

Becoming a Tzadik - That's the Dream

Posted by spaced - 20 Aug 2020 11:24

I'm a ger tzedek but not quite a tzadik. I have long struggled with porn addiction and same sex attraction. I thought that conversion will not only bring me closer to Hashem and Am Yisrael, but also lessen my tendencies for illicit pleasure. Alas, my yetzer hara has even grown stronger. I'm also single and stuck alone during this pandemic lockdown.

However, as I told the bet din during my giyyur, I accept all the mitzvot bar none. Hence I won't quit the fight. I have fallen thousands of times and gotten up the same number of times, but I am not contented. I have a dream, a tough one: that of becoming a tzaddik with kids and grandkids who will help bring about the geulah.

Hence I'm starting this journal. I have joined GYE a while back, joined a live SA group (we don't meet anymore due to the virus), read Torah and mussar, etc. But I know I should do more. I have even contemplated suicide before, but now I've kinda accepted that this is my avodah, to show the world that a convert can and will keep even the hardest mitzvot of shmirat habrit and einayim.

I hope that people who read this know that not one of us is truly alone in this struggle. We are connected to all Jews past and present through the brit. I will try my best to honestly document my struggles in this journal so others could learn from my mistakes (and hopefully my successes). Let's do this.

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Re: Becoming a Tzadik - That's the Dream

Posted by Grant400 - 20 Aug 2020 13:07

Wow! You are simply amazing! Welcome to GYE! I can't wait to join you in your struggles and triumphs. You have an incredible fight in you that I'd love to witness and learn from. Post away. May you merit you wonderful dreams coming true.

Your brother,

Grant

P.S. You wrote that you are a ger tzedek but not quite a tzaddik. I disagree. I think you a tremendous tzaddik! "Sheva yipol tzaddik v'kom". Even a tzaddik falls many times, but the key is that he gets back up. It's not about if we fall or trip, it's about if we get back up after.

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Re: Becoming a Tzadik - That's the Dream
Posted by Aaron1 - 20 Aug 2020 18:29

[spaced wrote on 20 Aug 2020 11:24:](#)

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This is so beautiful, and really gives me hope! Thank you.

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Re: Becoming a Tzadik - That's the Dream
Posted by Demolished - 21 Aug 2020 02:02

Dear TZADIK

i am deeply moved by your story, simply no words to express my admiration, you inspire me.

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Re: Becoming a Tzadik - That's the Dream
Posted by YeshivaGuy - 21 Aug 2020 03:37

[spaced wrote on 20 Aug 2020 11:24:](#)

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Amazing. You are such a kidush HaShem and an inspiration.

We're all cheering you on!!!

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Re: Becoming a Tzadik - That's the Dream

Posted by spaced - 22 Aug 2020 13:16

[Grant400 wrote on 20 Aug 2020 13:07:](#)

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Thanks for the chizuk, Grant. There were so many times when I really wanted to give up, but even in my worst days of falling to my porn addiction, I tried to cling to two mitzvot with a passion: keeping kosher and keeping Shabbat. And so far, Hashem has helped me get back up. I hope you're doing well.

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Re: Becoming a Tzadik - That's the Dream

Posted by spaced - 22 Aug 2020 14:03

Thank you to everyone who has posted here so far. You don't know how much it means to me to hear from fellow Jews who struggle with this nisayon of ours.

Especially today, Motzae Shabbat. This day is usually the toughest of the week for me. It's like I compensate for the time I spent away from my mobile phone by indulging in porn right after Shabbat ends. Not proud of it and I kind of hated myself for doing so. I mean, what kind of Jew is "tired out" by Shabbat so as to jump right back in to doing averot?

But this day is different. As a convert in a Mizrachi / Sephardic community, today is the first day (after Rosh Chodesh and Shabbat) that we start saying Selichot for a month, every day until Rosh Hashanah. I don't want to start the process of teshuvah by indulging yet again in a forbidden pleasure.

Hence I am posting here. I believe that a big part of my addiction is not bringing it up to the light. I also prayed to Hashem humbly to guide me, as nothing succeeds without siyata dishmaya.

