

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 Ykv_schwartz - 26 Feb 2009 18:26

Day 22.

Feeling great. Don't have much time to write, but b"h, the past three weeks have been very uplifting with no major nisyonos. My shemras eynayim is at an all time high. My control over hirhurim is at an all time high and I have taken this opportunity to fill my life with ruchniyus and begin to grow. I had spoken with R' Yair Shochet who does the hotline in Israel and the author of the book that Guard has been translating. He has been very helpful to me. I had asked what should I be doing now. I feel no urges, I feel 'cured' but I am nervous for the future. What do I do. He told me to not be nervous, and reiterated to me what GUE, Jack and battleworn told me and that is: to not be scared, as the y'h breeds off that. As you see from my other posts, I am quite concerned about this. This is a real thing. I feel like I should be actively doing something.

He told me just fill your life with kedusha and ruchniyus and let go.

Thanks everyone for being so supportive.

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Re: 15+ years of battle - The Final Battle that will lead to victory
Posted by Ykv_schwartz - 02 Mar 2009 21:03

Day 26.

B"H, all is well. bli eyin hara, no urges at all. I know that my brain is far from being rewired as I have elaborated on [this post](#), and I work every day to eradicate the potential of bad thoughts building up. I continue my avodas Hashem ascend by creating a chart of areas in my avodas Hashem that I want to work on. I go through my chart each day. As well as jot down different midos and aveiros that I feel I have violated. I keep my regimen of a small dosage of daily tehillim. And I constantly daven to Hashem to continue assisting me. I daven that I should never have urges to act out and if I do, I should have the strength to fight them. I daven to Hashem to give me insight how to continue growing and getting close to Him.

Thank you all for cheering me on. I have such wonderful friends here. May Hashem be with all of you!

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Re: 15+ years of battle - The Final Battle that will lead to victory
Posted by the.guard - 02 Mar 2009 21:41

26 is gematria shem havaya.

Yaakov, you are a divine spark of kedusha.

I wish everyone had your determination!

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Re: 15+ years of battle - The Final Battle that will lead to victory
Posted by Ykv_schwartz - 02 Mar 2009 21:47

Guard, whenever I even think your name I begin to cry. (yes, I am crying now). How fortunate I am to have you as my mentor. If I am spark of kedusha, you are an entire bonfire of kedusha.

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Re: 15+ years of battle - The Final Battle that will lead to victory
Posted by battleworn - 04 Mar 2009 14:26

"A bonfire of kedusha", I think that's right on the mark!

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Re: 15+ years of battle - The Final Battle that will lead to victory
Posted by boruch - 04 Mar 2009 22:41

[Ykv schwartz wrote on 02 Mar 2009 21:03:](#)

I daven that I should never have urges to act out and if I do, I should have the strength to fight them.

Hatzlocho Yaakov, the problem with fighting the urges is that it is counterproductive, it only increases the stress and pressures that feed the urge. Those who depend on *emotional* willpower and determination to win will lose as soon as they can no longer maintain the ever increasing emotional strength needed to contain the urge. That's the power of surrender. Not surrender out of weakness, but surrender out of strength and wisdom.

I was taking my addiction personally and it bothered me so much that when the urge struck, all the mussar I knew was out the window, and one way or another, it was almost as if, in my pride, cholilo, I was telling Hashem, "Get out of the way, while I take care of this one".

Then I joined the 12 steps group and as I described [here](#), through working the steps on my nisyonos, I came to realize that the urge to fight and confront the addiction with an all out emotional battle of wills is as damaging as the urge to succumb to the addiction. That is when I understood that the best way to fight the y"n was to be mevateil my rotzon to fight the yetzer hora directly. I realized that I needed to surrender my rotzon to Hashem's rotzon.

As the Rambam says in [Hilchos Issurei Biah \(21:19\)](#) "yasiya libo midivrei havai vehashchoso veyifaneh ledivrei torah", move the mind from empty and destructive thoughts and channel it to words of Torah. Yasiya, yefaneh, that's a smooth process, no struggle at all. So if we do it our way, and it becomes personal and we try and beat the y"n on our own terms we are asking for real trouble.

Thanks to the 12 steps group I joined, I learned to do it Hashem's way, which is that when a nisoyon comes we resist the urge to struggle and we resist the urge to take on the yetzer hora and instead we just immediately, absolutely and effortlessly switch channels to Torah, whether it is the Torah suggested by the Rebbe R' Elimelech in his tzetel koton, the drosho of Chazal on Venishmartem mikol dovor ra, shelo yeharher odom bayom veyovo lidei tuma balaylo, whether it is another possuk or mammar Chazal, whether it is a Shiur on a cellphone, or a Rashbo or Ketzos we remember, we just do what Hashem tells us to do, we focus on His Heilige Torah for as long as it takes and He will do the rest.

