

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 ZemirosShabbos - 20 May 2011 14:42

that's a beautiful story, thanks for sharing

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Re: Who am I

Posted by alexeliezer - 20 May 2011 18:49

RebJester, I can relate to so much of what you have shared. I had stopped looking at porn because I made a neder not to, which I kept. But I continued to ogle women endlessly, mentally unclothing them and plugging them into my fantasies. Every pretty face captivated my attention and got me fantasizing. I even told myself the lie that I was appreciating the beauty Hashem created and what could be wrong with that?

But I knew it was wrong because pleasant thoughts became obsessive thoughts, intrusive thoughts, sick thoughts. And the more I looked at women, the less I appreciated permitted beauty, the beauty of nature, my wife and children.

This site helped me understand the critical role of shmiras eynayim -- at all times -- in breaking the lust cycle. Yeah, it's flesh season out there. And a part of me still misses "participating." I take it one challenge at a time. Usually just have to avert my gaze for a few seconds and it's over. My reward? I appreciate the true beauty of spring, the flowers, buds and leaves. The blue sky and the beautiful green carpet.

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Re: Who am I

Posted by TheJester - 25 May 2011 21:50

Poem moved to poetry thread.

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Re: Who am I

Posted by TheJester - 29 May 2011 09:24

Entertainment for Laag, when he gets here. It's a bit old, but unfortunately relevant to our human condition in here.

Poem moved to the poetry forum.

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Re: Who am I

Posted by laagvokeles - 29 May 2011 18:07

man.

to enjoy this u probably have to be more espiritual, and u are as i red ?????? before, you understand to art and stuff.

but me? man i like a 300 gm stake! i just undestand to ?????? man!

give me something to eat and ill tell u a opinion

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Re: Who am I

Posted by TheJester - 29 May 2011 18:43

[laagvokeles wrote on 29 May 2011 18:07:](#)

man.

to enjoy this u probably have to be more espiritual, and u are as i red ?????? before, you understand to art and stuff.

That's what you think... But this poem is about 100% *Gashmiyos*. It was probably unfair of me to show you the poetry room, since English is not your most comfortable language.

but me? man i like a 300 gm stake! i just undestand to ?????? man!

give me something to eat and ill tell u a opinion

For me, it's not about the steak as much as the sauce.

Would you like to visit my kitchen, games room or library? Or my garden?

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Re: Who am I

Posted by laagvokeles - 29 May 2011 19:05

where do houses have a garden....? ;D

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Re: Who am I

Posted by TheJester - 29 May 2011 19:07

Presumably that is a joke, and you have a punch line. Behind them? In front of them?

So where do houses have a garden?

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Re: Who am I
Posted by laagvokeles - 29 May 2011 19:26

it looks like im wrong...

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Re: Who am I
Posted by luuustig - 29 May 2011 19:35

Thanks for the poetry Jester it inspired me. Or maybe not, or maybe yes. Just Kidding. You hav some real heavy talent there. I relate very much to your struggle with beauty. i personally am very sensitive to these things especially in the realm of music. Channeling our deep appreciation for beauty for good is obviously a part of why where on this planet. Or maybe not.

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Re: Who am I
Posted by TheJester - 29 May 2011 19:35

[laagvokeles wrote on 29 May 2011 19:26:](#)

it looks like im wrong...

Surely you are never wrong!

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Re: Who am I

Posted by laagvokeles - 29 May 2011 19:42

its so not commun i shoud be wrong, that the few times i happen to be wrong, its easy for me to

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Re: Who am I

Posted by TheJester - 29 May 2011 19:49

That's actually quite impressive. Most people have a hard time of it.

But I can see that you are extremely honest when assessing yourself. Too honest, actually. agree im wrong.....

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Re: Who am I

Posted by laagvokeles - 29 May 2011 19:51

i hope im not revealing my self here... :o

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