

The struggles of a human

Posted by anonymousmillennial - 19 Oct 2020 14:49

Hi this is supposed to be the first log describing what I'm going through and perhaps an outlet of my feelings and experience trying to fight the yetzer hora of hotzoas zera levatalah.

?Allow me to first introduce myself. I am a bochur of 24. Learnt in a yeshiva till the outbreak of corona. To be honest, I never fully understood what people meant when they said that masturbation is the nisoyon of the generation. Why would anyone from a logical perspective engage in such behaviour? It didn't make sense to me. That was till about two months ago.

In yeshiva I didn't have access to movies or unfiltered internet. When I came home I did. I also got my own computer for studies and although it was filtered, I was the one with the password. So I naively didn't think of it as a big threat. But one night my curiosity got the better of me and I checked out some pornography. That night I also gave in to masturbation and I realized all of a sudden that I've made a big mistake. A whole new pathway of what the brain might consider pleasure opened up before me.

Not much later I gave in a second time to masturbation (not porn which I have since tried to avoid). And as time went by the frequency of my giving in became more and more. I know I have to find a way to stop this and I am trying. It just is so hard sometimes when my whole body aches and screams and the anxiety is just not allowing me to think clearly.

Sometimes I can hold back for a day or two three even but then eventually I end up giving in. The thing by me is that I am usually okay throughout the day, but when I lie in bed and am trying to fall asleep I am having difficulties doing so without having the urge. And that is usually when I cave. So I have tried listening to a shiur to keep me distracted, which has helped maybe once or twice, but with my emotions being so powerful it is hard to concentrate. I also tried relaxing music and it has helped although I do need to experiment with that more. (I know that from a halachic perspective music is not the best thing to do before falling asleep, but I think it is permitted occasionally and it is also permitted if it is not leshem simcha. Also I am not sure if relaxing music fall under this stringency.) Another thing I do is that even when I do give in I stop in the middle and pause for a count of sixty. It gives me back a sense of control and I feel it can help overall. Another thing I do when I feel weak and I know I might likely give in is I try to postpone giving in for x amount of time. Sometimes I am so tired of the fight that just to get rid of it, I give in. I know it's wrong, but I still do it. I really need some technique here to overcome this.

I am currently going with the mindset that this is like building muscle and that slowly but surely I'll get stronger and stronger. I just doesn't always feel like this. It also pains me when I read some of the consequences this challenge has on both a ruchniyusdige and gashmiyusdige

sphere. As a bochur, I feel like I am tainted and that I might have a bad marriage or children of lesser quality because of this. I am sure that there is teshuva, but will I really be able to overcome this before getting married? I truly hope so.

My current goal is to go through a whole week without giving in.

For me this is a true lesson on another front. It's what I wrote in the beginning: I never thought that this nisoyon could be so hard and yet here I am. So perhaps when people are going through things, that to me seem trivial and perhaps I'll even judge them sometimes, I'll remind myself that it could happen to me and even if it doesn't I don't know where they are coming from so don't judge.

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Re: The struggles of a human

Posted by anonymousmillennial - 13 Nov 2022 14:57

Hi peeps,

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I still fondly and bitterly recall the early days of my struggle. A sense of mission to overcome this, no matter what. Perhaps even a sense of heroism. And on the other end, the pain of having these nisyonos to deal with in the first place. The question of "how did I get entangled in this?" hanging over me as I try to keep my head up from under the water. There were many wins and unfortunately many losses as well.

But as time went by, the initial sensitivity to what once seemed so sacred, has all but been dulled, numbed and weakened. Learning to live with your losses comes with great benefits, though. I mean, you can get used to anything, can't you? Even this.

And yet, there's this pervasive nagging feeling of unrest; this relentless feeling within myself that won't let go. "Don't give up!" it will say. Or perhaps "there'll come a day when this will all be something of the past". A sense of hope. Something to cling to. I am grateful for this.

Nonetheless, the weariness of the fighting is something I must carry with me every day. As much as I'd wished that this wouldn't be at the forefront of my mind, it unfortunately is.

