

A new beginning

Posted by TheFighter99 - 20 Apr 2020 11:02

Hi everyone!

I'm a married guy in my 30's who has been struggling with this for around 5 years. I've had some minor successes in this battle, but have not gotten the freedom I'm looking for as of yet. But today is a new beginning! I've signed up for GYE and am starting the 90 day chart today. Any tips and words of encouragement are appreciated, Thanks!

Kol Tuv,

TheFighter

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Re: A new beginning

Posted by Dave M - 12 Aug 2020 01:05

[TheFighter99 wrote on 11 Aug 2020 21:45:](#)

Dave M. Doing good, thanks for asking. Had a close call today on Facebook so I blocked it with my filter. Still hoping for a job soon iyH

That's incredible. Can you please start posting again? You have a great attitude that's infectious.

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Re: A new beginning

Posted by Grant400 - 12 Aug 2020 01:41

[Dave M wrote on 12 Aug 2020 01:05:](#)

[TheFighter99 wrote on 11 Aug 2020 21:45:](#)

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Re: A new beginning

Posted by TheFighter99 - 12 Aug 2020 12:24

Meyer M. I'm referring to the Gemara in kiddushin that says without Hashems help we can't defeat the yetzer Hara. The Gemara seems to be shifting responsibility from us free willed creatures to God, so I'm just kinda confused about that.

His attitude might not be so infectious if he's wearing a mask!

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Hope I'm wrong!

Re: A new beginning

Posted by TheFighter99 - 12 Aug 2020 12:26

[Meyer M. wrote on 12 Aug 2020 00:45:](#)

[TheFighter99 wrote on 20 May 2020 11:43:](#)

Is there somebody who can please explain the whole "needing a higher power" thing in recovery? I don't get it. Don't we have free will to make our own choices and kick the habit ourselves? there have been atheists who have quit porn, so I'm a little confused on this whole idea. Please share your thoughts

I don't think anybody said we 'need' a higher power but as Jews we believe in a higher authority who can grant us the strength needed. I don't know, that's my take, could be wrong. Anyhow 13 days to 16 days is a nearly 20% increase if you want to play the numbers game. So in my opinion you are doing great! And even with falling every 2 weeks, you would be at a total of 27 a year compared to me let's say when I began it would be nearly 1000 times a

year.....yeah I'm kinda happy I'm here.

Meyer M. I'm referring to the Gemara in kiddushin that says without Hashems help we can't defeat the yetzer Hara. The Gemara seems to be shifting responsibility from us free willed creatures to God, so I'm just kinda confused about that. We gotta own our garbage and not shift the blame, like the Gemara seems to be endorsing. Clearly I'm missing something here...

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Re: A new beginning
Posted by Dave M - 12 Aug 2020 12:40

[TheFighter99 wrote on 12 Aug 2020 12:26:](#)

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[TheFighter99 wrote on 20 May 2020 11:43:](#)

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From what I understand, the pshat is that if the Y'H will be left to its own device, nobody, even the greatest tzaddikim would be able to withstand temptations. The gamara records many such accounts, most famously Dovid Hamelech. Instead Hashem "helps" curb the Y'H strength. Our responsibility is to the fight the first 5%, then Hashem will take care of the other 95%. But we need to take the first step.

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Re: A new beginning

Posted by Grant400 - 13 Aug 2020 00:02

Dave M. you are in company. The Maharsha learns like your pshat. Meaning, we have free will, so Hashem doesn't help us to decide to fight the y"h, but once we fight him ourselves (to the best of our abilities) then Hashem swoops in and helps us defeat him. Like you wrote we must give the first 5%, but that must be our 100%. Without this additional help we would be powerless against the y"h.

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Re: A new beginning

Posted by Im Tevakshena Kakasef - 13 Aug 2020 12:27

Hi TheFighter, I don't think I've posted on your thread before. You have a great attitude. I wish you and your wife every beracha there is.

This last point of discussion is something I happen to have been thinking about over the last few days. Hashgochas Hashem. Hers my thoughts.

