

STORY

LIFE IS ALL ABOUT CHOICES

A GYE Member sent in the following and wrote: "The following is an amazing story. It gives me a lot of chizuk in my daily struggle":



Michael is the kind of guy you love to hate. He is always in a good mood and always has something positive to say.

When someone would ask him how he was doing he would reply, "If I were any better, I would be twins!"

He was a natural motivator.

If an employee was having a bad day, Michael was there telling the employee how to look on the positive side of the situation.

Seeing this style really made me curious, so one day I went up to Michael and asked him, "I don't get it! You can't be a positive person all the time. How do you do it?"

Michael replied, "Each morning I wake up and say to myself, you have two choices today.

You can choose to be in a good mood or ... you can choose to be in a bad mood. I choose to be in a good mood.

Each time something bad happens, I can choose to be a victim or ... I can choose to learn from it. I choose to learn from it.

Every time someone comes to me complaining, I can choose to accept their

complaining or... I can point out the positive side of life. Choose the positive side of life.

"Yeah, right, it's not that easy," I protested. "Yes, it is," Michael said.

"Life is all about choices. When you cut away all the junk, every situation is a choice. You choose how you react to situations. You choose how people affect your mood. You choose to be in a good mood or bad mood.

The bottom line: It's your choice how you live your life."

I reflected on what Michael said. Soon thereafter, I left the Tower Industry to start my own business. We lost touch, but I often thought about him when I made a choice about life instead of reacting to it.

Several years later, I heard that Michael was involved in a serious accident, falling some 60 feet from a communications tower.

After 18 hours of surgery and weeks of intensive care, Michael was released from the hospital with rods placed in his back.

I saw Michael about six months after the accident. When I asked him how he was, he replied. "If I were any better, I'd be twins. Wanna see my scars?"

I declined to see his wounds, but I did ask him what had gone through his mind as the accident took place.

"The first thing that went through my mind was the well-being of my soon to be born daughter," Michael replied. "Then, as I lay on the ground, I remembered that I had

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SMILE! IT'S CONTAGIOUS



A day without sunshine is like, you know, night.



I learned law so well, that the day I graduated I sued the college. I won the case and got my tuition back.



I'd like to give a big shout out to the sidewalks: Thanks for keeping me off the streets!



Why did the scarecrow get a promotion? He was outstanding in his field.



The surest sign that intelligent life exists elsewhere in the universe is that it has never tried to contact us.



**Do not leave children
alone in the car!**



STORY

two choices: I could choose to live or ... I could choose to die. I chose to live."

"Weren't you scared? Did you lose consciousness?" I asked.

Michael continued, "...the paramedics were great. They kept telling me I was going to be fine. But when they wheeled me into the ER and I saw the expressions on the faces of the doctors and nurses, I got really scared.

In their eyes, I read "he's a dead man." I knew I needed to take action."

"What did you do?" I asked.

"Well, there was a big burly nurse shouting questions at me," said Michael.

"She asked if I was allergic to anything. "Yes, I replied." The doctors and nurses stopped working as they waited for my reply. I took a deep breath and yelled, "Gravity."

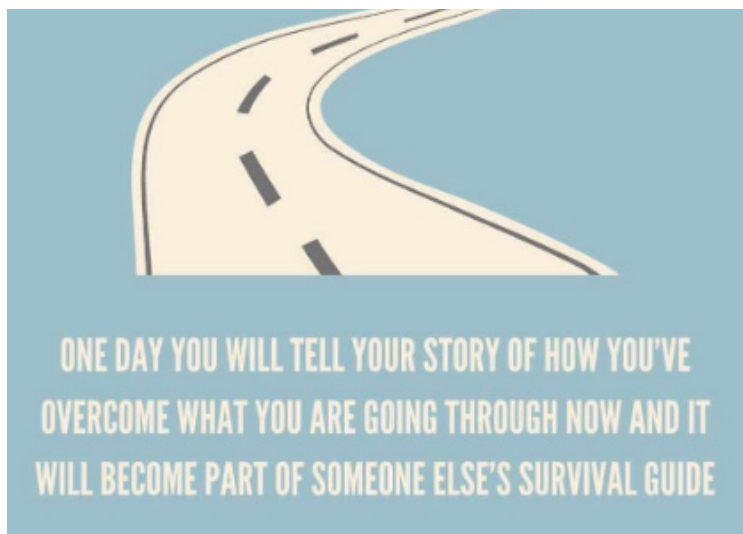
Over their laughter, I told them, "I am choosing to live. Operate on me as if I am alive, not dead."

