

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 TheJester - 29 May 2011 22:51

Chas V'Shalom should you gamble money!

Pick your game - we'll be playing it tomorrow.

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Re: Who am I

Posted by laagvokeles - 29 May 2011 22:54

i am tired you know whats the time....

good night

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Sleep on it, if you like. Tell me tomorrow

Re: Who am I

Posted by Eye.nonymous - 30 May 2011 05:21

[Eye.nonymous wrote on 29 May 2011 20:06:](#)

I spent YEARS and YEARS analyzing myself, thinking I was so enlightened, thinking I had such great insights, thinking I'd learn how to beat my addiction some day.

But, I have learned that the addiction FEEDS on ISOLATION, and part of the solution is GETTING OUT OF MY HEAD!!! All that self-self-self me-me-me, WAS REALLY KILLING ME! The more INTO ME I was, the sicker I really was.

--Eye.

I'm just restating this, resurrecting it, because I fear it was killed previously with a bit of leitzanus.

--Eye.

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Re: Who am I

Posted by TheJester - 30 May 2011 08:51

[Eye.nonymous wrote on 30 May 2011 05:21:](#)

I'm just restating this, resurrecting it, because I fear it was killed previously with a bit of leitzanus.

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Re: Who am I

Posted by TheJester - 31 May 2011 09:11

Laag? Where did you go to - can I offer you another beer? A single-malt? Wine? I'm being a terrible host, here.

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Re: Who am I

Posted by TheJester - 31 May 2011 10:22

[Eye.nonymous wrote on 30 May 2011 05:21:](#)

I spent YEARS and YEARS analyzing myself, thinking I was so enlightened, thinking I had such great insights, thinking I'd learn how to beat my addiction some day.

But, I have learned that the addiction FEEDS on ISOLATION, and part of the solution is GETTING OUT OF MY HEAD!!! All that self-self-self me-me-me, WAS REALLY KILLING ME! The more INTO ME I was, the sicker I really was.

...

I'm just restating this, resurrecting it, because I fear it was killed previously with a bit of leitzanus.

Here I think it is different for everyone. Some people think not enough, whilst others think too much. Without any thought, there is no direction, or *Chas v'shalom* the wrong direction. I'm now thinking of the people who blindly follow something that they read in a *sefer*, without understanding whether it is relevant to them or not. But with too much thought comes fear and inaction.

IMHO, a balance needs to be found for each person.

The *Yetzer Horo* is an amazing opponent, and has read *Sun Tzu* and all the other great books on war. He knows that one can use an opponents strengths against him. Where the mind is a person's strength (and pride), he will use that. At the end of any meeting (in business, medicine, therapy) there should be actions. Without those, and a follow-through, it is all *Hevel hevalim*.

Additionally, and separately, there is only one time, and that is **now**. The hard part is knowing the right thing to do "now". There are so many right things, and only one now... It gets confusing. Hillel didn't answer that one in an obvious way.

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Re: Who am I

Posted by Eye.nonymous - 31 May 2011 19:43

[TheJester wrote on 31 May 2011 10:22:](#)

Here I think it is different for everyone. Some people think not enough, whilst others think too much.

I'll have to consider that.

--Eye.

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Inspiration - beyond the official scope of GYE

Posted by TheJester - 20 Jun 2011 10:45

Who am I today? I am an inspired man.

When I walked through the streets of Boro Park for the first time, I was overwhelmed by the sheer weight of Jewry - the multitudes of JEWS. It was amazing, coming from a significantly smaller community, to see so much *Yiddishkeit*. So many *shuls*, *Yeshivos* and of course Judaica/Food/etc. shops. Here were so many Jews going about their business.

When I first saw *Yerushalayim*, the masses of Jews at the *Kotel* praying together, I felt my heart lifting, feeling as if I was where I belonged. I felt history, presence, togetherness. It was a wonderful experience - here were so many Jews going about their business.

When I first found GYE, I felt very drawn - here was a site for people struggling through what I have been through, and still go through. But here is something special - it is not Jews going about their business. It is people going beyond their boundaries, pushing themselves, succeeding, and more importantly failing over and over and over but not giving up (so it can hardly be failure)! "Heroes" is too corny a word for this site. How often does one get to walk amongst those fighting a war and seeing the victories? Walk through a *Yeshiva* - is it any comparison? Rarely.

GYE inspires me in areas other than the obvious. It has inspired me to look at myself and change in tangible ways in my *Yiddishkeit*, just from the basking in the presence of such people. You are all wonderful.

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Re: Who am I

Posted by ZemirosShabbos - 20 Jun 2011 14:39

awesomegevaldigbeautiful!

and btw, it is a two-way street. we are all the better having you aboard!

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Re: Who am I
Posted by mechazek - 20 Jun 2011 19:16

wonderfully put

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Re: Who am I
Posted by Yosef Hatzadik - 20 Jun 2011 21:00

(I don't know what to say, but it is something VERY nice!) ;D ;D

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Re: Inspiration - beyond the official scope of GYE
Posted by Eye.nonymous - 25 Jun 2011 19:22

[TheJester wrote on 20 Jun 2011 10:45:](#)

GYE inspires me in areas other than the obvious. It has inspired me to look at myself and change in tangible ways in my *Yiddishkeit*, just from the basking in the presence of such people. You are all wonderful.

Beautiful!

--Eye.

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Re: Who am I

Posted by ben durdayah - 26 Jun 2011 09:28

[Yossi wrote on 26 Jun 2011 08:47:](#)

I have, until now, been using a screen name that I became - "Jester" - one who picks on at others.

Hopefully, shedding the awful pseudonym will help me to avoid this in the future.

Humbly,

Yossi

Hi Yossi!

Nice to meet you!

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Re: Who am I

Posted by TheJester - 26 Jun 2011 10:00

[ben durdayah wrote on 26 Jun 2011 09:28:](#)

Hi Yossi!

Nice to meet you!

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Thank you.

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