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Re: 15+ years of battle - The Final Battle that will lead to victory
Posted by the.guard - 04 Mar 2009 22:51

Boruch, your latest posts are so beautiful and true that they bring tears to my eyes! You are taking the "Chachma Bagoyim Ta'amin", these deep truths about the human spirit, and you are uplifting them into Kedusha and transposing them onto Chazal and Avodas Hashem. It's truly incredible. Maybe one day you'll write a book called "Torah and the 12-Steps?"

Anyway, this is gonna have to be a Chizuk e-mail sometime! I hope your dear friend Shomer is true to his word and joins you on your next trip. And I hope Shomer can open his mind to internalize new concepts as well as you did!

Shomer, I davened hard for you at the bris today. Now is a turning point for you.

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Re: 15+ years of battle - The Final Battle that will lead to victory
Posted by boruch - 05 Mar 2009 17:24

[guardureyes wrote on 04 Mar 2009 22:51:](#)

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Guard, the way I understand what is happening to me this is not even a question of chochmo bagoyim, because in reality how to fight the yetzer hora is Torah and Torah bagoyim al taamin. The way I understand this is that Ho'Elokim boro es ho'odom yoshor, Hashem created all humans, not just Yidden but einom yehudim too, with an inner sense of morality. Most of the time, human ego and negative attitudes get in the way and even we frum yidden lose that inner yashrus and moral compass, kal vochomer goyim. But when a person, any person, yid or goy, is really desperate, when all other options are lost and he turns to Hashem then he can reconnect to the inner yashrus, the inner moral compass.

It seems to me that this is exactly what happened to the people of Alcoholics Anonymous. Their language and ideas are clothed in christianity and so the 12 steps and the entire program seem and in reality are to a certain extent superficially distant from the Eibishter's Torah. As you know that initially bothered me immensely.

Additionally, in my opinion, they do a very poor job of explaining the program to the intelligent and thinking newcomer who does not see himself as entirely lost. They just tell you to work the steps and not philosophize them. Somewhere they have a point but they also make a big mistake.

The Steipler Gaon Zt"l was once approached by someone who was having great trouble being mekarev a yid to put on tefillin. The Steipler asked the mekarev how he was trying to achieve

his goal of getting the Yid to put on tefillin. The mekarev explained that the yid had said he first wanted to learn about tefillin and then when he understood the mitzvo he would start putting them on. The Steipler asked what wasn't working and the mekarev explained that they had been learning about tefillin for a very long time, but the more they learned the more she'eylos and kashyos the yid had about tefillin and at this rate he would never get to the mitzva. The Steipler advised the mekarev to try a different strategy and come back to him. He should tell the yid that they needed to continue learning about tefillin until all of his questions are answered but in the meantime he should start putting on tefillin every day because they have learned about them for long enough that it is time he experiences them.

The mekarev returned a week later absolutely amazed. Not only had the yid agreed to put on tefillin, in one week all of his questions were gone and this yid was ready to learn something new. The Steipler explained to the bewildered mekarev that **the derech of a person is to justify whatever he is currently doing**. So, as long as the yid was not putting on tefillin his natural urge was to explain and *justify why he was not wearing tefillin* and that was why he was asking all of his questions and no amount of answers satisfied him. As soon as the yid started putting on tefillin *he now had to justify why he was wearing tefillin* and that was why all of his questions were answered in no time at all, he now wanted to accept them yo justify what he was already doing.

So, the right approach to helping to thinking people understand the steps, is not by telling them, just do the steps. The right answer is, *do the steps and as you work them, we'll explain them*. This is exactly what happened to me. I decided to do whatever I could of the steps immediately. I decided in advance that I would compromise nothing of the Eibishter's Torah, no spin, no propaganda whatever I did of the steps would be subject to scrutiny, is this what the Eibishter says in his Heilige Torah. So, beginning with the venue, the group that seemed to be the best fit for me was being held in a place where there was a potential she'eylo lefi the remo of avizrayhu da'avodo zoro. Although many are meikil for lesser reasons than fighting addiction such as business etc. although my therapist told me that HoRav Dovid Cohen Shlita was mattir for addiction as well as business and although the tzorech for my Yiddishkeit was very great (vaday avizrahyu d'arayus bemeizid with nothing to be somech on) I decided that I would make no exceptions to the way I usually ask my she'eilos and before my very first meeting I tried for over an hour to reach the Philadelphia Rosh Yeshiva HaGaon HoRav Shmuel Kamenetzky Shlita by phone (I do not know HoRav Shmuel, which is why I ask him these type of she'eilos, because I will not disclose my addiction to any Rov or Odom Godol whom I know).