I've personally struggled for many months on a daily basis with it's ups and downs. And I wish I could say that I am interested in being helped, and sometimes I am. But sometimes, I just want to be left to my own devices. Just to have the space to figure this out on my own. Or just to be allowed to drown, not needing to fight. And I have tried that. It seems like I am getting closer to the end. But like the horizon of the sea, I still haven't reached the end. And I'm still trying to keep my head up in those waters.

It occurs to me sometimes that perhaps like that same horizon, there is no end. Perhaps swimming in these stormy waters and trying to fight for our lives is the purpose. It's a scary thought. One I have difficulty accepting. Nonetheless that's the way it feels at times.

Being alone in life doesn't help either. Every day takes courage, with an overarching question of "what's the purpose?". Life can seem rather dull sometimes. I know this vision seems rather bleak, but nonetheless it's important to put these feelings out. Nothing in life is binary. There are always going to be great moments in life and ,sometimes, there are going to be some rough moments [and sometimes more than 'some'].

What am I clinging to? I'm clinging to the hope of better days. Of days with more Torah learning. Of days being married. Of days being fulfilled and happy with myself. Of days where I'll be entirely free of this poison that permeates my entire essence.

Now don't go feeling all sorry for me. Please don't. That's not the purpose of this. I don't like being pitied.

Knowing that I'm not alone in this battle does help. In fact it does help a whole lot. It is rather a comforting thought. On the other hand, I've yet to find a balance, because to be honest, this sometimes justifies my continued falling. [It is a side note, I shall admit. Nonetheless I think it has to be mentioned.]

There's also a great sense of fear that I've recognized within myself. One of those fears, is the fear of letting go. The fear of not being able to live without this. This is especially in times of great stress and pain when escape seems like the only venue and this form of escape the only one. Recognition is always the first step to recovery, and I'm happy I'm aware of this. Nonetheless, as Reb Yisroel Salant used to say, the journey to "ve'hashevoiso el levovecho" is as great as the journey to "veyodaata". Two seperate Avodahs.

Another thing I would like to say is that I've cried many tears to Hashem. I know deep down that "Sha'arei demaos lo ninalu", and I know that Hashem listens to me, but I feel like those tears somehow don't penetrate the gates. I know that when someone gives in to areas of Kedusha, it can block the spiritual pathways. But really, if this is the nisayon of the generation, can't Hashem make an exception for us? How much longer must we hold on? How much longer can Hashem refuse our prayers?

What more can I say? Well, probably a lot more, I'll leave it to this, though.

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I just felt like I needed to write a few words to get some feelings out and I also decided to share them because maybe someone else can relate.

This popped up today and I liked it so much I went to the beginning and read the entire thing. AM, you are an unbelievable person. Your writing over the past several years has, in one day, given me a tremendous boost of strength (which, at day 25, I am starting to really need!). A huge shout out to @grant400 for your truly insightful responses to AM. This is why I'm on the site. It's because of people like you. So a huge yasher koach for all you have accomplished since 2020. You are a true inspiration and a real warrior. And smart, to boot. Can't help pulling for your success! Keep us posted with more of your thoughts. They're gold!!

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Re: The struggles of a human
Posted by Teshuvahguy - 13 Nov 2022 16:30

AM, of course your feelings go up and down. And the struggle does wear us out sometimes and it feels just too hard. And maybe, sometimes it is. What you said about the fear of giving it up? That really spoke to me. I am terrified of facing the rest of my life without my drug of choice for the past decades. Until I became frum at age 53, I thought masturbation was natural, healthy, and I indulged myself liberally. Breaking a daily habit of so many decades that had become a crutch is excruciatingly hard. I see that you feel down now. But look back at what you have been able to do. You can do it again and you can exceed your past accomplishments and go even further. I saw what you could do when you were on fire. Throw on another log and burn bright again. I'm an older guy. I've seen a lot. I can tell from what you have written here that you. WILL. Succeed!

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Re: The struggles of a human
Posted by anonymousmillennial - 13 Nov 2022 18:12

Thank you so much @TeshuvaGuy for your kind words. That means a lot to me. I also really

needed that encouragement.