I use an app called Quitzilla to track my hourly sobriety progress, and so far it's at 3 days and 15m. Counting days so far seems to jinx them, making me think that it's ok to have a slip because I kind of "deserve" it (obviously a BIG NO).

Right now, I'm trying a new tactic. I offer up my sobriety period daily, from Shkiya to Shacharit, and Shacharit to Shkiya, for someone's healing or bringing up of souls to Gan Eden. I read somewhere here in GYE that this nisayon of ours is a sign of a strong, spiritually-attuned neshamah. Not saying I am one, but on the off-chance that I am, I want to make my sobriety count.

I see it also as an "incentive" for nekiyut. I know that we are not supposed to do misvot like shmirat habrit for rewards, only because Hashem commanded us to do so. But I recognize that I am an addict and that I am not yet the tzadik that I hope to become.

As they say, the sun is the best disinfectant.
If my love for other people can help me to fulfill this key mitzvah (because unfortunately, sometimes I just don't love myself enough to refrain from this averah), then why not? I read somewhere that even one who studies Torah lo lishma will eventually do so wholeheartedly.

What more with guarding the brit that represents the wellspring of Torah?

Comments and suggestions are welcome. This is a learning process for me so I won't always get everything right, but as Pirkei Avot says, I can learn from everyone if I am humble enough to do so.

Shavua tov!

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Re: Becoming a Tzadik - That's the Dream

Posted by Im Tevakshena Kakasef - 23 Aug 2020 22:06

You. Are. Incredible. Thats all.

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Re: Becoming a Tzadik - That's the Dream

Posted by spaced - 24 Aug 2020 03:44

So I fell again. I don't know but every 3-4 days, I just feel bored / anxious that I slip to my bad habits over and over again. It's been a while since I got to 5, let alone 7 days. Really struggling here.

I think one factor is I rely on myself too much. I know I'm smart and organized in other areas of my life, but I just can't seem to bring any of that to this struggle. Maybe I should try having a sponsor?

I will be having the first of my 3 free sessions with a psychologist this week. I felt before that this could be a game-changer, but in my negative mood now post-fall, I doubt if it can help much. After all, I have had these ideas to stop on my own before that I thought were game-changers. But I seem to just be in a big hole addiction-wise.

The method I started last time, the dedicating a period of sobriety for someone sick or departed to Olam Haba, is not fool-proof. I just didn't think of the person I had intentions for when my lust hit. Maybe I could have chosen someone I had more feelings for than someone's departed father that I didn't even meet? I guess I'm not as big of a Jew as I thought. Not there yet, definitely.

But despite everything, I got back up for selichot. This still counts as a win in my book, because sometimes I don't get up for days after a fall. I just stop everything and do what I call "goy days". I just say Modeh Ani and after that, no Jewish rituals at all. I hated myself for doing that, but I just felt hopeless in those times, that Hashem didn't really want me anymore so I stop making the effort. I will try my best to get that goy day concept out of my system this Elul.

I hope everyone is safe and doing better than me. My lesson for today is this: even if we don't feel good about ourselves, we still serve Hashem no matter what. I hope I cling to that for the rest of this week.

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Re: Becoming a Tzadik - That's the Dream
Posted by spaced - 24 Aug 2020 03:49

Today, I don't feel so incredible, given that I fell yet again. But I appreciate the chizuk, Kakasef. May you be more successful than I today in dealing with our nisayon.

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Re: Becoming a Tzadik - That's the Dream
Posted by Im Tevakshena Kakasef - 24 Aug 2020 11:52

Yup. I've been stuck in a rut for the last few days. I know the feeling.

As for goy days, I really do know what you mean. There are times when I can spend literally every available second learning, davening, or doing something to enhance my avodas Hashem. And then there are days I can just about complete tefillah. I can't bring myself to learn anywhere near as much. I just feel totally deflated. Zero steam.