Well, I was already on my way to the meeting by car (it is an hour trip and so in case I would get permission I had to be on the way) and I was ready to turn back if he told me not to go. Well half way along the trip I finally got through and Horav Shmuel told me that I should go despite the venue and not to be concerned about any potential she'eilo in the circumstances.

Same when it came to step 3 of surrender I would do only what the Torah tells me to do even if it conflicted with the steps. To my amazement, not only was there no intrinsic conflict, thanks to the steps I was able to put what the Torah said into practice for the first time. Why, just last night I woke up in the middle of the night, very, very aroused and after a few moments of getting my bearings, thanks to the steps I knew what to do, I reached out for a pocket electronic device on which I had Shas with Rashi and under the covers (so as not to awake my wife) I learned the first omud and a half of maseches bovo kammo, with Rashi, le'iluy nishmas a recently departed korov of my wife (I had been mekabel to finish maseches bovo kammo in time for the yahrzeit) and I have now decided that mastering Bovo Kammo, first with Rashi and then eventually all the way through tosfos, rishonim, acharonim, Tur, Shulchan Oruch, nosei keilim and ketzos is my permanent seder bl"n for the rest of my life whenever I have a nisoyon. I am now quite confident that I will finish with Rashi, well in time for the yahrzeit and I am looking forward to mastering ketzos in a way that I had previously only dreamed of.

Now of course anyone could say, well ok, boruch was only able to learn in a nisoyon thanks to the 12 steps, but at the very least, now that I have read this post, I will do it without the 12 steps. I have a maaseh for that too.

The Brisker Rov Zt"l had a Gaon of a talmid, HoRav Yosef Liss Zt"l. When, many years ago, a certain most prominent Israeli Rabbi issued a "psak" being mattir a certain case of an issur kohol, and wrote a teshuva explaining his rationale, the Chelkas Yaakov, HaGaon Rav Breisch Zt"l of Switzerland entered into chilufei michtovim with the Israeli Rabbi to persuade him that his teshuva was flawed. The Brisker Rov Zt"l was deeply pained that rather than discourage the Israeli Rabbi, the discussion was only granting him more legitimacy and so he asked HoRav Liss Zt"l who had an excellent pen and was very persuasive to tell teh Chelkas Yaakov to stop. Horav Liss wrote the Chelkas Yaakov of how in a certain shtetl there was once a baal agolo who was a big "grobyan" (hooligan/ruffian) and a big am ho'oretz. He was never to be seen in the Beis Hamedrash. Then one day he turned up in teh Besi Hamedrash agitated and out of breath, of all things demanding the big Rif (in old times the Rif was published separately and as Rav Liss told it, the Volume of Rif in this shtetl's Beis Hamedrash was an ancient volume that was massive and bound in no less than wooden book covers). The talmidim in the Beis Hamedrash were astounded and could not understand what such a hooligan wanted with a Rif but they were curious and so they brought out the massive volume of Rif and gave it to him.

The baal agolo grabbed the Rif and flew out of the Beis Hamedrash, followed by the talmidim, who wanted to see what would happen next. They did not have to wait long. In moments the baal agolo had caught up with the town blacksmith with whom he was in a massive fight and was clobbering the blacksmith on the head with the heavy Rif.

Rav Liss told the Chelkas Yaakov that the Israeli Rabbi knew from the beginning, long before he had even considered the she'eilo that he was going to be mattir. It was muttar and that was all there was to it. So, in that case asked rav Liss, why bother even writing a teshuva? Because, like the baal agolo, the Israeli Rabbi wrote the teshuva which included prominent mention of a shittas horif was intended to use the Rif to clobber his opponents. the Israeli Rabbi was using the Rif to fight the gedolim and talmidei chachomim who were oiser by publicly claiming that he was right and by publicly claiming that kocho deheiteiro odif and the only reason for the oisrim was that they were not as great talmidei chachomim as he and did not know how to understand shittas horif as well as he did.

Rav Liss explained that since the Israeli Rabbi's teshuva was not the real reason for the hetter, it was only a weapon in his fight against the gedolim, there was nothing at all to be gained by discussing the merits of the weapon.

Nachzor le'inyoneinu. Let's get back to us and our addiction. There are two ways to turn to Torah in a time of nisoyon of hirhurei aveiro. The first is the baal agolo's way and it was my way too. I was in a very personal fight with the yetzer hora and I was going to fight it my way. Even if I had used Torah in a time of nisoyon it would have been my way of taking the Torah and clobbering the yetzer hora over the head with it. After all is said and done that is just another way of struggling and fighting the tuma while being immersed at the very same time in tuma. Tovel veshoretz beyodo.

