

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 - 27 Apr 2009 21:46

[shomer wrote on 21 Apr 2009 02:33:](#)

The Villna Goan states ... how should a person know what their purpose and personal *nissayon* for coming to this world is? What is our most intimate and personal challenge that is the reason for our very creation?

The Villna Goan answers ... it is that which is *most difficult* for us and that which challenges us *most frequently*.

For many of us here ... battling and ultimately defeating this y"ch may be the reason why we were brought down to this world in the first place.

Shomer,

B"H, I found the source. The Steipler mentions it in one of his letters. The Gra Can be found in Sefer Yona 4:3. Sefer Yona is about Gilgul. A gilgul means that the neshama comes back to this world to fix things in the previous life. The GRA explains that the neshama has one major mitzvah to fix in his return to the world. This is the one major aveira that he messed up last time. So he asks how can one know what purpose of his nehshama's gilgul is? And he gives two answers. One, is the aveira that he constantly is nichshal in. And the second way is if he has a strong desire for a particular aveira.

The Steipler points out that the same idea can be found from Rav Tzadok, in tzidkas Hatzadik #49 and #181. I looked up the sources.

Once again, thanks for bringing this to our attention.

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Re: 15+ years of battle - The Final Battle that will lead to victory
Posted by the.guard - 02 May 2009 18:13

Yaakov, I updated your chart and noticed that you should be hitting 90 in 2 days! We'll have to drink a Big Lechayim!!

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

Posted by Ykv_schwartz - 02 May 2009 19:55

Thank you Guard. I am looking forward. However, it is three more days. I started on Feb 5, not Feb 4. I made a mistake. I sent you an email about this in the past.

This site has been my life savior. Amazing things are happening in my life, which I cannot go into details. My whole being changed far more than I changed last year when I went six months sober.

Amongst other items, I have been putting lots of focus on doing teshuvah, one stop at a time. Right now, I am working on daaga. At the same time, I have been going through the chapters on teshuvah in taharas hakodesh.

I started the new zman last week in kollel. It feels so good to learn Torah as a baal teshuva. My learning hit major heights last week. I still constantly ask Hashem to help me and protect me. I thank him all the time for assisting me in my growth and for removing all my urges for lust.

This monday starts BeHaB. For those that can handle fasts, this is a worthwhile fast to take on especially for baalei teshuvah like ourselves. But even if one has not reached the madreiga of abstaining yet, by fasting BeHaB you can get special siyata D'Shmaya in this struggle. But, again, only if you feel it will not take away from your learning and working. If fasting does disturb your mood, then giving tzedaka is a replacement for fasting.

May we all be zoche for siyata D'Shamaya

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

Posted by boruch - 05 May 2009 13:45

[Ykv_schwartz wrote on 02 May 2009 19:55:](#)

This site has been my life savior. Amazing things are happening in my life, which I cannot go into details. My whole being changed far more than I changed last year when I went six months sober.

Yaakov,

Nismach besimchaschem, I am very much looking forward to sharing in the simcha of your reaching this milestone in your sobriety. In honor of your upcoming simcha, Bezras Hashem I will attempt to say divrei piyus, divrei ratzon udvarim hashavim lechol nefesh.

From the early 1930s until the book 'Alcoholics Anonymous' was published in 1939 there were no 12 Steps. The early AAs all became sober by a "religious conversion". The 12 Steps were designed to be a step-by-step method that would achieve that same goal. A good moshol to that (I don't say lehavdil because surprisingly enough both mesilas yeshorim and original AA are peshuto kemashmo'o about avodas Hashem) is how the mesilas yeshorim explains that the ten steps of Rav Pinchos ben Yoir are the system to achieve the five elements of moh Hashem Elokecho Doresh mimcho. So the 12 Steps of 1939 was just one method to achieve the "religious conversion" of the first 100 or so early AAs who had achieved sobriety, over 75% of them for the rest of their lives, without the 12 Steps.

An early AA, Clarence Snyder, the founder of the Cleveland Chapter of AA, used to explain the Steps as being in reality three. Trust G-d, Clean House and Help others. Here is the meaning of these three:

1) Trusting G-d means realizing that if on any given day we do what we are supposed to on our side to stay sober and sane, then Hashem will give us 24 hours of relief for that day only. If we do *everything else that is good* but not what we need for our sobriety, G-d will not accept that, He will not give something for nothing and accepts no attempts at shortcuts. Even if, on one day, we do more for our sobriety and sanity than anyone in history we will not get more than 24 hours of relief. Even if we have a terrible day and do less than anyone has ever done for our sobriety and sanity, as long as we did something however small, to the best we could, we get the same 24 hours.

