

anybody out there?

Posted by aaron - 03 Jun 2010 18:44

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I've been having such a hard time lately. In recent months, my falls have become more and more common. I was on R. Duvid's calling hotline but seem to have fallen away from it due to conflicting obligations. Now that those obligations are gone, I feel that **maybe it isn't worth going back to the program** and just waiting until another cycle starts up again, so that I can do it right. Am I wrong for this thinking?

Its also hard for me to realize that i am actually having a conversation with myself before I fall. I hear voices making hints at me that this is not what I really want, but I cannot identify the voice telling me to continue as being external. He is speaking from within me. **I'd like to improve on realizing who is actually talking within me** and who is pretending to. any suggestions?

I think i'm gonna start posting again regularly. Its been awhile. I also am down on myself because - **since i've accepted that i am addicted** in recent months - i have stepped away from feeling bad about falls. **Im not so sure that this has been beneficial or if this has just made it easier for me to fall.**

No longer are previous falls contributing to the stress that drove me to fall again, but without them, I feel like I am **lacking the commitment to change and to improve**. I know logically that I have reasons to quite - primarily... because I don't have control over my life. But since I am not experiencing any consequences from this lack of control - and please G-d I should not - i'm having a hard time realizing that its a problem.

Looking forward to hearing your thoughts....

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Re: anybody out there?

Posted by Dov - 06 Jun 2010 04:14

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Dear Ahron - please forgive this minor hijacking...

Dear Briut,

Reading your post brought this out for me (so it's your fault):

Happily, once we *have* had a good taste from the the Eitz haChayim, the Eitz haDa'as is just no comparison. It actually **hurts** to go back. We still may, but I hear that it hurts horribly.

What's sad is that precious things are not gained overnight. Yetzias mitzrayim was a big, fat, dilug - a completely undeserved **gift** to us 49th-levelers. After the free jump, it was almost completely *lost* to us and we had to grow slowly from zero for 49 days before getting the Torah...then we lost much of it just 40 days later with our eigel....then we did some tshuvah and lost much of *that* by the complaining and those yummy quails...followed by more growth and d'galim and we were finally ready to go into Eretz Yisroel - only to lost almost everything with the meraglim...did a lot of tshuva again (the hard way, thanks to the ma'apilim) - only to have Korach's 'help' to almost lose the little they had left (a connection with Moshe Rabeinu)...Oh, boy. The goyim have an easy out: "Those Jews were losers!" Our version of the lesson is so very different, and has been borne-out by historical comparisons of our peoples: The *really* precious stuff takes time and is obviously worth the ups and downs of real life.

Time is needed, if we are to have any hope of actually growing into these lofty 'madreigos' we talk about. (I call them all Sobriety="Derech Eretz" - which is *before* "Torah" even *begins*.) We need to allow ourselves space to be screw-ups in many ways. Not in *dangerous* ways (like our addiction) - that obviously must stop (for today) for there to be hope. But as far as purity, living well, and happiness are concerned, tolerating imperfection *means* tolerating some ugliness in ourselves. And in others, too. We have some ugliness. Getting it out in the open is the only way I know to start to get free of it. Ignoring our ugliness may be encouraging, (as in, "you are such a tzaddik!") but it's still a lie. And I believe that lies get us nowhere....or worse. They just substitute **feeling better** for **getting better**. Many of the folks I have met in meetings have been focused on feeling better, rather than on becoming more useful. They don't usually get much better.

If they only knew how great it feels to actually be able trust themselves and have some integrity for a change, they'd know that there is simply no contest here. Lust simply has no 'schoira'. I am **still** an addict, believe that I am powerless and *could* lose it all tomorrow, but have still learned to trust myself to stay with Hashem and to **use Him** to stay sober and useful to Him and to His people today. And it's a great way to live so far.

Sorry I went on and on, but it was your fault.

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Re: anybody out there?

Posted by aaron - 06 Jun 2010 05:01

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Always a pleasure to host you Dov.

sometimes facing the pain of our failures head on is so decapitating - its can leave me without the strength to pick myself up again and sometimes even be an ultamite trigger for acting out (surprise surprise). As frustrating as it is, I logically (not always emotionally)know you are right about needing to live with my flaws in the present. Sometimes though, its just so much easier said than done...

How can we tolerate our imperfections while working on them without temporarily avoiding the problem by making ourselves feel better?

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Re: anybody out there?

