

Chaim starting over - again

Posted by chaim77 - 26 Oct 2010 21:39

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I am feeling so broken and distraught as I write this. I feel at a complete loss. I have struggled with this addiction and fought it for 20 years and it has beaten me again and again. I had 18 months of sobriety ending with a slip this past April. Now I struggle to get through one day without acting out.

Yet with all that I am so grateful I have found this site and this community. I have tasted extended sobriety. I believe that I can get back there, but right now I feel like I'm buried in a tunnel. I can't think. I can hardly focus. i can hardly even sit up and type this. All I can do is to groan from the depths of my broken heart. Help me, Father in Heaven! Please help me! I have nothing left. I can't fight this anymore. Not one more day. It's got me beat.

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Day 7 checking in. Thoughts on Procrastination, Alcohol and Growth

Posted by chaim77 - 15 Nov 2010 15:41

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Checking in on day 7. I am a little keyed up this morning for all the work I need to do and I have been procrastinating on. I am nervous about all I've been putting off, which I think fuels my procrastination. I don't have an answer for it, but I want to share it since it's on my mind so much.

I also want to unload my mind about alcohol. One of my friends held a shalom zachor this shabbos and there were l'chaims going around. As I imbibed, I became aware of wanting to turn something off inside me with the schnapps. It was unsettling and now I am very concerned about myself viz a viz self-medicating in other ways such as alcohol and food. Kol v'chomer since a lot of my acting out in the past involves alcohol. At the end of the day, the acting out is my real problem. I've drank a lot over my life, but I've never been a black out drunk or crossed the boundaries that I have while lusting. But I am becomein aware that drinking with the motive that I felt on Friday night is at odds with me growing alongg spiritual lines. I'm not sure if anyone else feels the same way, but I wanted to put it out there so I can at least aknowledge it.

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Feeling Okay on Day 8

Posted by chaim77 - 16 Nov 2010 15:02

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I'm clean 8 days and this is typically the second stage of my withdrawal. The first week is low energy, feeling bad and wanting to act out to dull the pain. The second week I tend to feel more "normal" and then get accute and sudden urges to act out. Thank G-d I don't have to worry about the second week - Today, I need to be focused on today.

I can feel the fog starting to lift a bit. This morning is day 8 and it's a beautiful sunny one in my area. It time for some more sunshine in my life.

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Re: Chaim starting over - again  
Posted by briut - 16 Nov 2010 15:38

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[chaim77 wrote on 15 Nov 2010 15:41:](#)

One of my friends held a shalom zachor this shabbos and there were l'chaims going around. As I imbibed, I became aware of wanting to turn something off inside me with the schnapps. It was unsettling and now I am very concerned about myself viz a viz self-medicating in other ways such as alcohol and food.

You've hit a nail on my head with this.

As I work past the physical urgency of this work on GYE and into the work that's hiding underneath, I'm starting to question my relationship with other forms of escape-ism. I love to eat a certain type of cuisine, and even use it as reward to finish work I hate or as comfort when I don't know how to get "out" of being "down." This obsession, this "putting power into the hands of mere food," might be an addiction in some peoples' definition of that term. What do I do with that thought?

And it's not just food. I might grab a drink (a single drink, once a week-ish) as a signal to loosen up. I might post on GYE as a way to gain some calm and perspective. I could go on and on.

So, am I addicted? Do I have an unhealthy relationship with food, with drink, with GYE, with dozens of other things? Am I simply an addiction-prone personality? I DON'T THINK SO. I think the standard here, for me, has got to be two-fold. One is, as R'Twerski says, "could I just give it

up, and will I." The other standard is, is this making my life better or worse (and be brutally honest with this one). I just don't see the problem, other than a coupla extra pounds from the food. I briefly smoked as a kid and quit -- I couldn't stomach the idea of holding on to an addiction.

I don't care much about semantics -- addicted, obsessed, connoisseur, whatever. I do look at what it's doing in my life. And so perhaps I could translate my own thoughts into your post and believe that the issue isn't drinking so much as the issues that come out when you're drinking. Those issues are still there when you're sober. Are you gonna deal with THEM?!

I'm not sure if this relates, and I for darned sure don't suggest that my 'stuff' is relevant to yours. I'm just sharing me, for whatever it's worth. Hatzlacha.

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Re: Chaim starting over - again

Posted by chaim77 - 16 Nov 2010 21:17

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Briut, those are some great insights and I appreciate the feedback. You provide a good perspective and if there's anything I can use more of, it's perspective. I think I was a little more keyed up when I wrote that post, I'm feeling calmer now, but I guess I just am seeing so much of what I do as laced with escapism.

During that first week with a lot of low level withdrawal, I was looking for some escape. Some escapism is healthy and just part of taking care of ourselves. Others are a double edged sword and they can come back and cut us bad. It's hard to tell what alcohol is for me right now. Even if it's not anywhere on the level of a struggle as tikkun ha'brit it's definitely been a "partner in crime". In banking parlance, it's on my watchlist.

When have a drink I feel better and it makes me realize how distressed I am inside. That's what's fueling the need to escape. There's a lot of issues inside - a whole long list. Where to start? I don't know anything better right now than to stay sober from my REAL addictive behaviors today. Maybe I'll know more tomorrow.

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Day 9 - Some thoughts on Asher Yatzar...

Posted by chaim77 - 17 Nov 2010 15:06

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This morning is Day 9. I had an interesting thought this morning after getting rid of a cup of coffee and making my Asher Yatzar. So I always thought this is an interesting and beautiful bracha just from the standpoint of its stam meaning. If, c's my appendix becomes yipateach and ruptures or my aorta becomes yistaem and clogs, I'm in big trouble.

