

Installed's Thread

Posted by installed - 21 Jun 2010 04:48

Hey guys,

Hope you had a pleasant day. I joined the site recently and I don't really know anybody here so I'll introduce myself. It would be helpful if you guys do the same.

My name is Avraham. I'm a 26 year old single guy. I was brought up in a modern orthodox home. My family moved quite a bit when I was younger and I moved quite a bit as well later on. I come from a stable background and get along well with my family.

I would describe myself as a bit of an introvert (more than I would like to be anyway). I generally do better in a one on one setting but can definitely handle crowds as well. I'm pretty detail oriented. I notice the little things in life and admire perfection. I love music, mainly R&B, mainstream pop and classical music. I'm trying to gradually wean myself off the non Jewish music (for obvious reasons) but it's a process. My hobbies include gardening, photography, hanging out with friends, traveling, cooking, and watching porn (can't believe I'm writing this). Hmm what else... Oh, if anybody here is familiar with the enneagram, I'm a 9 with a one wing.

My email address is installedjew@live.com .

All the best,

Avraham.

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Re: Installed's Thread

Posted by installed - 14 Jul 2010 01:22

tried calling in many times but there was no answer (it kept on ringing) :-[...

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Re: Installed's Thread

Posted by Ineedhelp!! - 14 Jul 2010 01:24

I WAS there.....nobody else was.... :' :'(

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Re: Installed's Thread

Posted by ur-a-jew - 14 Jul 2010 01:46

I couldn't call in until 9:30 and no one was there. Maybe we should try again tomorrow night.

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Re: Installed's Thread

Posted by installed - 14 Jul 2010 01:48

Perhaps it didn't work initially and people just stopped trying (as I did). Tomorrow works for me. Will the line be available?

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Re: Installed's Thread

Posted by Ineedhelp!! - 14 Jul 2010 02:19

Sounds like a great idea. Dont know if i'll be available but nonetheless the show must go on!

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Re: Installed's Thread

Posted by installed - 18 Jul 2010 21:45

Hey Guys,

I really enjoyed the call today. It's funny but I was really nervous while I spoke about my past. Public speaking is usually not a problem for me but it was extremely difficult for some reason in this setting. The setting is quite unnatural for me but I'm pushing myself to overcome the . I feel much more comfortable than I did when i joined. I'm sure that I'll get over this soon...

Avraham.

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Re: Installed's Thread

Posted by installed - 20 Jul 2010 20:47

I'm working on my emunnah but I'm not there yet. Do all the members here have 100% awkwardness emunnah? How does the second step work for someone like me?

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Re: Installed's Thread

Posted by ur-a-jew - 21 Jul 2010 23:46

100% emunah who has that. Doesn't the possuk say about Moshe Rabbeinu "yan lo hemantam be" (bamidbar 20:12). Now I recognize that it was on Moshe's level. But unless you're an angel no one has 100% emunah. And even if you do the 12 steps you won't get there. Building our emunah is a lifelong project. So let's not be unrealistic with ourselves and demand an impossible perfection.

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Re: Installed's Thread

Posted by installed - 22 Jul 2010 04:22

Thanks!

I'm happy that other people question (I'm not alone). But doesn't the second step require full emunah?

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Re: Installed's Thread

Posted by Ineedhelp!! - 22 Jul 2010 14:10

I presonally do not know what "full emunah" is. Did Moshe have full emunah? Even he did things that would that would show not having full emunah. Moshe was and will be the greatest person ever to live with the closest connection to Hashem. If Moshe didnt do it, I cant think we are expected to do it. This is not a program of perfection, its a program of progress. Have you ever heard of the saying: "Its about progress not perfection"? Thats from AA. In step 2 we need to set out the blueprints of what we need in our God. Nobody is asking us to be the best Jew. Just one that wants to grow each day. Lets draw our blueprints then we can build.

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Re: Installed's Thread

Posted by installed - 22 Jul 2010 15:58

Okay but can it work if I have my doubts about hashems existence?

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Re: Installed's Thread

Posted by Ineedhelp!! - 22 Jul 2010 15:58

Hmmm dont know about that one....Why do you doubt the existance of a God???

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Re: Installed's Thread

Posted by Dov - 27 Jul 2010 04:08

[installed wrote on 22 Jul 2010 15:58:](#)

Okay but can it work if I have my doubts about hashems existence?