Posted by briut - 06 Jun 2010 11:25

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[Ahron wrote on 06 Jun 2010 05:01:](#)

How can we tolerate our imperfections while working on them without temporarily avoiding the problem by making ourselves feel better?

Gevaldige question. And the more times we each ask ourselves the question, and cry to Tatty (im Himmel) over the question, and "do the work," the closer we might come to some answers.

I am reminded, though, of a dear friend who's been battling chronic pain from a very serious illness. Taking massive doses of painkillers. Trying to withdraw. And the real work for my friend is not really about the painkillers, it's about the pain. How to learn to live with pain without painkillers. A truth more powerful and awesome than the pain itself.

I don't know exactly why I'm reminded of this, but there's some parallel, somehow, I figure.

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Re: anybody out there?

Posted by Dov - 06 Jun 2010 12:28

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[Ahron wrote on 06 Jun 2010 05:01:](#)

How can we tolerate our imperfections while working on them without temporarily avoiding the problem by making ourselves feel better?

I believe that when I first began to accept my imperfections without shame, I began to become freed from them. I found that looking at my face in a mirror was no longer a disgusting experience soon after doing my 4th step inventory. It was a true discovery - totally unexpected. It was actually the last thing I expected, for I had always thought (as many I have met here on GYE do) that facing, writing down, and freely admitting my defects of character would be shaming and lead to self-loathing. Little did I know, that ***I had already been living with all those defects all these years, hating myself for it, and trying to run and hide from them!***

The only thing really missing was acceptance of the facts about me by admitting them freely, even to others. I could then find it a bit easier to stop running from myself by hiding in lust, porn and masturbation adventures.

A bit counter-intuitive, no?

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Re: anybody out there?

Posted by aaron - 07 Jun 2010 02:21

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It sounds like, from what you are saying dov, that if we are not feeling shameful of our own flaws, then the only real determination to change must be coming from a desire for something better. If this is true, how can we logically be expected to exchange our easy our and immediate pleasure for something that requires long term effort, whose results can only come after a long period of time (sorry if that q sounds immature- just trying to be honest). I mean, seriously how can we be expected to step away from behavior that is pleasurable *now* for something that will be pleasurable later after much hard work. its just so hard to know whats really around the bend sometimes, and what is worth waiting for. ( i'm not sure that I don't logically know the answer to this question, but on an emotional level it is hard to cope with).

on another note...

Last night I was up reading gateway to happiness by R. Zelig pliskin. Over the course of the last couple months I have been reading a few pages before going to sleep at night, but recently I have found my self needing to jump to specific chapters that deal with specific character flaws in the heat of the moment.

Last night, I began to realize that - similar to what has been said above - that I have been living with a ton of self-hate. I lack real confidence in myself, and this has been preventing me from living my full potential.

Like Dov had said in the chizuk e-mail, I had listened in on the first 4 steps of the program passively, learned alot about myself, but I have not taken the time to create my "new life." I am fairly broken from having tried so many times to create a new begining and failing that it gets so discouraging and hard to muster up the strength needed to do it again - when I am so confident that any determination sumoned will be tossed overboard in the heat of the moment.

**Preventing the triggers from occuring almost seems like an impossible goal.** How am i to never get angry, never be upset, impatient, stressed or even bored? Is this wrong? is the goal not as much to never experience these things for the time being, but rather to *recognize* when I am expereincing them and deal with them from there?

sorry if this post was all over the place... please tackle whatever you feel you can

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Re: anybody out there?

Posted by briut - 07 Jun 2010 02:31

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[Ahron wrote on 07 Jun 2010 02:21:](#)

How am i to never get angry, never be upset, impatient, stressed or even bored? Is this wrong? is the goal not as much to never experience these things for the time being, but rather to *recognize* when I am expereincing them and deal with them from there?

Well, I ain't Dov, and I ain't no expert. Plus, I ain't succeeded (yet) in most of this work. But I can guess that the goal doesn't have anything to do with what we SHOULDN'T do -- DON'T get angry impatient, etc. The secret has GOT to rest somehow in filling up our lives so much with what we DO want, that the "don'ts" have no more room to breathe. Stuff we want, like LOVE, tolerance, patience, curiosity, enthusiasm, whatever.

A focus on anything negative, even the elimination of negatives, has never gotten me anywhere but frustrated. It's got to be all about breathing the good stuff IN, and then the bad stuff will get displaced and go OUT.

Just a thought. We can wait for the Bearmeister to weigh in, perhaps.