I don't want to be cholek on the meharsha, but I understood the peshat is that really, we can do *nothing* ourselves. Not just 5%, but nothing. Insofar as we believe that we can 'help' Hashem

beat the yetzer hara, we cannot. Only Hashem can do anything. But how can we merit that divine assistance? How do we get Hashem to beat the yetzer? By a 2 part process. 1) Trying as hard as we can. 2) Realizing that all that trying is *sach hakol* worthless. The only value it has is it makes Hashem want to help us. That's it.

Story time. There was once a farmer, who woke up one morning to the sound of a voice from heaven. A *bas kol*. 'Farmer Joe,' it called, 'Farmer Joe! There is a boulder outside your house. Go and push it.' So Farmer Joe pulls on his boots and walks outside.

He sees the boulder, and its massive. Gigantic. 12 stone. And he thinks 'How will I ever move this rock?' So he shoves with all his might. 1 minute. 2. 5. 10. An hour. 2 hours later, he fishes trying, and goes about doing his normal everyday chores.

The next day, the same thing happens. *Bas kol* comes, Farmer Joe pushes etc etc. This happens for the next 2 weeks.

2 weeks later, the farmer wakes up to the *bas kol*. But this time, as he is putting on his shoes, he sees something terrifying. This demon type creature, covered in eyes, is staring at him from the corner of the room. The demon laughs, 'You are such a fool, Farmer Joe. In fact, you are the laughing stock of heaven! Every morning, all the angels and demons gather together and watch as you try and move the impossible boulder. Its such a laugh. We have a great time! Popcorn and everything. Toodaloo now' he says and disappears into smoke.

Farmer Joe walks outside heartbroken. He goes over to the boulder, gives it a kick, and then continue on his day like normal. Feeds the chickens, sheers the sheep, milks the cow. After a long hard day, he trudges into his house. Suddenly he hears a *bas kol* cry out 'Farmer Joe! Farmer Joe! Why didn't you push the boulder today? The farmer looks up and shouts 'What's the point? I can never succeed in moving that thing! Its massive! I can hardly bench 50 kilo, never mind 12 tonnes!. And everyone is upstairs mocking me. There's just no point.'

Silence. Then the *bas kol* sounds just one last time. 'Farmer Joe. Farmer Joe. I never asked you to *move* the rock. I asked you to *push* the rock. Whether it moves is up to me. Whether it gets pushed is up to you.'

What I understand from this is really we can do nothing against the yetzer hara. But Hashem wants us to fight, daavka realizing that we cannot do anything. We cannot budge that rock at all. And then, if He so chooses, He will help us.

It may be I am wrong here. Some of it I am basing off a poem that may not be of jewish origin, so it could be incorrect. Or I could be saying the same idea as the maharsha, and I just misunderstood Grant. Its a chosheva moshel though. Let me know.

Sorry for the length of this post. Hatzlocha all.

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Re: A new beginning

Posted by Grant400 - 13 Aug 2020 14:11

@ITK: It's the same point as the maharsha. What Dave meant by doing the first 5%, was to put in the **effort**, to start the fight (starting means doing all thats humanly possible) , then G-d will do the actual beating of the yetzer.

Just one point: You wrote "If he so chooses, he will help us", and your whole (greatly written) story advocates this point as well.

I think it's a great point in regard to tefillah, that Hashem wants us to daven and ask for help, which is akin to pushing the boulder, and if he so chooses he will help us- i.e. move the rock. All he wants is the push.

But in regard to the struggles with the yetzer harah I believe that isn't true. If a person puts in the proper amount of effort and fight, **automatically** G-d will swoop in and help him. It's not a hope or a prayer its a mathematical equation. If someone falls it doesn't mean he put in the requisite effort required and Hashem decided that he ain't in the mood of getting involved. It means more effort and motivation is required in order to solicit help from the great Almighty. That is what the gemarah seems to be implying.

Grant

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Re: A new beginning

Posted by wilnevergiveup - 13 Aug 2020 20:35

Simply put, we have control over our choices (*behchira*) but no control over the outcome of our choices. this is what it means to "give up to a higher power" to understand that we must take responsibility for our choices what happens after is beyond our control.