"Michael lived, thanks to the skill of his doctors, but also because of his amazing attitude.

The GYE member ended the story with this note:

I keep telling myself: "It's all about choosing. I can give in and let the Yetzer Hara win one more time, or I can give the biggest nachas ruach to Hashem"... For me, it's all about making the right choice.

INSPIRATIONAL IMAGE OF THE WEEK



Which will we choose?

וְהָיָה יַעֲקֹב תִּשְׁמָעוּן אֶת הַמִּשְׁפָּטִים הָאֵלֶּה
(פרק ז' פסוק יב')

"And it shall come to pass, because you listen to these commandments"

Or Chas Veshalom...

וְהָיָה אִם שָׁכַחְתֶּם תִּשְׁכַּח אֶת ה' אֱלֹהֵי הַיָּד
(פרק ח' פסוק יט')

"And it shall be, if you shall forget the LORD your God"

PRACTICAL TIP OF THE WEEK

Increase enjoyable activities



If you're busy all day with things you need to do, but don't spend any time on things you like to do, it's easier to get caught up in unhealthy or addictive behaviors. Try to find something enjoyable that you can add to your weekly schedule to add

more balance to your life. It can be a learning, a hobby or creative project, time with friends, or anything else that gives you real satisfaction.

Dependent on Him More than the Animals

By Yaakov Nadel

וְנִשְׁלַח אֶל-הַיָּדָאֲת-הַגּוֹיִם הָאֵל מִפְּנֵיךָ מַעֲט מַעֲט.
 לֹא תִוְכַל כִּלְתֵּם מִהֵרָ פֶּן-תִּרְבֶּה עֲלֵיךָ חַיַּת הַשָּׂדֶה.



This seems like a strange statement. If Hashem can bring the 10 plagues on Egypt and split the sea, why can't he wipe out the goyim in Eretz Yisrael in one fell swoop?

Is Hashem really worried about the increase of the animals, is that something harder to deal with then getting rid of those great nations?

Perhaps there is a far deeper meaning here. All the creations of the world have a connection to Hashem based on their needs. The more someone "needs" Hashem, the more connection they have with him. Hashem told the snake after the sin of the *Etz Hada'as* "and you shall eat the dust of the earth all the days of your life", and Rashi explains that Hashem wanted no connection with the snake and therefore gave him his food wherever he goes. However, the other animals of the field need to ask Hashem for food every day, as it says in Tehillim "*Livakesh Mikel Ochlam*" - "they ask from Hashem their food".

Now Hashem wanted human beings to have even more connection with him than the animals, and therefore humans don't have a natural way to get food like the animals do, but rather are dependant on owning land, toiling the soil, rainfall, and on a good crop and harvest. In last week's Parsha, one of the praises mentioned of Eretz Yisrael is "*Limtar Hashamayim Tishteh Mayim*" - "From the heavens you will drink water", and the Pasuk goes on to say - "not like Eretz Mitzrayim which drinks like a watered garden from the Nile". But why is that a praise? It would seem that Mitzrayim is more fortunate than Israel! The answer is that Hashem wants more of a connection with us than he wants with the Egyptians. To them he gave them the Nile river so that they don't need rain fall at all and don't need Hashem at all. However, Eretz Yisrael drinks from the heavens, and like it says; "the eyes of Hashem are on the land [of Israel] from the beginning of the year until the end". Eretz Yisrael needs special divine intervention

for water, and the praise of this is that the Jewish people living there are always dependant on Hashem for rainfall and therefore remain strongly connected with him. After all, like it says in last weeks Parsha, "and you will receive buildings that you didn't build, wells which you didn't dig, vineyards that you didn't plant, etc..." and the Yidden will have everything they need in Eretz Yisrael. If they weren't dependant on Hashem at least for rainfall, they would no longer need him and quickly forget him.

