

hello my friends....

Posted by Gevura Shebyesod - 19 Jul 2011 04:33

I've been lurking here for a couple of months, and now it's time to introduce myself and share my story. I first would like to express my Hakoras Hatov to Hashem for giving me a second chance, and for leading me to GYE when I needed it most. Also my thanks to all of you here, who through your stories and struggles have inspired me to hang on when times are tough, and to strive to become the person that Hashem really wants me to be.

i apologize if this is a bit long-winded but I am not such a good writer and I have a lot to get off my chest. I also apologize to the mods if i get too graphic and you have to edit. So here goes....

I am in my 40's, what you would call a "working yeshivishe ben torah", grew up in a small frum community, went to the "best" yeshivas, and I am B"H married with a bunch of kids K"AH. That's what everyone sees and thinks..... they don't know about my dark, secret life.

I have been struggling with SSA since my teens. Actually "struggling" is the wrong word, because until recently I was just wallowing in it. B"H I never went as far as doing it with another person, though not from lack of wanting. My natural shyness saved me many times from following through when situations presented themselves. But the looking, the fantasies, the WANTING, and the acting out with myself totally consumed my life and made me miserable even as i was enjoying the momentary pleasures.

I grew up in a small town with very few other boys my age. I am a loner type and very shy and I really didn't have friends. At Bar Mitzva age I was sent out of town to Yeshiva as there was no Yeshiva high school where I lived. I found myself even more isolated there, as most of the other boys had come in groups from larger schools and had their own circles of friends.

I had always "played with myself" even at a very young age. I had no idea what it meant or that it was wrong, just that it felt good. I guess i began using it to soothe myself more and more. At the same time, as my body matured, I found myself fascinated more and more with looking at the other boys how they were developing. I had barely any idea what sex was at that point, and surely did not even know that there was such a thing as homosexuality. I attributed my fascination to "scientific curiosity".

At some point around the age of 15, I did MZ"L for the first time, also out of "curiosity". I cannot even begin to describe the way it was immediately addicting, probably like a first hit of cocaine (I have never done drugs). I am sure all of us here know what I am talking about. before i knew it I was doing it every chance I got, even 2-3 times a day. As I got older I realized that I was fantasizing about the other boys while I did it, and I began to realize that i had a "problem". But I couldn't stop, and there was nobody i felt close enough to talk to. So I went through life walking the walk and talking the talk, while in secret i wallowed in my sick fantasies. I learned, davened and did mitzvos, and most of the time I even believed in it, even as I knew deep inside that it was all a show and I couldn't tell anyone about what was eating me up. I would cry on Yom Kippur, promising to be good, while knowing full well that the Yetzer Hora was waiting right outside the Bais Medrash door and i probably wouldn't make it 12 hours before i did it again.

There were times when I got into situations with friends who i think had similar desires. We would be together alone and we each knew the other one wanted it. Once a friend was telling me about his bodybuilding and wanted me to feel how hard his stomach muscles were. I knew what he really wanted, and he knew that I wanted it too. My hand was literally inches from that first contact with another boy's skin. But I couldn't bring myself to make that final move. I don't know what held me back but i knew that if I took that step there was no going back. I remember literally shaking from the tension and the desire, but I pulled my hand back and said no. For years later I would fantasize about what might have been, what could have happened. Now I look back and am comforted that even at my lowest moments i still had some self control (maybe it was just shyness but it saved me from going all the way over the edge).

I got older and began to date, but my heart wasn't in it and it really didn't go anywhere. I am attracted to women also so that was not a problem. I just couldn't "connect" with anyone.

Then I met my wife. From our first phone call it just "clicked". We got married and have a great relationship and a bunch of kids. I hoped that when i got married my 'problem' would go away. I actually stayed "clean" for almost a whole year, but then i fell right back in. My mistake was that I only stopped doing MZ"L, but would still gaze at every boy I saw, fantasize, and mast***** but without MZ"L. I quickly discovered that there's no halfway, but I could not stop and fell back in. This went on for years, I would stop MZ"L for a few weeks or even a couple of months, and then flop right back into the mud.