Of course this sounds familiar. The Bnei Yisroel were starving and needy in the midbor.

Hashem gave them relief one day at a time. No matter if they were marbeh, no matter if they were mamit they only got 24 hours of relief. And if as seforim hakedoshim tell us they did not want to have to go out because their aveiros had caused the mon to fall further than they usually had to go to get it, then they starved and suffered for that day. As Chazal tell us, asher lo yikach shochad, shochad shel mitzvos, we can do all the mitzvos we want but they are no replacement for the mitzvos that we refuse to do for our sobriety and sanity.

So the Steps 1-3, and 11 (davening and talking to Hashem and being open to listen for His guidance) are about trusting Hashem daily that if we do what He wants us to do for our sobriety and sanity to the best of our ability He will give us 24 hours of relief, one day at a time.

2) Clean House means realizing that our real problem is the pain in our lives that makes us vulnerable to addiction (addiction is the self-medication for the problem and not the problem itself) and this pain is caused by the mechitzos in our relationship with Hashem and our relationships with everyone else in our lives. To remove that pain we have to remove the mechitzos. The mechitzos are not as we thought in our addiction, the things Hashem has done to us, or the things that others have done to us, but in reality, our character defects that we have injected into those relationships. The only way to stop the pain is to make a cheshbon hanefesh on those character defects, accepting that we need Hashem to remove the defects from us, asking Him to do so, so that we are no longer kekelev shov al kio, uchetovel veshoretz beyodo, and then and only then can we with honesty begin to repair (yes, amends does not mean making do with apologies and payment of debts - it means repairing and fixing the relationships) so that our character defects no longer act as a mechitza in those relationships.

In brief this is fixing veohavto lereiecho komocha by using cheshbon hanefesh, asking Hashem to then remove the mechitzos of the bad middos in our relationships and then being mesakken those relationships by turning bad into good. As Rashi says in Shas, reiecho is also Hashem.

This is Steps 4-10 and the AAs found that addicts are so much in denial and are such manipulators that if their cheshbon hanefesh stayed inside their own minds and was not shared with another (Step 5) they never kept to their commitments and eventually they lost their sobriety. This is similar to the Chazon Ish about being mashbia the zedukki koehen godol. The Chazon Ish asked, according to this tzedukki he is nishba laavor al ma shekosuv baTorah. the way I understand the Chazon Ish's answer he says that once a person has totally committed himself publicly he will not be able to go back on the commitment no matter what the excuse.

3) Helping Others. The AAs found that if they did not make the purpose of their recovery to help others they could do everything else and sooner or later they would lose sobriety. If the whole of

religion is self serving then a person can get confused with doing what he feels like which is also self-serving. However if he thinks of others he will stay on the right track.

This once again is veohavto lereiecho, and even more so, as Rav Chaim Volozhyn is quoted by his son in hakdomo to Ruach Chaim on Ovos, the *entire purpose of existence* is to do for others.

This is Step 12 which includes making every aspect of our daily lives a fulfillment of these principles, bechol dercohcecho do'eihu.

So teire R' Yaakov, chasan denan, it seems to me that you have done most if not all of the above and therefore your simcha is our simcha kipshuto mamosh.

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Re: 15+ years of battle - The Final Battle that will lead to victory
Posted by the.guard - 05 May 2009 14:41

Dear Yakov, I calculated the duration from Feb 5 [over here](#), and tomorrow- Wed. will be 90 days clean! That is Yesod Shebenetzach. Winning over the Yesod! What could be more appropriate?

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Re: 15+ years of battle - The Final Battle that will lead to victory
Posted by Ykv_schwartz - 05 May 2009 18:37

Boruch, Thank you very much for your beautiful explanation of the 12 steps and for your kind words.

Hopefully, at a later time, I will have time to post some thoughts and reflections on my 90 days.

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Re: 15+ years of battle - The Final Battle that will lead to victory
Posted by aaron4 - 05 May 2009 19:27

Ykv, I've been reading your posts for a while and I find them full of Torah, wisdom and inspiration. Your 90 milestone is on my calendar and I look forward to sharing in your Simchah!

