

Living a holy life

Posted by committed_togrowth - 29 Oct 2021 04:06

Dear Chevra,

After a few months of visiting this website and quietly gaining chizuk by reading the incredible posts from this community I've decided to speak up and introduce myself. Over the past couple of years I've become religious starting from an almost entirely non-religious past. Hashem's Torah has transformed my life and imbued me with a new and deep sense of purpose, and it is my greatest desire to live each day with a sense of purpose, perfecting myself and living in connection with and recognition of Hashem. My path in Torah has led me to face the matter of shemiras habris, and in this I've encountered a great challenge. After many failed attempts at breaking free, late into this past Elul I found the resolve to pull myself out of the pit again. Since then BH I have been clean for a couple of months, but I still struggle greatly with temptation. The last time I fell I learned two things: I am not in control, and, more than anything, I want to live a life of kedusha. These two acknowledgements shocked me out of my sleep, but alarmingly I can feel over time that the clarity I gained from my last fall is diminishing. So, I've decided to jump in here to reinvigorate my journey. I look forward to growing together with each of you!

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Re: Living a holy life

Posted by Avrohom - 05 Nov 2021 03:34

[Ish MiGrodno wrote on 04 Nov 2021 02:52:](#)

Rabbeinu CTG Shlit"a,

My relationship with the internet has been very much all or nothing. As a former addict - youtube, CNN and just about any other online outlet - all send me back to a place that evokes indescribable lust (and pain). As such, over the past 4 months I decided that I had no choice but to basically stay away from what I term "recreational internet"....and that has made all the difference (i.e., the first 8 months of my most recent streak were far more difficult)!

I know that this seems harsh and I am certain that it is not for everyone; just my personal experience regarding the straightest / simplest manner in which to heal myself BEZ"H from my

former addiction.

Wishing you enormous hatzlacha. Your greatness parallels that of the Yosef Hatzadiks of Klal Yisrael; i.e., the great Yidden who have overcome their taavos without the peer and emotional support that many others are so fortunate to have.

If you are ever in Grodno, feel free to stop by and say hello ~ IMG

I agree very much with what IMG shared. The nature of the Yetzer Hora is to establish a tiny beachhead where he can work from, starting with a small tease, and increasing the urge and desire until he wins. As Chazal say ?????? ???, when you feed (Taavo) it, it makes it more hungry. So it's important to stay away from even small triggers.

That being said, this isn't an all-or nothing fight, and it isn't won overnight. You can see what works for you and what doesn't. See what happens if you avoid Youtube entirely for a few days. Will you in fact feel an emotional void that needs to be filled? You can try it for a bit and see if it's too difficult.

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Re: Living a holy life

Posted by committed_togrowth - 07 Nov 2021 17:29

Shavua tov all! Thank you for each of your responses. I think the consensus is that youtube is indeed a "beachhead" for the yetzer hara as you called it Avrohom, that's a very helpful way to think about it. I also like your suggestion of trying to abstain from youtube for a only few days to see how I feel after, and I'm going to try that. I think making the goal much smaller, rather than "I will never use youtube again" will help me actually take steps with this. BH the past few days have also gone well. A huge thank you to Hashem Help me for your support through webchaver, it has already made a big difference for me. Wishing you all a good week.

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Re: Living a holy life

Posted by committed_togrowth - 08 Nov 2021 20:50

Hi all,

Been dealing with a sort of constant, low level degree of desire for the past 24 hours. It's a bit frustrating! In the past I've dealt with the occasionally very strong surge, but it passes and then I can forget about the struggle for at least a few hours. The consistency of this urge is getting to me a little bit. I've seen in places that occupying yourself with positive things (Torah study above all) is the best and most natural way to overcome this struggle, rather than focusing on the struggle itself. I find myself often wishing this all just took up less of my headspace and that it wasn't one of the front and center areas of my avodah. I feel like this issue is sort of an energy sink, and that if I fought less with this issue I could grow more in other areas. And yet, I find I have to think about and deal with this far more often than I wish. Has anyone had similar thoughts or found any perspectives on this?

One last thought, related to the above. Over the past 2-3 weeks I have had a stressful time at work, and have also moved homes. During this time I gave up a some ground in terms of have a set time for limud hatorah and I am having trouble recovering it. Some nights I don't study at all which is a problem, because my night study sessions were a key factor in my recent growth (in general but also in shemiras habris specifically). I feel a bit paralyzed when I think about carving out time for study in the evenings. A combination of stress and being tired keeps holding me back. Does anyone have advice on breaking this sort of cycle? Thank you as always for your time and thoughts!

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Re: Living a holy life

Posted by Avrohom - 09 Nov 2021 04:51

[committed_togrowth wrote on 08 Nov 2021 20:50:](#)

Hi all,

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I think that's definitely true. Doing something else to take your mind off is certainly better than fighting head on.

Also, have you read any tips or strategies for dealing with urges? There are many that you can find in different places on the site. (Urge Surfing, Recognizing the urge isn't you, it's an urge that you have, changing your self-talk from I have to do this, - to I would like to do this but I'll be fine if I don't)

Also, you say things have been stressful recently. Stress and urges often go hand-in-hand. Whether that's because we're trying to escape the stress or using it as an excuse to allow ourselves to act out.

Hatzlocha in the fight! Keep up your amazing work!

