

One Day At A Time - What does it really mean?

Posted by stillgoing - 11 May 2016 20:17

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ODAAT, Or One Day At A Time, is a concept that is very helpful - crucial in fact to many people working on recovery.

But what it actually means is not so simple.

I thought I knew, and I was corrected. I thought I learnt the new meaning, but I was wrong again.

The purpose of this thread is for those people with experience in odaat, to have a place to explain to us others the true meaning (or their true meaning, if that's the case), and for those who want to hear it, to come, read, ask, (yes - even debate!) and learn.

So, Let the fun begin

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Re: One Day At A Time - What does it really mean?

Posted by inastruggle - 15 May 2016 03:17

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This is a great post on the topic as well.

It's from Dov. For some reason I'm having trouble quoting it directly so you can find it here

[guardyoureyes.com/forum/4-On-the-Way-to-90-Days/213548-with-Hashems-help?limit=15&start=15#214802](http://guardyoureyes.com/forum/4-On-the-Way-to-90-Days/213548-with-Hashems-help?limit=15&start=15#214802)

'Holding our breath' is a totally different experience than recovery offers. This story illustrates what 'holding breath' is:

The Steipler zt"l was once on guard duty in the Russian or Polish army on Shabbos - and his coat was in a tree, so it would be assur for him to take it down and use it! He decided to stay in place the entire shift without his coat. But it was terribly cold and driving him nuts. How could he stay put?!

He told himself that he could withstand the cold for just a minute (or hour?)...and he did! When that minute was over, he told himself that he just proved that he can tolerate the bitter cold for just a minute. So here before him is: a minute! He then waited a(nother) minute. When it was over, he thought: here before me is another one of those minute-thingies. I can definitely hang on just a minute! So he held on, and tolerated the cold for just a minute.

Etc, etc, and the entire night passed! Amazing. Beautiful.

AND THAT IS NOT AT ALL WHAT 'ONE DAY AT A TIME', MEANS! For what the Steipler did was a gimmick. A mind game. And it worked for him, for one night or day...it may work for more than one day - it may even work for a lifetime, who knows? And if I could stay sober that way for a lifetime, I would probably not take it. It would be gehinnom, would keep me good-and-miserable/crazy, and would generally...suck. I would surely eventually run to lust again just to get out of such a stupid (but kosher!) life. Yup.

But: the Steipler could **not** have actually held his breath all night using this gimmick. Correct? After a few minutes (about 2-3), a human knows he must breathe, period. So what would you do if someone told you he would give you a million (yep, a million!) bucks if you held your breath for two hours? Would you breath deeply and go give it a try? Silly, of course not. Why suffer for no reason and nothing in the end, anyway?

People who are not sincerely giving up lust for today are just sitting ducks. They are just holding their breath and 'holding back' one day at a time. It does not work. Eventually they will have to breathe. And Hashem knows this. It is a twisting of the meaning of 'one day at a time'.

I know they will say 'vatishlach es amosoh - she sent forth her arm' and all the sweet, encouraging droshos on that. But for an addict, it just does not work here! And in the meantime, the marriage and family are brutalized. Yuch.

[A nasty little digression :pinch:

When B'nei Yisroel (on Rosh chodesh Nissan) went to take the korban Pesach (in four more days!) Hashem writes: "[i]And Bn"Y went and did as Moshe commanded them.[/i]" Rashi brings that they went with the intention, knowing that come the 10th of Nissan, they'd take the goat/lamb, and come the 14th, they'd shecht it, etc. In their hearts, it was a done deal. So from right then, Hashem says He considers it that they already did it all!

Sadly, the converse is also true. We all know in our hearts that we cannot hold our breath forever. So, as inspired as we may be to hold our breath and resist getting that sweet orgasm/fantasy/porn joy we need...we are full-aware that we are eventually gonna pop. We have not given it up at all, see it as an eventual necessity, and a masculine right. The only guarantee, then, is that we will need to act out when the maximum tolerance of # days clean is reached. So it is almost as though they are already masturbating, in some respect. By the Korban pesach it means they are given over to G-d and committed to doing His Will - and by lust, it means they are given over to lust and committed to doing nothing real about stopping. So what's the use? May Hashem save me from making this mistake and being in that category, one day at a time.

I believe this is true for most ppl who take lots of half-measures and just 'fight it' (but see the exception below).

Therefore, only giving it up in our hearts one day at a time is useful and bears fruit, and that is the 12 step program way - not resisting 'one day at a time'. Get it?

There is one exception to this idea, and it is an important qualification: There are surely some who do the TapHsiC, or 90-day wall thingy, or counting the days, etc...holding their breath all the way - and it works! Because they did experience abstinence from their prize, after all, and did not die. Amazingly, their penises did not fall off. And abstinence sometimes makes it clear to the person that he does not, in fact, really need it at all!

Surprise!

But I doubt that such things will work for most people in the long run - and certainly not for addicts. For when the day comes that they desire it again as strong as ever, they will be 100% convinced again that they can't live without it, period. Back to square one. But surrender one day at a time really does work for alcoholics and others, all over the world.

