

Work in progress

Posted by Vehkam - 02 Jan 2022 18:43

Trying to post here on a somewhat regular basis so that I stay on course. I have to rewire my thinking patterns of over thirty years! I set the counter to the last date that I fell in masturbation. I have been able to stay away from other things for longer. I thank hashem for his kindness in helping me to this point.

this shabbos I was in Florida. Obviously there are a lot more nisyonos. I definitely was more successful than other times in not following my eyes and gazing with the help of GYE. (Not to say that I was successful in every instance- at some point my feet just took me in the wrong direction even though my mind was saying- STOP!)

One thing that helped me alot was a shiur I heard recently that describes the power of a tefila that one has immediately after he withstands a nisayon. When I feel a possible weakness to a temptation, I quickly resolve to turn away and then I immediately daven for something that is very important to me. Each small victory is another tefila. I don't want these nisyonos, but if they are coming anyway at least I have the opportunity to use them for something very meaningful.

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Re: Work in progress

Posted by Vehkam - 24 Jun 2022 02:54

This thought is in honor of my birthday a few days ago. (all birthday wishes happily accepted!)

I was recently bothered by a question. In the bracha of ??? ????? in which we are davening for parnassa I noticed that the focus seem to be on the ??? . I wondered why didn't chaza"l formulate a bracha that is more directly asking for a bracha for our parnassa. Why put the emphasis on "the year". In addition, the bracha as written seems to focus on crops and produce. The brachos of shemona esrai are timeless, most of us are not farmers any more, why would a bracha for parnassa be written specifically related to crops?

I had another question. If any of us were to formulate one standard bracha to daven for (absent a specific crisis) it would most likely be a bracha for Hatzlocha, Gezunt, Parnassa & Nachas from our children. That is the most typical bracha given today. Yet we don't really see such a request in shemona esrai. There is Refa'ainu, but that is for someone who is sick. There is parnassa in ??? ?????, but the rest seems to be missing. The typical place where people would include these requests is in ????? ????? or before taking three steps back, but it is not included

in the standard brachos that chaza'l formulated.

None of these questions are earth shattering, but still they had me thinking....

I want to suggest that in the bracha of ??? ????? there is possibly another meaning beneath the surface. There is only one thing on earth that we continually count by years. We count the years that we are alive. Every time we pass our birthday we note the completion of a year and the beginning of another year. We don't do that with anything else.

When we say ??? ????? ?? ????? ????? we are asking hashem to bentsh this year of our life! All of the brachos we would want our included in this. Perhaps this is why chaza'l put the emphasis on the year, rather than just a wording that would refer directly to parnassa.

??? ?? ????? ??????? refers to everything this year produces, all the fruits of our efforts and labor, our children, our ruchniyus our parnassa – everthing that we worked for this year.

??????? ?????? And fill us from the goodness – let our hearts be full of nachas.

When we say in closing that hashem is ??? ?????, this is similar to the bracha we make for good wine. ??? refers to the grapes which are end product by themselves, ????? is when the end product is further blessed by hashem and produces wine. So too in ??? ?????, Tov is a reference to our children and ????? is a reference to the product of that ??? – namely our grandchildren!

This past year was arguably (to my knowledge) so far, the best year of my life. As I begin a new year I ask hashem ??? ?????? ?? ????? ??????????? ??????? ??????. May it be a year of even more growth, may it be a year of hatzlocha, gezunt, parnassa and nachas for me, and may I in turn be zoche to bring nachas to hashem.

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Re: Work in progress

Posted by committed_togrowth - 24 Jun 2022 03:07

Beautiful, thank you for sharing. Happy birthday! Hashem should bless you with another year of growth, closeness, and simcha!

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Re: Work in progress

Posted by connected - 24 Jun 2022 03:16

Happy birthday!

May The Almighty grant you the clarity and strength to proceed in your climb towards greatness.

Watching your story unfold is nothing short of amazing!

Stay conected

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Re: Work in progress

Posted by Avrohom - 24 Jun 2022 04:09

Amen!!

and Happy Birthday - you are an incredible inspiration to me - thank you!

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Re: Work in progress

Posted by Vehkam - 27 Jun 2022 20:00

What if my parents find out?