Boruch, can you elaborate on how step 2 ("cleaning house") works? It sounds simple - be open and honest about your shortcomings and defects of character - but how do you do it in a practical way? Can you give some examples? Does posting your story on this site, leaving nothing out, count?

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Re: 15+ years of battle - The Final Battle that will lead to victory
Posted by boruch - 05 May 2009 20:22

[aaron4 wrote on 05 May 2009 19:27:](#)

Boruch, can you elaborate on how step 2 ("cleaning house") works? It sounds simple - be open and honest about your shortcomings and defects of character - but how do you do it in a practical way? Can you give some examples? Does posting your story on this site, leaving nothing out, count?

Aaron,

I can only tell you what worked for me.

Bechasdei Hashem Yisborach, I was fortunate enough to belong to one of the few SA groups (perhaps the only one) that had a Step meeting that took me through all the AA/SA 12 Steps, including the Clean House Steps, in just 4 weeks.

The 12 Step method has been used by millions around the World, myself included. I do not know anyone who intentionally worked the three Steps that I described by any other practical way than the 12 Step way. As a useful moshol, I know people who have worked through Rav Pinchos ben Yoir's 10 steps using Mesilas Yeshorim, I have never heard of anyone working the beraisa without mesilas yeshorim and certainly have never heard of anyone working the 5 things Hashem wants from us from the possuk.

Bechasdei Hashem I was fortunate enough to do the 12 Steps as part of a group, using a specific method and I do not know whether they can be done as successfully without a group. That said, I have material that could *in theory* bechavrusa take anyone through all 12 Steps in 4 weeks. I am interested in doing an experiment to see if it can be done remotely, bechavrusa, by email and phone without a group.

Aaron, if you want to sign up to a chavrusa schaft I would have to warn you that to my knowledge it has never been done before. As far as I know the worst that could happen is that you or anyone else interested would learn a lot about the Steps very quickly, and of course the best is that you would successfully get through all 12 Steps sooner than you could ever have imagined.

If this method is successful I could always consider posting coursework here on the site and then arranging Step chavrusas.

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Re: 15+ years of battle - The Final Battle that will lead to victory
Posted by aaron4 - 05 May 2009 20:33

the worst that could happen is that you or anyone else interested would learn a lot about the Steps very quickly, and of course the best is that you would successfully get through all 12 Steps sooner than you could ever have imagined.

I'm almost done with the first 164 pages of the Big Book and

know just enough to want more. Can you e-mail me with more details of your proposal?

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Re: 15+ years of battle - The Final Battle that will lead to victory
Posted by Ykv_schwartz - 05 May 2009 20:33

Aaron,

Thank you very much for your touching words. May we continue to grow together.

Boruch,

This sounds so interesting. I think this could be a great asset to so many on this site. This would especially help the partners program. Guard sets people up with partners. Now they could use your material and help each other grow at a steady pace in a step by step process.

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Re: 15+ years of battle - The Final Battle that will lead to victory
Posted by the.guard - 05 May 2009 20:50

Wow, I sense the beginnings of something BIG here... Boruch, would you be willing to moderate a phone conference once or twice a week where people could anonymously join and go through a program of the 12-Steps by phone with a group?

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Re: 15+ years of battle - The Final Battle that will lead to victory
Posted by boruch - 06 May 2009 03:41

[guardureyes wrote on 05 May 2009 20:50:](#)

Wow, I sense the beginnings of something BIG here... Boruch, would you be willing to moderate

a phone conference once or twice a week where people could anonymously join and go through a program of the 12-Steps by phone with a group?

That sounds like a better idea than mine, and the answer is yes I am.

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Re: 15+ years of battle - The Final Battle that will lead to victory
Posted by the.guard - 06 May 2009 05:54

Guys, a whole new facet of GuardYourEyes has just been born in front of your eyes.

I will discuss this privately with Boruch and decide on the best strategy for this. But get ready for a big announcement soon :-)

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Re: 15+ years of battle - The Final Battle that will lead to victory
Posted by aaron4 - 06 May 2009 12:28

I'm concerned that I either won't be able to join a phone conference at a specific time or won't be able to talk freely if I do. Can we pursue the e-mail option as well?

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