and began internalizing it. I began writing letters to my wife, as I expressed my emotions in a very open way. I became more careful with inyanei kedusha. This include sleeping in the right direction and stop inviting the yetzer hara into my life. I became extremely more cautious with other areas as well, but I decide not to elaborate.

A great zechus that Hashem has given me was that precisely during my days of sobriety, my wife and I had to remain abstinent due to uncontrollable circumstances. My wife was sick for an extended period of time. With my initial frustrations, I began to realize how much my perspectives on life and family have not been internalized and how selfish I have become. Also, during this time, my wife was unable to handle most of the daily chores. I had to help out much more as well as offer proper comfort to her. After all, as much I helped, I was still away from home 12 hours a day in another city. And taking time off was not a realistic option. This meant learning to become sympathetic and expressing love and concern. I began to understand that Love was not about romance but about caring. It was about building an eternal bond of oneness with another, which leads to a natural sense of concern and care. It is about giving not getting. The more I gave, the greater I felt. I transformed myself from selfishness to selflessness. I was finally able to express my love to my wife for real. And of course I always knew this. But for the first time, I began living it.

To Summarize: In the past this long period of separation would often lead to addiction and depression. This time it lead me to sobriety and rejuvenation.

My need for proper teshuvah was from my inner spirit telling me to do ratzon hashem. My need for teshuvah was not a 'method' to remove myself from sin. B"H, I was beyond that. The day I decided 'No More', it melted away like ice in the hot sun. That part was easy. When you want it, it is easy. AND I WANTED OUT. NO MORE.

But I still need to do teshuvah. I needed kapara for the past and tahara for the future. This has nothing to do methodology of recovery. Hashem sent his special messengers down to this earth to guide us. I needed to understand the effects of my past and ask for proper forgiveness. I knew this does not come to those who just want it. It comes after hard work or internalizing the truth of the world. One must learn to understand. I have done this many times in the past, but I knew this time would be different.

For the first time in my life, I began to understand what Charata really meant. I understood how

charata had much more to do with internalizing than knowing. Charata is a feeling of astonishment and shock. The new person known as a baal teshuva cannot believe what the old person did. This comes only through creating a new person. A person that has internalized how terrible his acts were. A person that internalizes how great Hashem is. With this he becomes shocked and stands in disbelief as he realizes how he has rebelled, destroyed himself, acted worse than the animals, etc. But this is an avodah.

I understood aziva hachet as I did everything in my capability to not allow lustful triggers from entering my day, following the guidelines of halacha (as opposed to idealistic thinking).

I understood and felt yagon as my neshama unleashed itself as it cried days on end.

As I began internalizing daaga from the yetzer hara, I strengthened my gedarim. I became more careful where I walked and with whom I speak with. I davened for protection with greater convictions as even the most remote possibility for sin was scary to me. As I feared I would never reach my goal in this world and push harder for success, I felt it even more. It encouraged me to increase my awareness of Hashem with each passing day. I should never settle for yesterday's accomplishments. As I feared retribution (and is proper, sorry to those that cannot accept), I davened for salvation. I took each minor mishap in my life as another brick of atonement. I laughed as I was pained, realizing it is all a kaparah.

And the growth goes on as we move to hachnaa (humility) and then to sheviras hataavos, and onwards.

And I also knew that last year, when I went six months clean, one of my biggest aveiros was not doing any vidui until Yom Kippur. I am so ashamed of myself for this. I was scared to say vidui only to be proven a hypocrite later on.

I needed to get close to Hashem (again). I felt so distant from him. It was me that created that barrier. And I would have to work to remove it. I know that I brought this nisayon on myself and I needed to get myself out of it. I made many wrong decisions in my life and it was in my hand to stop. I needed to stop relying on others for chizuk alone and realized the matter is in my hands to fix. I needed to stop thinking that 'Eventually I will stop. The problem will just go away on its own.' When I removed myself from sin, I begged Hashem day and night to let me back. He allowed me to come to his throne of glory for five weeks (until Purim) as I expressed all my inner emotions directly to him. Those were the most precious moments of my life.

Another great contributor to my early growth was that I had a close friend on this site (who never posted) that I corresponded with for two and half months. We spoke about a lot of things and clarified issues. I recently put our correspondences in a word doc, and it came to **28** pages.

I think my digression has come to a halt.

Good Shabbos,

yaakov

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Re: 15+ years of battle - The Final Battle that will lead to victory
Posted by nezach - 07 Aug 2009 09:28

An amazing encounter and recovery - kol hakovod & mazel tov.

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Re: 15+ years of battle - The Final Battle that will lead to victory
Posted by Pintele Yid - 07 Aug 2009 15:54

Heiliga Rav Yackov,

Thank you for allowing us a "look" into the Admas Kodesh that you are experiencing.

I hope Reb Guard puts this in a Chizuk e-mail in the near future.

Overflowing with admiration and love,

Pintele Yid

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Re: 15+ years of battle - The Final Battle that will lead to victory
Posted by the.guard - 08 Aug 2009 20:31

What a beautiful and inspiring path to Teshuvah. Thank you Yakov for leading the way. I hope to share this in a chizuk e-mail indeed, and I hope many people will be able to learn from you.

What R' Twerski writes about, is precisely what battleworn has been saying for a long time. If I did not know otherwise, I would have thought that battleworn wrote that article.

Exactly! That's what I'm trying to tell Battleworn; that we don't disagree at all! Rabbi Twerski says very clearly that we could get the same things out of Mussar that we can get out of the 12-Steps. But Rabbi Twerski makes it clear that there are two things that make it difficult to get it out of mussar. ONE - We would need to learn the mussar **as if our lives depend on it**, and TWO - Group support; i.e. Hearing from others how their lives depend on it, how they were almost dead, how they were able to turn their lives around using the mussar, having a sponsor, working the mussar in a clear cut, step by step program, not just something we hear today and forget tomorrow, etc...etc... If we could have all that in Mussar, then we would indeed have all we need to succeed...

The day I decided 'No More', it melted away like ice in the hot sun. That part was easy. When you want it, it is easy. AND I WANTED OUT. NO MORE.

This one sentence sums up the difference between those who don't need the 12-Steps, and those who do. It seems that you, Yakov, have a very powerful soul and a clear separation in your mind between soul and body. It's almost like two rooms for you. Once you chose with a strong resolve to enter the "soul room", you simply don't enter the "body room" any more. It's over. However, many people have their soul and bodies in **one room** and they can't figure out what they truly want. One second they truly "WANT OUT, NO MORE!" and the next second they can't hold back from the body's desires and forget all about the soul :D.. For such people, the best hope for long term success is the power of group support and "learning it as if life depends on it". And these things can only be found today in 12-Step groups, as far as I know.

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Re: 15+ years of battle - The Final Battle that will lead to victory
Posted by Dov - 09 Aug 2009 19:24

Dear Reb Yaakov -

It was very nice to read your post above and to see so much in common with another person. As far as I am concerned, you are yet another recovery person with whom to share when I need to, and I thank Hashem and you for that.

I will PM you some private stuff that may help us both.

Thanks again for sharing yourself this way and with love borne of understanding,

Dov

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