

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 the.guard - 18 Mar 2009 11:06

Wow! Look at that, he made one more Ba'al Teshuvah with his passing!

Is it already 40+ days since he passed away?

May his zechus stand for you in your struggle!

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Re: 15+ years of battle - The Final Battle that will lead to victory
Posted by battleworn - 18 Mar 2009 16:36

I was just worried that

- 1) you shouldn't overwhelm yourself, which can lead to giving up chas veshalom, down the line
- 2) people shouldn't see your posts and think Teshuvah is too hard and give up.

Rabeinu Guard, the Chofetz Chayim said that people need to know that Teshuva is not a "bear" IE: it's not something to be scared of. But I think that when people see to what heights teshuva is taking our holy friend ykv, they could only become envious and want to do the same. You could plainly see what Chazal meant when they said "Gedolah teshuva shemagaas ad kisei hakavod" and the closer you get to there the more you experience "oz vichedva bimkomo"

Don't look to feel broken about it and shed endless tears

Many tzadikim said that a person should set aside specific times for these things and the rest of the time concentrate only on the present and be bisimcha. How often and how much depends on the person. If it's getting you down and interfering with your growth then you know that it's obviously too much.

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.

I've kept silent on this issue for a long time for two reasons. First of all, I try very hard to avoid confrontation. I've learned from a lot of experience that debate gets you nowhere at best. So, as much as I have said on this forum, there's just as much that I've refrained from saying.

Second of all, before commenting, I took a lot of time to make sure I really understood the issue properly.

It's plainly obvious, that the 12 step groups are an absolutely amazing thing.

But listen to this: To me it's seems clear that going to R' Tvi Meir *instead* of the 12 groups, is **at least a 100 times as amazing**. So why don't I push R' Tvi Meir, like some people push the groups?

The answer is, because I try not to project myself on to other people. In my humble opinion this truly wonderful forum could use a little more open-mindedness (I'm not talking at all about Rabeinu Guard) Just because ploni didn't have emunah before he went to the groups, it doesn't mean that everyone is like that. Just because Almoni suffered abuse, it doesn't mean that we all did. Etc... Personally, I don't believe that the groups are appropriate for ykv at all (The fundamental differences between him and boruch are quite obvious to me) But I know I could be wrong.

So I want to make the following suggestion: Let's all continue to share our wisdom and experiences -others can learn a tremendous amount from them- but please don't stuff other people in to your mold. Thank you!

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Re: 15+ years of battle - The Final Battle that will lead to victory
Posted by Ykv_schwartz - 18 Mar 2009 19:52

Is it already 40+ days since he passed away?

His levaya was on thursday feb 5. That day gave me a tremendous boost. The following day, Feb 6, was my first major post. And it was on Feb 8, That I made my [official declaration of teshuvah](#), after dwelling in intense teshuvah/tefilla over shabbos.

The Shloshim was two weeks ago from tomorrow. It was at night. I actually went to Aish Hatorah to listen to part of it. Rav Uri Zohar was the first speaker.

May his zechus stand for you in your struggle!

May his zechus stand for all of us baalei teshuva on this site and the world.

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

Posted by Ykv_schwartz - 18 Mar 2009 19:54

Day 43. Beginning Week 7. Feeling great.

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

Posted by the.guard - 21 Mar 2009 22:25

I moved the discussion called: "Think you can do this without the 12 steps groups?" to the "Breaking Free" Board [over here](#). It was a wonderful thread, but it doesn't really belong on Yaakov's Log - especially since he hasn't even been part of this particular discussion really.

Yaakov, I updated your chart to 46 days.

Level 5: "Kabbalas Hatorah" at 50 days coming up soon!

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

Posted by Ykv_schwartz - 26 Mar 2009 21:39

beginning the 8th week.

B"H, all is well. I continue to work on myself in all areas. My main general avodah has been focusing on appreciating Hashem in all my life.

My midos refinement has been focused on self-control and desires (how appropriate). B"H, I have had no urges to act out, but I focus on why I have had lack of control in the past. And I look into my life on a day to day basis and realized that in a very subtle way, I do not have total control. Control over my eyes was a process, but at this point I stopped looking at any woman. And I realized with a bit of determination a person can really have control (just ask Hashem for help and then do hishtadlus). I do not consider it a difficult task at all. From the start of my journey I have been focus on controlling my mind. This means that when a bad thought would enter, a person should not let it linger. He needs to dispell it right away. And B"H, my only "unclean" thoughts were only in reference to my own wife. Those are not "unclean" thoughts I did not consider an issue. But now I realized that all sexual thoughts are not healthy and are all stemming from man's lusting physicality. And indeed I began controlling my mind in this area as well. And it has changed my life and my marriage. This was something I could never do in the past. Self control of the mind has become relevant to me in other areas like anger and frustration. In the past, when someone would do something that would get me angry, my anger would only build up. I have now realized that I can control my thoughts. After the thought enters, just dispel it.