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Re: anybody out there?

Posted by aaron - 07 Jun 2010 02:39

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thanks for the quick response... you are probably right about focussing on what I want in life, but (back to the first paragraph of the last post) what should be my motivation for improvement?

Even though i know that this is exactly the tactic the y'h wants me to but into, a part of me feels like i have fallen so many times that maybe i never really have had motivation to improve... do i

really lack proper yeras shamayim or the drive to live a fulfilling life?

should i be motivated to change by a logic of the mind htat it can lead to a better life- which poses the challenge of combating my emotions - or should I be driven by the logic of my heart which reminds me from my own experiences that theres is indeed something better over the rainbow?

- does this question make any sense?

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Re: anybody out there?

Posted by Dov - 07 Jun 2010 05:47

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More blue-lining....

[Ahron wrote on 07 Jun 2010 02:21:](#)

It sounds like, from what you are saying dov, that if we are not feeling shameful of our own flaws, then the only real determination to change must be coming from a desire for something better. Whoa! Sorry for being unclear. I never meant to imply that shame over character defects was a good or useful thing. In fact, the shame is paralyzing for me, even more than the defect, itself. I also never meant to imply that the only way that I have hope of getting better (or staying sober) is to get rid of all my character defects. What I was trying to say was that getting rid of the shame of admitting them to ourselves and others is a necessary prerequisite for me to getting any freedom from them. I can never truly ask Hashem to remove it from me if I do not really accept that I've got it. And if I cannot admit to another person (or meeting) that I've got it, then I still consider it an aveiro, not a chlo'ei hanefesh (as RMB"M puts it). If it is an aveiro, then it is ugly and wrong - how can I honestly believe Hashem takes away *aveiros* - that, to me, is completely against bechirah! An illness or 'bad' *middah*, yes - but *an evil choice I am making?! That* is a matter for basic Teshuvah, not for Recovery as I know it.

.....how can we be expected to step away from behavior that is pleasurable *now* for something that will be pleasurable later after much hard work. its just so hard to know whats really around the bend sometimes, and what is worth waiting for. Understood, amigo. I'd never change for a future reward either, *and never have*. Others have 'accused me' of this though, just cuz I

sometimes describe the wonderful things I have discovered in a life of recovery so far that were the fruit of years of slow change. But I never looked forward to get *any* of those things. They just fell into my life. Promise.

But when it comes to using *lust*, it is just so *destructive* that I did whatever was necessary to get the help I needed to avoid it. I was simply *scared* of ruining what life I had left after getting caught and exposed for who I really was.

Now, some of the fruits of recovery are a sense of *gratitude* for the good things in life (cuz they start to be more reliable), a feeling of *integrity* that cannot apparently be dislodged (I think it is Emunah, actually, that G-d *is* really here with me forever and always), and a sense of *safety* (that I am not *that* likely to flush my life down the toilet at any moment, nor to get arrested, and have no fear that I'll get caught in a lie). These gifts, once tasted, are precious, no? We try to hold onto them once we recognize them. That may be what you are referring to, I guess, as "**the payoff in the future**". Well, *I* never counted on getting any of those things, till I tripped over them. So I ask you: why look forward to getting anything more than ***just being sober***? If *that* is not precious enough to motivate someone, then I just have a hard time relating. It just isn't what I experienced, that's all. An expert on recovery in general might be able to help, not me. All I have is my own experience which is very limited.

Last night, I began to realize that - similar to what has been said above - that I have been living with a ton of self-hate. I lack real confidence in myself, and this has been preventing me from living my full potential.

Like Dov had said in the chizuk e-mail, I had listened in on the first 4 steps of the program passively, learned a lot about myself, but I have not taken the time to create my "new life." I am fairly broken from having tried so many times to create a new beginning and failing that it gets so discouraging and hard to muster up the strength needed to do it again - when I am so confident that any determination summoned will be tossed overboard in the heat of the moment. **Preventing the triggers from occurring almost seems like an impossible goal.** How am i to never get angry, never be upset, impatient, stressed or even bored? Is this wrong? is the goal not as much to never experience these things for the time being, but rather to *recognize* when I am experiencing them and deal with them from there?

[color=blue]The second way, it seems to me. But Hashem heals us in stages and little bits over time so that these character flaws affect us less often and with progressively less power. Nu. What else do you expect?



