

Coming out of my shell

Posted by NotAlone - 06 Oct 2009 16:41

I think I need a thread where I can post about myself and organize my thoughts. I hope that the act of revealing my feelings can help me control them. I didn't think "I'm new" was a very good title, so here is the new one.

This morning I thought about my new entry on to this forum. How would it help me? I could simply lie my way out of my guilt, couldn't I?

I concluded that if I posted honestly, and got into the habit of doing so, I wouldn't lie. My entire purpose in joining this forum was to have a place where I could be honest, and finally reveal the bits of my life that I couldn't tell anyone.

Even as I write this, even the anticipation of finally telling the truth to real people, takes weight off my shoulders.

My first thread detailed how I joined the forum, and how I felt. This is my real physical story.

I was a very curious child. I'm still curious. I can't stand not knowing. When I hit 13, I became curious about biology. I knew that there were things I shouldn't know, but the concept of "shouldn't know" is even now a difficult one for me. If something was hidden I had to find it. I looked up what I wanted to know in dictionaries, textbooks, medical websites. Then, when my curiosity was satisfied, something else took over, posing as curiosity. None of these things had photos, just descriptions. Wouldn't I understand what I was looking for better if I had photos, or videos? I knew I shouldn't, that it was wrong, but... how could it be wrong?

Well, I understood it, then, intellectually. Naturally I wanted to understand it physically. Curiosity, right? It wasn't.

There were no longer any revelations, just sin; I had lost control. I began my fight a few months later, and accumulated a legacy of failed battles for 4 years.

I am now 17. I know I have to beat it now, or it will only get worse. I know it's time to make a real commitment to winning, and I know that I can't push it off.

My y"ח tells me that I'm young, and that I can afford a few more years of foolishness. I tell him that I can't. If everyone's jumping off buildings, should I follow them? No. They can walk with broken legs their whole lives. I have to bandage what wounds I have and heal.

That's my story.

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Re: Coming out of my shell

Posted by the.guard - 07 Oct 2009 23:38

"Because our Rabbis have Divine Guidance."

"Do they? Who told you that? More Rabbis? What do you expect them to say?"

Do you know the story of the goy who came to Shamaï and asked how many Torah's do the Jews have? Answered Shamaï, "Two, Torah Shebichtav and Torah Shebal Peh". But the goy asked to become Jewish and learn only Torah shebichtav. So Shamaï threw him away and he went to Hillel. Hillel told him the same, but agreed to be megayer him nonetheless. So Hillel started to teach him Alef-Beis, in order to learn Torah Shebichtav... The next day, Hillel told him that the Beis is an alef, and the alef is a beis. Asked the man, "but yesterday you told me that the *other one* was an alef, and that *this one* was a beis??"... Answered Hillel, "just like you believe me that this is an alef and this is a beis, believe the Chachamim when they teach us Torah shebal Peh!

The schar we get for keeping derabanan is just as great, if not greater, than keeping de'oraysah. Torah shebichtav is *nothing* without Torah sheba'l Peh. **Hashem tells us in the Torah to not stray to the right or left from what the Chachamim tell us.**

The medrash gives a parable of a king who gave sheaves of wheat to two of his servants. One

left the wheat to rot, and the other created flour and baked fresh smelling bread rolls. When the king came back to see what his servants had done, you can imagine his chagrin at the first servant, and you can imagine the pride and joy he had when his second servant served him the fresh warm rolls...

Hashem gave us the Torah, like sheaves of wheat. He wanted us to grind it, knead it and bake it, thereby creating fresh warm rolls - that is what Torah She'bal peh is.

the beauty of Judaism, that we take every little mundane aspect of life - and we elevate it to G-dliness by being concerned with Halacha (read: "the will of G-d") in every aspect of our lives. The Halacha tells us how to get up in the morning, which shoe to tie first, how to take a shower, how to eat, etc... There isn't one aspect of a Jew's life that doesn't have myriads of Halachos associated with it. And that is how Hashem wanted it. He put us into lowly bodies on a lowly world where he is so well hidden, but when we concern ourselves with His will in everything we do, we uplift the world and make it a G-dly place.