The same applies with our enemies. And that is why it says in this weeks Parsha that although Hashem will wipe out the goyim from before us slowly but surely, still, he will not destroy them fast - "lest the animals of the field increase upon thee". What this perhaps means is, that if Hashem would wipe out our enemies all at once, we would no longer feel a need to depend on him. The words "lest the animals of the field increase upon thee" mean to hint perhaps, that if Hashem would destroy our enemies fast then even the animals of the field would "increase" over us, meaning that the animals would have even more of a connection with Hashem than we would.

And that is why Hashem has given us the Yetzer Hara as well. He wants a connection with us! He wants us to know that we need him, and that without his constant help, we are lost. And that is also why Hashem doesn't destroy the Yetzer Hara in one fell swoop once a person decides to do Teshuvah. Instead, each time we think we got rid of him, he keeps coming back again and again. Only "slowly but surely" does Hashem wipe him out from before us. For if Hashem would get rid of the Yetzer Hara all at once, we wouldn't need him any more and we wouldn't feel dependant on him. And this "connection" that we have to Hashem through our struggles with the Yetzer Hara, is even more important to Hashem than the falls that we have as a result of Him not removing the Yetzer Hara altogether as soon as we want to do Teshuvah.

To sum it all up: The most important thing to Hashem is not our progress in destroying the Yetzer Hara, but rather our dependence on him, and our constant knowledge that we need Hashem every day anew to help us break free of our #1 enemy.

Which Way are You Going?

By Rabbi Abraham J. Twerski



"This shall be the reward because you hearken to these ordinances" (Deuteronomy 7:12)

The Hebrew word for "because" in this verse is *eikev*, which also means "a footstep". Rabbi Moshe Leib of Sasov said that a person should consider each step one takes.

Life is a mission, an assignment, which carries with it responsibility. Each step one takes is either in the direction of fulfilling one's assignment, hence it is a mitzvah, or in the direction of self-indulgence, hence it is a dereliction. There is no neutrality.

All one's steps should be toward fulfilling one's mission in life.

Who is stronger



We read in this week's Parsha (*Eikev*): "If you should say in your heart that the nations (read: *Yetzer Hara*) are much greater and stronger than us"; *"EICHA UCHAL LEHORISHAM* - how can we conquer them?".

Notice that the Pasuk uses the word "*Eicha*", like the first word of "*Megillas Eicha*". Perhaps this is a hint that when we ask this question and we don't believe in the power of Hashem to save us, we bring upon ourselves destruction!

The Zohar says that the root of the destruction in *Megillas Eicha* comes from the original "*Ayeka* - where are you?" that Hashem asked Adam after he ate from the *Eitz hada'as*. ("*Ayeka*" is spelled the same as "*Eicha*")...

And what does Hashem answer the question in this week's Parsha? "Do not fear them, remember what Hashem your G-d did to Pharaoh and all of *Mitzrayim*.... That Hashem took you out with great wonders, etc... So will Hashem do to all the

nations that you fear before them.... Do not fear them, for Hashem your G-d is within you, a great and awesome G-d!"

Yes, the *Yetzer Hara* is INDEED MUCH stronger than us, but he isn't stronger than *HASHEM!!* And Hashem is not asking us to conquer the *Yetzer Hara*. He knows that we can't do that alone. All he's asking is that we put our trust in HIM to conquer the *Yetzer Hara* for us. "Hashem your G-d is within you, a great and awesome G-d!"

DESIRES ARE AN ILLUSION

Look into the middle of the circles and move your head forwards and backwards. Do you see the circles turning?

Our eyes are a tremendous blessing that allow us to perceive the world around us. However our eyes can trick us as well, making us believe that we need things that in reality it may be very bad for us. Let's train ourselves to use our eyes for good and not let them trick us to turn after our hearts desires!