What if my yeshiva finds out?

What if my friends finds out?

What if my family finds out?

What if my neighbors find out?

What if the shadchan finds out?

What if the girl finds out?

What if the girls parents find out?

What if the the girls parents rav finds out?

What if the wife finds out?

What if the rav finds out?

What if the kids schools find out?

What if the kids friends parents find out?

What if my kids find out?

What if my boss finds out?

What if my co-workers find out?

What if the shadchan finds out?

What if the mechutanim find out?

What if the mechutanim's rav finds out?

What if the marriage therapist finds out?

What if her lawyer finds out?

What if the grandchildren find out?

What if no one ever finds out?

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What if I just stop?

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Re: Work in progress

Posted by Vehkam - 29 Jun 2022 13:26

Dear Dad,

I hope that you are doing well. I have to be honest. I really miss you. I thought that I would be ok over here. The scenery, the food, the activities are attractive and inviting. I tried many of them and at first I enjoyed them. I really thought that if I involved myself in everything here that I would not miss you. That I would be ok. That I would make new friends and experience the freedom that can only come from staking out my independence. Everything they advertised seemed so exciting. I was sure that this was going to be the best time ever.

Dad, I think I may have made a mistake. In the beginning it all seemed great. I thought I was having the time of my life but that was very short lived. The truth is that a lot of what I imagined was superficial. All the smiling faces were just done for the camera – people here are really miserable. They run from activity to activity thinking the next one will be better but at the end of the day the experience just doesn't have any meaning and the day ends with everyone even more frustrated than the day before.

But Dad, this is not the worst of it. I just don't belong here. In the beginning everyone was nice. But that was just because they wanted to draw me in. To let down my guard. They knew that I felt special and they wanted to take that feeling away from me. They are jealous of me and my relationship to you. They are trying to take that away from me. I can't believe I was so short sighted. That is all they want – to separate me from you.

Dad, why did you send me here? I cannot take it anymore. Everyone is so mean. They pick on me and blame me for everything. I have no friends here, I am all alone. It seems like every day there is someone else picking a fight with me. I no longer have any interest in all their foolish activities. It was all a façade. I don't know why I ever thought I would like it here. Please Dad, please come take me home. I don't want to be here anymore. I promise to be good. I will follow your rules without question. Dad, its been too long. I need to be with you. To feel your love, your embrace. Please just take me home. You promised me you would come get me. That I could come live with you and spend time with you. Forever. Just like the old days.

I am begging you my dear father in heaven, ?????????? ????? ?????? ????? ?????? ????? ?????
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Please just take me home.

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Re: Work in progress

Posted by Lchaim Tovim - 29 Jun 2022 14:10

Wow. Great mashal and very well written.

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Re: Work in progress

Posted by retrych - 30 Jun 2022 15:11

Great peace, had to read it again

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Re: Work in progress

Posted by Vehkam - 19 Jul 2022 16:04

Its been a couple of weeks since i posted on my thread. BH i am doing well. Just haven't had any inspirational or emotional moments to capture in writing. I do miss those moments which were more frequent in the beginning of this journey but i am confident that if i continue to follow my program i will continue to have those moments from time to time.

I am two thirds of the way through reading through The battle of the Generation for the third time. I don't believe that i have missed more than one night since i started the first time. (not sure if i actually did miss a night or not!) I continue to gain from the book and internalize the messages and responses to the yetzer hara.

I will share something that i was thinking of recently regarding shemona esrai...

in ??? ??? we say ????? ?????? i believe that this is a reminder not to fall for a tactic of the yetzer hara. the yetzer hara will tell a person why bother asking forgiveness, in all likelihood you will fall again, so your teshuva is not real. The answer to the yetzer hara is that i can sincerely do teshuva now and ask for forgiveness - even if i don't know that i will be able to withstand the next barrage of the yetzer hara's arsenal. If i ch"v fall again then i can ask forgiveness again and again. Hashem is a ????? ??????. Not being confident that i can withstand future nisyonos should never be a reason to not do teshuva. (of course for complete teshuva i have to want to withstand... but that is not a guarantee). We then ask hashem to help us win our future battles against the yetzer hara. That is also the reason that the following bracha ??? ?????? is asking hashem to help us overcome the yetzer hara.