Then I discovered the internet! first it was just some pictures, but more recently I found all the "goodies" that are available. Now I had even more material to satisfy my fantasies and cravings. I began to secretly look at g** po** more and more. as time went on i got bolder, even looking at it while my wife was in the next room. (I work in IT so I know how to cover my tracks). She still had no idea.

As I sank deeper into my "alternate reality" I would begin to think and question where I really belong. I felt like I was living a lie (I WAS living a lie, i just wan't sure which one). There were times when I would feel like an outsider waching myself acting in a play, davening, learning, raising my kids to be good Yidden, all the while knowing that i couldn't REALLY believe in it if i was acting the way i was. i began to identify myself in my mind as g*y, wondering if I really belonged in the community where i lived. I wondered if Hashem really knew and cared, if He was really there and didn't want me to be like this why did He play such a nasty trick on me and make me this way....(vlo sosuru....zu haminus). I couldn't take the conflict in my head and wanted out. There were times when i contemplated running away and joining "them", and even considered ending it all....

But Hashem sends the refuah not before the Makkah, but IN the makkah itself. I eventually was compelled to break free...

This past winter I discovered what to me was the most destructive form of porn. Stories. I found a site with literally thousands of stories of boys having relationships. Not just s*x, but friendship and romance. A video is just fun while you see it, and you can only watch it so many times before it gets boring. A story makes you think, and you get emotionally involved with the characters. The stories are serials, with a new chapter added evey few days. I would be checking 10 times a day to see what was new. I found myself getting so caught up in them emotionally that it started to affect my daily life.

I also started to realize that as I was getting older, my fantasies were becoming less likely to be fulfilled, what teenager was going to do anything with a guy old enough to be their father? This just increased my sense of emotional desperation. I realized that I was yearning for the friendships i had never had in my youth, and sexualizing them because I had no proper frame of reference due to my stunted social development. I was turning into an emotional train wreck, and that just made me act out even more.

Then hashem started sending me messages, things that would open up my feelings in ways I had never experienced. For a year or 2 now i have started occasionally davening in another shul, wher they daven with intensity and feeling. I thin my own davening started to improve then, and hashem hears it when it comes from the heart even when we don't deserve it....

There are 2 boys in the shul that I daven in that are extremely close friends for years. One in particular was a big "trigger" for me and i fantasized about him all the time. I always imagined

that the 2 of them had "something going" (i hope it's not true, I'd hate for them to suffer like this). This past year they went out of town to separate yeshivas and did not see each other for six months. i was in Shul the shabbos before Pesach when they greeted each other after their long separation. They hugged like brothers, and I burst into tears. I never had a FRIEND like that, that I could hug in public. I never felt more alone then in that moment.

Then over Pesach I had a terrible dream. i dreamt that I had a close friend that I had not seen in many years. he was on his way to meet me , and was killed in a car crash. I woke up sobbing, and could barely make it through davening that morning. I couldn't figure out at the time why i affected me that badly, but it was all the accumulated emotional junk starting to bleed out of me. Then by Birchas Kohanim, where we daven for Hashem to heal our dreamd, i totally broke down. i cried, i'm not even sure what i cried FOR. I just cried in pain. I knew i was a hopeless mess and at that moment, i knew that only Hashem could fix me.

At that moment I felt a calmness and resolve rest upon me. i knew that I must do whatever it takes to bring the two halves of my life together. I realized that i have to do something so shocking to me, that i would be forced to completely change my life. i resolved to "come out" to my wife and tell her everything, and take the consequences as they came. At that point I wasn't even thinking about doing teshuva, just to stop living in secret and to take whichever path presented itself. i was prepared for the ultimate rejection. I don't know where i would have gone or what i would have done if that happened, but i couldnt survive anymore with what had been bottled up inside me for so long.

So that firs Motzoei Shabbos after Pesach, i sat down with my wonderful wife and said "I have something to tell you about myself that i have been hiding from you all these years.....I'm gay.....". Her reaction stunned me; "That's not so bad, we will work on fixing it together". In that instant i knew it would be OK. I shared everything with her, all the desperation, all the filth, all the loneliness, all the hopeless yearning for things that cannot and will not be.