You truly are a source of inspiration yourself as I can't imagine what it must be like becoming frum at the age of 53. Keep up the great work!!

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Re: The struggles of a human
Posted by Vehkam - 13 Nov 2022 18:27

I read your post. I did not have the opportunity to go back and read any of your earlier contributions so I am responding only to what you have written here.

First of all I want to express my gratitude to you for taking the time to share your innermost thoughts and struggles. Sharing your vulnerability and feelings is helpful to all of us as we try to identify many of the same thoughts and processes that go on in our mind and hearts.

It is obvious that anyone who keeps up the fight despite "failures" and falls is someone that we all look up to. While we all aspire to achieve the pure endgame, true greatness is achieved from the process of fighting back. No matter how many times we might fall.

The following are some observations that may or may not be helpful to you. They are the reactions that I had when reading your post and while applying some of your thoughts to my own struggles.

"And on the other end, the pain of having these nisyonos to deal with in the first place. The question of "how did I get entangled in this?" hanging over me as I try to keep my head up from under the water"

Perhaps this is the guilt usually associated with someone that has had a history of giving in. That guilt is best left in the past. It no longer defines us. We cannot change the past and that is therefore not our responsibility. Our responsibility is to learn from the past to make our present successful in reaching our future goals.

“But as time went by, the initial sensitivity to what once seemed so sacred, has all but been dulled, numbed and weakened. Learning to live with your losses comes with great benefits, though. I mean, you can get used to anything, can't you? Even this”

Accepting our losses does not mean “living with them”. Living with our successes is much more helpful. Focus on those. That will motivate you further.

“And yet, there's this pervasive nagging feeling of unrest; this relentless feeling within myself that won't let go. "Don't give up!" it will say. Or perhaps "there'll come a day when this will all be something of the past". A sense of hope. Something to cling to. I am grateful for this.”

This is the truth. Even when I was in the darkest of struggles that nagging feeling in the back of my mind existed although I had no idea how in the world it would ever come to be.

“Nonetheless, the weariness of the fighting is something I must carry with me every day. As much as I'd wished that this wouldn't be at the forefront of my mind, it unfortunately is.”

It is difficult to fight a never ending fight. especially if you feel like there hasn't been much progress. That is another reason why it is so important to focus on your successes every time you hold back is a success count them celebrate them.

“I've personally struggled for many months on a daily basis with it's ups and downs. And I wish I could say that I am interested in being helped, and sometimes I am. But sometimes, I just want to be left to my own devices. Just to have the space to figure this out on my own. Or just to be allowed to drown, not needing to fight. And I have tried that. It seems like I am getting closer to the end. But like the horizon of the sea, I still haven't reached the end. And I'm still trying to keep my head up in those waters. “

Many people have a difficult time changing until they feel they have hit rock bottom. Usually that

is defined as a situation that they can no longer live with. Without the clarity that these activities are diametrically opposed to the life we want to live, and to the people we want to be, there will be constant rationalization and ultimately constant falls. I rationalized for decades until it became clear to me that I had to choose. Once it was crystal clear what I wanted I also would not stop at anything to get there.

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No two people are the same and no two struggles are the same however The challenges that you have are the ones that Hashem determined are the best for you. As I mentioned before it's not about the endgame it's about the process. Hold on to all the greatness that you achieve every time you hold back from giving in. That will carry you afloat through any storm.

“Being alone in life doesn't help either. Every day takes courage, with an overarching question of "what's the purpose?". Life can seem rather dull sometimes. I know this vision seems rather bleak, but nonetheless it's important to put these feelings out. Nothing in life is binary. There are always going to be great moments in life and ,sometimes, there are going to be some rough moments [and sometimes more than 'some'].”

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Ultimately your journey in life is unique to yourself and your goals are your own. What you achieve with your capabilities should never be compared to anyone else. The comfort should lie in the fact that we care and understand the difficulty. It should never be a rationalization to fall off and be complacent.