In my opinion I sincerely believe that it is only by joining a 12 step group that we can get the environment to learn to OVERCOME the yetzer hora to struggle with tuma, eizehu gibbor hakovesh es yitzro --- one who has the strength to resist his urge to struggle with tuma and out of STRENGTH he instead surrenders to doing it Hashem's way, he is machnia himself to stop fighting tuma and accepts upon himself to do it the right way, to drop the fight and just follow Hashem's instructions.

Now in case anyone is still reading this hyperfocused post, we can make it real simple by analogy. Imagine someone who was chas vesholom nichshal in visiting a mokom, an entire district of botei zonos. As he does teshuva he becomes more and more outraged by the fact that there is such a terrible place and such terrible people. So he takes upon himself a one-man crusade against zenus by visiting the mokom znus, this district, every night and protesting and harrassing the zonos. Well, most of the time, at least he is successful in not being nichshal himself with the zonos, although he achieves nothing by his protests in terms of preventing anyone else's znus, everyone else just goes about their business as usual, slightly inconvenienced and annoyed. The only thing he does achieve is that at least once in a while despite or perhaps because of all his righteous indignation and zeal, somehow he is himself nichshal on a semi-regular basis to sleep with the very zonos he believes that he is harrassing.

What would we advise such a guy? sechor, sechor amrinon lenoziro, lekarmo lo sakriv, go away. Stop being so foolish!!! Stay far away!!!

The same goes for the yetzer hora, stop spending time with him on his territory, get far away. Think you can do this without the 12 steps groups? Do you think that you can **serenely** learn the Eibishter's Torah while the yetzer hora disturbs you with the most profane temptations? I wish you the best of luck, but it is at very least, much easier said than done. And **it is certainly a lot easier to do it a lot more effectively by joining a 12 step group.**

[guardureyes wrote on 04 Mar 2009 22:51:](#)

Maybe one day you'll write a book called "Torah and the 12-Steps?"

Anyway, this is gonna have to be a Chizuk e-mail sometime!

Before I do that I'll first collect various posts of mine, edit them and put them on one of my 12 step threads in a format that is easy to implement one piece at a time.

[guardureyes wrote on 04 Mar 2009 22:51:](#)

I hope your dear friend Shomer is true to his word and joins you on your next trip. And I hope Shomer can open his mind to internalize new concepts as well as you did!

Shomer, I davened hard for you at the bris today. Now is a turning point for you.

Guard, a big Mazel Tov on your simcha and you should be zocheh legadlo leTorah, Chuppah massim tovim, he should be a true tzaddik, chossid and eved Hashem. You must be tired because this is Yaakov's journal and not Shomer's. Due to scheduling Shomer has chosen another SA group and he will be going alone. He is good to his word and these posts are for Yaakov who has so far not said anything about joining a 12 step group.

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Re: 15+ years of battle - The Final Battle that will lead to victory
Posted by Ykv_schwartz - 05 Mar 2009 19:40

[boruch wrote on 04 Mar 2009 22:41:](#)

[Ykv_schwartz wrote on 02 Mar 2009 21:03:](#)

I daven that I should never have urges to act out and if I do, I should have the strength to fight them.

Hatzlocho Yaakov, the problem with fighting the urges is that it is counterproductive, it only increases the stress and pressures that feed the urge.

Boruch, you missed the point greatly. The key element here is davening. This is a basic 12-step principle known as let go and let G-d. A person needs to constantly daven to Hashem to protect himself from Y"H. He must believe that only Hashem can save him. And believe me when I say that the 12 steps cannot help without tefilla. This is well known from kiddushin and succah, that without Hashem's help, a person cannot conquer his Y"H. As you say, that is coupled with the fact that a person is sunken in Torah, which B"H I spend the greater part of my day doing (13 hours). But he needs both things. He needs to be sunken in Torah. But a person needs to constantly daven to be protected. The Gemara at the end of kiddushin (81a, a few lines down from where they get wide) tells a series of five stories dealing with man's fight with the Y"H. The gemara makes it clear that a person is completely powerless to the Y"H without Hashem's help. And the Gemara goes on to say that a person must daven for it. I advice you to go through each story carefully. We know this concept from our own davening. We mention all the time in our davening that we should be saved from the Y"H. And I can tell you that I say this with tears. I have no urges. And I have had none for a month now. But I also know that I went six month completely clean. I barely had urges all that time. And I mean it. And suddenly I was

attacked. Now I introspected to figure out what went wrong. I posted my finds in another area of this site. Guard included it as a chizzuk email today. One thing I realized that I stopped doing, was daveing. I felt cured and I thought the problem was finished and I go back to life. There were other issues, but amongst them was davening. So I now continue to daven.