I'm curious to know if anyone knows of any teaching about this bracha on a more spiritual level? Here's the thought: man is a creature of tubes and cavities from a physical basis, but also we are full of tubes and cavities in the spiritual sense that we are to be vessels for Hashem's spiritual nourishment. So, if my spiritual vessels are ruptured or blocked off, I can't receive that spiritual nourishment and stand before H'KBH for even one second. So what damage have I done to my spiritual vessels through acting out? Or what is mistaem my spiritual vessels? My dishonesty? My pride? My selfishness?

It is interesting that for the several times a day that I have to relieve myself, I don't get angry and resentful. I don't feel self-pity and cry out "why me?!?" I simply let it pass. There's something toxic and damaging in my body and I let it go. Certain circumstances withstanding, I don't try to hold it in. But with my spiritual filth, it is amazing how I hold it in! I embrace my self-pity, impatience, arrogance and it becomes so hard to let go of! It really seems comical.

It seem like there's some real mussar there. Like I said above, if anyone knows of any teaching on asher yatzar from this angle, let me know!

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Re: Chaim starting over - again

Posted by Kedusha - 17 Nov 2010 15:12

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Re: Day 9 - Some thoughts on Asher Yatzar...

Posted by ZemirosShabbos - 17 Nov 2010 15:42

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[chaim77 wrote on 17 Nov 2010 15:06:](#)

It seem like there's some real mussar there. Like I said above, if anyone knows of any teaching on asher yatzar from this angle, let me know!

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Day 10 - Not too much to report  
Posted by chaim77 - 18 Nov 2010 16:27

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Just checking in on a good day 10. It's a blessing to be sober today. Hope all are doing well. I've been meaning to make a point of remembering those in the GYE world in my davening, but I had not been doing it - until this morning. What a lift I got in Shacharit.

All of you are my light, my day break. Like Yaacov, I've been wrestling in the dark with this thing for 20 years. All of you are the breaking dawn that forces this adversary to flee. May H'KBH guide all of us to live this day in sanity, sobriety and growth.

~~I just read a very beautiful thought on this and YOU wrote it!~~=====

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Re: Chaim starting over - again  
Posted by ur-a-jew - 19 Nov 2010 04:18

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Keep it up Chaim. Hatzlocha on another great and sober day tomorrow.

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Re: Chaim starting over - again

Posted by Eye.nonymous - 19 Nov 2010 07:44

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[chaim77 wrote on 26 Oct 2010 21:39:](#)

I am feeling so broken and distraught as I write this. I feel at a complete loss. I have struggled with this addiction and fought it for 20 years and it has beaten me again and again. I had 18 months of sobriety ending with a slip this past April. Now I struggle to get through one day without acting out.

Dear Chaim77,

Just after the darkest hour, comes the light! Vayehi EREV, Yayehi BOKER!

So, as sad as it may seem, this is actually a good sign.

Welcome to the forum, and thanks for joining! You've find lots of help here like you never imagined!

Lots of luck,

Eye.

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Re: Chaim starting over - again

Posted by briut - 19 Nov 2010 14:50

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I'm with eye here. Someone gave me the term "structural tension." It means the distance between what in part of your mind's eye is "current reality" and what the other part sees as your "life's choice" (I forget the specific term).

And you'd THINK that the CLOSER reality is to your goal, the BETTER. Actually, they say punkt-verkehrt (the exact opposite). Seeing that "structural tension" between reality and goal is like PULLING BACK ON A RUBBER BAND AND LETTING GO -- IT PROPELS YOU TO YOUR GOAL WAY WAY FASTER THAN IF YOU WERE ALMOST THERE.

You see where you are (yuk) and where you want to be (ahhh) and then LET GO AND LET G-D because he's going to pull you back like a rubber band and shoot you right where you need to go.

I've actually found this to work in my life over many years. I might walk normally from one side of the street to the other, but if I'm wallowing in garbage and there's a nice piece of sidewalk across the road I'm going to RUN!

Good Shabbos. Keep going.

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Re: Chaim starting over - again

Posted by chaim77 - 19 Nov 2010 16:26

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Thanks eyes, ur-a-jes and Briut. G-d willing we should all be blessed with His light today and everyday.

Today is day 11. I'm pooped today, but sober going into Shabbat so hopefully I'll be able to catch up on some rest since we're not hosting this Shabbat for the first time in too long.

Not too much to say right now- just wanted to do a quick check-in. Gut shabbes to everyone on

the forum.

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Day 13

Posted by chaim77 - 21 Nov 2010 16:50

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Good morning all! Hope everyone had an excellent shabbat. B'H it's day 13 on this side. Over the past week or so, I've been reflecting on this last slip after 413 days of sobriety - i.e. not acting out. At first it's been devastating but now I can see how I was spiritually stagnant during that long stretch of not acting out. I was still tightly trying to live this life my way and how many shortcuts I had been rationalizing in my life. I can see now that all these little attempts to control were like snowflakes falling on the mountain side - it was just a matter of time until an avalanche would come crashing down. Perhaps I could still be sober - but I don't think I would have been "restored to sanity." I would still be trying to do life my way on my terms and judging it by my impossible standards - in a word, I would still not have the simcha that Hashem wants for all of us. It's a very humbling return to see how I really didn't get the 1st step.

Don't get me wrong, enjoying a long stretch of not acting out is a beautiful thing, but there is a greater segula of living in a way of utter trust and relationship with Hashem. I've had a taste of it and I'm seeing it lived in other's lives in the GYE circle. I just want to make sure I keep my eyes on the real prize.

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Re: Chaim starting over - again

Posted by frumfiend - 21 Nov 2010 21:05

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you write beautifully. You really inspire me.

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