

Real Life Lessons

Posted by BenHashemBH - 24 Jun 2024 17:14

Every experience can be a teaching instance. I'd like to share those AHA moments when I've learned something by internalizing and growing from even seemingly mundane circumstances. Hopefully others would also like to share some observations, thoughts, and chizuk from their day-to-day journey's.

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Re: Real Life Lessons

Posted by BenHashemBH - 24 Jun 2024 17:15

Hank at the Bank

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Innocently waiting in line at the bank,

When suddenly, in walks Hank.

His face covered by a reflective visor,

Perhaps he thought us none the wiser.

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His head was spinning like a dreidel,

Conveniently pausing towards every maidel.

Neck kept turning, round and round like an owl,

His intentions, I'm afraid, were obviously foul.

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As I watch this display with utter disgust,

How embarrassing, his unbridled lust.

I thought to myself, why is he here?

Alas! Perhaps the reason was clear.

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Hank is here for me, though he never looked my way,

With a lesson I need to internalize for every day.

This man whose behavior bothered me to the bone,

It's ME when I think that I am alone.

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When I sin, it is also on public display,

For Hashem is always looking my way.

If only I would realize that I am that poor guy,

When I think there is no one that sees my eye.

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When I remember that my sunglasses are transparent,

Then the derech Hashem becomes more apparent.

My Father my King is always opposite me,

Oh, how much better I will try to be.

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Re: Real Life Lessons

Posted by BenHashemBH - 02 Jul 2024 14:33

The shul tables were not set up this morning, causing some extra background noise during davening. Seemed like a good segway to share something I've been working on that has changed me tremendously. Curbing curiosity and pointless looking. Doesn't matter if it's a davur asur or not, you can train yourself to reign in your eyes and thoughts. Obviously there are times when you must be paying attention, but most of the time we can tune out the general buzz of activity around us that has no impact on what we need to be doing.

I need to see the other cars when I'm driving, but I don't need to look at who's driving the car.

I need to see if people are crossing the street, but I don't need to look at who's walking down the sidewalk.

I need to be aware of my surroundings when walking, but I don't need to focus with any clarity on the obstacles.

I'm a naturally observant person, so it was quite difficult to work on this, but once I did, there was a realization that I'm really not missing out on much meaningful information by minding my own business.

And without further ado . . .

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Re: Real Life Lessons

Posted by BenHashemBH - 02 Jul 2024 14:34

A Rule for Shul (and Everywhere)

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Sitting at my usual seat, I hear a sound,

Immediately, my head wants to turn around.

Someone just came in through the door,

It's not something to offhandedly ignore.

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Who's walking in? I must know,

To check is part of my status quo.

Late is the hour in which he chooses to appear,

And his personal business is my job to commandeer.

.
Mark the person, the date, and the time,

Documenting this most heinous crime.

Ok, back to what I was doing before,

this distraction, that was called for.

.
Fast forward a couple of minutes,

My attention span has small limits.

Someone is putting their tefillin away,

Whilst the chazan repeats shmona esrei.

.
Why the need to leave so early,

This is important information, surely.

Where is it that you need to go,

Another thing that I must know.

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STOP!

.
Does any of it really matter,

To make my brain such a scatter.

Obsessed with what others are doing,

An empty thing to be pursuing.

.
My focus should only be on myself,

Leaving those curiosities on the shelf.

Only then can I maintain a clear mind,

Keeping focus on what I've been assigned.

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My friends, no matter where we are,

In shul, at the park, or driving a car.

Our mind and eyes should be in one place,

Inside the boundaries of our own space.

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When we let our attention go to freely wander,

Then we imprison ourselves as a responder.

Subservient to all the surrounding stimulations,

Developing a bad habit of unhealthy fixations.

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So, no matter where we may be,

Remember to worry just about me.

I'm the only one I need to be thinking about,

The rest of the noise I ought to block out.

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Hashem please guard me against these distractions,

Help me control myself and refrain from these infractions,

I want to take back ownership of my own reactions,

The need to see everything, is after all an abstraction.

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Re: Real Life Lessons

Posted by frank.lee - 02 Jul 2024 17:42

Amazing! Huge yesod!

I once heard - that is the definition of Kalus ROsh vs. Koved Rosh - is your head bopping like a balloon, floating? When someone walks in the room - do you look up? That is Kalus Rosh, a light head. But if your head stays down, focused on what **you** are doing, that is the opposite, Koved Rosh!

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Re: Real Life Lessons

Posted by BenHashemBH - 05 Jul 2024 14:27

Sorry I'm not writing a poem this time, though I do feel like it can be easier to internalize the lessons when they have an entertaining spin (presuming of course that you find poems entertaining).