End of the nasty little digression. ]

Where were we?

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Re: One Day At A Time - What does it really mean?  
Posted by stillgoing - 29 May 2016 14:22

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Well, i certainly don't inderstand it well, but can one day at a time be summed up by the following?

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Re: One Day At A Time - What does it really mean?  
Posted by stillgoing - 21 Jul 2019 16:19

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Dov in an email wrote:

re 'one day at a time'...I just wanted to take the opportunity to say that GYE et al typically take that to mean, "Be encouraged! If you see that you can hold your breath for 1 minute, then obviously you can hold your breath for *another* 1 minute, for it's the same 1 minute, right? And you'll just do that simple formula for the rest of your life (translation: if you held back and put off masturbation and porn pleasure for the whole day yesterday *and survived*, then **obviously** you can do that again just for today, for it's the same 24 hours!)A little absurd, no? I don't know anybody who can hold their breath for 2 whole minutes. Hence, lots of disillusioned and frustrated good people are walking around blaming themselves for 'falling' again. But in my travels so far, I've learned 2 ways to understand and use the 'one day at a time' idea, and both are dramatically different than that: 1- My experiencing today, has practically nothing to do with

yesterday. Because yesterday is over. And the same thing goes for the future that is not here yet. (Actual **planning** for the future, and serious **assessment** of my past behavior, are of course today's business and today's business only. Nearly all emotionally-compromised people make do something very different than planning for future responsibilities and assessment of the past: they live today as if they are **in** and re-experiencing the past or **in** and re-experiencing the future. That makes living right today practically impossible. That's what paralyzing guilt and fear are: not living in the present. Unhealthy Guilt is emotionally living in the past and pretending in our hearts that it's *still going on* - and unhealthy Fear is emotionally living in the future and pretending that we are *facing it as we are now*.) So **living one day at a time** just means living in reality and thereby remaining free to be busy doing *only today's job today and tomorrow's job tomorrow*. It's about not getting distracted by our bulls\*\*\*. How often are we dragged down by the past and the future. *Learning* from the past is entirely different than being pulled down by it, and *planning* for the future is entirely different than being paralyzed by it. The only way I know to be free of that is by surrendering the past and surrendering the future, no matter how tightly I want to hold on to them. Yep, I and others have spent decades holding on to the past and the future because the present is scary, annoying, or boring. And on the way, I ended up on a 20 year journey trying to go where no man has gone before! ...which brings me to: How does that relate to living sober? Well, it's certainly *not* a funny mind game of pretending that tomorrow doesn't exist or that yesterday never happened and it's certainly *not* about tricking myself that 'if I can hold my breath today I can hold my breath another day, too'. (I've seen both of those frequently on guard your eyes and from very well-intended motivational Rebbis) I think the main way that living one day at a time also helps people stay **sober** is that unnecessary pressures cease to exist for us when we accept G-d's Will and live out the day that he has prepared for us. As we Jews said today in hallel: "*This is the day G-d has made for us, let's enjoy it.*" (*Accepting it comes first and only after that can someone really start enjoying it.*) In the same way, the 12 Steps mention **nothing** about self-control techniques anywhere. Instead they are completely focused on living a life that's real and acceptable by reducing the nonsense we get ourselves mixed up with. 2- I can't recall the second way, right now. Oops. Dov

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Re: One Day At A Time - What does it really mean?  
Posted by stillgoing - 25 Feb 2022 16:26

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[stillgoing wrote on 11 May 2016 22:05:](#)

From a group email

**SG "If today I am feeling lustful, and I have not set up a long term plan.. then why would I Want to stay clean 'just for today' . Today, I want to act out. Tomorrow I'll be clean.**

**CORDNOY: Go right ahead**

**SG: Slicha, I don't understand your response.**

**Gracias**

**CORDNOY: The answer is that if you wanna act out today, go right ahead.**

**I wanna as well, but I know that I can't afford to.**

**SG: Why can't you afford to? Its just one day?**

**CORDNOY: Several reasons, but the practical one is that one day will turn into many.**

**Besides that, I experienced liberation, and slavery - not even for one day, does not interest me at all.**

**SG: To your first line, the practical answer is that if you are worried that one will turn into many, then you are taking tomorrow into consideration.**

**and for the second line, are you saying that you don't have times anymore that you are at**

**CORDNOY: 1 it is today's decision.**

**2 I can lust and there is risk. The thought of slavery helps me today.**

**SG: To both, of course we are making the decision today, but it seem like you are taking the rest of your life into consideration while making that decision.**

**I thought that odaat is about only making the Commitment for today, but it seems to me that the Motivation still needs to take the rest of our life into consideration.**

**DOV: Rather, it is very different, as I tried to express during the call today. Did you hear that part, or should I review it? Whatever you want, man.**

**OK Everybody, I'm all out of ideas. Is odaat a really simple concept and im just missing the sail boat, or can a little more clarification here help everyone.**

Bump

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