The question of Hashem stepping in, Chazal tell us that head to head with the Y"H we are goners, we have no chance. Our only option is to rely on Hashem.

Rav Yeruchem Levovitz explains by the story of the *meraglim*, that even though they were great *tzadikim*, they were not able to withstand the *nisayon* because the the Y"H was indeed to great for them to handle on their own. Only Kalev and Yehoshua were able to stand up to the test because they had special *siyata dishmaya*, Yehoshua because Moshe *davened* for him and Kalev because he stopped by the *kivrei avos*.

Without special *siyatah dishmaya* even the greatest *tzadikim* just don't match up.

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Re: A new beginning

Posted by starting - 14 Aug 2020 05:47

[wilnevergiveup wrote on 13 Aug 2020 20:35:](#)

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I don't really get this.

Every time I choose to touch myself in a way that will cause masturbation is a choice that I have made.

That is the choice I don't want to make.

Meaning, I am trying to surrender my entire struggle that I should not ever touch myself there or even feel that the urge to touch myself is overpowering.

I do not claim to understand the concept of surrendering (though I would like to) but now I am totally confused.

I do appreciate that the outcome is totally gods' doing in kotzk I think they said that with siyatta dishmaya anyone can split the yam suf and without siyatta dishmaya no one can walk through the doorframe, as ITK said we have to do what God instructs us and what actually happens is not like we can actually take credit for it or be upset and give up if we did not succeed.

Can someone who knows, please explain what is meant by surrendering our lust and how to go about doing it?

Thanks

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Re: A new beginning

Posted by wilnevergiveup - 14 Aug 2020 08:13

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I do not claim to fully understand this either, but here is some food for thought.

I don't think you can surrender your urges by raising a white flag and saying here you go evil inclination (or G-D) I don't want this, you can have it back.

If you think surrendering i.e. letting go of your desires is easy, well it's not.

If you think it's just a step, like getting a filter on your phone, well, it's not.

You can't surrender your struggle, you have to surrender your will.

Rabbi Twerski explains in his book Teshuvah Through Recovery (p. 89) "The third step is the recognition that our sinful behavior of our addiction is the result of our yielding to our own will. People in the twelve-step program say that their behavior was "self will run riot." The Talmud instructs us, "Make Hashem's will your will" (Avos 2:4). A prominent trial lawyer, celebrating his fortieth anniversary of sobriety said, "When I was told I had to surrender my willpower, I

rebelled. I am a strong-willed person. But my strong will just didn't work for drinking. I had to swallow my pride and accept someone else's will. There was no one whose will I could trust, so I grudgingly accepted G-d's will. As a result, I am now forty years sober."

"...In order to merit that Hashem remove our shortcomings, we must make a maximum effort to do so ourselves. That is "becoming entirely ready to have G-d remove all these defects in character." There are things one can do to minimize one's anger, and we can certainly learn to control our response when provoked. Only if we have done everything within our means to rid ourselves of our shortcomings can we ask Hashem to eliminate them."

There are a few different ideas flying around in this thread.

Is there somebody who can please explain the whole "needing a higher power" thing in recovery? I don't get it. Don't we have free will to make our own choices and kick the habit ourselves? there have been atheists who have quit porn, so I'm a little confused on this whole idea. Please share your thoughts

To answer @Fighter99's question directly, higher power doesn't need to be G-d per se but Hashem is for sure the most reasonable choice. A higher power can be a moral standard or whatever as long as it's a higher power than yourself.

Meyer M. I'm referring to the Gemara in kiddushin that says without Hashem's help we can't defeat the yetzer Hara. The Gemara seems to be shifting responsibility from us free-willed creatures to God, so I'm just kinda confused about that. We gotta own our garbage and not shift the blame, like the Gemara seems to be endorsing. Clearly I'm missing something here...

This is what I was trying to explain, free will is only for our choices. The workings of the world, including the outcome of our own actions, are in G-d's department.