Now what do you daven for? So, I said "I daven that I should never have urges to act out and if I do, I should have the strength to fight them." Now I believe this is an appropriate formula. Do you disagree? Boruch, What do you daven for? How do you daven. Do you say the Pasuk from zecharia? When a person gets struck with the Y"H, at that moment he needs willpower to overcome it. At the moment of truth you do not have 12-steps with you. No one is watching. You are all alone. Yes, you can get up and learn Torah. But that takes willpower. You can get up and yell at your Y"H. But that takes willpower. As a 16 year old I knew this. And every time I would fall, I would cry why hadn't I gone to the beis medresh to save myself. But the answer is strength. I had none. Where does a person derive his strength? From Hashem. We daven to Hashem that if Chas V'Shalom we are tested, we should have the strength to fight the Y"H. It is for no small reason that our Rabbis call us a person a Gibor that fights his Y"H. It is strength. But he gets that from Hashem. I doubt that you disagree with any I say which is why I was surprised that you commented on my tefilla. Nothing you said addressed that issue. Now it could be that you are at a different stage then I am and therefore you are focusing on different issues in your tefilla. It could be that your addiction is different than mine and therefore could not relate to my small tefilla. I don't know. [But you need to be careful when you attack someone's avodas Hashem. I have built for myself a tailor made day that is based on sifrei mussar, pasukim, and gedolim that fits my personality, struggles and schedule. I put a lot of thought into what I do. perhaps, next time you disagree with someone's approach to avodas Hashem you should try to gain insight rather than attack.]

Now, obviously, like everything in life, a person must come up with strategies how to fight his Y"H. But the strategies depend on where you are holding. I sense that you are still at a level that you constantly get tested. You seem to have urges and need to know how to deal with this. I do not know. For you, the 12 steps might be a wonderful thing. But that does not mean that everyone on this forum necessarily needs it the same way you do. Yes, I see the advantage of it. In fact, I did it myself. And I continue to do it. I do not do it in a group. I do it all alone. I spend a large portion of my day in teshuva, introspection, and tefilla. I go through each step carefully. I prefer not to go into detail as to what I do. The main thing is focusing on yourself and getting in touch and changing your inner self, which is indeed possible. I have changed greatly in the past years. My struggled continued, but I gained great insight into myself and others and learned to work and change myself. My urges have diminished greatly where I finally came to a point where I went six months with no urges, except once. And that one time I fought my Y"H. I described how earlier on this post. For you, the 12 steps in a group setting is helping you learn yourself. I think that is great. Kol Hakavod to you. But as you describe what the 12 steps gave you, shows that the focus for you was getting in touch with yourself and your desires. You learned not only the concept that one must mevatel the ratzon to Hashem but you finally learned what that means and how to do it. And this is a valuable tool for life. And is the key for all inyanei kedusha and perishus. I wish you success with your growth. You took a first

major step. You seemed to have begun changing yourself. As you pointed out many times, understanding all the mussar is not enough. One must internalize it. But that does mean one cannot get there without your group. I discuss mussar topics all the time with a group of friends to undertsand avodas Hashem. I am, B"H, exposed to many chasuva people. I attend vaadim, etc.

[boruch wrote on 04 Mar 2009 22:41:](#)

Those who depend on *emotional* willpower and determination to win will lose as soon as they can no longer maintain the ever increasing emotional strength needed to contain the urge. That's the power of surrender. Not surrender out of weakness, but surrender out of strength and wisdom.

This, I believe, is a fundamental point in ones growth. I, of course, never said anything to the contrary. As I explained above, I was addressing the tefilla aspect and that is it. I was not discussing an emotional willpower to overcome the Y"H. However, the funny thing is, is that I was going to discuss this topic at greater length on my post tonight, but instead I ended addressing your post. Well, maybe, at a later point I will elaborate on this topic. For now, I need to to get back to my work.

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Re: 15+ years of battle - The Final Battle that will lead to victory
Posted by Ykv_schwartz - 05 Mar 2009 20:26

Day 30. And feeling great.

I have been focusing on the concept of simcha in the past week, trying to understand what it truly means and what are all the aspects of simcha. I, of course draw upon the works of mussar (chovos halevovos, Rabeinu Yona, Orchos tzadikim, Rambam, maharal, etc) and the Tehillim.

I plan to go to the kosel on Sunday again. If anyone has special requests, please post them in the announcement section.

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Re: 15+ years of battle - The Final Battle that will lead to victory
Posted by the.guard - 05 Mar 2009 20:44

What can I say. You guys, Boruch and Yaakov, are just **ATOM BOMBS**. I am just blown clean away by the sincerity, determination, and down-right HARD WORK. You two are shaking all the worlds with your Avodah, I am sure of THAT!

