

My personal war against the YH

Posted by adam2014 - 03 Nov 2023 11:59

Hi all,

I have been lurking in the shadows of GYE for a number of years and just in the last month or so, came into the light and started posting. I see that my posts are all over the place and decided to start a new Topic about me and my struggles and not hijack other peoples threads.

My story is simple and unfortunately common. I am in my 50's and happily married with two amazing kids and I am addicted to P and M. Have been for decades and I see it getting worse. My sex life with my wife is almost non-existent at this point as my focus is on P and M. It is easily available, never says no, never judges my performance, and gives me the variety that a 30+ year marriage doesn't. I am also going down a slippery slope in regards to the types of porn I am watching, they are getting darker and darker and things that in the past would have disgusted me are now things that I seek out. That scares me!

I come from a non-orthodox home and do not live in an observant neighborhood. I live in a town that if I had to say is mostly Reform and Conservative Jews. I hate putting labels on Jews, because a Jew is a Jew and their level of observance does not mean they are Less-Jewish than anyone else. I just say this for context so you know where I am at.

I am hesitant to call myself a Baal Teshuva, but I have greatly increased my observance in the last 8 years after my first trip to Israel. I still have a long way to go (like everyone) but HaShem has blessed me in so many ways and if this struggle was taken away, I think that I could climb so much higher. Maybe this is the final Nisayon that is holding me back? I don't know... only HaShem knows.

I am working through the F2F program and chatting with a few of you guys online. I am still not ready to speak on the phone about it. Hashem Help Me as graciously sent me his number and told me to call him anytime. He will be my first call when I get the courage.

I want to limit the technology in my life and try to give myself a little advantage in this fight. I work in IT so I am surrounded by Smartphones and unfiltered computers all day. I am trying to get rid of my personal smartphone and use a dumb phone. I want to do it for a few reasons.

One, it is the first choice that I go to when I want to act out. Second, every time that I pull it out of my pocket it will be a reminder of the battle that I am in. I know that it is far from the only problem I am facing, but I think that both logistically and symbolically it will greatly enhance my chances.

At this point 7 days is my best, with normally 2 to 3 days seems to be the norm.

That is my story and would appreciate any thoughts, ideas, prayers, well wishes or any kind of inspiration you guys could give. This website seems to be full of amazing people and would like to get to know as many of you as possible.

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Re: My personal war against the YH
Posted by adam2014 - 18 Dec 2023 11:05

I am on a 6 day streak at the moment, my longest is 7. I am excited and cautiously optimistic that I can extend that record. I actually had a 4 day streak before this current streak, so actually it is 11 out of the last 12 days clean. I am in no way getting cocky and the more I read BOG, the more I read these forums, the more I Daven, the better I become. I am building an Army against the YH. It is a small but motivated Army, but getting bigger and stronger each day.

And HaShem is leading the charge

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Re: My personal war against the YH
Posted by adam2014 - 22 Dec 2023 11:47

I sit here this morning reading my last post about "Building an Army" and my 11 out of 12 days clean and it seems like ancient history. My streak is over, I have fallen 2 days in a row and feel terrible.

I was so looking forward to writing to all of you about my trip to Crown Heights and the Ohel on

Tuesday. I had to go to a Funeral of a dear friends father. Before the funeral, I had time to spend in the Ohel. Writing a letter, praying at the Kever and while praying and reading Tehillim. I opened the book to a random page (I always do that at the Ohel) and came upon Psalm 101. It spoke directly about our issue that we are all facing and I prayed like never before. Tears were running down my face. This was the day, this was the time that HaShem was going to free me from this prison that I have put myself in.

I had driven over 5 hours to attend the funeral and then 5 hours home. I could have run home I was so much on a high. I did the Mitzvah of attending the funeral and HaShem immediately rewarded me with opening the book to the exact page that I needed to read at that moment. It was the best feeling that I had in years. My wife was amazed that after 10 hours in the car alone and standing out in the cold at the funeral, I was full of energy. She expected me to crawl through the door and go right to sleep. I was on such a spiritual high it is hard to put into words. I went to sleep that night and slept like a baby.

Then I woke up....

?I had work to catch up on from the day before. I got into my office early and was ready to have a productive day and simple email from a company trying to sell me something had a girl in the ad that was inappropriately dressed, not in a bikini or pornographic, just a clothing that was form-fitting and a little tight. You will see far worse on the streets of NY on any given day. It triggered me like never before. Being that my computer is filtered now, I had a smartphone of an employees that I was repairing and I knew it was unfiltered and I grabbed it and it was over.

The next day, I purposely told the employee that I need the phone for "one more day".... and I fell for the second time in a row. The phone is sitting next to me as I write this and I look at it in disgust. I am not tempted this morning other than being tempted to throw it through the wall and smashing it.

