

check-in

Posted by Mr. Smith - 10 Sep 2009 08:50

Following the advice of many, I am posting to try to keep it together.

I was just working on some really great Torah stuff. I was enjoying it. And all of a sudden, *whango*, attack of the yetzer hara. I experienced a little dip (don't know if it would count as a fall). I made it back out.

The absurdity of having Torah open in Word and garbage open in a browser is the kind of funny it makes me want to cry.

It frustrates me that Torah is supposed to be a tavlin, and I have yet to find it very effective. I was really involved in something here! Why didn't it protect me? That's a rhetorical question.

Smith

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Re: check-in

Posted by Dov - 16 Sep 2009 17:32

Dear Kutan -

Thanks for your encouragement.

To answer you I'll first point out your handle, "kutan shebachaburah". Why choose such a title? Ella what, you seem to agree that maintaining a right-sized self-perception isn't just a great *idea*, but is *essential* for you. That's part of my answer, of course.

Now I agree that, as a yid, I know that acting out is wrong, that harboring hirhurim is wrong, etc., etc... But I also came to recognize that *using* that information as a basis for staying clean simply did not work for me. Then I met SA and changed the way I approached my whole problem. The goal was of course, staying clean - just like the Torah and s'forim I read told me I *needed* to be - but the approach was now based 100% on getting myself out of the driver's seat and letting Hashem do the job.

The catch seems to be that this attitude does not work if it is only used in one department of life. For it to be real and to work - not just a mind game - it needs to be the way the addict *lives*. This bears a lot of fruits that were essential in my and my family's recovery as a whole:

1- Oy, all the hard work I put in to trying to change my wife to be more spiritual and/or more

sexual over the years! It all came to an end. After all, she *is* out of *my* hands, no? She's *His* business. This created shalom bayis, because I was really torturing her all along w/my manipulation...from what I hear, a common MO.

2- I was able to start being a better father, being emotionally able to give my kids space and respect instead of constant judgement and the resultant constant yelling that were actually very damaging to our first two children. (BTW, at the time, I was convinced it was all about kibud av voeim, etc...! And those children still have a much harder time with that mitzvah, let me tell you, having a father who was clearly an idiot.)

3- I cannot put myself into a position of telling other sexaholics what they *should* do. As soon as I do that I am toast, because as soon as I get self-invested and start begging someone to stay sober "for their own good", I believe I'd be turning the whole thing into my responsibility *in my mind*. It'd be my loss that they acted out again, too. Please forgive me, but I have noticed that one group of frum yidden who have the most impossible time getting sober are the guys who make kiruv-type activity their own issue. By the same token, I"h, I have *never* met a goyishe evangelical type who ever gained long term sobriety. My heart tells me they have the same problem. Even though one is right and the other wrong, neither can get sober. We are sick. Not normal. Normal values and directions do not often work for us, even though they are "right". Yes, out of love for My G-d and love of yidden I try to pass the message and share yiddishkeit with everyone I can. But I can't afford to play the game of I need to remember that I am expendable and that *Hashem* - who has many sh'luchim - will save you, not I. It's the old stewardess thing: "put the oxygen mask on your own face **first**, **then** on your child's" - even if you want to give up your very life for him. For if you don't, *you'll* pass out and then you're both goners. The Chayecha Kodmin card. And it ends up saving other peoples' lives in the end, too!!

Being an addict, I have lost the "license" to go out there and *try to change* others to the better because I'm allergic to that approach. I believe I'd act out soon, should I change my approach from sharing with to "taking care of" people.

The consolation prize for me is that Hashem has apparently had much better success using me

4- My damaging fear and pride that are tied in tightly to that whole approach bubble up in my screwy heart when someone else's goodness becomes "my fight".

Chazal say, as Mesillas Yeshorim quotes, "**kol mi sh'ein bo Dei'ah, assur l'racheim olov.**" Why? To me, this means that it's assur - cuz it's **bad for me** - to invest myself emotionally in anyone who is not willing to to integrate ideas that may work for them into themselves (da'as is integrated awareness, I think :D). It is apparently actually bad for them, too. This seems clear to me, based on the above.

You ask what about if someone was trying to jump off a bridge, would I not try to stop them? Yes I would. But I sure won't take any risk to my own life for it. On the other hand, if someone is

becoming a victim of violence, I hope I'd have the bravery to exhaust every ability I have to save them, even at the risk of my life. It's not their fault. And BTW, we similarly do not **use** the concept that "Gam zu leTova" in these cases. The old question of "why ask Hashem for what we don't have..." There are reams of stuff to explain the philosophy here. In the end I (a bal habos) believe we just need to use the attitude that works. Like R' Simcha Bunim's "two papers in a yid's pockets" idea. Use the "bishvili nivra Olam" when you need to, and the "va'anochi ofor vo'efer" when it's what you need. What is *truer* is really irrelevant.

And saying that this implies that I consider considering *spiritual* damage as different or less important than *physical* damage, is silly. Because we can't fight the addiction for someone else, only for ourselves. We don't run into a burning house for the same reason.

Love,

Dov

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Re: check-in

Posted by kutan - 16 Sep 2009 18:36

Dov,

Thanks very much.

To summarize (at the expense of loosing *toichain*, of course):

An addict in order to stay in recovery must remove 'control' from his tool box. Not just in the area of lusting, but in all of life.

hmm.

Could you imagine Elliot Spitzer removing control from his tool box? wow. I feel bad for him.

and doing so makes is usually anyway more effective in life, long term (and yes, i agree and find it 100% true in real life...although I need to keep improving in this....which may be why I find your posts so interesting and inspiring)

Y'know Dov, perhaps what the real chiu of tochacha is, is to be able to 'beg'/preach without

feeling any need to control, just doing it for His sake.

Not saying we are able or expected to do that (I beleive the Gemara says that we no longer are able to perform tochacha properly), but in theory, that would be it.

kutan

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Re: check-in

Posted by Dov - 16 Sep 2009 20:31

Sounds good to me. Thanks.

Perhaps the proof that I'd be "beg/preaching for His sake", as you put it, would be that I don't repeat myself or allow my words to get to a fever pitch. Trying harder, implies to me that I am taking it personally. Then I am in trouble.

Just a thought...

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Re: check-in

Posted by kutan - 16 Sep 2009 20:50

Dov,

are you the little fellow, or the two arms?

In your avatar, I mean.

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Re: check-in

Posted by Dov - 16 Sep 2009 21:32

[kutan shel hachabura wrote on 16 Sep 2009 20:50:](#)

Dov,

are you the little fellow, or the two arms?

In your avatar, I mean.

k

I dunno. Guard gave it to me. At least I'm not a kielbasa any more! he also gave me the printed thing under my posts, whatever that's called. He's my kind of guy!!! 8) 8) 8) 8)

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Re: check-in

Posted by kutan - 17 Sep 2009 02:32

Asking because if you are the 'two arms', then I'd be happy to be that little kid.

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Re: check-in

Posted by Dov - 17 Sep 2009 17:03

Trust me reb Kutan, I'm that little kid. But I'd be happy to sit in a circle with you and finger paint

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