

Chizzuk!

Posted by Emes - 18 May 2009 13:29

I thought I didn't need this anymore, but I'm wrong again. I hope I can add another honest story to the inspiring accounts of ordinary men struggling against an overwhelming enemy. I need the help and encouragement of my fellow warriors, battling in distant yet familiar battlefields around the world, and I hope I can add my strategies and weapons to the common fight, until we slaughter this enemy the same way he wants us destroyed.

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Re: Chizzuk!

Posted by the.guard - 18 May 2009 13:53

Good move, Emes. I linked your chart to this thread on the forum. Welcome to our community, and good luck on your journey!

P.S. Make sure to read the handbooks in your spare time. Especially when feeling weak....

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Re: Chizzuk!

Posted by bardichev - 18 May 2009 15:29

Dearest Emes

we all need chizzuk we are all fighting on all fronts against a monster who is out of control. this beast has broken down all barriers known to man .there is no longer any thing NORMAL any more .He is after every man woman bochur child he can get.

There is no EITZA there is only fight fire with fire. Don't take him head on. Be cool and be

creative outsmart him.

Do things that you never did before. If you did not learn before davening do it now. Where do you get a shiur a chavrusa ask your rov call an old chever .C'mon get creative .You already have chavrusa do something else get a new siddur change the way you daven. buy a new tallis.do something that will rejuvenate your avodas Hashem . Go to mikva. I can give you tons of suggestions .

Make sure you daven all 3 with minyan. If you are doing all this already find something in YIDDISHKITE that you can apply your ENERGYYYYY.

Do it with fervor GESHMAKK .MENUVAL HATES GESHMAK .he loves to sell the same old same old he wants you to be cold worn out down trodden lifeless and helpless.

SCREAM OUT!!! Hey Menuval you loser there is anew game in town!!!

KEEP UP THE GOOD WORK

h&h

bardichev

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Re: Chizzuk!

Posted by Emes - 19 May 2009 12:29

I've never had an accountability partner before, but I always wished I had.

[This was me](#) a few years ago.

I am very grateful to Ilan for agreeing to help me. Together we will give each other chizzuk.

So far so good.

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Re: Chizzuk!

Posted by Emes - 20 May 2009 13:51

I want to be like [dov](#).

I daven every day for anavah. It's always seemed to me to be the "first middah" and most central. As far as I understand, the more anav a person is, the more in touch with reality they are. Real reality.

dov's got that. And I want it. But he only got it after being *broken*. Shattered. Finished. Wiped out. Nearly dead, as he says.

I'm terrified of reaching such a stage. Is it only possible to get to the level I see in him after being broken? Can one be broken gently? Is it possible to do it to oneself?

I think yes.

What do you think?

So far so good.

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Re: Chizzuk!

Posted by the.guard - 20 May 2009 14:32

Dear **Emes**, although it says "**Emes me'erezt Titzmach**", the question is how low down does the eretz have to be?"

Read well #441 on [this page](#), and you'll understand what I mean.

You have just touched on one of the main goals of GuardYourEyes!

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Re: Chizzuk!

Posted by Emes - 20 May 2009 14:44

Thank you, guard.

That's just what I needed to read.

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Re: Chizzuk!

Posted by Emes - 22 May 2009 13:35

These days I'm in a good space. Learning is going well, enjoying work, happy at home and in general. But it's taken many years to get here.

My family wasn't frum at all. It's still a mystery even to me where my pull towards yiddishkeit came from. Possibly cheder, but all I remember about that was learning to read Hebrew. Whatever the source, from a young age I felt that being religious was the right thing to do. We didn't do it, but we should. No one else from my family seemed to feel that way.

When I was studying for my degree my best friend phoned me up and invited me to Israel. Aish

HaTorah were piloting their first [Jerusalem Fellowships](#) from South Africa. We thought we were getting a cheap trip to Israel, but had I known the outreach nature of the program beforehand I think I still would have gone. Like I said, there was always something inside me that said being religious is the right way to live.

The program was perfectly suited for an ignoramus like me. I went to a public school with a fair percentage of Jewish students, and came out with a spectacular lack of Jewish knowledge, as is to be expected. They presented in a palatable way how pleasant and fulfilling it is to be frum, and I was eager to accept the message. One of the presentations was on Tznius and Shomer N'giah (cunningly set towards the end of the program, after they'd softened you up) and I absorbed it with a happy heart like all the rest of the lessons I was thirsting to learn.

I had made a girlfriend on the tour, and after that lecture we sort of danced around each other in a way I would have found strange a few weeks before. Back home I distinctly remember walking along the street one day and suddenly realising that 50% of all my thoughts and energies were now free to use as I wished. No more anxiety about 'does she like me?' or 'how do I look?' or 'where am I going to get money for a date' or a million other concerns. Quite liberating!

Continued...