Perhaps the two questions the free will and the siyata dishmaya one are connected. Maybe the reason why the Y"H beats us every time is because we think we have the power to affect the outcome, i.e. to become sober or to be clean, when really all we have control over is to make

the right choices. When we learn to rely on G-d then making the right choices become less daunting. Sill lots of work but at least we are not trying to do work only fit for G-d.

A recovered atheist once said "I don't believe in G-d, but at least I know that I am not G-d."

There are three parts.

1. We need siyata dishmaya, help from a higher power.
2. We need to surrender our will to his will.
3. We need to do everything in our power before we can turn it over to Hashem.

Or

Step 1: Admit we are powerless over lust (if you are not powerless then you would have stopped already).

Step 2: Believe that a power greater then ourselves could restore us to sanity.

Step 3: Decide to turn our will and our lives over to the care of G-d.

Don't know if this is helpful or just more confusing. I might be totally off and if so just ignore me.

I would love as much as you to hear from the experts here what exactly we are supposed to surrender and how.

Wilnevergiveup

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Re: A new beginning

Posted by TheFighter99 - 14 Aug 2020 21:50

Thank you so much to everyone who has commented recently. I actually had stopped posting because I felt like I was talking to the wind.

Never underestimate the value of even a short simple comment in people's threads. It helps me a lot and makes me feel like I'm not alone. I actually am currently using the brainbuddy app for that reason. Its not a jewish app obviously, but I needed some more interaction. So thanks again and I hope we can keep the conversation going!

I'd like to parse the "powerless without a higher power" topic a bit more. The gist of what people here are saying is that we just make choices but the outcome is in God's hands. This is certainly true in many areas of life, such as having children, parnassah etc. We do our hishtadlus and hope for the best. However, I do not see how this concept is applicable to quitting P addiction. Chazal tell us that "everything is in the hands of heaven except for the fear of heaven." If I'm not mistaken, the traditional understanding of this chazal is that the execution of moral choices is in our domain, whereas livelihood health etc our Hashems domain. When it comes to a job for example, I can apply to a job but there is not guarantee that I'll get it. For that to happen I need God's help. However, If I decide not to act out with P than where exactly is the space where I need God's help? If I decide not to open my computer then it's game over and I won the battle.

Hopefully this question is clear, but in essence it seems like a contradiction between the gemara in kiddushin saying that we need Hashem's help to overcome the yetzer hara and the gemara in taanis (and everyday experience) that says that moral choices are in our domain. I would greatly appreciate people's thoughts on this. Thanks!

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Re: A new beginning

Posted by Grant400 - 16 Aug 2020 02:22

The way I understand it is like this:

"Hakol bidei shamayim etc." Means that a person must generate his own fear of heaven. It is not something G-D will instill in him by himself.

The gemara in kiddushin is saying that even with all the yiras shamayim in the world, all a person can achieve with it in regard to fighting the yetzer, is with deciding and starting to fight,

but the actual victory is only by way of Gods intervention.

Meaning, that creating the willpower, and starting to fight (yiras shamayim) is your prerogative but the actual outcome of your decision can only be achieved through hashem i.e. a higher power.

Grant

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Re: A new beginning

Posted by starting - 16 Aug 2020 12:02

The sefer Tomer Devorah (if I remember correctly, it's been quite a few years since I saw it inside) speaks quite a bit about how Hashem gives us the strength to do aveiros, without active assistance (hashgacha pratit) we would not be able to move a muscle or think a single thought.

We are given bechira to do as we see fit based on our situation and once we have made a choice, we are given the power to act on it.

I understand that the yetzer hora is given the power to make us fall and the way he does it is by making an illusion of immense pleasure which is really worthwhile.

That is something that a normal mind cannot overcome without help.

Note the gemara says ??? ????? ?????? meaning actual help, whereas when it comes to doing bad it says that one is not stopped, I don't remember the exact wording.

Hashem continuously gives us the power to make any choice - right or wrong because we are going to get schlar for every right choice we make.

This is found in many mussar seforim

So the way I understand this, we can make any choice we want.

What happens as an outcome of our choice is what Hashem plans for us.

Usually, you can expect the world to run with the laws of nature which God is actively controlling.

Just my 2 cents. Would love to hear from more guys

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