We resolved together to work on making it right. The very first thing we did was to install K9 on every computer in the house. From that moment on I have not MZ"L, I have not mast**** (except one slip recently), and I have not looked at porn (with one exception). I promised that any slips i would tell her immediately, and that I would see a therapist. I began from then on to daven with kavana and with tears, begging Hashem to give me the strength to hold on and continue, and to fight the Yetzer Hora for me because I cannot do it alone.

The first weeks were sheer hell. Just like starting was like a drug, stopping was like a physical withdrawal. i walked around in a daze, shaking from tension. i committed to making an effort not

to look and not to fantasize, but it's not that easy. My triggers are EVERYWHERE, in the street, in the store, in shul, at work (don't even mention the mikva). i don't even have a mechitza to hide behind. I constantly have to force myself to look away. i was literally whimpering with the desire for another look, another trigger to release that good feeling in my head. It's a little easier now, but still a constant struggle.

I had finally acknowledged that I am "gay" and i felt totally disconnected from reality. I would play with my kids in the yard and think to myself "What is this gay guy doing here, i don't belong here". My wife quickly set me straight (pun intended) on that one "You are not gay, you are a yid with a strange and powerful yetzer hora and you are finally fighting it!". I eventually realized that rejecting the label was one of the most important steps in recovery.

I also met with a frum therapist who deals with these issues. He helped me to understand how certain issues from my childhood cause the stunted social development that leads to this problem, and gave me some tips how to control and redirect my thoughts away from the dangerous fantasies.

Sometime during that first desperate week, ~~i discovered~~ Hashem led me to GYE. I had seen the ads before, and I always thought it was for a filtering service like JNet or Yeshivanet, which i was subconsciously resisting because i didn't want to lose access to my precious secret world... But then i was on another website, one that often mocks practices of the frum community. They had a post making fun of the GYE handbook (specifically the "rubberband snapping" thing). The post actually had a link back to the GYE handbook, and i was curious so i clicked it. It was like being transported to a new planet. Suddenly i was not alone anymore, there were so many others who were struggling with similar issues AND SUCCEEDING. I spent hours reading the handbook and browsing the forums, and got tremendous chizuk from it. I even discovered that i was not the only SSA addict out there, and that it can be successfully suppressed.

The entire secular culture is obsessed right now with being "Born This Way" and that it can't be changed and you should just "be yourself" and "it gets better" etc. as much as we strive to separate ourselves from the Goyish attitudes it seeps in like a poison and in moments of self-doubt the Yetzer Hora tries to convince us that they are really right. My weapon is to turn the slogans against them and use it to my own advantage. Yes i was "Born This Way", a member of Hashem's Chosen People, tasked with the mission of spreading His light in a world bent on ignoring Him. we each have our own mission and our own fight, and I have been tasked with a special job. I have a special and unique Yetzer Hora to fight, and although I was held captive by the enemy for 30 years, i have now escaped and i am fighting back! With sweat and tears (lots of tears) I try every day to resist the temptations placed in front of my eyes and the fantasies that linger in my mind. Eventually "It Gets Better", when the desires will fade away with time and it will be easier to resist. i know that just like I will have to pay and burn for each time I don't look away fast enough, so too i will receive infinite reward for each time I resist the urge for a second look, and each time i suppress the fantasies that constantly try to creep into my head.

I mentioned before that there was one exception to stopping to look at porn, and that was the stories (i found a way around the filter for those). I just couldn't. I needed that fix of knowing what happens next. For few weeks I unsuccessfully tried to quit, I would manage a day or 2 then I fell in again. I wasn't even interested in the s*x parts, just the storyline and the emotional buildup. But i knew it had to stop. Then one day i told myself "Enough! if you are serious about this there are no halfways anymore!" i went to Maariv that night and it was the 37th day of the Omer. The sefira of Gevura ShebYesod. I realized "that's what we are all about, Gevura, Kovesh es Yitzro, in the midda of Yesod, of self-control". I resolved that that day would be my personal Yom Kippur of sorts. I davened like never before, and promised that I would never go there again. B"H so far I have been successful. Hence my screen name.