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Re: Work in progress

Posted by Dave M - 19 Jul 2022 19:27

[Vehkam wrote on 19 Jul 2022 16:04:](#)

Its been a couple of weeks since i posted on my thread. BH i am doing well. Just haven't had any inspirational or emotional moments to capture in writing. I do miss those moments **which were more frequent in the beginning of this journey** but i am confident that if i continue to follow my program i will continue to have those moments from time to time.

This is very common, that in the beginning of a strong recovery, one will have these inspiring moments much more frequently since there is a lot of momentum in the beginning. Just keep on doing what your doing and keep on inspiring us. The quality of your post and responses have not deteriorated at all.

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Re: Work in progress

Posted by Lchaim Tovim - 19 Jul 2022 19:55

There have been plenty of inspirational and emotional moments captured in writing recently. Maybe not as many on this thread but you definitely left your mark through the many posts you penned on other peoples threads.

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Re: Work in progress

Posted by Vehkam - 19 Jul 2022 20:09

Thank you both for your kind words.

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Re: Work in progress

Posted by Vehkam - 31 Jul 2022 20:42

Tomorrow will mark nine months to the day since I started my journey home. The truth is that I didn't know at the time what path I was headed towards. I just knew that I needed clarity and that I could not attain that clarity while acting out sexually. I knew that I needed a clear mind in order to make the choices on how to spend the rest of my life.

In order to understand where I was coming from it is necessary to back up a little bit. I am 53 years old. I first discovered masturbation when I was 16. During those early years the craving and intensity of those feelings were extremely powerful. I knew that it was wrong but did not really understand why. It was wrong just as much as lots of other things were wrong. I had always been a good kid and done the right thing, but this was definitely something I could not resist. I remember seeing my face in the mirror back then while I was experiencing this pleasure. I was used to seeing an innocent boy looking back at me. Not anymore. Now I saw a face with eyes that reflected a darkness about them. I was no longer innocent. There was a deep-rooted evil within me. The problem was that I liked and craved that evil. It was liberating. It brought me pleasure that was other worldly. The fantasies that I would create in my head were captivating and intense. Many of them were dark in nature and centered around extreme and unhealthy thoughts.

I never told anyone about this. I had no idea if anyone else had these same thoughts. I assumed that no one in my circles would understand what I was dealing with. As a sincere bochur I really wanted to shteig in learning. I felt very torn. I was inwardly very depressed. Sometimes I had to go out once or twice during seder to relieve myself of the pounding intensity that was going on in my body. I needed to do that just to be able to focus on the gemara. So I came back to my shtender feeling like a lowlife, no longer dealing with intense cravings, but carrying a brickload of guilt for where I was holding.

My cravings drove me to do some crazy things. Sneaking xrated magazines into the bathroom at times. (and then having to figure out how in the world to dispose of them.) When I turned 18 I had access to a car. With that came access to all sorts of "adult" places. The magazines were now replaced with movies. I don't remember the complete timeline but I do know that when I was 21 I learned about all the different things available in nyc at that time. There was a lot available.

I carried my heavily guarded secret with me into marriage. I don't like to look back and say "what if", but it is clear to me now that my thinking and decision making was very negatively impacted by my secret. I could never be honest and open up completely. I did not seek out proper guidance. accordingly I entered into a marriage that was doomed to failure from day one. I was not discovered. I didn't fall apart. But I married someone who was not healthy and there was no relationship. (had she been healthy it may have ended even worse for me...)

I was now stuck with my secret, my guilt, my loneliness and divorce on top of it all. Even though

I had a good reputation and was still considered a good learner, there were not many good opportunities for someone in my position. The shidduch crisis had not yet hit and a young divorced guy was not high on any solid girls list.

On the other hand, my secret life did not care if I was divorced or not. I started working and had access to some money. My phone bills grew every month from paid phone services. I knew where and when to go and act out on my fantasies and I became very comfortable spending time in very disreputable places. This was all BEFORE high speed internet.

I did not fix myself at all during this period. I am sure that there were times that I davened for the strength to stop what I was doing, but I did not have any tools or anyone that I was comfortable talking to. On the outside I was fervently frum ehrlich and idealistic. On the inside I had a problem.

