

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 committed_togrowth - 28 Sep 2022 21:11

Just want to vent a quick complaint here because where else can I do it. How are we supposed to work a full day with all of the attention to detail and critical thinking it involves while fasting!! Moreover, how are we supposed to go from 50 hours of concentrated reflection on the very nature and purpose of our existence and then drop seamlessly back into managing mundane work tasks, meetings etc. And to do this while fasting!! I know a Jew is supposed to live in both worlds constantly, but it is such a hard ask in modern society.

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Re: Living a holy life

Posted by committed_togrowth - 02 Oct 2022 03:35

Hope everyone had a connected Shabbos. Not too much to update about, but I'd like to get back into posting a bit more to stay plugged into this community. Been really connecting lately

with the understanding that Hashem can lift us up totally and permanently from where we find ourselves no matter how low we have fallen. When I connect with that idea I start to feel joy and excitement. I've been trying to reflect on this as often as I can and to maintain contact with that feeling of joy. It feels a bit like feeling my own heartbeat. Wishing you all a good week and a meaningful Yom Kippur.

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Re: Living a holy life
Posted by Hashem Help Me - 02 Oct 2022 19:21

[committed_togrowth wrote on 02 Oct 2022 03:35:](#)

Hope everyone had a connected Shabbos. Not too much to update about, but I'd like to get back into posting a bit more to stay plugged into this community. Been really connecting lately with the understanding that Hashem can lift us up totally and permanently from where we find ourselves no matter how low we have fallen. When I connect with that idea I start to feel joy and excitement. I've been trying to reflect on this as often as I can and to maintain contact with that feeling of joy. It feels a bit like feeling my own heartbeat. Wishing you all a good week and a meaningful Yom Kippur.

See attached file from the Shem MiShmuel - one remains a merkava for the Shechina, no matter what.

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Re: Living a holy life
Posted by Knightynight1 - 03 Oct 2022 02:22

Your journey sounds so inspirational. I feel that I felt the same thing. That is, I felt the desire to live a life of kedusha. Keep up the good work.

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Re: Living a holy life
Posted by committed_togrowth - 03 Oct 2022 03:50

wishing you hatzlacha in your own journey as well

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Thank you for the kind words

Re: Living a holy life

Posted by committed_togrowth - 04 Oct 2022 03:01

I'd like to share a suggestion with the chevra here, just something I noticed to be very helpful in my own life. For many of us, P&M is likely one of several ways that we shield ourselves from having to emotionally regulate. Others might be binge watching TV, eating lots of sugar, using social media etc. For me a big one was drinking alcohol. My suggestion is to try to identify the 3-4 primary things you do to hide away when the going gets tough and to give up or at least heavily minimize one of them (other than P&M). I'm referring to the kinds of activities that cause you to think "as long as I continue doing X, I will not be my true self." The rationale is that, your emotional coping skills are essentially a muscle. If that muscle never gets worked out, then it just atrophies. We all know on here that the pull to P&M is extremely visceral and getting free of it is quite difficult on that account. But, not all of your coping mechanisms will have such a visceral pull. I don't think we all get pulled to read that next silly news article in the same way that we do to watch pornography. A less visceral coping mechanism is much easier to scale down and, crucially, will finally get some oxygen flowing to your emotional regulation muscles. I think it's really key to peel back one of those layers of coping and expose your mind to the arena of challenge. Once you start getting that training back, the fight or flight instinct in the face of stresses and anxieties goes way down. For me, since I stopped drinking, I BH just have not entered the catastrophizing mindset I regularly found myself in that would compel to watch

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Re: Living a holy life

Posted by committed_togrowth - 07 Oct 2022 21:52

Just some miscellaneous reflections to share here. I and I'm sure many others have been experiencing stress related to work/parnasah during the yomim narayim. There's a certain feeling of insecurity and anxiety that comes from asking for so many days off work, falling behind in different areas, and the steep transitions back and forth between kodesh and chol during these days. Today was a day where my mind really started to run as more sources of stress kept getting heaped onto the pile. Then a thought occurred to me that really helped me reset. I think it is by design that the busiest time in the Jewish calendar coincides with one of the busiest times in the secular world. I know many people who just started new jobs, or new semesters, or their business is waking back up from a summer down period. At exactly that moment, Hashem asks us not to get sucked into all that is happening around us, and to entrench ourselves in a relationship with Him. This is no simple task, and when I look at myself

in my normal way of thinking, I have to say that I am really not at a madrega to move through these very demanding period with calmness and bitachon. But, the thing is that I (and we) specifically should *not* look at ourselves in our conventional way during this period. We just went through Yom Kippur. Hashem totally cleaned us of our mistakes, and we have an unbelievable closeness and totally new relationship with Him having gone through that day. These means that we are not bound by our ordinary limited thoughts which kept us distant and perhaps lacking in bitachon. The doors are wide open for us to rely on Hashem, and for him to steward us through these coming days with total closeness. If we stay stuck in our previous way of thinking about ourselves and don't process the transition we went through we will miss the opportunity to experience this new relationship. I think that is why Hashem gives us such a challenge during this period. It is a chance to ascend and, given our clean slate, it is really an unbelievable opportunity. While I do not expect perfection of myself, my focus and intent for these coming days is to just show up each day and do what I can, but to refuse to drown in concern. Hashem is with me and all of us more than He ever has been before.

