

Who am I

Posted by TheJester - 11 Apr 2011 18:03

I feel bad hijacking the threads of others, without introducing myself to the forum properly. It is terribly bad mannered on my part, and I apologize. I'm not certain why I am here, other than "this forum applies to me in many ways".

I am an addict. I'm not sure if I have specific addictions, but I get addicted to things. Compulsive would probably be more accurate, but I can safely stick with addict. I am an addict with variable levels of self-control - sometimes my addictions just "stop". Sometimes, I have needed to be "shocked" out of them. Sometimes, I can control them to a degree. If there is yo-yo dieting (addictive eating with dry spells between?), then there must be yo-yo lots of things.

To what am I addicted? Anything. Anything that takes me from reality to fantasy. Anything that pushes boundaries. Anything that wastes time. Bad things. Sexual things, too. *Baruch Hashem*, not drugs - I thank *Hashem* for the fortitude that kept me well away from those, because I would have been a very easy victim. In the past, my compulsive behavior led to real-life encounters that were damaging to all concerned. I got caught, I dealt with the symptoms and some of the causes, and moved "on" to significantly lighter *issurim* (in terms of damage), such as encounters with myself. This (of course) didn't last, and I went back to full-scale sexual depravity. OK - I suppose I could have done worse, but certainly not by much.

Compulsive behavior. Addiction. For me, it was "stuff I just couldn't stop myself doing, even though I knew it was wrong and had consequences". The theme was helplessness. It still is - I can feel it, like the darker side of "*Ki karov aylecha*". Even in the depths of depravity, Hashem is a breath away. Even on the high of recovery, the abyss is similarly but a breath away. I am not recovered - it is even questionable whether I am recovering. What I know is that I am not doing things I should not be doing, in previous quality or quantities.

Ever switch on a light switch on *Shabbos*, then think "oh, damn", switch it off, and think "double-damn"? Ever let your feet take you somewhere on auto-pilot, then realize you're not where you should be? That's what my compulsion was. Sit down, switch on, and before I'd thought about it, I'd have my webcam on, and my trousers around my ankles. OK, that might have been the exception and not the rule, but I just "did" it. And you know what? It wasn't necessarily for the "buzz". It's just what I did. It was part of me. No thought required. *Complex actions, including thoughts and planning* became auto-pilot things for me. And it's still there - I know it. I can feel it. *Ki karov aylecha*... It goes both ways, for an addict.

To all those who do not believe in evolution, I have proof: my *Yetzer Horo* evolved quite rapidly, and brought me to other compulsions, some of which may or may not have been worse than before - who measures anyway? I imagine that I have dealt with these through overwhelming willpower, and a change of lifestyle. More correctly, through having the willpower to make a few massive changes to my life, and "reset" some of my ways of thinking. Specifically, this included a somewhat new start, keeping no secrets from my wife, and giving her full access to everything I do online. All in all, I've been *relatively* good for a few years. No encounters with myself, for example.

Of course, my addictions have just moved elsewhere, to more benign areas. This doesn't bother me as much as it should (especially since these don't break *halacha, per se*), but it is something I try to work on a bit at a time. OK, I'll be honest - I work on it when it becomes a problem. Perhaps that just makes me human.

In fact - "when it becomes a problem" is a bit of a theme. If not for at least a clear and present threat of "serious trouble", I probably would not have ceased any of my activities. Actually, I am not sure why I no longer masturbate - I cannot for the life of me understand why I made that commitment, and why I keep to it, even when it is difficult. Actually, I know why I keep the commitment - I challenged myself, and I *hate* failure. But how did I make the commitment in the first place? I know my wife does not mind in the slightest. Probably because I saw it as a final level of protection on a Pandora's Box. Probably because I feel that if that were to crack, then I would open a floodgate to destruction. Selfish me can't be having none of that, now.

So am I clean? Hell, no! A *Lubavitcher* once tried to explain to me that a *Beinoni* (somewhere between *Tzaddik* and *Rasha*) is someone who does not even allow bad thoughts into his head, but must fight them off constantly, and only ever just manages to win the fight. If this is so, then I'm a *Rasha*. 1000+ days without masturbation does not mean clean. It means just that - 1000+ days without masturbation. I still catch myself objectifying women - often. I still catch myself lurking online where I should not.

In Yeshiva, I learned that helping others to learn was the best way to help myself to learn. Perhaps sharing some of my more positive experiences will similarly help me remain positive. Perhaps I will improve the things that need improving, and keep a lid on those that lie uneasily at bay. There are many, less healthy, places for me to lurk online. This is not one of them.

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Re: Who am I

Posted by Eye.nonymous - 12 Apr 2011 06:58

Hello Jester,

Welcome to the forum.

Good idea to start your own thread (but, don't stop helping out in other people's threads!). Just post, and post everything, and that helps.

Lots of luck to you!

--Eye.

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The problem is me.

Posted by TheJester - 12 Apr 2011 10:04

OK - so who doesn't like eye-candy? Summer's out in various places around the Northern hemisphere., and people are wearing more revealing clothing. So places that should not be "exciting" are - buses, trains, airports... And it's not really my fault. It's just a feature of the weather, and those scantily-clad women. They're putting it out there, and I'm just passively enjoying it.

