

SonicReducer's story so far

Posted by sonicReducer - 04 Jan 2010 17:16

Evening all (;

I only discovered GUE a few weeks ago, but it's been such a huge help to me. I thought I'd post my own story.

I'm a baal teshuva, and I've been shomrei mitzvot for about 5 years. Becoming frum has been both the most fulfilling and difficult journey I've ever undertaken (still on it!). Although it can be very hard day-to-day, and I've had more than a few moments where I wanted to throw off my yarmi, the Aibishter has helped me to keep going.

My family emigrated from Johannesburg, South Africa, to London when I was about 14. This move was very, very hard on me, especially socially. I left behind a lot of my friends I grew up with, and struggled to rebuild in the UK. For the past ten years (I'm 24 now), I've been quite lonely, and my self-esteem took a lot of big hits (although Baruch H-Shem therapy has helped a huge amount). I was unhappy with my situation, and unhappy with who I was. I think I used p**n and shfichas zera as a pick-me-up, and as an attempt at some kind of intimacy, besides the usual urges and curiosities of a young man.

This continued when I become frum, although frequency decreased (and guilt increased). University was a very difficult time, fashions left very little to the imagination, although I managed to avoid getting involved with all the shmutz that goes on.

I spent a year at a well-known baal teshuva yeshiva after uni. This was to be my greatest length of shmira - just over a year. I fell badly when I came home for pesach - after 9 months in Yerushalayim, the fashions and posters in the UK were just far too much to handle, along with my PC that I had left behind.

Since then, I've really fought (and fallen), and GUE has given me a lot of inspiration. I was quite happy to realise I had been mechavin to the Guard Your Eyes Handbook already about 3 years before I had read it! My browser opens onto the chizuk list, which is really handy.

London is a tough place for shmiras eynayim, and I really daven hard that H' should help me. Baruch H-Shem I'm usually ok but sometimes the y'h just gets too much. My recent best period is about 6 weeks. I found a good filter and I'm really considering accountability software, but I'll see how the next few months go.

A big challenge at the moment is shidduchim - I'd really like to get married (and feel emotionally I'm finally in a good place to deal with it properly). I don't fit in very here - I'm too 'modern' for a chareidi girl, but too chareidi for a modern girl, so it's been hard meeting girls that are shayich. That sneaky y'h gets me here a lot - telling me that it will be years before I find someone and in such a tough environment, who can blame me for giving in? Positive thinking and bitachon are really my biggest weapons here, but they don't come easily.

One thing that really surprised me reading others' stories is how widespread these struggles are, and how wide a cross-section of yidden it affects.

May the Ribono shel Olam give you all the beracha and hatzlacha you all deserve for your truly super human efforts!

sR

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Re: SonicReducer's story so far
Posted by sonicReducer - 19 Mar 2010 06:10

After a night's sleep (not long enough to be called a good night's sleep :D) feeling like I'm getting back to normal.

This is both good and bad;

good - since now I feel like I want to go find myself a nice lass and get hitched

bad - teiva's also getting back to normal

Can't really complain though :D

kol tov

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Re: SonicReducer's story so far

Posted by sonicReducer - 24 Mar 2010 22:30

Pretty frustrated with my learning at the moment. I worked pretty hard during my year in yeshiva (which was a nisayon in its own way), and got to a level that I was quite proud of, though I was aware that I still had very far to go.

Now I've noticed a definite decline over the past few months. Slowly slowly my translation has slowed down, my vocab is smaller, I'm chupping less and less of the issues at hand

Not enjoying my learning at all. Canceled a chavrusa for tomorrow night because I couldn't face spending an hour thinking 'wish I was somewhere else, wish I was somewhere else ...'

Having a break at least over the next two weeks, hopefully chazara and doing something a bit different will recharge me a bit.

Bit of drama with my parents - My mother is going to my sister for Pesach. My father was going to go for the first few days of yom tov, and come back. My mother told me about 20 minutes ago that he's not going at all. I asked her if she was okay with it - she said yes, but I could hear she wasn't at all happy. He'll probably sit and munch the chametz that I sold, and anyone who says anything against it will just get an earful.

My mother's applied for two jobs outside of London, but my father doesn't want to leave. Really

only the Aibishter knows whats gonna be, and He sure doesn't seem to be letting anyone know.

Spent a good part of the morning at the National Gallery in Trafalgar Square. Was good to do something cultural and touristy for once :D

Otherwise I feel like I'm settling down a bit emotionally, considering speaking to shadchanim after Pesach, though that might be a bit premature.

kol tov,

sR

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Re: SonicReducer's story so far
Posted by Holy Yid - 24 Mar 2010 22:43

Keep sharing if you want to, that is what we are here for.

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Re: SonicReducer's story so far
Posted by briut - 26 Mar 2010 14:59

So, it sounds like you're going through pretty 'normal' stuff. With pretty normal reactions and emotions.

I'd say, 'normal' is normal. Don't sweat it. You'll find yourself on a big upward swing very soon. (Don't sweat that, either!) I'm happy for you. PM if you like.

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Re: SonicReducer's story so far

Posted by sonicReducer - 26 Mar 2010 17:26

Just a quick post before Shabbos. Thank G-d I'm starting to level out a bit. My parents' situation is still a mess (my mother has gone alone to my sister for Pesach, and has applied for 2 jobs outside of London), but I've distanced myself from it, really out of necessity.