A couple of years went by and I was introduced to a frum girl who took interest in me. She saw the frum ehrlich and idealistic side of me and that is what she wanted. She seemed nice enough and I married her despite the fact that there were many red flags. Even before we were married I knew that I would have to carry more than just my side in the marriage. However I was so lonely and she was so interested in me that I decided that I would make it work no matter what.

So for over twenty years and four kids I made it work. As my wife became less and less functional, I took over more and more responsibility. My children grew up without a mother and I was a husband without a wife, but we were a family. I devoted myself to ensuring that my children grew up as happy and healthy as possible even though they never had a mother to nurture them. We took the best trips and vacations and everyone was jealous of us. (I tried to take care of my wife as well but that never worked out. Obviously my secrets were a big factor but ultimately the problems were just too big...) I also learned how to work around my responsibilities and find time to feed my fantasies. I was doing well enough to be able to afford what it cost and I also developed friends from my secret world. To them I could talk about anything. I had no secrets from them. The only thing they never knew was my real name.

Over the last few years things started to spiral. My children were all growing up and I no longer needed to devote as much attention to them. My wife was also becoming harder and harder to be around. I would take "business trips" for days at a time to get away and also to connect to my other world. It became harder and harder to know which was the real world and which was the fantasy. By this time I also had deep emotional attachment to some friends from the forbidden world.

This is the background and the general picture of my steady decline from yeshiva bochur to sexual addict. The following is the timeline of how hashem pulled me out..... I wrote this early this year...

1) Over the years I tried here and there to stop but never with outside help. I came to a point where I did not really think it was possible to stop at all and just decided to embrace that life and make peace with it.

2) my marriage at home was fairly miserable. I was married to someone who became less and less functional over the years. I had to be the mother and father to my children. My own acting out was a stress relief and keeping me sane on the one hand but it was drawing me further and further down a rabbit hole. (to be clear the marriage did not cause the problem the problem preceded the marriage)

3) Over the years countless people (from the other world) had asked me how I reconcile my religious lifestyle with the forbidden stuff that I was into and I answered them honestly that I could not reconcile it, I just preferred not to have to think about it.

4) A couple of years ago I realized that I was becoming more and more miserable at home (the dysfunction was significantly worse) and I knew that I needed to get out of this marriage. At the time I even contemplated leaving the religious life and following my friends into a fully promiscuous lifestyle. In hindsight this was never really an option. If nothing else I could never have done that to my kids.

5) at the same time I went to the siyum hashas and the religious side of me was inspired to begin Daf Yomi in earnest. That actually gave me the first stability that I needed to turn my life around. It had been decades since i had any serious learning commitment.

6) when Covid hit I ended up becoming even more involved in the Daf and spend even more time on it. I was lucky enough to be in a chabura that met on zoom with a captivating magid shiur. we were often on zoom for over two hours.

7) I was still fully involved in the forbidden life and so the hypocrisy became even more glaring to me.

8) I spent a few days Vacationing With some friends - it was an extremely promiscuous environment. Even so, these were people that I was able to open up about everything and they were fully aware of all my struggles. They also really cared (and still do care – edit – I no longer have contact with any of them) about me. I spent a half a day walking around deep in conversation with one of my friends about my future and goals. After speaking to her I felt like my mind was clearly made up that I cannot move forward in life unless I get divorced.

9) Although I did not share my secret life with my Rav, he felt that he had enough information to encourage me to move on with my life as well and he validated my decision as did my family and friends. (my children were very relieved that I took this step)

10) I was finally able to end my marriage A little over a year ago (in December 2020). While it was a difficult thing to do the after affects were an incredible peacefulness that I have not had in 25 years.

11) I knew that I wanted to go for therapy but was not ready I needed to decompress after the

marriage and I just continued doing -what I was doing until then - on both of the religious side and the forbidden side.

12)As soon as I got divorced people started to approach me with dating opportunities. On the outside I told everyone that I was not ready but on the inside I knew that there was a side of me that was secret and that there was no way I would ever marry someone again that didn't know all of me.

13)I also realized that being over 50 if I don't do something about this now I am going to run out of time.