Or am I kidding myself?

When winter comes, I find myself enjoying the boots, the textured tights, the hugging blouses. It's not my fault, it's just a feature of the weather, and those alluringly-clad women. They're putting it out there, and I'm just passively enjoying it.

The problem *is* me.

Buses, trains and airports *were always* exciting, and *will always* be exciting. And I cannot avoid these places. How excited I am is the only thing I can change.

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Re: Who am I

Posted by WeWillWalk - 12 Apr 2011 13:34

Sometimes I catch myself slipping and beginning to look at other girls, especially when I get to new places I've never been to before. So what do I recommend? Stare at the windows. There are so many things around us that deserve our attention that if we look at them we don't see the triggers around us. Look at the sky, or at the windows, each with its own style. Look at the trees, the leaves, the birds. Sometimes walking to school, I choose a route only to be able to hear all the small birds twittering in the morning.

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Re: Who am I

Posted by TheJester - 12 Apr 2011 13:57

[WeWillWalk wrote on 12 Apr 2011 13:34:](#)

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What a truly beautiful thought. Thank you.

I love beauty, and other aesthetic pleasures. I enjoy looking at beautiful things. Thank you for reminding me that there is *clean* beauty everywhere, and that I can constantly seek it out. I intend to put this into practice with immediate effect!

You are better than Keats!

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Re: Who am I

Posted by ZemirosShabbos - 12 Apr 2011 14:09

Hi Reb Jester and welcome,

i enjoy your posts, please keep them coming

all the best

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Re: Who am I

Posted by WeWillWalk - 12 Apr 2011 14:11

I am happy to help,I will also try to do the same thing as I suggested to you. Sometimes,by helping others we also help ourselves.

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Re: Who am I

Posted by laagvokeles - 12 Apr 2011 14:13

[TheJester wrote on 12 Apr 2011 13:57:](#)

[WeWillWalk wrote on 12 Apr 2011 13:34:](#)

There are so many things around us that deserve our attention, that if we look at them we don't see the triggers around us. Look at the sky, or at the windows, each with its own style. Look at the trees, the leaves, the birds. Sometimes walking to schul, I choose a route only to be able to hear all the small birds twittering in the morning.

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unbelievable!

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Re: Who am I

Posted by Eye.nonymous - 12 Apr 2011 14:54

[TheJester wrote on 12 Apr 2011 13:57:](#)

You are better than Keats!

I thought the phrase was, "better than Cats".

--Eye.

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Re: Who am I

Posted by Reb Yid - 12 Apr 2011 17:33

[TheJester wrote on 12 Apr 2011 13:57:](#)

[WeWillWalk wrote on 12 Apr 2011 13:34:](#)

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What a truly beautiful thought. Thank you.

I enjoyed that thought a lot as well. There is definitely a beautiful world out there to be appreciated and admired. I will try to take the time to do it more often.

I think it is also a good idea, when taking in Hashem's beauty, to remember it is coming from Him, and use that thought to get closer to Him.

I guess it would be like killing 2 birds with one stone. Wait. You mentioned birds as some of the beautiful things we are admiring?

Ok fine. Leave the birds alone!!

Thanks again!!

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Re: Who am I
Posted by WeWillWalk - 12 Apr 2011 18:18

I feel encouraged to continue posting similar thoughts.

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Re: Who am I
Posted by Reb Yid - 12 Apr 2011 21:33

Great!!

Whenever I hear the word "Post" I right away think of this story. You Gotta Read This Article!!!
check it out!!!!

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This morning's struggle, and its reward.
Posted by TheJester - 20 May 2011 09:37

This morning, I was waiting on the street, and working a little on my *Shemiras Eynayim*. I should mention that Summer is not significantly more of a challenge for me than Winter. My own *Yetzer Horo* is not the conventional *schmutz*, which is why mainstream pornography is not so much of a trigger (I'm actually not interested), but rather objects of beauty and sensuality. I won't go into detail, but I would pursue what my misplaced pride would consider "connoisseur material". Yes, I am like a *chazer* with makeup, instead of just a *chazer*.

So I noticed... stuff. I positioned myself at an angle so as to avoid it, glazed my eyes (you know, a way of not-seeing, whilst not seeming to actively avert your gaze) and ended up with a magnificent view of a perfect rose bush. Now I had something really beautiful to look at - deep crimson and perfectly formed roses across the street, which I had never previously noticed. I had immense pleasure looking at it, and I thanked Hashem for the solace.

When my wait was over, I took the image with me, and felt great. I wanted to share that.

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Re: Who am I
Posted by laagvokeles - 20 May 2011 10:33

wow u most understand a lot about art, huh?

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Re: Who am I
Posted by TheJester - 20 May 2011 12:16

[laagvokeles wrote on 20 May 2011 10:33:](#)

wow u most understand a lot about art, huh?

I don't necessarily understand it, but I most certainly do appreciate it.

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