

Living a holy life

Posted by committed\_togrowth - 29 Oct 2021 04:06

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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 Vehkam - 20 Mar 2022 20:59

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My best advice is to not be complacent. You want to make sure you are moving forward. So find a small thing to work towards and keep pushing yourself. The goal in this struggle us not just to have "wins" is to build our inner resolve and determination to the point where it changes our outlook and our self value. And to keep building on that.

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Re: Living a holy life

Posted by committed\_togrowth - 21 Mar 2022 01:20

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Hi Vehkam that is a helpful point that you! In terms of the mindset one a practical level the biggest difficulty for me is coping with stress in healthy ways (I think all of my falls are a consequence of extreme stress). I actually had my first therapy appointment today and BH it went well, I'm hoping that will be something to help me keep growing and find healthy ways to

handle stress.

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Re: Living a holy life  
Posted by Vehkam - 21 Mar 2022 01:28

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Teaching yourself to become aware that you are stressed is the first step. It is very good that you are recognizing that.

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Re: Living a holy life  
Posted by committed\_togrowth - 22 Mar 2022 00:45

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90 days! Thank you Hashem! And thank you to all of you here, especially HHM. HHM, the simple fact is I would not have done this without you. I don't know how you do what you do, but you are an unbelievable asset to Klal Yisrael.

I have a long way to go and in many ways this is really just the beginning for me. Nonetheless, I figured I will share a few things I learned along the way:

1) The simplest and most effective solution for me has been removing access to unkosher content with a filter and Webchaver. Any attempt I made at staying clean while still having access to pictures and videos was destined to fail from the start. Willpower can get you through nisyonos some or most of the time, but there will be moments where you just want to fall. Knowing that falling is impossible or at least very very difficult can get you through these moments.

2) Get support, either by posting here on the forums or even better by getting an accountability partner. I don't think it's possible to succeed alone, and even if it is, why take the harder/lonelier/more miserable route? I was super shy and hesitant to talk with a mentor (see earlier in my forum), and that makes sense as of course it initially feels super weird to talk with someone you've never met about this stuff on the phone. But, getting an accountability partner was a complete game changer for me.

3) No "taking a peek." My experience taught me that if I'm in a place mentally where I've started to look at pictures of women (even clothed ones) for the purpose of arousal, a subsequent fall is incredibly likely. The fall might not even happen that day, but this sort of enticing yourself can build up an insurmountable amount of tension and taiva that will eventually bring you down.

4) This battle gets easier, not harder over time. Early on I used to equate this struggle to resistance training (i.e. strength training in the gym). When you're working out, the more reps you do, the more tired out you get. You know eventually you'll have to give in. For a time I thought this struggle was the same way, and the more days you "resist" for, the more the pressure and urges will pile on. This isn't the case. As long as we aren't actively inciting our taiva with thoughts and peeks, this struggle will become easier with time as your brain becomes accustomed to not acting out in response to stress-related or emotional cues.

5) Very related to number 4, satisfying our libido is neither a physiological nor a psychological necessity. Secular culture trains us to think that if you do not act on your urges, you will become psychologically repressed/crazed, and your body will...explode? deteriorate? I actually asked my physician a while ago about our medical understanding of what happens when you refrain from masturbation over long periods and he said we're really not sure as it hasn't been researched well. This is a support of why number 4 is true. Urges will pass, they do not build up

6) Manage your expectations on what "getting free" means. We aren't aiming for a point where we never again have taivas for these things. Sometimes it will be hard. This is especially true in the first few weeks, but even subsequently, sometimes you can go through phases of very strong taiva. Even today on day 90 for instance I went through a "lust attack." Resurgences might be because you are stress, tired, depressed, anxious, hungry, the list goes on. Even if you aren't aware of a current cause who knows what weird stuff your subconscious is doing. In these times, reach out for support, batten down the hatches, and wait it out. It won't last forever and it doesn't indicate where you are in your growth. I used to think that "getting free" meant not having a yetzer hara. BH I still have a yetzer hara for these things as it means I am normal.

7) Listen to shuirim on these issues and keep learning. They keep you engaged and motivated. My top two recommendations are Rabbi Shafier's *The Fight* and Rabbi Moshe Weinberger's *Chaburas Yosef HaTzaddik*. Rabbi Weinberger's series is really amazing. It's all about shmiras habris, but only a few episodes touch on it directly. Mostly it is a deep dive into the middah of yesod, and how to become a solid and grounded eved Hashem. It has helped me through many dark periods.

Thank you all again for your support. I don't plan on going anywhere, so let's keep growing

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Re: Living a holy life  
together  
Posted by Bilaam Harasha to Yosef Hatzaddik - 22 Mar 2022 01:00

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That's amazing to hear and thank you for the post and all that's in it! I'm certainly glad you're not going anywhere. Wishing you much hatzalacha on your journey forward and on growing together!

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Re: Living a holy life  
Posted by Avrohom - 22 Mar 2022 01:49

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Wow! Great post! and Amazing work getting to 90! It's a real Chizuk to me - thank you and keep up the great work!

Genuine stuff, from the heart, it's clear your advice is coming from someone who's worked at it, and experienced it, and not just quoting what sounds good - much appreciated.

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Re: Living a holy life  
Posted by DavidT - 22 Mar 2022 14:36

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[committed togrowth wrote on 22 Mar 2022 00:45:](#)

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Thank you all again for your support. I don't plan on going anywhere, so let's keep growing

Mazel Tov on your reaching 90 days clean! Hashem should always be with you and you should have many many more clean, healthy and happy days!

I quoted your whole post because **in my opinion, it's one of the best posts** and we should keep on reading it again and again!

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Re: Living a holy life  
Posted by committed\_togrowth - 22 Mar 2022 21:43

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Re: Living a holy life  
Posted by taherlibeinu - 24 Mar 2022 17:44

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I just wanted to say i get a lot of chizuk when i read your blog.. Well done on 90 days. Really amazing. very inspiring. BH you should continue onwards and upwards.

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Re: Living a holy life  
Posted by committed\_togrowth - 25 Mar 2022 03:34

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Thank you guys for your kind words

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Re: Living a holy life  
Posted by committed\_togrowth - 25 Mar 2022 19:34

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Pretty big update for the chevra, today I swapped out my iphone for a kosher flip phone. This honestly makes me kind of anxious but I'm hoping it'll help lock in the progress I've made recently in keeping clean. I got one called the Sunbeam F1 Orchid. It's a locked phone (no internet or app downloading), but it has a kosher GPS app developed by TAG as well as voice-to-text messaging and a touch screen keyboard, so it's pretty functional option in case anyone is looking.

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Re: Living a holy life  
Posted by Shtarkandemotional - 25 Mar 2022 21:09

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Very impressive! Your inspiring me to maybe make the same choice!

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Re: Living a holy life  
Posted by committed\_togrowth - 28 Mar 2022 02:41

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Pretty big fight today, I've had a far stronger yetzer hara than usual. I've had to work a late night today (a few more hours still left in the shift), and the stress/frustration/sleepiness is getting to me a bit. I work in a college town and even had a yetzer hara to pick up a college girl from the street! Feels like a resurgence of my pre-BT days. Hard day but hanging in there so far...

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Re: Living a holy life  
Posted by committed\_togrowth - 28 Mar 2022 04:17

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Still hanging in there but this is very unpleasant. I'm the only one in my work building and all the unfiltered computers are calling out to me. Going to hang on

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