“There's also a great sense of fear that I've recognized within myself. One of those fears, is the fear of letting go. The fear of not being able to live without this. This is especially in times of great stress and pain when escape seems like the only venue and this form of escape the only one. Recognition is always the first step to recovery, and I'm happy I'm aware of this. Nonetheless, as Reb Yisroel Salant used to say, the journey to "ve'hashevoiso el levovecho" is as great as the journey to "veyodaata". Two seperate Avodahs.”

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I just felt like I needed to write a few words to get some feelings out and I also decided to share them because maybe someone else can relate.”

Likewise I was just trying to post some counter points all of your thoughts and feelings are valid. Please keep fighting the good fight and keep on posting here so that we can inspire each other.

Best wishes

Vehkam

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Re: The struggles of a human

Posted by anonymousmillennial - 13 Nov 2022 19:23

Wow!! What a response! Thank you for taking the time to write that all out.

Yes, your counterpoints are very valid.

Indeed, as much as we sometimes know that guilt isn't healthy for us and that we ought to focus more on the positive, we often must be reminded of these truths (as per the famous mesilas

yeshorim). And even after having been reminded, it's sometimes hard to emotionally internalize those truths (my post being the result).

I therefore really appreciate your words of encouragement and helping me put the things back in the right perspective.

Wishing you much continued Hatzlacha.

AM.

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Re: The struggles of a human
Posted by Teshuvahguy - 13 Nov 2022 19:34

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It may help to daven to connect to Hashem instead of davening for a specific outcome. If this is the test of the generation which will bring us to greatness it may not be beneficial for it to go away. We don't know exactly what happens to our prayers. But there is no way that a genuine prayer is turned away regardless of what you may have read. There is no question that your tears penetrate and are extremely valuable.

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I'm hesitant to post this as this post probably sounds melodramatic and I thank you the reader if you've arrived to the end.

If it sounds all negative to you, please don't go taking all I said 100% literally as my feelings tend to go up and down.

I just felt like I needed to write a few words to get some feelings out and I also decided to share them because maybe someone else can relate.”

Likewise I was just trying to post some counter points all of your thoughts and feelings are valid. Please keep fighting the good fight and keep on posting here so that we can inspire each other.

Best wishes

Vehkam

@vehkam, your wisdom and calm clarity brought me near tears. Thank you for your constant commitment to chizuk. My heart is deeply appreciative. If I could, I'd give you the biggest hug in thanks for all you do for us here.

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Re: The struggles of a human
Posted by Vehkam - 13 Nov 2022 19:42

Hug accepted!

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Re: The struggles of a human
Posted by Hashem Help Me - 13 Nov 2022 21:00

Welcome back! By coming back here to post, you announced to yourself that you really want to get this under control. Hatzlocha buddy. Please accept my HUG - it's been a long time.

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Re: The struggles of a human
Posted by anonymousmillenial - 13 Nov 2022 21:14

Ooh, I feel the warmth of your hug penetrating the airwaves!!

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Re: The struggles of a human
Posted by YeshivaGuy - 14 Nov 2022 05:02

[anonymousmillenial wrote on 13 Nov 2022 14:57:](#)

Hi peeps,

It's been a while. Honestly, coming back here to write a post feels kinda weird. Like picking up

the phone to call someone you know you should've called a long time ago. A sense of guilt coupled with relief. This post isn't part of a series of blog posts nor the beginning of a new adventure. I'm sorta writing it for myself, being at my computer and feeling the need to express a few thoughts. [You, the reader, have been forewarned and I give you the permission henceforth to skip this post.]

I still fondly and bitterly recall the early days of my struggle. A sense of mission to overcome this, no matter what. Perhaps even a sense of heroism. And on the other end, the pain of having these nisyonos to deal with in the first place. The question of "how did I get entangled in this?" hanging over me as I try to keep my head up from under the water. There were many wins and unfortunately many losses as well.

But as time went by, the initial sensitivity to what once seemed so sacred, has all but been dulled, numbed and weakened. Learning to live with your losses comes with great benefits, though. I mean, you can get used to anything, can't you? Even this.

And yet, there's this pervasive nagging feeling of unrest; this relentless feeling within myself that won't let go. "Don't give up!" it will say. Or perhaps "there'll come a day when this will all be something of the past". A sense of hope. Something to cling to. I am grateful for this.