I stayed clean until last friday. Then in the shower i suddenly found myself mast*** I stopped before anything worse happened, but i feell like i was teetering on the edge of a cliff. Then on shabbos i had fantasy dreams which i had not had in a long time. When i have these dreams they are so real that i experience every sensation. many times I would wake up wet, this time B"H I did not. but I need to strengthen myself over again. The events of the past week have affected me terribly and have left me emotionally drained, and maybe that's what made me vulnerable and in need of "soothing".

So here I am, trying to stay clean and to clear the bad thoughts from my head. It has its ups and

Once again I would like to thank all of you here on GYE who have shared your stories and your struggles, especially those of you who share my particular "flavor" of addiction. The chizuk i get from seeing how everyone encourages each other to get up and start again really inspired me in my darkest moments. Thank You.

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Re: hello my friends....

Posted by Gevura Shebyesod - 23 Sep 2011 16:11

The way I understand it, the "inner child" is what has been controlling and messing up my life all

But I love him so much, he makes me feel so good when I give him what he wants.... ??? :-[

Sometimes lately I'm in a place where there is "eye candy" and I start thinking "just look a little and enjoy, then you can stop and feel good about stopping, you can have both worlds...." But then I feel bad that I looked, and the other part of me feels bad that I didn't look more, and I have lost both worlds..... Oy Li M'Yizri, Oy Li M"Yotzri..... :(

I'm also not getting enough sleep, I'm still having a problem where I wake up many times every night with an arousal, and I can't get comfortable with it the way I used to so I just toss and turn until I can finally fall back asleep. I want my tzummy back WAAAAA :(!!!!

OK just keep on Truckin' and don't fall asleep at the wheel!

Gevura!

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Re: hello my friends....
Posted by alexeliezer - 23 Sep 2011 19:16

[Gevura ShebYesod wrote on 23 Sep 2011 16:11:](#)

But I love him so much, he makes me feel so good when I give him what he wants.... ??? :-[

Well said. I once heard it said that too often we allow children to make decisions for adults. Meaning that we, as children, decide what kind of adults we will be, what job we want, etc. Then when we're adults, we see the foolishness of those decisions and sometimes feel trapped and unhappy as a result.

Boy do we have work to do!

Have a wonderful, geshmake Shabbos!

Alex

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Re: hello my friends....

Posted by Yossi.L. - 25 Sep 2011 00:58

[quote="alexeliezer" link=topic=4125.msg120142#msg120142 date=1316805408]

[Gevura ShebYesod wrote on 23 Sep 2011 16:11:](#)

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If by 'inner child' you are referring to the unhealthinesses that were developed in you during your childhood that still festers within you, then..... from my personal experience when i start looking at my current deficiencies and blame the past then im sort of shifting the blame onto a different entity and away from myself. I am telling myself 'Yossi dont blame yourself, its your parents fault'.....in this case 'your inner childs fault.....im just saying that for myself it is crucial

that when i fall i realize that I fell, not some entirely seperate excusable entity.....thoughts?

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Re: hello my friends....

Posted by Gevura Shebyesod - 25 Sep 2011 01:31

[Yossi.L. wrote on 25 Sep 2011 00:58:](#)

[alexeliezer wrote on 23 Sep 2011 19:16:](#)

[Gevura ShebYesod wrote on 23 Sep 2011 16:11:](#)

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I agree, as i've said in the past, all these things are explanations, not excuses. I need to work on the "real me" in the present to get away from the harmful effects of my past.

Gevura!

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Re: hello my friends....

Posted by obormottel - 25 Sep 2011 21:59

A gut, gebencht yohr!

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Re: hello my friends....

Posted by 1daat - 25 Sep 2011 22:51

Hang on a sec, guys. We don't want to throw the child out with the bathwater.

What follow is an intellectual, psychological model about the so-called "inner child". I know about this model because I was in therapy for years with a therapist who used it, and I even went on and became certified to use this model as a therapist myself.