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Re: Living a holy life
Posted by committed_togrowth - 02 Nov 2022 21:52

Been procrastinating updating my counter here but feeling strong enough today to address things. Had a really really hard past two weeks. Made very good strides over the past few months with anxiety and mental health as well as physical health. I'm grateful for the yomim tovim we have, but they threw quite a wrench in my routine and I could not find my footing for a while. Clean since this past Friday. I'm reminded that growth is iterative. As much as I'd like to ride off into the sunset and never make a mistake again, that is not the nature of my trajectory.

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Re: Living a holy life
Posted by committed_togrowth - 04 Nov 2022 19:30

Getting back on the healing train, it's been an interesting time. It has felt like a whole bunch of doors closed on me the past few weeks and that I have been cut off in a weird way from my own emotions and totally sapped of motivation both in spirituality and career. This week I had some things go wrong at work that would have ordinarily caused a huge emotional psychological wobble for me, but I didn't react at all to them. It's a bit of a strange feeling as on the one hand I suspect the lack of reaction is partially rooted in apathy/disengaging, but on the other hand I think there is an honest part of me that just cannot keep abusing myself with stress and anxiety and is no longer will to "freak out" over these kinds of things and I'm enjoying this newfound stability. I also cannot bring myself to care about the days counter. I'm basically glad that today I am not masturbating and don't have to experience the huge depression that it brings

on. Last night I was thinking back to a really really low day that occurred about two weeks ago where I was so unbelievably anxious that it felt like everything was over. I even caved on my no alcohol policy, drank a bunch, looked at bad photos, the whole nine yards. I realized I can't even remember at all what I was so worked up about. Made me realize that I psychologically can be pretty sensitive but that it is not always grounded in reality.

With all that being said, I do think I'm doing better and am trying to reopen those closed doors. Unfortunately I feel quite far from Hashem. Normally I have very emotional and sweet feelings towards Him, I want to grow and be the best I can be, I really try hard in my davening etc. Now I really feel like a deflated balloon in all areas of ruchnius except learning gemara, as some things are starting to click on that end. Just davening to Hashem that he wake my heart back up again because I don't enjoy this feeling of being asleep. Grateful to be clean and healthy today, and good shabbos to everyone here.

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Re: Living a holy life
Posted by committed_togrowth - 06 Nov 2022 05:02

Had a nice Shabbos, been getting back into an exercise routine and went for a quick run eruv Shabbos. At the end of the run Hashem popped a nice idea into my mind. It's a simple one and one that probably many already understand, but I feel like I never really understood what oneg Shabbos was. Something about physical indulgence for the honor of Shabbos seemed hard to understand and kind of lofty and hard to engage with. Then a very simple explanation occurred to me. When you understand how special something you have is, then you want to celebrate it. Shabbos is an unbelievable gift from Hashem. If you feel simcha in that knowledge and you want to celebrate it with an extravagant meal, that is all stemming from a recognition for and appreciation of the mitzvah of Shabbos. That recognition and joy is itself a very holy thing as it stems from love of Hashem and His Torah. Anyway like I said it's a simple idea, but it took a little while for this one to click with me.

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Re: Living a holy life
Posted by committed_togrowth - 13 Nov 2022 22:57

Day 15, doing pretty well BH. Been having some moments of reflection while listening to shiurim or even just while studying and have realized that my emunah has taken a real hit over the past month or two. I can't really point to a specific cause, but I think I've been so dragged down by my environment and my life stresses that the physical world has kind of closed in around me.

With my sense of higher purpose being so camouflaged and far away, everything becomes more difficult. There are paradoxical things happening inside of me. I'm feeling very driven to learn, but at the same time when I hear mention of the greatness and fundamental, total importance of Torah a part of me questions the truth of that. When I hear stories of hashgacha pratis or even just think about life, I sometimes find it hard to feel or think that Hashem runs the world. I'm not talking about a crisis of faith or anything near that dramatic, but I am becoming aware some subconscious tendencies emerging in my mind. But I am just taking it one day at a time and trying to do the right think as best I can. I don't have answers for my current feelings and situation, but I do know who I am at my core and what my life is about and I will just keep trying to do my job as a Jew.

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Re: Living a holy life
Posted by Teshuvahguy - 13 Nov 2022 23:38

[committed_togrowth wrote on 13 Nov 2022 22:57:](#)

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So relate to this. Especially the part in the second half. Thanks so much for sharing this. Sometimes just knowing someone relates to what you're feeling can help!

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Re: Living a holy life
Posted by committed_togrowth - 14 Nov 2022 00:07

[Teshuvahguy wrote on 13 Nov 2022 23:38:](#)

[committed_togrowth wrote on 13 Nov 2022 22:57:](#)

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Re: Living a holy life
Posted by committed_togrowth - 17 Nov 2022 05:26

Currently caught in a pretty vicious anxiety spiral. Hard to rationalize my way out of it and in fact the more rationalization I do the worse my evaluation of a current situation seems to become. Definitely have a desire to lean into fantasies or worse but will try to hunker down and weather the storm.

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