

Getting back to basics

Posted by Ash - 08 Jul 2012 16:50

Good morning/afternoon/night to all who read this. I am a young male struggling with this addiction. I have been living with this addiction for years and it has always masked itself with whatever resentment or negativity I had at the time at whoever it was directed towards. In short I had it but never said it like it was till last year about this time. It got to an out of control situation. It all blew up in my face and people got hurt emotionally as a result. That was a realization that something is wrong and that I had nothing in control and so healing began to take place. I have unloaded and processed a lot of negativity and past, forgave those who wronged me, and came to believe that a higher power exists and that even at the worst of my times he was still looking out for me. SA, meetings and the 12 step came about six months later when I did more research and decided I needed to take that next step. To get current I am grateful to god of the strides I have been able to take and owe people in my life so much gratitude (including some that got hurt) that I will never be able to pay back. I'm glad and grateful that I can say things as they are and not have to deny or rationalize this addiction, and I'm just grateful that I can be writing all the above today. My longest sobriety since last year has been 2 weeks and have made 7-10 days often enough when I am consistent and focused on working the steps. However with all this I have a long way to go. Lately I have been falling quite a bit . The falls arnt extreme compared to the past (last year and prior) however it sickens me every time again (a feeling that as hard as it is I'm grateful that I can feel as prior I would not or care not to) and again. I know something's that I should do but was never strong from the getgo. Those things are contacting others when I know I should, and having a consistent partner and even better a sponsor to help me through this. I will be touching base with this website more often now and using its tools. I am using some things alkyd such as the daily emails and have downloaded some of the books. Connecting on a more one on one bases is what I believe will be best for me so feel free to contact me via email or text first if you feel so. I am also on the 90 day chart. So here I am starting from the basics. I got nothing to lose but my lust and all to gain. Thanks for all those that will read this.g

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Re: Getting back to basics

Posted by Machshovo Tova - 08 Jul 2012 18:08

Welcome Ash, and hatzlacha rabbah.

Hopefully the koach harabim on this forum will help you alot. Please stick around, share and get chizuk, and have a successful GYE journey.

MT

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Re: Getting back to basics

Posted by Dov - 08 Jul 2012 22:31

Being 'sickened' by falls may prove not to be enough. You may need real, painful consequences like the blow-up you referenced that happened last year. I am not condemning G-d-forbit...just sharing that I and many others need to see that we really can't afford to act out. Private guilt and pain - real as they may be - are rarely real enough.

But I have met more than a few guys who have been unable to have long term sobriety for a year or two - until something just seemed to 'click'. May Hashem bless you with that and continue to bless you with more of the good you have gotten till now!

BTW, as far as I see it personally (and was taught) the steps (even #3) do not *directly* address my acting out or my lusting. Only step 1 does - it means that I have learned that I can't afford to act out. I am handicapped in lust. *Normal* people **can** lust and enjoy it - I cannot *succeed* at that, because I am an addict. To me, that's Step 1, and there ain't much else there.

Steps 2 and 3 are mainly about sanity and surrender of my *life* - not specifically my *lust*.

One who tries to work these steps - and cannot afford to act out his lust - will probably eventually come around and get the 1st step. That guy (or gal) will then do whatever it takes to stay away from the things that make him end up acting out and nothing in the world will stop him.

Make sense? Maybe this is what you have been saying in your share - but if not, then I am so glad we got to meet in this way!

Hatzlocha!

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Re: Getting back to basics

Posted by Ash - 08 Jul 2012 22:43

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Re: Getting back to basics

Posted by alexeliezer - 08 Jul 2012 23:27

Ash,

Welcome!

I've never been to an SA meeting, so I generally don't have much to offer anyone who's hooked up with SA. I think it's great that you've recognized you can't do this on your own, and are willing to do whatever it takes to be sober.

Pray frequently, whenever you feel challenged. Just talk to Gcd in your own words, surrendering your lust to Him and asking Him to take it, because, as Dov already said, we can't use it.

I find not looking at women at all very helpful. I simply can't look at a woman and not start the gears turning. My mind's just too sick. So unless it's absolutely necessary for business, or it's my family, my eyes are elsewhere -- or closed. This means I can't watch TV or movies, or read magazines. Even the newspaper is hazardous, and my hand is at the ready to cover the pics that are inevitably there. Personally, I find the less I know about what's happening in the news, the more at peace I am.

Best of luck to you, and keep us posted on your progress. Hopefully hooking up here too will yield better results.

Alex

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Re: Getting back to basics

Posted by Machshovo Tova - 12 Jul 2012 15:48

In other words, even if you're not yet ready to join an SA meeting. but you must practice some minimum SA activity, and that is "Shmiras Ainayim".

MT

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Re: Getting back to basics

Posted by Dov - 12 Jul 2012 17:29

Dear Chevra, anyone who is interested about Shmiras Einayim, here is a colorful post for you.