I still continue with my teshuvah process that I described above. I am still putting my focus on charata, which as I pointed out above is not a simple issue. But it builds on you. Teshuvah for this aveira can take years. Every sunday I have been saying parshas teshuvah and the vidui. This way I can formally confess my sins once a week. It is very special. We need to learn from Dovid Hamelech.

On top of that I began to write out all the tricks of the yetzer hara that he has played on me. I use the gemara in succa that states the seven names of the yetzer hara, as my guide. I have

been writing up a few explanations of each names and how it pertained to my life in the past. This has been become more of a fun hobbie than anything else.

I began sharing with my wife some of my childhood memories that haunt me which caused my problems in the first place. Every time I talk about my youth I cry. But as long as one does not get depressed over this, it can be very helpful to lift oneself out of it. The reason I cry is only because I am so emotional.

I continue to read taharas hakodesh. It has been a very inspiring sefer and helpful. He explains concepts and gives advice. I focus on the areas that are relevant to me.

For my kavana in davening, I try to have extra kavana in tka shofar in shemone esrei. We know that all the mekubalim explain how this bracha relates to spilling the seed. I still keep up trying to have proper kavana in first pasuk in shma.

For me it is bein hazmanim now. During bein Hazmanin I do review in gemaras that I have not learned in a while. I started today. For me that is so invigorating. My wife had already told me to make sure to keep up my regular mussar/cheshbon hanefesh seder. She realized how much I gained from this. So I will try to maintain a proper seder for these things.

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Re: 15+ years of battle - The Final Battle that will lead to victory
Posted by the.guard - 26 Mar 2009 22:59

This is a very great soul!

Yaakov, if you find parts of the taharas Hakodesh that you think could especially help people, please post translations.. I would like to use them for future Chizuk e-mails...

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

Posted by the.guard - 28 Mar 2009 23:07

Chart updated! Maza Tov on reaching Level 5 - Kabbalas Hatorah!

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

Posted by Ykv_schwartz - 31 Mar 2009 13:44

It is Bein Hazmanim for me

This means more time at home more time on the computer. During this time, I put extra time into work so to properly support my family. This has, in the past, been extremely challenging for me. I do have ADHD and to concentrate can be challenging unless I am learning Torah, which I have a passion for. As I would sit at my desk and try to focus on my work, my head would drift and I could not focus on my work and I would drift away into another world... This would lead to terrible consequences. Last year, after Pesach, I fell so bad I did not know what to do. But yet, on rosh chodesh Iyar I picked myself up and went six months. I survived almost two whole bein hazmanims. It was on the LAST day of bein hazmanim after succos (Oct 28, 2008) that I fell after those six months. I could not get back up. I tried and tried. Until finally I found GUE (and many other factors) and found that strength. I picked myself up on Feb 5. And here I am 55 days later experiencing bein hazmanim again, almost a whole year after my initial rise.

Even though I know I have no urges, it can come at any moment without a blink of an eye. So what should I do to protect myself? Well for one, I check GUE constantly. This gives me something to do when I get frustrated with work. I have to make sure projects are completed. But I take healthy breaks. I daven a lot to Hashem to protect me. I remind myself all the times how much I hate p*. Whenever I think of it, I just think of vomiting (sorry about the vulgar language). I keep a stack of seforim on my desk. I have shaarei teshuvah, cheshbon henefesh, taharas hakodesh, rambam hilchos teshuvah, hilchis korban pesach, mishnayos, hagados, hilchos pesach seforim. Whenever I feel a bit bored I pick up a sefer. I also take about half hour to an hour to focus on teshuvah, using shaarei teshuvah and taharas Hakodesh. This is on top of my regular sedarim that I maintain during bein hazmanim. I am reviewing parts of pesachim now. And learning new halachic sugyas with a chavrusa.

I have a lot to grow. But if I ever get down about something or if life looks gloomy, I remind myself that I have one great accomplishment that brings nachas ruach to Hashem. He knows the efforts I have been putting in. He knows how pained I have been. He knows I cry sincerely. He knows all I want is to come close to Him. If I ever have a difficulty appreciating what Hashem has given me, there is one great gift that I can never overlook: MYSELF. He gave me a

NEW self. All I did was ask and try. I am so thankful for this. This is a miracle and I recognize it.