Yesterday's Chizuk e-mail was from Yaakov, and today's from Boruch. 333 people are being inspired by you guys!

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Re: 15+ years of battle - The Final Battle that will lead to victory
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Hatzlocho Yaakov, the problem with fighting the urges is that it is counterproductive, it only increases the stress and pressures that feed the urge.

Boruch, you missed the point greatly. The key element here is davening.

Yaakov, first an introduction. I will be very open with you. As a rule, unlike many such as yourself, I don't post on people's journals. That is with two exceptions. Shomer was one. When I saw what he wrote, and I am his accountability partner and close friend and realized what he meant, and so I challenged him to join the groups. He was very unreceptive originally and now he has come a very long way in a very short time. That said, I am not your accountability partner and do not even know you, so what did you do to deserve this tzoro of having boruch invade your journal?

Here's what you did. You asked me about medication and in addition to your knowledge, involvement and awareness of mussar you displayed **intelligence, openness and a desire to improve**. Yes, in hindsight it is true that when you asked about ADHD you didn't think you were an expert in either ADHD or medication, you did not have firmly entrenched ideas on medication and you were more open on that issue.

But Yaakov, intelligence, openness and desire to improve are character traits, they are middos that you have and they transcend any one topic or area. You can use them across the board. Even in areas where you want to believe that you already have all the answers and where you feel that you will be undermining your system built in years. Your intelligence, openness and desire to improve will show you that your fears are at once normal and natural but at the same time they are entirely ungrounded.

So that introduction done, let's get to tachlis. I looked at your latest post and we are talking at cross-purposes, and I fear that in reality it is you who has greatly missed the point. I never discussed what you said about davening and there is much to be said about that too, most of which we are probably in agreement.

So let's put all the misunderstanding behind us and once and for all make this really clear, so that you understand the significance of a word that you have used and keep using. You wrote that you daven for **the strength to fight**. You wrote about your fear. **All of that shouts out aloud concern about your fear of what will happen in a moment of nisoyon. Will you have the strength?** That was and still is my point. So we are not talking about 13 hours of learning when not in nisoyon. We are not talking about hours of davening when not in nisoyon. We are talking about what to do in a moment of nisoyon. Anyone who has done the steps with a group knows that in addition to working the 12 steps in general in life as a whole, in a moment of nisoyon you need to work the first through third steps to survive.

So addressing implementing the 1st through 3rd step in a moment of nisoyon, as I posted earlier, there is no submission to Hashem if you are not prepared to implement Hashem's prescription for a moment of nisoyon. And if you are honest you will look at the Rambam and see that it is very clear beyond any doubt that the Rambam is discussing what to actually do in a moment of nisoyon. The place for tefila is all in advance. L'olom yispallel odom shelo yechleh... However once we are in the actual situation of a nisoyon, tefila is the wrong approach. In this specific instance of nisoyon of hirhurei zenus the Rambam is very clear. And in fact in all nisyonos of yetzer hora chazal say moshcheihu lebeis hamedrash. And as you well know the mesilas yeshorim says that torah is the tavlin and no other approach will work.

[Ykv_schwartz wrote on 05 Mar 2009 19:40:](#)

When a person gets struck with the Y"H, at that moment he needs willpower to overcome it. At the moment of truth you do not have 12-steps with you.

You do not have the 12 steps because you don't put 6 hours a week into attending 12 steps groups. lo yogatta velo motzoso. It doesn't have to be 6 hours but if you are not joining a group you did nothing so you don't have them.

[Ykv_schwartz wrote on 05 Mar 2009 19:40:](#)

No one is watching. You are all alone. Yes, you can get up and learn Torah. But that takes willpower.

When you are heavily invested and heavily invested in the groups it takes no willpower at all. It comes naturally.

[Ykv_schwartz wrote on 05 Mar 2009 19:40:](#)

I doubt that you disagree with any I say which is why I was surprised that you commented on my tefilla. Nothing you said addressed that issue.

As you agreed Yaakov I was not addressing that issue, so don't be surprised by any comments on tefilla you thought I made --- because as you agree yourself I never made them.

[Ykv_schwartz wrote on 05 Mar 2009 19:40:](#)

But you need to be careful when you attack someone's avodas Hashem. I have built for myself a tailor made day that is based on sifrei mussar, pasukim, and gedolim that fits my personality, struggles and schedule. I put a lot of thought into what I do. perhaps, next time you disagree with someone's approach to avodas Hashem you should try to gain insight rather than attack.

Dearest Yaakov, we are on the same side and I did not use one negative word in addressing you. I have seen a lot of determination and indeed much openness in your posts. I admire your sincerity and purity. That's why I believe that you have what it takes to do it right and do it the whole way. To make the fights and the fear a thing of the past.