A group of us were talking last week about the great benefits of not taking the **second** look at the image of a woman (or any person) we would likely use for lust. I shared what was suggested to me once, that "*the first look is on G-d, the second look is on me*," and how truly that actually *works* for me and others. (somebody recently posted on GYE this exact concept from a very big mussar sefer, but I am not talking here about what's hashkafically right-sounding, but about *what actually works* to stay clean.)

A guy in the group then wrote: "I really did not understand what you said last night about the first and second look. To me being powerless is staying away from that first drink. Once I have taken it, I have lost the battle. The only way I can choose whether to let the first look have power over me, is by realizing that it is poison for me, and raising the white flag. Is that what you meant too?"

I wrote him back:

Nothing I said (or meant) yesterday was different than that. The first look is not a drink. What makes a drink a drink is what I do with it in my mind - if I choose to - after seeing it. Even though I do not see it any more with my eyes. I just wanted to clarify that. It's important to me because if I assure even first looks, then I will be looking for first looks to assure. That is just the way it is - I will notice all the things I need to protect myself from - and then I am dead meat. For they are then inside my mind even when I do not see them! How do you stay away from the first look? True, I stay away from pritzus as much as is practical - but for me to be vigilant in "not seeing anything that might be triggering", I'd have to have it on my mind all the time! And then I've already lost cuz I am already wrestling with dirty things...we get dirty that way.

So then am I saying that it is fine to look at women? No. I am just getting honest about the fact that seeing them is not our problem. So fighting it will not be the solution, either!

And this is why pointing to shmiras einayim eliminating the internet as the *solution*, is bogus. For normals, it *is* a solution...for addicts it is a smoke screen. For addicts, it is not the internet and it is not the images of the women that walk by us that torments us - it is our *lust* that is our problem. The *obsession* is the problem, here, and everyone but (quite likely self-righteous)

tahara perfectionists can admit that. (The actual level of Tahara we can achieve in this dor is obviously quite low, even for normals - but not addicts. Addicts usually achieve more than normals do, *because they have to*. But that's incidental, and not for tahara, but to survive.) In the meantime, the internet and the images of women around us are irritants, dangers, 'triggers'. That's all. They are obviously not our problem itself. One who is an addict and uses abnegation (escape from the trigger) as their sole recovery tool...will eventually find his or her lust elsewhere, perhaps years later and in some other form. I believe there is no escape for an addict, only postponement. Nu. But that's the place we are at in this dor - appearances mean everything - if I dress the part well, then I *am* frum....if I shukle, then I *must* love - or *believe* in - G-d....sad how much sheker we are comfortable with in this dor. We frum porn and sex addicts and professional masturbators know so well how fake the clothes and appearances can be *from ourselves*! Right? But I digress...

So practically speaking, if I put all my focus on not seeing women's images, it is as bad for me as looking for them is. It is negative sobriety and all about 'winning' by not doing x, y, or z. Even if I succeed, it will ultimately convince me I am strong and do not really need G-d - or I will just fail and act out more and more...or both. Struggling all day long against lust is probably great for normal yidden - but it's not gonna work for an addict. And the 'normals' (including some awesome, totally well-meaning GYE guys and rabbonim) will sincerely tell them something like: "You just gotta try harder! Hashem will definitely help you!"

No He won't.

Surprise!

Since when are 'good intentions' all that matters? This is Yiddishkeit, not some other religion! Warm and fuzzy sheker is still just sheker. Hashem is where the truth is, not in mushiness or frum, well-intentioned 'trying'. So we need to take the right *actions* - actions that **matter**. Actions that are all the opposite of what is natural to us, like

1- not looking at the people I tend to lust after - and

2- not fighting the lust, either - and

3- Praying for them - and

4- actually **speaking out** the words to Hashem, things like I said this very morning when I noticed a pretty lady in a car next to mine and felt a pull to check her out and see if there was

anything there I shouldn't be looking at...I took five seconds to say, "Tatty, please save me from my lust for that lady, and give her the relationship with You that she needs, Tatty. Thank You, I love You." (BTW, I say "I love You" to Him frequently. Isn't that the way it *should* be? Rav Avigdor Miller was not the first one who came up with that, you know. It's in Sh'ma.)

Hope it is useful to many, is useless to only a few, and insults none.

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Re: Getting back to basics

Posted by bzyzgye - 12 Jul 2012 18:43

Question for you Dov, does this davening for the woman we find ourselves lusting over apply to a goy as well or only to a bas yisroel? I find it strange to daven for a shiksa to have a relationship with hashem, why should I waste my tefillas on her, a shiksa?

Thanks

KC

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Re: Getting back to basics

Posted by rt - 12 Jul 2012 21:11

Shalom Chevra.