This may sound crazy to you and would probably *not* win a Blue Ribbon at the "Annual Plato
) , but here it goes:

You can talk to Hashem even if you do not fully believe in Him. Trust me, you can *still* say,
"Hello Hashem. Thanks for bringing me to this point in so many ways. I do not understand You,
but I do understand that I am screwed up. So I need help. I am not sure you are hearing me and
if you *are*, then I am still not sure that you really *care* about me. But if You *are* hearing my words
and really *do* care for me, then it must be the deepest hearing that there is, and the most real
caring that can ever be. So - I am asking you to ***please help me*** go on the right path today.
Help."

I like to ask Him. before doing a mitzvah, or even sometimes just upon waking up and
(eventually) regaining my consciousness, "Tatty, help me be Yours". I say it calmly, as I do all
tefillos - He either hears me and knows what I mean or not...yelling or kvetching is not needed.
If I cry, then it is not forced - it just wells up on its own, cuz it's real. (And it feels great.)

As a result of doing this 'illogical' activity, you **will** get a Higher Power in your life - One that is
Festival" (:
real.

And another thing. If you want to 'work on' your emunah there are other things to do, and they'll
be posted on a thread I will try to start tomorrow called "Stuff people did to work this step - that
actually worked!".

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Re: Installed's Thread

Posted by ur-a-jew - 27 Jul 2010 14:52

[dov wrote on 27 Jul 2010 04:08:](#)

[installed wrote on 22 Jul 2010 15:58:](#)

Okay but can it work if I have my doubts about hashems existence?

This may sound crazy to you and would probably *not* win a Blue Ribbon at the "Annual Plato
(), but here it goes: You can talk to Hashem even if you do not fully believe in Him.
Trust me,

This all reminded me of a story I recently read which I think reflects the same question posed by
installed (in a more dramatic circumstance) and shows how Dov's response really does work. I
know it's long but it's worth it (I believe) either way you'll have a good story to say over:

In "Stories That Tug At the Heart" Artscroll / Mesorah Publications 2009, Rabbi Binyomen
Pruzansky tells a story that I once shared with him. The story is true and close to my heart. In
the book Reb Binyomen changed the names of those involved to protect their privacy. With
permission of the family I am putting the correct names back in. The names are part of the story!
The comments in parenthesis are mine. [copied from
http://www.torahlab.org/haberblog/the_last_class/ so that is Rabbi Haber speaking]

The Last Class

The clock ticked inexorably toward Shabbos as Rabbi Yaacov Haber put the finishing touches
Festival" (:
on his preparations. Another hour or so, he assessed, and he would be finished. As he leafed

through a brand new sefer searching for a quote he would utilize in his Shabbos morning sermon, the insistent ring of the phone pulled him away from his task.

“Rabbi Haber?” the voice on the other end asked hopefully. “Yes, it is. Who’s calling?” “It’s Jarom Haber,” said the caller. “I live here in Monsey and really must speak to you right away. Could I come over today?” (I assumed that the purpose of the call was to compare notes from Galicia and figure out whether we are related. Although this is a task I enjoy - Friday afternoon just wasn’t the time. When I tried to make an appointment for the following week he became desperate.)

Hearing the desperate edge in the caller’s voice, Rabbi Haber began quickly weighing the possibility of fitting one more item on his Erev Shabbos agenda. Alas, it appeared impossible. “I’d be happy to speak to you,” Rabbi Haber told the caller. “But today will not be possible. How about Sunday?”

“No, Rabbi, I’m sorry, but this really can’t wait,” Jarom replied firmly. “I need to speak to you today.” Clearly, Jarom Haber, whoever he was, would not be taking “no” for an answer. “In that case,” Rabbi Haber conceded, “come right over.” He gave Jarom his address and returned to his work, hoping he would be able to finish in the half-hour it would take for Jarom to reach him. Methodically recalling the names and faces of former members of his Monsey shul, he tried to put a face to the name Jarom Haber. However, he had no memory of anyone by that name. The mystery was soon settled by Jarom’s arrival. Entering the foreign territory of the Rabbi’s study, Jarom appeared a bit tenuous. His tall, broad frame was a bit stooped, as if he were carrying a heavy bundle on his back. Yet one could see that such was not his normal bearing; his direct, blue-eyed gaze, the thick, tousled shock of sandy brown hair and deep laugh lines framing his mouth created the image of an energetic, self-assured man.

“I hope this isn’t too much of an inconvenience,” Jarom began. “I realized on the way over here that Friday afternoon is probably a busy time for a Rabbi. But I won’t take too long. I just have one question to ask.” “It’s no problem,” Rabbi Haber assured him. “Have a seat and tell me what I can do for you.”

