

Eye.nonymous (Elyah) official count

Posted by Eye.nonymous - 13 Jul 2009 21:08

I'm new to this forum, but not new to this struggle. I signed up to the weekly E-mail lists a few months ago. I often just glance at them, as I'm trying not to spend so much time reading E-mails. But, even with this, I have gotten chizuk through the themes that keep repeating themselves.

I grew up secular, but did Teshuva in college--I came to Yeshiva in Israel and never left. Now I'm married with five children (our oldest is eight and our youngest is a month old).

I was in the habit of staring at girls, I remember even in nursery school. I just liked the way they looked. Things got worse when I was 10 or 11. My sisters had a "facts of life" book with indecent pictures and crooked ideas, and I found it. It described Mast... as a fun thing to do, and so I followed the instructions. I've been stuck ever since.

I was a member of a shul youth group around the age of my bar-mitzvah. The youth group leader gained my trust very early on, and I could discuss anything with him. Luckily, I learned early on that mast... is wrong. I've been fighting it ever since, sometimes more successfully and sometimes less so. I think now I go two or three months clean, and then I tend to trip up a few times close together. I always feel that the yeitzer hara tricked me, and somehow it's strategy was different than last time. Also, I view it as tripping up for one "phase," instead of multiple times. So, I manage not to get too depressed about it, and can pick myself up again pretty quickly.

I would like to be able to stop altogether. But, I am more concerned with controlling my eyes. I feel that it is impossible to walk down the street without taking a look at every woman along the way. I think the trickiest part is that, in my neighborhood, everyone is dressed so tznius that it's hard to feel that I'm really doing anything wrong.

Besides that, I slip up every once in a while with the internet--probably a few times a year. But then, I feel that I was somehow outsmarted again by my Yeitzer. I wasn't looking for indecent pictures... I was just curious about such-and-such an actress... I wasn't expecting to find such indecent pictures...

I see the progress is still very slow on my own, and that's why I decided to become more involved in this forum.

But, I find this is also a challenge. I think my own situation is rather mild, and I find that by seeing other people's stories which are more involved than my own, I end up getting thoughts instead of getting rid of them. Any advice on this point would also be helpful. Thanks.

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Re: Eye.nonymous official count

Posted by Eye.nonymous - 24 Jun 2010 11:33

I've been learning Sha'arei Kedusha in a little chabura in my kollel. We don't understand much of it, but every once in a while we understand a word or two, and it's really all worth it for that!

We're now on the part that describes how prophecy works. I actually found it very practical in this Guard Your Eyes struggle. In my feeble understanding of this part of it:

The highest part of our soul is in the highest of worlds, and it's only the lowest part of our soul that is here inside our body.

Our animalistic soul is always thinking of worldly things. BUT, the loftiest part of our soul is occupied with much loftier thoughts.

Achieving prophecy, in part, is a matter of silencing the animalistic soul, the worldly concerns. THEN, we can tune in to the loftier messages of our loftier soul.

I never understood--if I'm not thinking of the women on the street, than WHAT am I going to think of. I've got to make up something else to occupy my mind, and that takes so much effort.

But, there's this loftier aspect to my soul which has ALWAYS got something on it's mind.

My job is just to TUNE OUT the concerns of the physical world. Turn of my radar which is looking for the nearest woman on the street.

Like when you think you hear a beautiful song playing off in the distance but you're not sure. You just pause and listen intently. It may be miles away, but your focus on it can bring it to the forefront of your consciousness. And the noises in your immediate surrounding, which may even be louder, can fade away into silence.

Just an idea I thought you might like.

--Eye.

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Re: Eye.nonymous official count

Posted by Eye.nonymous - 24 Jun 2010 11:45

This post really ought to be before the previous one.

I had a major slip last night.

It was a trigger that I haven't confronted for a really long time and, it's actually something that shouldn't be stimulating and even ought to be positive. So, I find it very confusing. I don't want to avoid it if there's any way for it to be safe.

--Eye.

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Re: Eye.nonymous official count
Posted by yehoshua - 24 Jun 2010 12:50

Can you write more on what the slip was? And how did you remain sober?

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Re: Eye.nonymous official count
Posted by Eye.nonymous - 25 Jun 2010 06:56

Besides all that high-fallutin kaballah,

I think something that's even more important is just to take pleasure in doing the right thing.

Keep it simple.

--Eye.

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Re: Eye.nonymous official count
Posted by eliyahunavi - 25 Jun 2010 13:04

The part about being curious about such and such an actress- it KILLS me. So many times, that's the way it started for me. What do you do about it?

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Re: Eye.nonymous official count
Posted by Eye.nonymous - 27 Jun 2010 13:27

[eliyahunavi wrote on 25 Jun 2010 13:04:](#)

The part about being curious about such and such an actress- it KILLS me. So many times, that's the way it started for me. What do you do about it?