@Dov: I have a question as well. It is very hard to imagine that some of the people who are struggling are actually not "like we are" (addicts) What is the exact hilluk ?

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Re: Getting back to basics

Posted by E-Tek - 12 Jul 2012 22:04

@KC: All human beings have the capacity to relate to Hashem, and are commanded to. Just because their capabilities are limited due to lacking a yedishe neshoma doesn't take away their responsibility. And, it follows, if the purpose of Klal Yisroel is to be "A Light Unto the Nations", which nations are we referring to?

Hope this answers your question.

Hatzlacha!

Meir

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Re: Getting back to basics

Posted by SoldierOfHashem - 13 Jul 2012 07:40

First of all welcome Ash!

and to what Dov said about trying to hard to fight the lust and attempting to prevent the first look. I compleatley relate to this and have been feeling like that all week. I was slacking with my shmiras einayim this week, and I was noticing as I was taking second third and forth looks that the thought that I tried to avoid the first look but saw anyhow, wich of course is inevitable I ultimetly just took multiple second glances.

much hatzlacha to you Ash

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Re: Getting back to basics

Posted by Ash - 13 Jul 2012 08:50

. I'm working on the connection with him and calling upon him in life overall and when it comes to the addiction specifically. When I pray I ask for one thng specific which is in the addiction/lust department. I also ask for a side thing which is going to be my question to follow. I don't seek shiduchim at the moment because I feel that the one area in life holding me back is the

addiction. I simply feel that, while I have made progress since last year, I am not at the place I would like to be(not that I think there is an "exact" place for addict). So what I do is pray and leave it open to god by saying something like " god while I am not seeking because of the addiction I feel I have much to offer as a potential husband (and eventual father god willing) so I am leaving it up to you. Point is I will not seek for the time being but I will not keep that door closed". Yesterday I was asked where I'm at regarding shiduchim. I was honest about it and said I'm not seeking because I feel there is a few things that I'm not at a level I want to be at, however, I, not closed to the idea. This individual knows I have a rocky history (not great details though) but sees me today as the person I am. So what I'm asking is this what's appropriate in regards for single people when it comes to the addiction? Should I deny myself all together til I have x amount of sobriety? Is the x amount a flat number for everyone? I did not seek or set out for this so what's up with that? Logically I should not get in to the parsha but so many connections including the one that saved me from the abyss of darkness came about in such a indirect non seeking way and this is another, like the others, that could change everything. If this was something that I set out to do then it's a no brainier but this is a true conflict I am having with myself. Nothing has happened yet all that's happened was that the option was put on the table and it's my call whether or not I want to take it further. I'm looking forward to hearing what you all have to say. If any details are missing feel free to ask.

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Re: Getting back to basics

Posted by alexeliezer - 13 Jul 2012 14:32

I propose that a bochur should be sober enough that the battle is no longer so prominent in his mind, and he is free to think about other things. In my personal experience, this takes between 6 months and a year.

That's not 6-12 months of slipping and sliding. Not a "streak." I'm referring to fully committed, stable sobriety. Ideally, this time should also be used to begin dealing with the personal issues that led to, or came along with the addiction, especially selfishness and isolation. Rav Dessler's "Kuntres Hachessed" or "Discourse on Lovingkindness" (Michtav m'Eliyahu vol I; Strive for Truth vol I) is highly recommended for anyone considering marriage, and for anyone serious about moving forward through recovery. It speaks about the paramount importance of being a giver in this world, whereas we addicts, generous though we may be, tend to be takers.

Other opinions welcome...

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Re: Getting back to basics

Posted by Ash - 13 Jul 2012 18:38

That's the kicker...it wasn't till 6 months after taking care of selfishness and isolation and other character defects did I start working on the addiction itself...that's not to say I was doing nothing to stop the habit of sexual acting out till then....it's just he character came first...by the time I came to the first meeting or read the white book I had worked out most of my past and taken on a new mentality....I'm not fooling myself in to thinking marriage will solve addiction. Obviously I intend to be honest at the appropriate time should I even start this parsha (as of right now I am next to make a move). I'll continue reading what you guys have to say and will consider all that's said. I would love to hear from someone that actually took the route of working fully on the addiction first then got married. I'd like to hear what was t like realistically going that path.

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Re: Getting back to basics

Posted by bzyzgye - 15 Jul 2012 04:07

[E-Tek wrote on 12 Jul 2012 22:04:](#)

@KC: All human beings have the capacity to relate to Hashem, and are commanded to. Just because their capabilities are limited due to lacking a yedishe neshoma doesn't take away their responsibility. And, it follows, if the purpose of Klal Yisroel is to be "A Light Unto the Nations", which nations are we referring to?

Hope this answers your question.

Hatzlacha!

Meir

Yes you answered my question, thank you Meir

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