The moral of the story is regardless of the situation, you have to be ready 24/7 to fight. I got a taste of the spiritual high and how it feels to think that I have this beat, but quickly realized that I am still at the very beginning of my journey. Maybe someday I can look back and recapture the feeling I had at the Ohel. It was pure bliss. short lived but intense. I want that feeling back, I want that to be the norm, I want that life!

But I am nowhere near that yet and this was a stark reality check.

Wishing you all a Shabbat Shalom

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Re: My personal war against the YH
Posted by youknowwho - 22 Dec 2023 12:52

Dear adam2014,

I'm so sorry to hear about your recent fall. It's very painful to see that after all the things you've been doing, it's still so difficult and we can be triggered by something so relatively innocuous.

We are all here to comfort you and let you know how much we understand your struggles. Your struggles are our struggles.

There's one point I'd like to make regarding what you've experienced.

Disclaimer: I'm only sharing what's been my own personal experience. Perhaps others can find it helpful.

The feelings of spiritual high, while they feel so good, can actually have very little to do with meaningfully moving the needle in this struggle.

Sometimes, we feel so close to Hashem and sometimes our hearts feel distant and frozen.

Personally, I'm more often frozen and dry, than not.

And the times in my life that have been imbued with spiritual highs have had very little impact on my struggles.

Chanuka this year was so surprisingly dry, it did bother me....yet, it was still so different.

What really did change was my perspective. My understanding of what porn and masterbating did for me and what it doesn't. Where I want to be and where I don't.

I'm still working on this, and sometimes the fear of actually changing, is paralyzing.

But slowly shifting the paradigm has been a game changer.

We can be dry, frozen, feeling distant (although of course we never are truly distant from Hashem) and still have crystal clarity of where we want to be.

I pray for you, for myself and for us all, we should be zoche to gain ground in this battle and have the clarity we need to overcome this thing for good...one day at a time.

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Re: My personal war against the YH
Posted by cordnoy - 22 Dec 2023 13:14

[youknowwho wrote on 22 Dec 2023 12:52:](#)

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Well said, albeit a bit too lengthy for me, but that's fine.

For some, the "war/battle against the yetzer hara" is a losin' one; the "war/battle for livin' life" may be a winnin' one.

Here's to life!

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Re: My personal war against the YH
Posted by chaimoigen - 22 Dec 2023 16:12

[youknowwho wrote on 22 Dec 2023 12:52:](#)

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Well said, indeed.

Like a well-cut diamond, your words about feeling cold are lustrous, and though they may be dry and have sharp edges, they **glitter** much. Be worth a lot.

I would add: Knowing that you don't have to feel inspired is actually empowering.

Because who in this oft-grey world is feeling cheerfully inspired all the time anyways? (except).

But to know that I can move the needle by having the **courage** to face up to reality and sometimes-hard truths about how I want to **live** and how I don't want to not-live; what and why I want what I don't want; this means I can grow and keep changing, even on a freezing-cold, uninspired wretched fast-day of a Friday.

I'm looking at **living** (Thanks, Cordnoy).

Chaim Oigen

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Re: My personal war against the YH
Posted by bright - 22 Dec 2023 18:27

[youknowwho wrote on 22 Dec 2023 12:52:](#)

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Beautifully said! I actually have a harder time when I have the spiritual highs. Maybe I should be thankful they are so infrequent. Yes Chanuka was super dry by me as well. (By the way there is a nice nesivos shalom about it this week...)

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Re: My personal war against the YH

Posted by ainshumyeiush - 22 Dec 2023 18:49

I can relate with feeling spiritually stagnant while fighting this fight. I guess it can be helpful. If you can break free when you're uninspired, you can stay clean while uninspired too. As opposed to breaking free while on a high, and then when you're on a low you don't have the tools to stay clean. But its all just a cycle of ups and downs. @Adam2014, don't beat yourself up, you can get over this hump. The fact that you got triggered by something "not bad" can be a good sign. It means that the desensitized effect of porn is wearing off. You got this!

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Re: My personal war against the YH

Posted by youknowwho - 24 Dec 2023 04:15

[bright wrote on 22 Dec 2023 18:27:](#)

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Bright/Miss Granger... Are you just gonna dangle that in front of our noses? Well?

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Re: My personal war against the YH
Posted by bright - 24 Dec 2023 14:45

Looking up a nesivos shalom never killed anybody:) Its the piece, Vayigash aylav Yehuda. It talks about the difference between serving with passion and without feeling that passion. I dont want to ruin it by bringing it down short here. Read it.

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Re: My personal war against the YH
Posted by adam2014 - 29 Dec 2023 12:16

I wanted to bring something up and let you guys know what is happening in my life and struggles. I am doing two significant things that I am hoping helps me in our problem that we are all dealing with. They are totally unrelated other than the fact that I am doing both with the hope that it helps me in my struggle.