There's a story of an Israeli non-religious soldier who once took a hitch with a religious person and was invited for Shabbos. After a nice Shabbos, the religious guy asked the soldier to accept upon himself one small Halacha to remember that there was a G-d of Israel. The soldier agreed and they opened up the Shulchan Aruch and found one of the first Halachos, that a person should put on his right shoe first, but he should tie his left shoe before tying the right. The soldier agreed to accept that upon himself, even though it sounded completely silly. Why should G-d care which shoe we tie first?? Anyway, each day he would put on his army boots that way. One day, a big general was coming to inspect them, and they all hurriedly got dressed and stood at attention outside waiting... Suddenly the soldier remembered that he had put on his boots wrong that morning. He had forgotten to put the right one on first. He asked his commander for permission to quickly go back for something important. The commander thought there was still some time until the general was due to arrive, so he gave him permission. The soldier went back, took off and re-did his boots (army boots take a few moments to tie), and came running back outside only to see the general had arrived already. The general was angry and asked the soldier where he had been and why he was late. The soldier tried to explain and mumbled something about Halacha and tying shoes... The General blew up in a rage and ordered the soldier put into the army prison for a week. Meanwhile, his division was scheduled for a very important helicopter exercise in the coming days. This soldier was in prison and was unable to join the exercise. Unfortunately, there was a terrible accident. See here for details. Two of the helicopters collided in mid-air killing 73 Israeli soldiers. This soldier's entire division was killed.

Needless to say, this soldier became a complete Bal Teshuvah.

This story shows the power of keeping even the most simple and seemingly insignificant halacha!

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Re: Coming out of my shell

Posted by NotAlone - 08 Oct 2009 00:04

Thank you for the mussar, R' Guard.

I was aware of the Talmudic warnings about this, but thank you nevertheless for the reminder. The point of the dialog (I call it a dialog rather than a monologue because the I am well aware who the yetzer hara is, and that he is wrong (in this dispute anyway)) was to show that even though I intellectually KNOW the reasons why we trust Chazal,

"Well then, it obviously is written to be explained: shchita is not described, the laws of Sabbath are not described. The oral tradition is obviously valid because the Torah is nothing without it." I just still have an emotional problem trusting them wholeheartedly. That's why half of my heart (you know which one) has answers, not questions. I can refute them and you can refute them as much as we can, but throwing Talmudic and Kabbalistic quotes won't be a revelation.

Basically, the only thing my y'h seems to understand is habit or a slap in the face. Today, both helped me overcome him; reading your quotes from the handbook and the story (quite the reprimand and inspiration), and the fact that I have an ongoing clean streak which I'd feel very stupid breaking.

Right now, perhaps the very spiritual disconnect that you mentioned makes my yetzer hara not CARE about the very same disconnect, but what really hit home was the knowledge that continuing my addictive behaviour would destroy my life in a very physical sense.

As it says in the handbooks, the knowledge that I'm sinning isn't enough, somehow.

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Re: Coming out of my shell

Posted by the.guard - 08 Oct 2009 00:17

That's why half of my heart (you know which one) has answers, not questions.

Good point. :D A non-religious man once told the Brisker Rav that he doesn't believe in G-d because he has many questions. The Brisker Rav told him, "you don't have questions, you have answers".

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Re: Coming out of my shell
Posted by NotAlone - 08 Oct 2009 00:26

P.S. I have received the confirmation for the chizuk emails. Looks like I did put the address in wrong the first time. I'll try signing up for the board now with the right address.

P.P.S. I can't sign up with my name again due to the first mistake with the address, and my old confirmation hasn't come in. R' Guard, can you please resend the confirmation email to the proper address for my username on the Wall of Honor?

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Re: Coming out of my shell
Posted by kutan - 08 Oct 2009 01:50

Welcome,

Yes, that is the story I was referencing
:D

Not alone!

Kedusha, and Ratm, your answers to NA's questions are beautiful, and right on the mark! I may be only the kutan here, but I recognize yashrus when it shows up!

N.A., I can just repeat what Kedusha wrote... your hatzlacha in conquering this thing will come from the recognizing the gashmius benefits... how much luckier, happier, it is to be in control of ones urges rather than having ones urges control him!

I just had the pleasure of feeding the goats. Hey, they are better than pigs, but man, I don't want to be like that! they are totally not in any control when they are hungry and there is food, especially if there is not enough food. But that is exactly what I was like when I used to 'lose it' with lust. And there is no such thing as 'losing it just a little', if you are honest with yourself.