[Ykv_schwartz wrote on 05 Mar 2009 19:40:](#)

Now, obviously, like everything in life, a person must come up with strategies how to fight his Y"H. But the strategies depend on where you are holding. I sense that you are still at a level that you constantly get tested. You seem to have urges and need to know how to deal with this. I do not know. For you, the 12 steps might be a wonderful thing. But that does not mean that everyone on this forum necessarily needs it the same way you do. Yes, I see the

advantage of it. In fact, I did it myself. And I continue to do it. I do not do it in a group. I do it all alone. I spend a large portion of my day in teshuva, introspection, and tefilla. I go through each step carefully. I prefer not to go into detail as to what I do. The main thing is focusing on yourself and getting in touch and changing your inner self, which is indeed possible. I have changed greatly in the past years. My struggled continued, but I gained great insight into myself and others and learned to work and change myself. My urges have diminished greatly where I finally came to a point where I went six months with no urges, except once. And that one time I fought my Y"H. I described how earlier on this post.

Yaakov, I like you a lot. What you described in your post is not what Chazal and the Rambam say and you owe it to yourself to open up to a new way of doing things that is far superior to what you have done until now. As you put it so well when discussing medication it is not because you are not lost now that you cannot improve.

[Ykv_schwartz wrote on 05 Mar 2009 19:40:](#)

But that does mean one cannot get there without your group. I discuss mussar topics all the time with a group of friends to undersand avodas Hashem. I am, B"H, exposed to many chasuva people. I attend vaadim, etc.

And doing it your way, you did not get beyond the fear, nor did you get beyond fighting. Yaakov, now that you know what my point is go back and read all my posts to this thread.

And I'll say this again, I am challenging you so openly because like Shomer, you can take the challenge. It doesn't have to be a day before you are ready but you owe it to yourself to digest what I wrote and keep it in mind for when you are ready.

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Re: 15+ years of battle - The Final Battle that will lead to victory
Posted by the.guard - 05 Mar 2009 21:43

keep it in mind for when you are ready

I agree with Boruch on this. You are doing great now Yaakov. Keep up the same tactics, you are truly a "Yagata Umatzasah" in my opinion. But if Chas veshalom there's a relapse, you'll know what you have to do.

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Re: 15+ years of battle - The Final Battle that will lead to victory
Posted by Ykv_schwartz - 05 Mar 2009 22:24

Boruch, I prefer not to debate you. I spend most of my day debating people, but when it comes to avodas hashem, I stay far away from debate. The wrong things come out of people's words in these moments and it is not worth it.

You wrote that you daven for the strength to fight. You wrote about your fear. All of that shouts out aloud concern about your fear of what will happen in a moment of nisosyon. Will you have the strength?.That was and still is my point.

Listen, if you prefer not to daven for this then don't. But do not spoil my avodas hashem because you do not like to daven to be saved in a nisayon. If you have another formula for davening, please share it. But this is the formula of the davening presented in kiddushin.

Again, I am not debating. If you have your understanding of avodas hashem, go ahead. But I do not understand why I cannot daven for this? And I do not understand how the 12-steps is a contradiction to davening. They are two separate points.

If your point is the fear, well, I do believe a person should be on guard and concerned at all moments. He should realize the potential danger lurking inside. So, if the 12 steps has brought you up to NO FEAR, kol hakavod to you. But, on the other hand, you have not even reached 90

days, why are you so sure about yourself? I do not mean to cast a spell on you, I am just wondering what your thinking is? IF you believe the 12 steps empowered you enough for any nisayon, that you for sure have the strength to pull away [do not forget ??? ????? ???] without Hashem's help, I do not know what to say. I put all my trust in Hashem. I believe it is he can save me. Look at the Gemara in kiddushih, where great tannayim(Rabbi Meir, Rabbi Akiva) were saved from the Y"H of arayos only because Hashem pulled the Y"H out from them at the last moment. He did not allow the Y"H to remain within them. The Torah saved them. But not because they were strong enough on their own to run to the beis medresh. On the contrary, they ran after the lady. Now, I do not know if the Gemara is to be taken literally, but the message is clear. The Gemara at the end of the first perek(daf 40) brings a story of three great Rabbis who were willing to do anything to save them selves including jumping off a roof and jumping in a fire. That takes great strength. Where did they get that strength from? From Hashem. The Gemara comments on daf 81 about these individuals that they are quite unique. And even Rav himself was not sure if he would have the strength. Take a look at Rav Yaakov Emden's auto-biography where he describes his own nisayon with the Y"H of zenus. He comments about himself that his nisayon was greater than Yosef Hatzaddik's. Basically, his niece seduced him. And he was tempted. He was proud of himself for standing the test. But he discusses the great struggle. Now, I daven I should never have any nisayon. And if I do, I should have the strength like all the above great Rabbanim to be saved. This requires siyata d'shmaya. But, obviously, a person needs to be willing to fight at shaas maaseh. With a Hashem's help he can be saved and can have the determination and strength to pick himself up and do what he needs to do. But he also needs zechus Torah to be saved.