“Well, I just have to preface it by explaining to you that even though I was born Jewish, I am an atheist. Not just an atheist, but you might say I’m a professional atheist. I’m a professor at Rockland Community College, and I teach courses on atheism. In fact, I’ve written several books on atheism. “The reason I came to you is because this morning, I went to my doctor to receive the results of some tests, and he informed me that I have pancreatic cancer. I don’t know if you know anything about pancreatic cancer, but it has an almost-zero survival rate, and

mine is already in a very advanced stage. In a few weeks or at best, a few months, I'll be finished. There's nothing for me to do about it.

("Here is my dilemma) what I really want to do now is to pray. My problem, of course, is that I don't know how I can possibly pray. How can an atheist pray? Who would I pray to? (I am the proverbial 'athiest in a fox hole' I want to pray but I really can't) I've been hearing about you from some of my neighbors and I thought that you might be able to advise me. What should I do?"

Observing the lively spark in Jarom's eyes as he spoke, Rabbi Haber could hardly believe that he was speaking to a terminally ill man. Nevertheless, he was aware that this particular disease often progressed rapidly, and he had no doubt that the situation was dire. Jarom was like a drowning man struggling to find something to hold onto, begging Rabbi Haber to throw him a lifeline. "What comfort is there for an atheist facing death?" the Rabbi wondered. "How alone he must feel with his fears and pain!" Regardless of Jarom's lifelong misconceptions, however, Rabbi Haber knew that G-d was indeed there for him. The challenge was to convince Jarom that this was so; that he, like any other person born into this world, had the ability to call out to G-d for help.

"Tell me something, Jarom," Rabbi Haber said. "When you say you're an atheist, what exactly do you mean? Are you saying that you are 100 percent certain that there is no such thing as G-d? Or is there perhaps a small 5% window of possibility that you may be wrong? "

Jarom drummed his fingers on the armrest of his chair and rolled his eyes upward as if searching the ceiling for an answer to the question. He had never considered his level of certainty about his beliefs. Now, using nothing but his own considerable power of logic, he had to admit that his atheism (or anything else for that matter) was not a 100 percent certainty. If it were, why would he be sitting in a rabbi's office? "Well, I guess I could say that there's a five percent possibility that there's a G-d," Jarom replied cautiously, as if the very proclamation might cause some unseen cosmic cataclysm. These were not words he had ever expected to hear from his own mouth.

"Good!" Rabbi Haber declared. "So here's what I want you to do. Pray through that window that is open 5 percent. Aim your prayers there, and I am sure they will reach G-d."

The Rabbi's words painted a picture in Jarom's mind. There was a splendid palace, and Jarom stood outside it, facing a window that was open just a few inches. From that little crack at the bottom, Jarom could sense the majesty and power residing within. He didn't own a key to the

palace; the guards didn't know him at the gate, but he would pray through that narrow opening, and his words would be heard. Jarom Haber's words would reach the ears of G-d. Jarom's cool facade crumbled as he pictured himself, a lost child trying to get his Father's attention, calling through the window from outside.

His eyes instantly overflowed with tears and he began to cry aloud, "I can pray! Thank you, Rabbi. There's a way for me to pray." Rabbi Haber sat quietly watching this troubled man gratefully grab the lifeline he had been thrown. Jarom regained his composure and turned urgently to the Rabbi once again. "What will I say, Rabbi? Even if I can pray, even if G-d will listen to me, I don't know what to say!"

"Do you know how to read Hebrew?" asked Rabbi Haber. Thanks to a few years of Hebrew school in Jarom's pre-bar mitzvah years, he had indeed learned alef-bais. With a small measure of pride, he answered, "Yes, I do." "Alright," said Rabbi Haber. He took a slim volume of Tehilim off the top of his desk and handed it to Jarom. "Let's start right now, then, by saying this chapter of Tehilim." Jarom took the sefer into his hands. He had handled thousands of books in his life as an academic; some of the volumes were rare antiques. Yet now, handling a simple volume of Tehilim, his hands trembled. He began to haltingly read the chapter Rabbi Haber designated, all the while imagining that slightly open window, and hoping that inside the palace, his praises were being received with pleasure.

When Jarom finished his recitation, Rabbi Haber helped him understand the meaning of what he had said. The words were full of encouragement and comfort, stirring in Jarom the beginnings of a sense of trust in G-d. No longer was the issue whether or not G-d existed; he had prayed and felt certain that his words were heard. Now the issue was how to build a relationship with G-d in the short time he had left.