BEST WISHES and, keep posting!

kutan

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Re: Coming out of my shell

Posted by Noorah BAmram - 08 Oct 2009 14:44

[guardureyes wrote on 07 Oct 2009 23:11:](#)

Interestingly, I signed up for the emails yesterday and I still haven't received any. I also tried to sign up for the chart, but I haven't received a confirmation yet. I wonder if I put in my address right....

You probably didn't put in the address right, because I just tried signing you up and you weren't signed up. You should start getting the e-mails tomorrow, if the address in your profile is correct

"What's wrong with what you're doing? You're not married, you're not wasting anything."

Chazal (Niddah 13a) write that HZ?L is as if one has spilled blood or worshiped Avodah Zorah, and that those who do it are chayev misah biday shamayim. The Zohar even goes as far to say that it is the worst sin in the Torah. Another terrible result of these sins brought down in the holy books, is that they desensitize our souls to spiritual connection. The more we sin in these areas, the more desensitized we become. This is a commonly experienced phenomenon, where people slowly lose their yearning for spirituality, and they start to feel ever more disconnected from Torah, Shabbos and Mitzvos. Unfortunately, this also makes Teshuvah all the more unlikely, as one becomes more and more disconnected.

Also, maintaining our addiction requires constant hiding, lies, and living a double life. This cuts us off from the world around us and doesn't let us feel the tremendous kindness of Hashem that fills our lives. It blinds us to the goodness in the world around us, to our souls, and to Hashem. We begin to lose appreciation for the good we have in our life. We are unable to find inner peace, we can't stop lusting everywhere we go, and we remain closed up within a shell that no one can penetrate.

It is also brought down in Kabbalistic texts that every drop emitted in vain causes souls to be created, and these souls are snatched up by the forces of evil and become demonic forces that cause much suffering in a person's life. The souls themselves also suffer in misery with no hope (unless we fix ourselves), and after we die they stand as terrible accusers against us. See this page and video clip for a dramatic first-hand testimony of someone who claims he had died and experienced the judgment of the world to come. This story and video, especially where he weeps as he recalls the myriads of accusing souls that stood before him, can help inspire our Fear of Heaven and ensure that we do everything in our power to heal from this disease.

And if you'll say that you'll be careful not to let out zera livatala, but what is so bad about porn?

As far as the prohibitions are concerned, anyone who is frum and has learned any Torah, should be aware of the severity of these sins. The Torah says "Thou shall not go astray after

your hearts and after your eyes which lead you astray,". This applies to any image that arouses one's sexual inclination, and erotic images of any type are definitely forbidden. The Rabbis state that anyone who purposefully arouses his sexual organ is to be banished (Niddah 13A). The Gemara there even goes as far to say "Better one's stomach should burst than he should touch the area of his bris (and possibly bring himself to an erection)". And another Gemara says "better to walk behind a lion than to walk behind a woman". And another Gemara: "whoever brings himself to an erection is destroying the world". This is not Mussar or Chassidus, this is regular Gemara. Chaza"l were fire about this! The Medrash says that anyone who is not careful with gazing at women will come to sin with them in the end. Viewing porn is also included in the prohibition of "Lo Sikrevu Legalos Erva, Ani Hashem Elokeichem" - "Do not come close to revealing nakedness, for I am Hashem your G-d". There is no other Mitzva in the Torah where such terminology is used. Even with idol worship, the Torah doesn't say not to come close! Only with sexual matters, the Torah exhorts us to stay far away from it. It is also interesting to note that the Torah uses the words "do not come close to reveal nakedness" and not "to sexual relations". This implies that "revealing nakedness" (i.e. even looking) is, on some level, as if one had already done the act.

This little test can be your meter - if an image triggers a sexual twitch, a stronger heartbeat, sweaty palms, or even a silent, "Wow!" then you are polluting your soul, damaging your "Da'at," the ability to know G-d, and cutting yourself off from the Divine Presence, the Shechinah. The eyes are the windows to the soul and they are the vessels to receive the light of the Shechina. One who has damaged these vessels will not be able to bask in the glory of the Shechinah in this world, nor in the next.