Fell last night, almost 2 weeks clean. Really it was a mixture of loneliness, wanting to feel close to someone, feeling a bit tired of the constant battle. Hopefully the next few weeks will be busy enough to keep my shmira going strong.

It is very hard around here though, I'm constantly bombarded (as are most guys I assume) - women's fashions seem to get worse daily, the newspapers have pornography splashed on the covers, in the articles, posters and advertising is just as bad Don't really understand how Hashem really expects us to be perfect in an environment like this. Anyway...

considering starting dating some time after Pesach. Not sure if this is premature, but I feel like I'm getting to a point emotionally that I'll be okay. Despite all that's happened I feel that I have a lot to offer (something people close to me have echoed, including my therapist).

My learning has collapsed a bit though, not so motivated or enjoying it much. I think I need to use Pesach to reboot a bit. I'm quite settled into my shmiras hamitzvos but sometimes I'm not so sure why I'm doing it, not sure what I enjoy about it. I do a lot of things because 'it's the right thing to do', or out of a sense of duty or expectation or fear of punishment

Not the best reasons.

Anyway, hope everyone has a good Shabbos :D

sR

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Re: SonicReducer's story so far

Posted by Holy Yid - 28 Mar 2010 02:23

I can only say I think of you often.

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Re: SonicReducer's story so far

Posted by sonicReducer - 04 Apr 2010 09:10

Just a quick one - also to wish everyone a gut Moed and a gut Yom Tov

Was late for mincha yesterday (after looking at the wrong calendar entry, d'oh!), and overslept by an *hour* this morning (slept through my alarm, quite unusual for me). When I got to shul both times, I was flustered frustrated, rushed through davening (especially this morning, was pretty terrible).

The wierd thing is, in both cases (especially this morning) I felt very frustrated with myself. I dunno, I can't seem to cut myself any slack, it's got to be all or nothing. At least I'm aware of it, but the annoyance and irritation is not so easy to deal with, and I know other people can sense my mood.

Anyway I think I'm about 9 days clean so far, has been more or less okay.

kol tov,

sR

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Re: SonicReducer's story so far

Posted by sonicReducer - 04 Apr 2010 12:56

Just read 'Pursuit of Perfection' by Dr Sorotzkin - food for thought :D

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Re: SonicReducer's story so far

Posted by silentbattle - 08 Apr 2010 01:54

You don't have to be perfect, but you can still work on yourself...

You certainly do have a lot to offer. Whether or not now is the best time to start dating, I can't say - that's a question for a rebbe or therapist that knows you well and will be blunt and honest with you.

Whatever it is, keep us posted on what's going on, please. And keep growing!

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Re: SonicReducer's story so far

Posted by briut - 08 Apr 2010 02:15

It's always such a pleasure to hear how you keep going and spiraling upward above the sludge you're having to deal with. An impressive track record, eh mate?

Do YOU feel like it's an impressive upward spiral, sR?

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Re: SonicReducer's story so far

Posted by sonicReducer - 12 Apr 2010 05:17

Have been to post for a while - finally have a few minutes.

Briut - Sometimes I find the weight of what I've been dealing with and the feeling of getting through it kind of matching off. The winner is usually determined by the one I choose. Unfortunately it's not always the best one, but I recognize enough that my seichel is in many ways the 'ace in the hole' - so I use that to ensure that I feel 'wow, I went through all that and I'm still a good guy? Impressive!', over anything else.

Spoke to my therapist on Thursday about dating, and we discussed it for a while. The maskana was that we both feel I'm ready to start again. I'm a little worried about how I'll broach all this stuff with a prospective callah, but I think that the kind of girl I'm looking for will be inclined to support me more than anything else.

I was at a wedding last night, of another baal teshuva I'm friendly with. Firstly they probably spent more money on that wedding than I'll probably see in my life, so that made me feel a bit anxious about marriage/weddings, but I know that they are definitely in the minority, and that most people are in the same boat more or less as me.

The ladies' dress was pretty much standard fare for a well-off, not very frum crowd, but honestly, even though I saw a lot of very pretty girls dressed not so tzniously, I have to say (baruch Hashem) I really wasn't affected by it. I think there were too many things holding me back from really feeling interested or whatever - I don't want my wife to dress like that / she's not frum so not shayich / a jewish girl shouldn't dress like that / etc.

The ones I struggled with were the frum girls (for opposite reasons) and anyway they're the tznious ones.

Must dash to shacharis and then try to power through the day (pretty zonked).

kol tov, hope everyone is doing well

sR

PS 17 days clean :D

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Re: SonicReducer's story so far
Posted by briut - 12 Apr 2010 11:27

[sonicReducer wrote on 12 Apr 2010 05:17:](#)

my seichel is in many ways the 'ace in the hole' - so I use that to ensure that I feel 'wow, I went through all that and I'm still a good guy? Impressive!', over anything else.

PS 17 days clean :D

The start and end of your post seems to be the ikkar. All the rest is commentary.

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Re: SonicReducer's story so far
Posted by sonicReducer - 12 Apr 2010 16:27

Haha, absolutely :D

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Re: SonicReducer's story so far
Posted by silentbattle - 12 Apr 2010 16:51

17 days - that's fantastic! Keep it up!

When you say you're worried about "broaching all the this stuff" - you mean the overall issues you've been facing, or specifically acting out? Or both?

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