I've got K9 on my computer, and you can add extra keywords to block. I added their names to this list.

That's how I started out. Eventually I saw that I don't really need search engines and even certain "useful information" web sites. So, I just blocked these tools.

Someone on my thread said he did this. I wasn't ready to copy him then, but eventually I was able to follow his example.

--Eye.

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Re: Eye.nonymous official count

Posted by Eye.nonymous - 27 Jun 2010 13:36

I think today is 29.

I was getting this feeling that, whether I follow the 12-step program or not, I end up just as bad off. So, why bother!

Then, if I'm really honest with myself, I wasn't really DOING the program. For one thing, I

believed I was being helpful and unselfish, yet I was still just as selfish as ever.

I don't know if I slid back, or if I just gained a new awareness of how dishonest I am with myself.

So, I was lying to myself--I wasn't really doing the program. I've got to be honest with myself about this.

AND, I can say, although I've got a long way to go, and I feel pretty much the same about the bigger stresses in life, I DO NOTICE that a lot of smaller nuisances have slipped off my radar screen.

And, RID is a by-product of ALL our stresses, big and small. So, there definitely are fewer straws piling up on this camel's back.

--Eye.

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Re: Eye.nonymous official count
Posted by briut - 27 Jun 2010 15:53

Dear Eye. Shavua tov. I was thinking about your post. About thinking you're unselfish when really you're not etc. I want to disagree with you and (try to) give a little chizuk.

You see, most folks tend to overplay their good deeds AND their bad deeds. Esp folks like us here. We see our sins as mountainsized, and when we start making progress we might think our recovery as perfectly mountainsized, too.

Neither is true. We are beinonim. (baynonim? I can't spell in transliteration.) The truth is probably to be found in a less exaggerated version of however we're seeing it. And so what?

So, if you saw a big change to helpful, there probably was some. Maybe not BIG but certainly meaningful. Good for your spouse. Nachas to the RBS'O. Strengthening to you. PLEASE DON'T SHRINK THE IMPORTANCE OF THIS, JUST BECAUSE YOU'RE SEEING THINGS IN THE FUN HOUSE MIRROR THAT SHOWS IT IN A DIFFERENT SIZE. IT'S STILL IN THE MIRROR, SOMEWHERE.

We all talk here about "fell schmell" when we need to bring a fall back into perspective since we're so so so down. Well, what about the "fly, schmei" or something approach to realizing that our amazing amazing progress is merely normal.

Your posts always amaze me (!) in your good eye (pun intended) into your world. Don't let the Yetzer fool you with a fun house mirror. Your progress is beautiful, and real, and if you're not at the top of the mountain yet... remember that only Moshe Rabbeinu was allowed to (equipped to) climb all the way while the others remained farther away. Yet they still moved from 49 levels down to 49 up, whether they saw it or not.

Keep going. Please.

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Re: Eye.nonymous official count
Posted by the.guard - 27 Jun 2010 17:26

[Briut wrote on 27 Jun 2010 15:53:](#)

Your posts always amaze me (!) in your good eye (pun intended) into your world. Don't let the Yetzer fool you with a fun house mirror. Your progress is beautiful, and real, and if you're not at the top of the mountain yet... remember that only Moshe Rabbeinu was allowed to (equipped to) climb all the way while the others remained farther away. Yet they still moved from 49 levels down to 49 up, whether they saw it or not.

Keep going. Please.

Ditto 100%

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Re: Eye.nonymous official count

Posted by Eye.nonymous - 27 Jun 2010 18:37

Thanks Briut. (And ditto to Guard)

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Re: Eye.nonymous official count

Posted by Dov - 27 Jun 2010 20:48

Double ditto - and a funny thing I have noticed about the people I work with professionally (in health care): As they begin to improve they start to complain about how bad off they are. It is just so frustrating as a person helping them, to hear them get more negative at the very time that they are finally starting to *progress*. Well, it occurred to me that as long as they felt so very limited, being very bad-off, they had *no* aspirations for normalcy. But once they started to see some improvement, they started to have expectations! But as they were still almost as limited, they were mainly left with frustration....Slowly as they actually improved, the hope grew that they would be better one day, but the emotional roller coaster is frustrating and pretty convincing regardless of reality.