1. I am redecorating my home office. I am changing EVERYTHING. I will not give you a recap of the interior design changes, but the reason for doing it. It is to change the environment in which so much of my struggles occur. When I walk into my office, I know that I am walking into the place where most of my problems happen. It instantly gives me anxiety and it just has a bad vibe in there. I am hoping that creating a newer, cleaner, office might change the vibe. I am now going to daven in a new room in the house. I am disgusted that I pray in the same room as I do all these disgusting things. If it helps, I will return davening into the room, in the hope of making the room a place to honor HaShem. It might sound weird, but I am a big believer in changing your environment can change your mindset and behavior.

2. The other big nisoyom is, I have rented a tiny cabin in the woods about 2 hours from my home. I am going there next Shabbos (Jan 4th and 5th). I am going there alone and going to test myself to see if I can stay clean. I will bring the BOG book along with other sefers that I can read on Shabbos. I want to break away from the mundane of my life and try to shake things up. I fall into patterns and those patterns are not overly positive these days. I want to send a "jolt to my system" and see what happens. I will spend time in the woods and with some animals (it is on a farm) I want to have some "alone time" with HaShem and talk to him and see if we can get myself back on track.

Here is the weird part. I am going to take an unfiltered computer with me. I am going to leave it

in my car, but I want it within reach. I want to achieve something and just locking myself away for a few days will not cut it. If I can stay clean, for the three days (Friday morning thru Sunday afternoon) with an unfiltered computer within reach, that will be a HUGE win for me.

I am currently in a pattern of two or three days clean followed by a fall which becomes two or three falls because of my twisted way of thinking that since I fell, and my modest streak is over, I will fall again and start a new streak "tomorrow".... It is crazy, but I am sure you can relate.

?I would love to hear your thoughts on these two big moves in my battle.

Shabbat Shalom

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Re: My personal war against the YH
Posted by Hashem Help Me - 29 Dec 2023 12:32

Incredible how much effort you are investing. Personally, i would not bring along the unfiltered device. My understanding is that Hashem wants us to be clean by avoiding unnecessary nisyonos. We have the safeguard of muktza to safeguard Shabbos, a nazir is told to avoid entering a vineyard, and no Orthodox Jew has a pantry with non-kosher snacks and educates the kids not to eat from the non kosher shelf. Similarly, when one does not absolutely **need** access to unfiltered devices, it makes sense to simply avoid it. My personal goal is to simply stay clean - not to test myself if i would stay clean with an unfiltered device. Of course this is just my opinion.

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Re: My personal war against the YH
Posted by Vehkam - 29 Dec 2023 14:15

[adam2014 wrote on 29 Dec 2023 12:16:](#)

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Shabbat Shalom

it is great that you are trying to find ways to shake things up. I would caution you to think through the possible outcomes of each of the steps you are taking. Make sure that you are prepared to handle the various possibilities.

Additionally, in my opinion it is not advisable to test yourself. I don't see any possible benefits to that concept.

consistent small concrete steps in the right direction with siyata d'shmaya will take you where you want to go.

best wishes

vehkam

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Re: My personal war against the YH
Posted by yitzchokm - 29 Dec 2023 16:43

[adam2014 wrote on 29 Dec 2023 12:16:](#)

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The Gemara says that Zehirus leads to Zrizus. Rashi explains Zehirus as overcoming challenges that a person faces and Zrizus as avoiding a situation where a person will have challenges. The Gemara there starts with the lowest level and mentions the order of progress up to the highest level. We see from this Gemara that not putting oneself in a situation where he might sin is a greater level than someone who overcomes his challenges. We also see that overcoming our challenges leads to avoiding them. Perhaps the reason is that when we see how much effort was required to overcome our challenges we realize that it is simply better to avoid them.

You already have enough challenges without bringing along an unfiltered computer and you are already fighting them. The time has come to raise yourself to the next level of avoiding challenges.

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Re: My personal war against the YH
Posted by bright - 29 Dec 2023 18:21

You already have enough challenges without bringing along an unfiltered computer and you are already fighting them. The time has come to raise yourself to the next level of avoiding challenges.

I dont believe he is saying he never will avoid challenges. Just that he feels doing this will give him a huge boost. I dont know you so I cant say if its true that it will help. It certainly seems that taking an unfiltered device is a major risk. It is amazing how hard you are working! Really, you are ready to do whatever it takes! Amazing. I also really feel your frustration with your feeling that you didnt kick the habit yet. One thing though,I am scared for you that you are putting so much time and effort into things that dont have concrete results, that they may not work, and

you will be left even more frustrated. If you are prepared for this, go ahead! Otherwise, slow and steady wins the race, small changes, coupled with precautions are the way to go.

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