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So yesterday I'm driving down a road that I don't frequent and pass a store that sells dresses for fancy occasions. Approaching the store from the rear, it caught me a little more off guard. A brightly colored dress on a mannequin in the back window. I didn't think anything inappropriate per se, but I imagined for a moment that it would look attractive on my wife, before looking away. Immediately the YH was there, telling me it was muttar to look again. It's just a mannequin, and you are thinking about your wife, nothing wrong with that. Definitely not the worst kind, but lust all the same. That guy doesn't rest and he will manipulate any opportunity to exploit a chink in the armor.

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A big mitzva can be hard to do. A small aveira in some ways is harder not to do than a big one. I remember once in EY when boys were trying to fit two at a time in the turnstile for the bus station bathroom because it cost a shekel to get through. A Yid there reprimanded them "nu! you're going to be oiver geneiva - for a shekel!" It stuck with me. The "it's not so bad" mentality is just YH's way in, it can definitely slip to worse things from there. Stay vigilant, and don't compromise your resolve with his little excuses. Then pat yourself on the back, because

avoiding a little aveira **is not** a small thing to do.

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Re: Real Life Lessons

Posted by BenHashemBH - 29 Jul 2024 17:44

My little boy is just learning how to walk. He sees me from across the room, and his eyes light up. Grabbing onto some nearby furniture, he stands up and steadies himself. Holding on until the last moment, he faces my direction and lets go. One wobbly foot in front of the other, arms flailing about in the air, he starts to make his way. He gets ahead of himself and as his feet can't quite keep up with his body, he leans forward. The momentum propels him onward—too quickly. Sometimes he makes it and I catch him as he stumbles into my waiting arms. Sometimes he falls down in a heap and cries. Either way, the next time he spots me from across the obstacle-littered room, he hoists himself back up and takes those first faith-filled steps.

Crying as I realize that my baby has more emunah and bitachon in his father than I have in mine.

He will learn how to walk.

I need to learn how to live.

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Re: Real Life Lessons

Posted by BenHashemBH - 02 Aug 2024 18:50

Transforming some thoughts from several books that I'm reading into a poem. There is nothing quite like discovering and being your true self. Believe!

Lost and Found

Where am I

I thought I knew

Yet every day

I'm somewhere new

Which place today

Here or there

What will I feel

Hope or despair

Don't look at me

In my undress

I lost my clothes

Inside my stress

Now I must hide

Myself protect

The world's a boot

I'm the insect

Deep dark corner

Musty smell

Dying in my

Personal hell

Save me save me

No one's here

I'm on my own

That much is clear

Suffering

I'm left to be

Utterly alone

No one sees me

Enter GYE

A ray of light

Cracks my shell

Illuminates

That place I dwell

Squinting my eyes

Coughing dust

Awakening

But can I trust

If not I'll die

In this dusk

Despondently

An empty husk

Struggle and fight

Break down the walls

Emancipate

My freedom calls

See me see me

I am here

Existing

In perpetual fear

I was afraid

I was alone

Petrified

If only I'd known

There was help

Many others like I

Camaraderie

A powerful ally

They also lived

A life like mine

Brokenhearted

Bent over spine

But together

They all stand tall

Supporting

Any that might fall

Arm in arm

And hand in hand

Embracing

A brotherly band

Nothing like it

Near nor far

Transforming

Raising the bar

We can live

Take our lives back

Commandeered

Thrown out of whack

Now this I know

Pure and true

We all belong

Be you be you

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Re: Real Life Lessons

Posted by BenHashemBH - 12 Aug 2024 13:09

Having some thoughts while saying tehillim today.

May everyone have a meaningful Tisha b'Av and merit the rebuilding of our Beis Hamikdash as well as our own personal Battei Mikdash that we have damaged.

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Even (especially) from the depths I still sing a song of ascension. There is always hope.

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Hashem hears my voice and listens not just to my plea itself, but to the sound of my pain. Hashem isn't just giving solutions, He offers empathy & connection in my struggles.

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If I think that there is no hope CV because of what I've done, then I am giving up on everything.

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Nothing else exists in His presence. There are no other substitutes that could satisfy me in living.

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My neshama is already there. I need to put in the work from my end.

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There are two mornings that my neshama is waiting for. The ultimate dawn of Mashiach bimheira viyameinu amein and the actual next day – **ONE DAY AT A TIME.**

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Things may not seem to change right away, but don't give up. Hashem will come get me.

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We are in this struggle together.