After years and years of therapy for myself with all different modalities, I want to stress that **absolutely none of them helped me stop acting out.** They were very helpful in other ways, but nothing helped me clean up to the extent that I have so far, except bottoming out, GYE and klal GYE, and Hashem's precious mercy.

The so-called "Inner Child" is divided by the transactional analysts (Eric Berne, Games People Play, and "I'm OK, You're OK) into three parts: The adapted child; the "little professor" and the child in the child.

The adapted child is the seat of all the adaptations we made as children to our environment--family, friends, teachers, rebbeim, etc. Good and bad--Kibud av v'eym, for example, as well as the ineffective adaptations like trying to be perfect to please, ignoring our needs and getting what we want/need in secret, etc

The "little professor" is the part of the child that thinks, scopes things out, figures out how to manipulate, is clever, resourceful, etc.

The child in the child is the seat of childhood memories, the locus of feelings, creativity, vulnerability, our sense of innocence, spontaneity, play, the place that knows it's entitled to be cared for, understood, loved, disciplined, protected, etc. This we don't want to throw out.

According to this model, if the child in the child doesn't get what it wants or needs in childhood it will use the little professor and the adapted child to figure out how to get it one way or another, in effective or dysfunctional (acting out) ways. When all is well in the family, the child's acting out will be corrected by parents, family, etc. and often they can figure out what the child needs and try to provide it within reasonable limits. the child in the child returns to peace.

When the child in the child need goes unmet and acting out persists we become King Baby.

Our baby needs can't ever get met and therefore we can never get enough of what we can't have. We can't ever fill the need because, we need it in the way a baby needs it--in a very intense way. Babies have millions of neurons that get pruned away to the essentials as we grow up. So we can never get the kind of intensity we're looking for in the drug of choice because all those extra neurons that would intensify the feelings aren't there anymore. The second reason we can't ever get what we need is that childhood is over. There is no mommy, family to meet that need. Try as we might to make our adult loved ones fulfill those childhood needs, it just can't ever happen.

The solutions to this dilemma that the psychology model gives never worked for me to stop acting out. This is as far as the model goes, **which is why it's not much help to people seeking recovery.**

Put in the language of "the inner child" (which is way too intellectual for me, personally), what I've learned since arriving at GYE goes something like this: To stop acting out I had to stop acting out. Duh. See GYE Handbook for details. I had to accept that childhood is over and that I can never get that need filled. Really accept that. Day after day. I just missed that train and I have to suffer that. I need grown-up "good enough" comfort, support, education, limit setting--what we give each other here on GYE, and in some cases what I can get in limited ways from other real life adults in my life. I have to accept that I am powerless over the urge to get that need met at any cost. I have to be in touch with my longing for d'vekus. I need His grace, His kindness and His unending mercy.

I guess you could say He loves all parts of my child, all parts of me, all of me. Without Him I would surely be dead by now. After years of psychotherapy, I almost was.

Baruch Hashem, Thank you is utterly insufficient. David hamelech tried and tried to thank Him enough. It wasn't enough, though. Eyn maspikim...

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Re: hello my friends....

Posted by Gevura Shebyesod - 26 Sep 2011 14:53

Thank you 1Daat for the explanation. But as you said it really doesn't do anything for us.

I always see the therapists saying how we need to "get in touch with" and "indulge" the inner child in us. basically they mean to give in to our Tayvos and enjoy all the things we wanted in order to find the happiness we seek. That is the basis of the materialistic, hedonistic society we live in.

But that is the exact opposite of what Hashem wants us to do and what we need to do for ourselves. I have pretty much come to the same conclusion as you did, we need to abandon the need for those thing that we wrongly wanted as a child, and grow up and strive to become closer to Hashem. It's hard because it's been ingrained in us for so long, and it will always be a work in progress. Sometimes I am jealous of the younger guys here, if only I had woken up (and there was such a thing as GYE) 25 years ago....

I had a stupid slip the other day, I got into a situation where I spent some time with someone who has been a big trigger for me. I could have avoided it but I was weak and I jumped at the :-[>

Truck, Truck Truck!!!

Gevura!