So I cannot seem to figure out where we disagree. I doubt you disagree that it takes strength and determination to fight the Y"H. You know it is not easy. You also know that just because a person went six months and without urges and test, it is possible he will be tested again. To say impossible is not true. And you know that it when that test comes again, it will require some strength to stop himself. If not, well ,that is not a test. And even to take oneself to the beis medresh requires strength. And you know that the ultimate strength comes from Hashem, through a real determination from the person. And you know that through tefilla you can connect to Hashem. And you know that it is important to daven to Hashem for the Y"H. So where are disagreeing?

Anyone who has done the steps with a group knows that in addition to working the 12 steps in general in life as a whole, in a moment of nisoyon you need to work the first through third steps to survive.

I cannot seem to follow most of what you are talking about. Perhaps you do not understand me. I do not seem to disagree with most of your words. The idea of the first three steps has been a very fundamental cornerstone in my work. As I stated, I used the 12 steps for personal growth. It continues to have a major impact on my life and approach. I have stated that from the start on my posts. Did I ever negate the concept of the 12 steps.. Did I ever say that it is not worthy approach? And what do you think those steps tell us? To put our wills and lives over to Hashem. How do you do that? Talk ti him. Daven to Him. This comes clearer when you get to step 9. (I do not know which step you are holding on). "We fervently prayed to forge a constant, joyous connection to G-d, and spoke to him out loud, on a regular basis as a man speaks to a friend, admitting our weaknesses and fears, and asking for His help in all of our doings, placing special importance on the recital of Tehillim" . This stage was an intense stage for me. And I continue.

What you described in your post is not what Chazal and the Rambam say and you owe it to yourself to open up to a new way of doing things that is far superior to what you have done until now.

I cannot seem to understand what you are referring to. What precisely about what I am doing is against the Rambam and chazal? Did I do something that they say not to do? Precisely, which Rambam and which chazal are you referring to? As I sift through your word I cannot discern a difference in your words and mine except the fact that you seem to negate fearing sin and davening to be saved in times of a nisayon, neither of which I can find a chazal on. So please quote it. In fact, I recall the opposite is true. Is it the fact that chazal talk about doing the 12 steps in a group setting. And if a person does not he is violating an aveira (I do not recall such a chazal). Please clarify. Is it the fact that I like to introspect to understand myself and the Y"H? Read the chovos halevovos, shaar yichud hamaaseh, where he elaborates on the Y"H, and how important it is to understand. This has also been a fundamental point that Rav Yisroel Salanter spoke about. A person needs to get in touch with himself. Undertsand the subtleties of anger and gaava, and taava within.

Perhaps, for clarity sake, can you share with us what your struggles have been since you have been clean. I am getting this feeling that the nature of your addiction is different than mine.

Last point:Avodas Hashem is complex in nature. There are many components. There are

different approaches to different issues that are relevant at different times. One cannot simply take a line from Gemara and a line of Rabeinu Yona there and say he understands it. If you read Mishei, one of the basic themes is the concept of understanding. You find there the idea of understanding what Yiras Shamayim means. Understanding avodas hashem is itself an avodah. And every person will apply it differently and will understand it differently. As we grow, we understand more. (see chovos halevoso shaar avodash elokim) A person has to have the goals set straight based on the classic works. The precise way how he fights the Y"H might be different for different people. It may change based on the generation. There are core principles to focus on, but the details can change. The famous sefer, cheshbon HaNefesh, which Rav Yisroel Salanter encouraged to be printed again, makes this concept clear at the beginning of his sefer. He writes that in the olden days people had great Yiras Shamayim and it was easy to prevent themselves from aveirs, but in our days we need a new approach. And he presents his approach, which I base a lot of what I do on. It is perfect for an ADHDer.

He himself ends the sefer with the fight with zenus. And this is what he says:

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I am not good at translating (maybe guard can do that), but he makes it clear that a person will have to fight and he needs Hashem Help, and he should cling to Hashem for that help. In the previous paragraphs he mentions what chazal say about going to ythe besi medresh as being the best advice but points out that it takes determination and not everyone can persist.

He ends of by saying that a person can indeed rewire his brain, but it will takes a few years. But a person should have bitachon that Hashem will rewire his brain.

Lets all be zoche to fight and destroy our Y"H, each in his own way, and come to teshuva shleima.

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