14)right after sukkos this past year I went on vacation again. This time my friends were not able to be there. Most of the time I spent hanging out I realized that I just did not belong here.I believe that this feeling was a gift from Hashem and it was as a result of me keeping up with the Daf even while living in proverbial Sodom and Gomorrah.

15) when I came home I decided that I had decompressed enough and that I am going to try really hard to finally change. I fully expected to fall flat on my face.

16) I did not delete any of my accounts or contacts. I just stopped going onto any sites. I was very busy at work and at home preparing for a child's wedding so it was a good time to stop. I was afraid to announce my war to the yetzer hara so I tried to just do it under the radar without putting on any filters etc. (to clarify, if felt from experience that i could inspire myself to delete everything but that could cause me to have very strong desires to get them back, see 22 below)

17) it was at that point that I joined GYE. I started getting the daily boosts and was religious about listening to them first thing in the morning when I woke up.

18) I posted my first posts and if you read them you will see that I did not think it was possible for me to become clean.

19)I started looking for a therapist and started posting to try to be connected. I spoke to Yaakov from GYE and I spoke to someone from relief. For the first time in my life I was verbalizing and acknowledging to other people The extent of my problem.

20) I joined the 90 day challenge. Initially, I just planned on working on porn and websites (and worse)and figured that I would work on mzl later on. But then there was a post that being mzl was a fall (even though it probably wasn't because I wasn't working on that) So I decided to be careful with Mzl as well And I started the 90 days from The last time I knew I had been mzl. At this point I became fully emotionally invested in this fight.

21) I cannot explain it but since I started this process I have not had a fall. Occasionally there will be some tingling of an urge, like when they were girls in bathing suits in the hotel where I was staying but I have been accustomed to pushing away the thought Before it takes hold. I have become better at that as time goes on.

22) ive mentioned a few times on the forums that the best defense is a good offense. As time has passed and I have slowly but surely been deleting apps. Trying to slowly but surely keep

moving forward. At this point I would not be worried about handing my phone over to someone because I don't think (edit – I know there isn't anything) there's anything on it that I would be embarrassed about. I did this slowly over time because I did not want to awaken the feeling of mayim genvim yumtaku. The stuff was available if I wanted it ... This worked for me probably would not work for many. While I put some restrictions on my iPhone I do not have a filter through tag. My work is not about filters it's about changing myself. If I come to a point where I need the filter, the filter will not help! I may put a more serious one on at some point but not right now.

23) at the same time I looked for different ways to increase my awareness and sensitivity for Kedusha. I bought the book the battle of the generation and read a chapter religiously every night.(edit – about the finish in a few days for the third time!) I also bought a Siddur that focuses on teaching you that davening is a relationship with hashem.

24) along the way over this past year I also spent time developing some relationships with religious people and rabbonim that are happy and encouraging and a positive influence. (edit – I told my full story to a rav and he is the one that I ask halacha questions that can be affected by my story. E.g. listening to music when normally asur)

25) I spend a lot more time now with headphones on especially when walking from the train to work. This can be Daf Yomi related or just music but it takes me out of the streets and puts me in my own world.

It is hard to describe how far I have come in such a short time. I have hinted at the depths of depravity that I have travelled but for most people it's beyond what they could imagine. I have always been a good person at heart and I can't fully explain how I fell so far. I really hope that this lasts and is not just a four month swing in the right direction. Maybe this is how the yidden felt when the mitzriyim were chasing them after yetzias mitzrayim - on the one hand they were finally out, on the other hand they were scared the mitzriyim were chasing them and they would have to go back....

edit – it is now nine months and I am no longer looking over my shoulder. Of course I always have to be vigilant, that will never change. I am comfortable with who I am. I understand (through therapy) much more of my personal vulnerabilities and how to deal with them in a positive way. I am hopeful that I will soon be able to finally have a real relationship with a wife that understands me. My only secret now is GYE. (my friends and family have no idea.) I have opened my heart and soul and cried rivers of tears during the course of some deeply emotional writing on these forums. I can't wait to share it all with someone really special who will do the same with me.

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Re: Work in progress
Posted by Hashem Help Me - 31 Jul 2022 22:10

The inspirational hero, Vekahm, just posted a real masterpiece! May Hashem fulfill your wish to "*share it all with someone really special*" very soon!

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