"I think the most important thing we could do at this point is to learn some Torah together," Rabbi Haber suggested. Jarom agreed, and they arranged to spend 15 to 20 minutes a day learning. "What is it that you would like to learn Jarom?" Jarom had no ready answer. He was not sure where to find what he felt he needed in this crucial period of his life. He wanted a little time to consider the possibilities. On Sunday morning, Jarom called Rabbi Haber. He had done some reading and some thinking, and had decided. "I want to learn the laws of repentance," he told the Rabbi with conviction. Rabbi Haber was moved by the man's sincerity. Indeed, all he wanted now was to get his affairs in order both in this world and the next. Like a man moving to a new home after many long years, Jarom wanted to shed all the useless items he had accumulated and go forward carrying only that which he would need.

Starting that day, Rabbi Haber and Jarom became learning partners, poring over the Rambam's laws of Teshuvah (repentance) with depth and focus. Jarom's scholarly abilities

were turned in a new direction, exactly 180 degrees opposite of the path he had pursued throughout his life. Rabbi Haber enjoyed the challenge of Jarom's insightful questions, and marveled at his quick grasp of the concepts they learned together.

As expected, Jarom grew weaker by the day. His athletic build began to shrivel, his posture to droop; his bright, intense eyes contrasted eerily with his pale face. Finally, too weak to deliver his lectures, he was forced to resign his teaching position. Nevertheless, Jarom persisted in his journey toward G-d. He purchased tzitzis and a yarmulke and began to wear them. Every day, he put on his tefillin and prayed as well as he could, injecting the overflowing contents of his heart into the Hebrew words he was just beginning to master. Rabbi Haber watched with mixed emotions as his new student's Torah learning blossomed and flourished, and his physical presence withered away.

One morning, as Rabbi Haber and Jarom learned together, they reached a point in the Rambam's work that describes the process of complete Teshuvah. "The final step," Rabbi Haber explained, "is when a person has the opportunity to commit the same sin again, but he holds himself back and refrains from doing it." "There isn't enough time left in my life for me to revisit every sin I've committed," Jarom commented somberly. "I wish there was some way I could do a complete Teshuvah, but I'm afraid that's just never going to happen." The weeks passed quickly, and as they did, Jarom's condition deteriorated further. He and Rabbi Haber completed their study of the Rambam's work, but Jarom continued to pay frequent visits to his mentor.

One day, Jarom walked into Rabbi Haber's study looking more energized than he had in weeks. "Rabbi, I've got it!" he exulted. "I figured it out! I found a way that I can do complete Teshuvah!" "That's great!" Rabbi Haber responded. "What do you have in mind?"

"I called up the college where I had been teaching for all these years and I asked them if I could give one final class before I die. Well, of course they couldn't say no to a request like that, so they are letting me give a lecture." "That will be great, but what does it have to do with complete Teshuvah?" Rabbi Haber asked. "I am calling my lecture 'The Last Class.' With this lecture, I am going to prove to the students that (absolute) atheism is false, and I am going to prove to them that there is a (strong possibility of) G-d. I am going to do Teshuvah just as the Rambam describes it: the same place, same situation, but this time, instead of turning people away from G-d, I am going to teach them that Hashem is the Master of the World."

A few days later, Jarom arrived at Rockland Community College to speak to the students. Standing in front of the lecture hall, the once vibrant professor was gaunt and tired looking. But when he called the class to order and began to speak, his passion for his subject opened up new reserves of strength within him. If the class had come in expecting the raspy whispers of a

dying man, they would be taken aback by the clear, bold words Jarom was speaking. "Everywhere you look around you, you can see there is a Creator who designed the world," he told them. "If you pay any attention at all to your life – to the people you meet and the things that happen to you and to others, it is clear that (there is at least a possibility that) G-d is running things. Even if you can't be so sure, you cannot prove beyond a doubt that there is no G-d. Hold open a small window of possibility – a five percent chance – that there is a G-d," he urged his students. "And make it your business to pray to Him. Pray through that small window you've left for yourself, and you will find, as I have, that it opens wider and wider for you. You'll find some day that G-d has become a certainty in your life – that he's there for you 100 percent."

A few weeks later Jarom passed away. He left this world as a Torah Jew whose lips had uttered prayers, whose keen mind had been rededicated to Torah learning, and whose longing for repentance had been satisfied.

Rabbi Haber said in his public address at Jarom's funeral, "Jarom Haber died as a great Jew. and his story is a lesson for all of us".

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