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chance. Nothing bad happened, but now I have to get him out of my head all over again.
Re: hello my friends....
Posted by Yossi.L. - 27 Sep 2011 17:48

Right now i dont truly understand this at all. Maybe some day i will. It sounds compelling.

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Re: hello my friends....
Posted by Gevura Shebyesod - 27 Sep 2011 18:47

Day 73....

Lekovod the Yomim Noroim a thought about Ledovid Hashem Oiri.....

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The word B'kroiv is explained by the meforshim as either "coming close" from the word Koroiv, or as "battle" from the word Krov. The truth is that they are really the same, the word Krov means "close combat". M're'im means "evildoers" but is very closely related to the word Re'im meaning friends, and is sometimes used that way.

So the beginning of the possuk is referring to the evildoers who masquerade as friends. The Yetzer Hora, and those who facilitate him, are our fake friends, manipulating us into thinking that they are here to help us and that what they have to offer is good. But, ????? ?????????? ???, when they are MY enemies, when I recognize them for the evil that they really are, ?????? ?????????? ??????????, they stumble and fall. Once we see their true nature, they lose their power over us and we can vanquish them, with Hashem's help!

A Ksiva Vachasim Tova to all, and may we be zoche to Keep On Trucking to new heights in Avodas Hashem.

Gevura!

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Re: hello my friends....
Posted by ZemirosShabbos - 27 Sep 2011 18:51

that is a really beautiful vort!

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thanks for sharing that. i think i will be thinking of that when i say Ledovid

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Re: hello my friends....
Posted by gibbor120 - 27 Sep 2011 19:07

Yes, very nice gevurah!

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Re: hello my friends....

Posted by alexeliezer - 27 Sep 2011 19:23

Thanks for the vort. I'm gonna share it at the Yom Tov table (if I remember it). I need to say it, and at least one of my kids needs to hear it.

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Re: hello my friends....

Posted by Gevura Shebyesod - 04 Oct 2011 21:08

Hi everyone, day 80....

So R"H was OK, I survived going to the mikva on Erev Yomtov (I have to do it 3 more times in the next 2 weeks ???). I davened hard, cried in all the right places, maybe some of it was even sincere. Hashem knows i want to be good, even if I get distracted all the time. The YH seems to be working really hard these days, I'm seeing things everywhere and having a harder time than usual looking away. And I'm feeling more down too, it's all part of his bag of tricks. But I know his game now, and BE"H I will power through.....

I was thinking about the sequence of some of the Brachos in Birchas Hashachar, and how they apply to our struggle.

Hameichin Mitzadei Gover. Hashem has prepared every step of our path in life especially for us. Everything that we have done and that has happened to us was engineered to bring us to where we will work on our tafkid in life, as unusual as it may be. He has given each one of His soldiers a unique set of challenges and trials to face and accomplish, in order to bring His world

to true perfection. We fight the evil, that he created for the sole purpose that we should fight it, in order that we should be worthy of experiencing the true joy of closeness to Him without Nahama DeKisufa.

But a good general does not send His soldiers on a suicide mission, without the proper weapons to fight the enemy. Which brings us to the next Bracha, **HaOseh Li Kol Tzorchi**. He has given us the tools and abilities to battle the Yetzer he gave us, we just need to identify and), He gives us the courage to fight no matter how hard it gets. He knows we can win if we try, He set it all up that way. And in the end **Ozer Yisrael BeTifara**, we will be zoche to the glory that comes with a mission accomplished.

And when the going gets tough, when we feel burnt out and tired of the fight, **Hanosen LaYaef Koach**, he recharges us with new strength to continue. And this is followed by a long bracha asking Hashem to help us fight our Yetzer Hara.

use them properly. And **Ozer Yisroel BiGevura** (my personal favorite

I just did the math, day 90 IY"H will fall out on the second day of Sukkos, the Ushipizin of Yitzchok who represents.....Gevura!!!!

Gmar Chasima Tova and KOMT!!!!

Gevura!

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Re: hello my friends....

Posted by gibbor120 - 04 Oct 2011 21:17

Beautiful!

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