Sometimes we just have to stop. Today I haven't had a great day, but nor a goy day. And I'm determined to have a Yid afternoon. Its the pushing no matter what which Hashem really values. To break the pattern of falling. Go out of our comfort zone. That's what he wants.

You are incredible. You don't feel that way? Meh. That's because you compare your behind the scenes to everyone else's highlight reel. We look at you and see someone who gave up being allowed to chase all of olam haazeh, to be close to Hashem. O.K. other people seem to have no problems davening and learning, everything seems to go great for them. But if you looked at me, I'd be one of those people. And nothing is further from the truth. We all have nisyones. All have days we wish we would do more. We just have to plug on.

So again. Like you said. We all have bad days. Ups and downs. Just keep posting. When you feel like you hit rock bottom, you can only go up. And you'll find solid ground upon which to build.

p.s. Hashem doesn't really want you anymore? If you gave everything to be close to Him, you really think He'll ever abandon you? He'll want you by Him always. I'm rooting for you man. And if I am, you think he isn't?

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Re: Becoming a Tzadik - That's the Dream
Posted by Hashem Help Me - 02 Sep 2020 01:35

Spaced, did you get a mentor/sponsor?

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Re: Becoming a Tzadik - That's the Dream
Posted by Meyer M. - 02 Sep 2020 01:48

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Re: Becoming a Tzadik - That's the Dream

Posted by spaced - 27 Sep 2020 06:09

It's been a while since I last posted. Here's a short summary of updates:

1. Stress at work helped me fall a lot, but unlike before no more goy days. Bounced back immediately after and started on improving myself again

2. Sessions with psychologist helped a lot. Allowed me to express feelings about myself, Hashem, and the mission I believe He wants me to accomplish that I couldn't talk to anyone in my kehillah about.

3. Adopted new methods to do better:

- Alarm every hour while working to remind me to sneak in 3-5 minutes of reading halakhot email newsletters, GYE stuff, Mussar, etc
- Reading biographies of tzaddikim who I want to emulate. In particular, Reb Aryeh Levin struck me as very human, honest, and humble (3 H's). Obviously not on his level, but reading snippets about his life made me realize I could be one too.
- Positive self-talk. I told myself that I am a tzaddik-in-training, that Hashem still wants me and loves me so much, that I can start again, that I can stretch further, etc
- Told Hashem during Rosh Hashanah shofar-blowing that I will no longer be an addict and will be more humble this year

About the last point, I'm an emotional guy who talks a lot to Hashem via hitbodedut but overall I still consider myself a bit of a skeptic (after all, skepticism is what helped me escape Xtianity before). But I just don't feel like an addict with unstoppable urges anymore. Not sure what to call this but I think I got a bonafide nes.

Before Rosh Hashanah (aka all throughout Elul this year), I used to do motsi zera livatala 3-4 times per week. My sobriety streak is at most 1-3 days only. Even during the Aseret Yamei Teshuvah last year I couldn't stop myself (except Yom Tov of course).

But now, I feel able to control myself. I fell just once since Sept 18. And I bounced back immediately after instead of wallowing in bed all day like I did before.

Just wanted to share. So happy and excited. I feel like I've been granted a new lease on life. I choose to believe that He has given me refuah shelemah already. But I'm trying to keep myself humble by thinking that even cancer patients relapse. If I continue looking at the streets or at porn, I will be back to square one. I don't know how long I can keep my streak up (will definitely get to at least 5 days because tomorrow is Yom Kippur), but I will keep at it one day at a time.

To any of you who are feeling down, please don't lose hope, because salvation can come at any moment. And because kol Am Yisrael is relying on us GYE members to keep the flame of kedushah burning until that day comes when the Temple is rebuilt and we are reunited with the Shechinah in our land.

Gmar chatima tova lekulam. Praying for everyone's refuah shlemah, continued persistence (we are am kishei oref after all haha), and that we all continue growing in humility and gratitude.

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Re: Becoming a Tzadik - That's the Dream
Posted by spaced - 27 Sep 2020 06:12

Hashem is good. May He bless all of you the same way He did for me.

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