So with all these sources, how can a frum person even ask such a question? The answer is in Parshas Shoftim. "Ki Hashochad... etc..." .. "For bribes make wise men blind, and twist the words of Tzadikim". The Yetzer Hara, who offers us bribes of false and fleeting pleasures, blinds us to the obvious truths and makes us think we have real "questions". But he is just disguising them as questions. Don't be fooled, and realize that these are not questions but really his "answers"! (R' Elchanan Wasserman used this very Pasuk in an essay he wrote, to explain how the multitudes of non-Jewish wise men and scientists from around the world, fail to see the obvious and glaring hand of Hashem in all of creation).

May Hashem be with you.

P.S. This is all without even getting into how addictive these behaviors are, and how dangerous an addiction is. Addictions don't get better, only worse, and they lead us on a horrible path of self-destruction, and sometimes even death! Is drinking alcohol assur? No, but what happens when a person becomes an alcoholic? He can't function! Well, being a lustaholic is no different.

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Re: Coming out of my shell
Posted by NotAlone - 08 Oct 2009 18:54

Gentlemen, this is why we call him "Babeinu Guard"
I'm getting my retribution, middan kneged middan (tit for tat? Kind of hard to translate.)

Before, when I was down, I would use the internet for evil. Now I use it for good.

Before, when I felt lust, I forgot about G-d. Now when I feel lust, I remember him.

Before, when I fought my lust, I felt alone. Now, when I fight my lust, I feel people supporting me.

Before, when I fell, I felt dirty. Now, when I don't, I feel clean.

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Re: Coming out of my shell
Posted by the.guard - 08 Oct 2009 19:09

AWESOME!

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Re: Coming out of my shell

Posted by Noorah BAmram - 08 Oct 2009 19:13

[NotAlone wrote on 08 Oct 2009 18:54:](#)

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Before, when I fell, I felt dirty. Now, when I don't, I feel clean.

very very important in our little battle!

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Re: Coming out of my shell

Posted by 7yipol - 08 Oct 2009 21:12

Hi Not Alone,

Welcome to the family. I see many of the gang have already come over with their bruchim habaim wishes, but hey; better late than never for me. :D

Your thread promises to be interesting, and I have a feeling you will have a following before

Good luck with the journey and welcome aboard,

7up

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long!

Re: Coming out of my shell

Posted by the.guard - 08 Oct 2009 21:28

Woops, it seems I left out the link above. Sorry. Here is a repeat, with the link:

It is also brought down in Kabbalistic texts that every drop emitted in vain causes souls to be created, and these souls are snatched up by the forces of evil and become demonic forces that cause much suffering in a person's life. The souls themselves also suffer in misery with no hope (unless we fix ourselves), and after we die they stand as terrible accusers against us. See [this page](#) and video clip for a dramatic first-hand testimony of someone who claims he had died and experienced the judgment of the world to come. This story and video, especially where he weeps as he recalls the myriads of accusing souls that stood before him, can help inspire our Fear of Heaven and ensure that we do everything in our power to heal from this disease.

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Re: Coming out of my shell

Posted by NotAlone - 09 Oct 2009 17:59

Recovery highs are nice. Recovery lows are terrible.

This morning I felt all-powerful. I swept away my sins with my arava-broom, and thought it would be no problem to put my past behind me. The y'h doesn't like that kind of overconfidence.

I slipped a couple of times today. I haven't fallen, and I don't even feel like falling, but the fact that accidents happened is a reminder that there is quite the ways to go, and that the danger remains. I guess there is a subtle line between forgetting lust and forgetting you HAD lust, where the first is essential and the second dangerous.

Perhaps I'm trying too hard to regain the innocence of youth. Maybe I should aim more for the wisdom of experience.

P.S. A belated thank you to 7up and all the others for your warm welcomes.

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Re: Coming out of my shell
Posted by Kedusha - 09 Oct 2009 20:06

[NotAlone wrote on 09 Oct 2009 17:59:](#)

Recovery highs are nice. Recovery lows are terrible.

I slipped a couple of times today. I haven't fallen, and I don't even feel like falling, but the fact that accidents happened is a reminder that there is quite the ways to go, and that the danger remains. I guess there is a subtle line between forgetting lust and forgetting you HAD lust, where the first is essential and the second dangerous.

Not all accidents are considered slips. See guardyoureyes.org/woh/WOHRules.php. Rule 8.

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Re: Coming out of my shell
Posted by 7yipol - 10 Oct 2009 19:32

Perhaps I'm trying too hard to regain the innocence of youth. Maybe I should aim more for the wisdom of experience.

Are you sure you are only 17??

Words of wisdom!

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