And just in case you thought it was a good thing... Q: Guess where I believe eliminating all emotional 'triggers' would lead *me* (and maybe others, too)? A: To completely abandon Hashem. Yup. I wouldn't need His help at all!

C'mon. Hashem is smart, no? You think he really arranged us to become this sick for Him to save us - like Superman? Does He 'need' to run around saving the world post facto? I doubt it. I believe that He put me in *this* life and I *have* this problem cuz it was indispensable to me! I needed to become sick enough to need him in order to ever have hope of finding Him. Rav Noach Taught me this idea, and I use it this way.

Sorry for the long post.

And I do not intentionally write the chizzuk Emails and never *got* them, either. It's all Guard's cutting, pasting, and hard work. [color]

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Re: anybody out there?  
Posted by briut - 07 Jun 2010 10:57

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[dov wrote on 07 Jun 2010 05:47:](#)

Q: Guess where I believe eliminating all emotional 'triggers' would lead *me* (and maybe others, too)? A: To completely abandon Hashem. Yup. I wouldn't need His help at all!

C'mon. Hashem is smart, no? You think he really arranged us to become this sick for Him to save us - like Superman? Does He 'need' to run around saving the world post facto? I doubt it. I believe that He put me in *this* life and I *have* this problem cuz it was indispensable to me! I needed to become sick enough to need him in order to ever have hope of finding Him. Rav Noach Taught me this idea, and I use it this way.

A beautiful Dov-ism. Thanks.

I love this vision of G-d as more powerful than needing to stoop to some "give us pain" trick to encourage our growth. Thanks. [And I confess I tend toward that Superman delusion myself (look for damsel in distress, just so the great and powerful Me can save them -- sick, sick, sick). I've made progress on it for decades --all the way up from an F to a D+ -- but it's still a vision I'd like to abandon for myself. And now, I suppose, it's time to abandon viewing Hashem that way, as well.]

Hmmnn. Thanks again.

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Re: anybody out there?

Posted by aaron - 07 Jun 2010 14:57

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[dov wrote on 07 Jun 2010 05:47:](#)

C'mon. Hashem is smart, no? You think he really arranged us to become this sick for Him to save us - like Superman? Does He 'need' to run around saving the world post facto? I doubt it. I believe that He put me in *this* life and I *have* this problem cuz it was indispensable to me! I needed to become sick enough to need him in order to ever have hope of finding Him. Rav Noach Taught me this idea, and I use it this way.

Sorry, im still a bit confused about this last paragraph... are you saying that H' did *not* bring me to this problem in order to draw me close to Him and come to know him? I think i missed your superman mashal, cause the end of what you wrote makes it sound like he *did* create the problem specifcily for me in order that I find Him... ???

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Re: anybody out there?

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Posted by Ineedhelp!! - 07 Jun 2010 17:10

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If I may...

I think Dov means that Hashem doesn't need us to be close to him. We need to be close to Hashem. Therefore, Hashem put us in our respective situations in order for US to grow closer to HIM for OUR benefit. Not HIS benefit. Hashem doesn't need us to be closer to Him. View it as a Chesed that Hashem does for us. We are given an opportunity to grow closer to Hashem than most people have. Most people go through life not realizing the opportunities that are God-given to them in order for them to grow closer to Hashem. We are given the opportunity and recognize it. Now it's our job to take advantage of it and spring forward into action.

Make sense Dov and Ahron?

-Yiddle

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Re: anybody out there?

Posted by Dov - 08 Jun 2010 04:31

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Yup.

And before this gets all bogged-down in a big fat 'hashkofa' debate, I just want to say that all this might seem dead wrong....but I do not really care, because **it works** to allow me to get me sober and to be an eved Hashem to the degree that I am, so far. I don't really *care* about the philosophical veracity discussions. They can go either way and back and forth forever, anyway. ***If it works, then it's probably true*** - and the truth will eventually become apparent to me as a gift from Hashem *when He is ready to have me know it.*

Humility is far more precious to me than 'being right'....after all, 'needing to be right' was always the poison in my relationships, itself!

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Re: anybody out there?

Posted by briut - 08 Jun 2010 11:16

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Yup. What's working, compared to what wins the intellectual debate.

"Nothing succeeds like success."

Pres. Obama, quoting Alexandre Dumas

(PS: If we all weren't just so good at deluding ourselves into thinking that nonsense is actually working. But delusion is another whole topic.)

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Re: anybody out there?

Posted by aaron - 08 Jun 2010 13:52

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I'll def. agree to this stuff

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