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Re: Real Life Lessons
Posted by BenHashemBH - 12 Nov 2024 19:40

BH I have to share an experience of trial and triumph.

Sukkos was beautiful and busy as anything.

You might be nodding your head, but whatever hectic tumult you are picturing, probably multiply that by 4.

So when a nice group of cleaning help came to assist with keeping the house in usable shape, it felt necessary. On top of that, I know that my other half has wanted regular cleaning help pretty much since we met. Honestly, I was so overworked that I didn't pay them much attention.

That was not the case last week, when the Erev Shabbos hustle all over the house included frequent encounters with them. Their age and attire certainly made the nisayon more challenging. Leaving or hiding isn't really a practical option when Shabbos is a few hours away. For various reasons, asking them not to come would have caused a lot of frustration for my wife. But I had to do something. Careful as I tried to be, it was a much less than ideal situation.

So what is one to do?

Of course I reached out to my special family for advice and accountability!

I'm doing my best. I'm trying to be reasonable. Is this normal? Is this not ok? I need to think about this seriously and try to make the right choice.

Plan A - Simple, if it works, would be to have them come when I'm not or don't have to be home.

Plan B - Prepare for battle. Call in accountability for reinforcements so I'm not fighting alone. Might walk away with some cuts and bruises, but determined to share a victory celebration at the end. Same time and place next week? Ugh. I don't really want to wrestle with this on a recurring basis, but that might be my hishtadlus right now. One step at a time.

Lo and behold, tefillos and hishtadlus paid off and the cleaning help is available to come at a different time when I will generally not be home.

Mamash chasdei Hashem

Truly grateful that Hashem has helped me to avert this nisayon.

Truly grateful for my friends here on GYE - holy warriors of HaKadosh Baruch Hu who came to my aid.

Thank you!!!

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Re: Real Life Lessons

Posted by BenHashemBH - 27 Nov 2024 14:44

Learning from Life's Lessons.

New episodes bi-weekly!

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So, I had a big community simcha to go to on Mon night. Shem is an incredible friend (join the Vaad!) and has been helping me with accountability – in addition to his deeply meaningful conversation. It was BH a successful evening of not looking, but I walked away with a nagging issue. There was a particular person there that I was trying extra hard not to look at. This has happened before, and I was thinking that it's likely to happen again. I don't even know this person (they are a relative of someone I'm close with). No urges, no fantasies, no interaction, but an extreme attitude of 'stay far away'.

It left me feeling uneasy. Should I just do my best to never look at this particular person, forever? The reaction felt abnormal, and I struggled to approach my problem in a healthy way.

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Thank you Shem and thank you HHM for helping me reach an appropriate mindset.

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Stop making mountains out of molehills. I'm not supposed to look at any woman, and this individual is no different. Don't obsess about it so much and make it into a big scary monster. Be normal about it. Do what you have to do without freaking out. Let go of the unhealthy fixation, take them off the pedestal, and as-needed deal with it like I would anyone else.

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Deep breath in, exhale, let go, and let's live.

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Kol Tov Brothers

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Re: Real Life Lessons

Posted by BenHashemBH - 10 Dec 2024 20:13

You'll just have to believe me that I don't specifically wait ~2 weeks between posts.

Work (secular) is having a holiday social this afternoon with cookies, hot cocoa, and ugly sweaters. While they socialize, I'm at my desk making a siyum on completing maseches Menachos BH.

I used to feel strange going to these things, but I went anyways to be part of the group. Now I'm good being different enough to not go at all. Many times being different in life is good.

Kol Tov

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Re: Real Life Lessons

Posted by chosemyshem - 10 Dec 2024 20:52

[BenHashemBH wrote on 10 Dec 2024 20:13:](#)

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Kol Tov

That takes real gevurah. Good for you!

My work also had a holiday party. But instead of cookies, hot cocoa, and ugly sweaters it was little red dresses, an open bar, and a very treif six course dinner.

I wish I had had the guts to ditch it. Unfortunately, I didn't think it was optional.

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Re: Real Life Lessons

Posted by stopsurvivingstartliving - 10 Dec 2024 22:53

Mazel Tov on the masechta and the courage to be different.

May you many more siyumim and wins like these!

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Re: Real Life Lessons

Posted by Hashem Help Me - 11 Dec 2024 12:33

[BenHashemBH wrote on 10 Dec 2024 20:13:](#)

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Kol Tov

Gadlus! We can just imagine the seuda waiting for you in shamayim. Different menu, different company. Tzaddikim being "*ne'he'ne mi-ziv haShechina*" Humbled by your post buddy.

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