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Re: Living a holy life

Posted by Hashem Help Me - 09 Nov 2021 15:54

Don't beat yourself up about the learning tzaddik. Hashem wants you to have menuchas hanefesh. Get settled and push yourself **a bit** beyond your comfort level to restart the seder of learning **when you are actually ready**. A healthy person learning will get much farther in both kamus v'aichus than a guy who is sitting by the gemara with paralyzing anxiety. Obviously we could all be morah heter with this and abuse this point, but something tells me you want to get back to it asap, so i am not concerned you will do that. May Hashem grant you yishuv ha'daas and you should be able to learn with true peace of mind and geshmak. And of course hatzlocha in your new home. Make sure it remains a place that the Shechina is "comfortable" dwelling in also.

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Re: Living a holy life

Posted by committed_togrowth - 10 Nov 2021 04:23

Hi Avrohom and HHM,

Thank you both for your kind words, they really uplifted me. I actually have not looked into those . It is really interesting to me that in moments of stress I feel like I have external reasons for why I should act out or how I could excuse it, but it is also exactly those moments that seem "excusable" (of course they aren't actually) when I have the chance demonstrate my loyalty to Hashem and stay clean in spite of potential excuses.

strategies Avrohom, but I have some homework to do
Your perspective is also super helpful HHM. I sometimes have trouble evaluating how much I need to push myself in terms of growth. My rabbi generally has me err on the side of caution (i.e. not do too much) because it's easy for me to become intense and overshoot the mark. Still, it's hard for me to shake the feeling that I'm falling behind or not doing enough, it can feel pretty visceral at times. Your words are very wise, I do think I need to take time just to settle in and then I will naturally come back to learning

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Re: Living a holy life

Posted by Hashem Help Me - 10 Nov 2021 12:30

There is a genetic/environmental issue in the Orthodox world - all streams of Orthodox - of severe perfectionism. Rabbi Frand spoke about it at the most recent Siyum Hashas. Your description of becoming too intense etc is unfortunately extremely common and a major cause for acting out and other mental issues in our community. You are not "erring on the side of caution". You are being mekayem the ratzon Hashem of living as an erliche yid with yishuv hadaas and menuchas hanefesh.

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Re: Living a holy life

Posted by committed_togrowth - 11 Nov 2021 03:02

Thank you for your strong words on this, they come with a lot of clarity. I will have to find that recording. I know that in parshat Bereishis we see first that Elokim created the world, and later we learn that Hashem Elokim created the world. From this Rashi teaches us that Hashem's original intention was for the world to be created based on pure din, but he knew this wouldn't stand because a world of humans requires rachamim. I was taught that we should relate to our own lives through these two lenses. That we should know that what Hashem wants for us is to be our best, as if we could live in a world of pure din. To strive for perfection and be the best we

can be. But, at the same time we have to understand that Hashem built the world with an understanding that we will sometimes fail. Putting these two perspectives together is difficult! If we know that failure is okay, how can we stay serious in our commitment to growth? And if we're striving to perfect ourselves, how can we withstand our failures? I've been trying to figure out how to plug these two sides into each other for a while now, interested in what this wise chevra has to say

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Re: Living a holy life

Posted by Hashem Help Me - 11 Nov 2021 12:24

Stop analyzing so much. do the mitzvos, avoid the aveiros - all to the best of your ability. Strive for success, not perfection. Appreciate every good deed you do. You can even jot them down in a diary and build up a feeling of self worth. reward yourself for the little things you do consistently that declare you believe in Hashem and His Torah. If you do it this way, you will get much further. Cheshbon HaNefesh? there is a time and place for that too. However the reckoning and teshuva process for "this stuff" should not enter your mind until you are iyh clean **completely** for a year or two, and are healthy and comfortable with your sexuality as an erliche yid. Until then it is the atzas ha'yetzer to be busy doing teshuva for this. For now just get a mentor, get advice how to stop, and then simply stop. Hatzlacha.

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Re: Living a holy life

Posted by committed_togrowth - 11 Nov 2021 20:43

I actually really like this idea idea of recording my mitzvot for at least a while to appreciate what I'm already doing. I do have a mentor that I chat with pretty frequently, so I'm going to ask him how I could approach building in rewards for positive deeds. Thank you again for your strong

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Re: Living a holy life

Posted by dovidfg - 11 Nov 2021 21:54

I would like to bring out HHM point even further as this exact point has bothered me as well. Though you will find in sefarim that continuing to do mitzvos without doing teshuvah, takes away

Lots of hatzlacha, you seem really determined and i y"ch you will succeed

Posted by DavidT - 11 Nov 2021 22:00

Lots of hatzlacha, you seem really determined and i y"ch you will succeed

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Re: Living a holy life

Posted by committed_togrowth - 14 Nov 2021 04:44

Thank you all for your perspective. BH I am still fully committed to and actively performing mitzvot and am not wavering on that, but it is helpful to hear reasoning for the value of mitzvot even while going through a struggle.

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Re: Living a holy life

Posted by committed_togrowth - 16 Nov 2021 20:05

Hi all,

Coming with some small updates. Around two weeks ago we had a discussion here about refraining from youtube use. I felt at the time that I wasn't ready to give it up, but I'm happy to report that I haven't used youtube since that conversation and haven't felt like I'm missing anything. I think refraining from youtube in combination with using webchaver has set me in a good place in terms of internet usage. However, I've noticed in the last few days however that I'm struggling with gazing at women in the street. My will to fight when I'm out and about is running a little low, and maybe I'm being lured into thinking that because I'm succeeding right now in controlling internet usage I don't have to be as careful on the street. Of course I know that's not true, just speculating on what might be happening psychologically to create this pattern. I work in an extremely immodest place so this is a particularly challenging area. I've experimented in the past with taking my glasses off, maybe I should revisit that as a solution. Just wanted to share how things are going here.

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