In recovery, I have seen this problem manifested in a very bad way: A guy comes as a shmateh. Soon, after surrendering to the truth about himself and actually doing a bit of recovery work, he becomes suddenly aware of what he forgot for so long: Normalcy. Though he is still very sick, he expects normalcy once he recognizes it. It's horrible to see: Just as he reaches the cusp of some real progress, has his first sniff of real honesty and freedom...he quickly comes to expect it! Like **he** made it happen in the first place! Forgotten is the pain and weakness that were the vehicles to get him here - he feels inherently 'strong' now! In common or pop-psych terms, we'd say, "Great! You are getting better!, Mazel Tov!" Self-confidence is a great thing to be sure, and **normal** people know how damaging and depressing it can be to so so focused on your defects. No argument there...unless one is truly sick. Let the sick man act as if he is normal and see

what happens. Have him keep his illness in mind and see how nice life gets - *provided he takes care of himself accordingly instead of giving up.*

Anyway, so the new-found expert soon falls hard on his behind (or more slowly but *very* badly) and often reacts by throwing away the entire derech - "I tried it and 'made it', but it failed me anyway!" The problem here is not lust - it is his pride. We are shmatehs, and will remain so, in some respect. Especially an addict. Just ask Reb TzviMeyer Zilverberg - he'll tell you that the greatest aspiration a yid can have is to be a ben melech, b'ni b'chori - and yet *still be a **shmateh**!* For most people this is a madreigah perhaps....but for *addicts* I believe it is survival itself. We pray for humility not because we *want* it so badly, but *because we **need** it.*

We know we are on an endless road. Our freedom increases and it gets easier and easier to stay sober and to live the Good-Life - but at a price: we addicts can never become *free of G-d*. Our dependence on Hashem *increases* over time, not the other way around. To the average frummy this sounds well and good - but I cannot tell you how many of these same guys I have met whose slip away from dependence on Hashem as soon as they *start* to get better. Funny, I have seen the very same reaction in religious goyim, too.

So, we actually become *more* needy, not more independent as we get better. An inconvenient, weird, truth. The bright side (especially as Jews) is that as the dependency grows so does the *relationship*. Ask any couple happily married for over 20 years and they'll tell you: Their dependency on the spouse increases *while their independence as individual grows*, and the love becomes ever deeper and more comfortable. Same with Hashem, I'havdil. (A long time ago I posted a shtikk'l about how Hashem gave us all the relationships in our natural lives specifically in order to help us grow closer to him.) Addicts feel this more keenly than most folks do, I guess.

Enough of me, sorry for schlepping on for so long in your thread, Eyeball guy. Is there a fine? ;D
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Re: Eye.nonymous official count

Posted by Eye.nonymous - 28 Jun 2010 13:08

[dov wrote on 27 Jun 2010 20:48:](#)

Eyeball guy. Is there a fine? ;D 8)

Not at all. That was great! Thanks, Dov.

--Eyeball guy

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Re: Eye.nonymous official count

Posted by Eye.nonymous - 02 Jul 2010 07:36

Day 34.

Quite a while ago, I noticed an undercurrent of tension that led me to act out.

Thanks to the insights I got through this forum, and especially thanks to DC's group, I think a lot of this tension is gone. The fears and resentments that caused them are much less.

And, I had a great talk with one of the guys for DC's group. We confronted one of my biggest fears--my feeling of hopelessness in finding a parnos. He gave me a whole new attitude; something I can work with and feel good about no matter what. So, this helped alot, too.

So, lately I've been walking down the street, feeling the urge to look at the women on the street. Then I was thinking, "I don't need this--I'm content with life." It's like, if you don't have a headache, why take pain killers.

It's a big realization. My whole life hasn't been transformed--it's just a feeling that comes along a couple of times here and there throughout the day. But, it's definitely a good start.

That undercurrent of tension is turning into an undercurrent of contentment.

Regarding "control." I had a talk with my wife about something. I realized, another type of control--trying to control THE PAST! In short, we made a big mistake with something, and it's been eating us up. BUT, it's in the past! WE MADE A MISTAKE. Just accept it and move on. Just make the most out of things today.

It may take us a while to fully integrate this, but it's an important realization.

A catalyst for some of these realization was a shiur I was listening to by Rav Moshe Aharon Stern. He was talking how a lot of problems come because we don't have satisfaction in our life--from our davening and from our learning, for example. During shacharis I was thinking--here I am in the middle of tachanun which is supposed to be a really powerful prayer, and I'm just rattling off the words. WHY DON'T I PUT SOME FEELING INTO IT! This is something I can choose to do! So I tried it. Again, this is another awareness that comes and goes, and goes more than it comes, but it's a new thing I can start working on.

And, it has further applications. The other morning I had something quick to do on the computer for work. I could have gone back and forth to the computer during breakfast and finished it. BUT, I wouldn't be fully present with my wife for breakfast--not physically, mentally, or emotionally. SO, I decided I WANTED TO PUT MY HEART INTO WHAT I WAS DOING--time with my wife. I left the computer work for later on in the day.

I'm feeling like there's been this screen between myself and others, even though I'm in the same room. I feel like this screen is lifting. Somehow, everything seems more vivid. People seem more real.

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Re: Eye.nonymous official count

Posted by Dov - 02 Jul 2010 20:51

WE love the Eyeball guy and wish him and the delightful Mrs Eyeball a sweet Shabbos w/o any burdens at all. Just Shabbos.

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