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Re: 15+ years of battle - The Final Battle that will lead to victory
Posted by boruch - 01 Apr 2009 02:34

[Ykv_schwartz wrote on 31 Mar 2009 13:44:](#)

It is Bein Hazmanim for me

This means more time at home more time on the computer. During this time, I put extra time into work so to properly support my family. This has, in the past, been extremely challenging for me. I do have ADHD and to concentrate can be challenging unless I am learning Torah, which I have a passion for. As I would sit at my desk and try to focus on my work, my head would drift and I could not focus on my work and I would drift away into another world... This would lead to terrible consequences. Last year, after Pesach, I fell so bad I did not know what to do. But yet, on rosh chodesh Iyar I picked myself up and went six months. I survived almost two whole bein hazmanims. It was on the LAST day of bein hazmanim after succos (Oct 28, 2008) that I fell after those six months. I could not get back up. I tried and tried. Until finally I found GUE (and many other factors) and found that strength. I picked myself up on Feb 5. And here I am 55 days later experiencing bein hazmanim again, almost a whole year after my initial rise.

Even though I know I have no urges, it can come at any moment without a blink of an eye. So what should I do to protect myself?

Yaakov,

I wish I could help more but as you will see from my post on the other thread, my experience is very limited.

For most of my 36 years of addiction I was not really serious, and then when I got serious on January 19th, I was deadly serious. I'll tell you what I mean by that. As you probably know the Magid of Dubno in Ohel Yaakov quotes the Gr"a who explains on the posuk of lapesach chatos

roveitz that the yetzer hora only has power where there is uncertainty, but when a person is totally and absolutely resolute there is nothing in the World the yetzer hora can do. Well from January 19 on, there was absolutely no way, how, shape or form that I was ever going back to my ex-addiction.

Now as I freely pointed out in my other post, I may be delusional (if the delusion lasts until 120 I), but the point is that my experience will not necessarily be useful for you, because B"H so far, from Day 1, my issue has not been whether I would fall, but rather how to cope with not falling.

The best moshol/analogy I can give you is that coping with my addiction when I first stopped was like someone fasting on Yom Kippur who gets very very hungry. There is no way in the World that they are going to eat, the only question is how to cope with the hunger. So that's how I was in the beginning when I was still fighting my addiction. Then, of course as you well know came the steps and I had a whole new way of life, I have not even had a temptation since March 5th and if I would get one I would work Steps 1-3 and learn some more bovo kammo. But what concerns me is that my own not so typical personal experience in which I was only struggling with withdrawal and not with the addiction, compared to the experience of many others, is less analogous to what I am hearing from you.

I would think that if we were to limit ourselves to personal experience only, Shomer's experience will probably be more instructive than mine.

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Re: 15+ years of battle - The Final Battle that will lead to victory
Posted by the.guard - 04 Apr 2009 21:14

Yaakov, I updated your chart to 60 days. Mazal Tov. You're 2/3 to 90!

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Re: 15+ years of battle - The Final Battle that will lead to victory
Posted by Ykv_schwartz - 18 Apr 2009 21:00

day 73. Doing Great!

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Re: 15+ years of battle - The Final Battle that will lead to victory
Posted by battleworn - 19 Apr 2009 14:56

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Re: 15+ years of battle - The Final Battle that will lead to victory
Posted by Ykv_schwartz - 19 Apr 2009 15:38

I want to share with everyone a beautiful vort I read yesterday from the nesivos shalom. I think this can serve to be a great inspiration for all of us:

Rashi brings down that when Aharon was asked to bring the korbanos on the eighth day he was embarrassed because he was reminded of the chet HaEgel. Moshe said to aharon, "why are you embarrassed, for this you were chosen". The obvious question is that Aharon had a good reason to be embarrassed; he sinned. He begins by explaining that Aharon's involvement was completely without bechira and therefore there was no reason to feel embarrassed. However, the fact that Aharon was involved, albeit without bechira, made him brokenhearted and embarrassed. He then proceeds to quote from R' Chaim Vital who explains that Moshe was telling Aharon that because you are embarrassed and brokenhearted over your sins, you were chosen for greatness. Precisely Aharon was zoche to bring the hashraas Hashechina down, not Moshe. Why? Because Aharon had the Medareiga of embarrassment and brokenhearted. This is the meaning of ????? ????? ?? ???? , which Dovid Hamelech states at the end of the chapter 51.

It gets better. For the seven days of the milium Moshe Rabeinu put up the mishkan and then took it down. Why? because the hashraas Hashechina did not come. He writes that this is symbolic of the derech of teshuva. A baal Teshuva tries very hard to build his personal mishkan fro hashraas Hashechina, but then fails and his mishkan falls down. He needs to try again. And no matter what, he keeps trying until finally he will reach the eighth day, (above natural forces) and he will be zoche to teshuva. Eight is symbolic of teshuva. So, davka on the eighth day, which is the maaleh of teshuvah were bnei Yisrole zoche to teshuva, and it was accomplished by Aharon who had the madreiga of embarrassment and brokenhearted from the

chet HaEgel.

We should all be zoche to take our broken spirits and bring kedusha into our lives as we come close to Hashem. And may we be zoche to turning the broken pieces of the past into beautiful jugs of kedusha.

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