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Re: Chizzuk!

Posted by the.guard - 22 May 2009 14:21

Beautiful!

I updated your chart to 7 days. Welcome to Level 2.

(Level 3 is at 14 days)

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Re: Chizzuk!

Posted by Emes - 25 May 2009 15:02

I was doing so *well* after that tour. It seemed so natural not to return to the ingrained habit of adolescence. Then I went to a friend for Shabbos and stayed in an absent sibling's room with some books... and everything went back to start.

Internet access at University and then at work made it far too easy to stay there, even though I was taking on the external trappings of frumkeit.

Eventually I was inspired to give up my job and go to Yeshivah. I quit work and began the best years of my life.

Continued...

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Re: Chizzuk!

Posted by Emes - 28 May 2009 07:51

Yeshivah changed my life. I was a well-meaning but mostly ignorant baal teshuvah, and I sort of decided to "see what this Torah thing was all about". I thought I'd stay for a year or so but ended up staying for many years. I never did get smicha, but I am proud of the learning I did, the skills I acquired, and most importantly the derech I absorbed. It was time very well spent for me. Coming from a religiously apathetic family in a divorced single-mom latchkey-kid home, Shimush Talmidei Chachamim gave me a approach to transcend my mostly father-less upbringing, which I appreciate more and more as I raise my own children.

But Bein HaZmanim was torturous. I stayed in the dorms with maybe one or two out-of-towners who didn't go back home, and it was hell. I told myself I would learn and revise and spend the precious time well, but without the presence and support of like-minded fellows the loneliness returned and despite resistance I fell.

These were horrible times, full of awful loneliness and black depression, guilt and shame and

hating myself for weeks in a row. All alone.

I tried various strategies, some of which worked in part or for a short while, but nothing helped me to meet the standards I set for myself, and I longed miserably for the zman to start and my days to be structured again.

Eventually, I gave my Yeshivah to Hashem. I'm proud of what I did. Basically, it was well understood that after marriage you enter the workplace. There was no Kollel attached to the Yeshivah, and the prevailing attitude was that Kollel was for the elite. 'The cream of the cream of the cream'. I was only the cream of the cream ;D.

I couldn't stand falling every Bein HaZmanim, and after much desperate analysis concluded honestly that I would not be able to remain clean until I got married. This meant cutting short my stay in Yeshivah. I had planned to stay the course for seven years, get my smicha and then go back into my field (I feel I am not well-suited to the Rabbanut). I gave up these plans in service to Hashem.

I remember reading a story about Rav Moshe Feinstein who was collecting for his Yeshivah with a talmid. After a very long day Rav Moshe was becoming exhausted and the talmid urged him to take a rest and continue tomorrow. When Rav Moshe declined the talmid tried to persuade him by pointing out that exhaustion would hinder Rav Moshe's ability to learn. He replied that the Torah commands us to serve Hashem 'with all our heart, all our lives, and all our *me'od*'. This *me'od*, the extra, is different for everybody. Rav Moshe said that his *me'od* is Torah learning. It was something more valuable to him than even his life. Even so, Hashem commands us to serve Him at the cost of this precious thing. Raising money for Torah learning was service of Hashem and it transcended even his learning.

Same with me. I couldn't go on with this duplicity, and I consciously and sincerely offered the great heights I would surely grow to in Yeshivah to Hashem. I've never regretted this decision. It was the right thing to do. So I called up some shadchanim and bravely entered the shidduch scene.

What fun that was. Not.

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Re: Chizzuk!

Posted by the.guard - 28 May 2009 07:53

Keep posting your story... When you finish, I will gather all the pieces together and post it on our site bl"n...

P.S. Make sure it has a good ending!!

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Re: Chizzuk!

Posted by Emes - 28 May 2009 08:02

Thanks, guardureyes! ;D

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Re: Chizzuk!

Posted by the.guard - 31 May 2009 13:30

Hi Emes, I updated your chart to 14 days, level 3. Congrats! Keep us updated...

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Re: Chizzuk!

Posted by Emes - 01 Jun 2009 08:13

This post window has been open and waiting for me to write in it for an hour, but I haven't had the courage to say what needs to be said.

No acting out, but Saturday night I didn't change the channel when I should have. There's no way I can say it wasn't a fall (by the standards of the Wall of Honour). I should have turned off immediately. I might say it was tame compared to what's on TV later at night, but that doesn't really cut it.

So set me back to Day 2, guardureyes. I'm sorry to disappoint.

Perhaps why I'm in this position is that my focus has been on acting out, rather than Shmiras Einayim. With that perspective Saturday night was a win rather than a fail. But I have told myself in the past that the fight is not to resist temptation, the fight is to avoid being tempted.

I am not discouraged. With patience and without dwelling on the mistakes of the past (except to learn from them) I will begin walking forward again, step by step.

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