Nonetheless, the weariness of the fighting is something I must carry with me every day. As much as I'd wished that this wouldn't be at the forefront of my mind, it unfortunately is.

I've personally struggled for many months on a daily basis with it's ups and downs. And I wish I could say that I am interested in being helped, and sometimes I am. But sometimes, I just want to be left to my own devices. Just to have the space to figure this out on my own. Or just to be allowed to drown, not needing to fight. And I have tried that. It seems like I am getting closer to the end. But like the horizon of the sea, I still haven't reached the end. And I'm still trying to keep my head up in those waters.

It occurs to me sometimes that perhaps like that same horizon, there is no end. Perhaps swimming in these stormy waters and trying to fight for our lives is the purpose. It's a scary thought. One I have difficulty accepting. Nonetheless that's the way it feels at times.

Being alone in life doesn't help either. Every day takes courage, with an overarching question of "what's the purpose?". Life can seem rather dull sometimes. I know this vision seems rather bleak, but nonetheless it's important to put these feelings out. Nothing in life is binary. There are always going to be great moments in life and ,sometimes, there are going to be some rough moments [and sometimes more than 'some'].

What am I clinging to? I'm clinging to the hope of better days. Of days with more Torah learning. Of days being married. Of days being fulfilled and happy with myself. Of days where I'll be entirely free of this poison that permeates my entire essence.

Now don't go feeling all sorry for me. Please don't. That's not the purpose of this. I don't like being pitied.

Knowing that I'm not alone in this battle does help. In fact it does help a whole lot. It is rather a comforting thought. On the other hand, I've yet to find a balance, because to be honest, this sometimes justifies my continued falling. [It is a side note, I shall admit. Nonetheless I think it has to be mentioned.]

There's also a great sense of fear that I've recognized within myself. One of those fears, is the fear of letting go. The fear of not being able to live without this. This is especially in times of great stress and pain when escape seems like the only venue and this form of escape the only one. Recognition is always the first step to recovery, and I'm happy I'm aware of this. Nonetheless, as Reb Yisroel Salant used to say, the journey to "ve'hashevoiso el levovecho" is as great as the journey to "veyodaata". Two seperate Avodahs.

Another thing I would like to say is that I've cried many tears to Hashem. I know deep down that "Sha'arei demaos lo ninalu", and I know that Hashem listens to me, but I feel like those tears somehow don't penetrate the gates. I know that when someone gives in to areas of Kedusha, it can block the spiritual pathways. But really, if this is the nisayon of the generation, can't Hashem make an exception for us? How much longer must we hold on? How much longer can Hashem refuse our prayers?

What more can I say? Well, probably a lot more, I'll leave it to this, though.

I'm hesitant to post this as this post probably sounds melodramatic and I thank you the reader if you've arrived to the end.

If it sounds all negative to you, please don't go taking all I said 100% literally as my feelings tend to go up and down.

I just felt like I needed to write a few words to get some feelings out and I also decided to share them because maybe someone else can relate.

Thank you for coming back.

I missed you dearly.

You have managed to accurately describe in words the exact issues and struggles I'm currently experiencing as well.

The constant question of "what is the purpose?"

You mention that you are "clinging" onto a better future. If you may elaborate on the meaning of that, I'd greatly appreciate it.

Viewing oneself as having abandoned past hopes, goals, aspirations, and expectations, is certainly something I struggle with as well.

The depiction of yourself swimming in the ocean trying to keep your head up and swimming to a seemingly nonexistent location shakes me to the core.

I too am in those same waters and very very often I question why swim if I will seemingly never reach dry land.

As far as the whole "tears not penetrating the gates" thing and that if you're nichshal in kedusha it can "block the spiritual pathways."

Maybe there's an element of truth to that, but dude, it's not true the way you're taking it.

It's just not true.

There's no such a thing as a Jew who is left out in the cold by GD. Doesn't matter what they were nichshal in.

Could be it's hard, but pathways towards connecting to Hashem remain open so long as one's

heart still beats.

I'd say do yourself a favor, I know certain seforim will say things which make it sound like you can't have a relationship with Hashem without kedusha.

Don't have that be your driving force because it's unhealthy and untrue the way it seems you're understanding it.

Feeling alone, so so alone.

Yes my dearest friend, I am with you in this deep pain and confusion. Please reach out to me if you'd like to speak offline. I'm here for you and wish that soon we may both reach the dry land, or better yet, that Hashem may lead us ?????? ??? ??????

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YeshivaGuy

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Re: The struggles of a human
Posted by anonymousmillennial - 14 Nov 2022 13:31

Thank you for coming back.

I missed you dearly.

Thank you for welcoming me back, YeshivaGuy. I'm happy to be back and to hear from you.

You have managed to accurately describe in words the exact issues and struggles I'm currently experiencing as well.

The constant question of "what is the purpose?"

You mention that you are "clinging" onto a better future. If you may elaborate on the meaning of that, I'd greatly appreciate it.

What I mean is that there are times when living in the present is so painful or meaningless that it's hard to keep going. When seeking inside myself for a reason to indeed keep going, I find that a few things can help.

A.) The hope for better days and confidence that indeed there will be better days makes the suffering a bit easier, saying "this too shall come to pass one day".

B.) Seeing the bigger picture. With that I mean that everything that happens to us can be viewed from an isolated perspective of the here and now or as part of the bigger picture that makes up our whole life. Focusing on the former will often lead to pain and confusion. Understanding that all that happens to us is part of Hashem's master plan to help us grow and become who we're meant to be, even though it hurts so much now, can help us tolerate the pain.

C.) Another thing that helps me is the knowledge that as bleak as things seem to be, the glass is never empty. Sometimes we just focus so much on our pain that we forget how many things Hashem has actually blessed us with.

Please feel free to share any additional ideas.

As far as the whole "tears not penetrating the gates" thing and that if you're nichshal in kedusha it can "block the spiritual pathways."

Maybe there's an element of truth to that, but dude, it's not true the way you're taking it.

It's just not true.

There's no such a thing as a Jew who is left out in the cold by GD. Doesn't matter what they were nichshal in.

Could be it's hard, but pathways towards connecting to Hashem remain open so long as one's heart still beats.

I'd say do yourself a favor, I know certain seforim will say things which make it sound like you can't have a relationship with Hashem without kedusha.

Don't have that be your driving force because it's unhealthy and untrue the way it seems you're understanding it.

Yeah, I know this to be true, but unfortunately when you're feeling down and things aren't going

so well, this is the way things feel at times. As you probably know all too well, the world of facts and the world of feelings are two whole separate entities that more often than not do not coincide with each other. I do appreciate you pointing this out, though.

Feeling alone, so so alone.

Yes my dearest friend, I am with you in this deep pain and confusion. Please reach out to me if you'd like to speak offline. I'm here for you and wish that soon we may both reach the dry land, or better yet, that Hashem may lead us ????? ??? ?????

YeshivaGuy

Omein!! Thank you so much for your heartwarming chizuk, YeshivaGuy.

It's a great comfort indeed, knowing that we're all in this together. Picking each other up when any of us falls down.

Keep doing what you're doing, because you're one heck of an inspiration!!

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Re: The struggles of a human
Posted by Vehkam - 14 Nov 2022 15:28

I watched the meaningful minute podcast last night. They interviewed Rivka Shotkin, a 16 year old who is paralyzed from the chest down from a skiing accident in January 2021. While everyone has their own personal difficulties, her perspective on life and challenges was inspiring and fascinating.

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Re: The struggles of a human
Posted by Teshuvahguy - 14 Nov 2022 16:40

Feeling alone, so so alone.

Yes my dearest friend, I am with you in this deep pain and confusion. Please reach out to me if you'd like to speak offline. I'm here for you and wish that soon we may both reach the dry land, or better yet, that Hashem may lead us ????? ??? ?????

Hey, guys...I'm also out there trying to stay afloat. How am I still so lonely in this if you guys are also out there? It's the loneliness that makes the struggle so painful for me. I have a beautiful life and I am suffering inside, alone with things I dare not tell another.

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