

Hello folks

Posted by oisvorf - 18 Apr 2010 22:10

Well, here goes, yet another new member in this august society of those who are attempting to bring some kedusha back into their lives.

I hate to say it, but I too am a Rabbi, perhaps not so well-known but with my share of talmidim over the years, who has been struggling in this area for a long time.

I am not quite sure what to say in my initial post. On the one hand, it seems like others have gone through much more pain and anguish than me, and perhaps are dealing with a more difficult Yetzer Hara than I do. So perhaps I should just be quiet and thank my lucky stars, and gain some chizuk from seeing what some of the heroes here have done. ???

On the other hand, the issues that I seem to have little or no control over have been dogging me for many years. Baruch Hashem although I had fallen deeply into the chat room trap years ago, I have been able to completely stay away from that for a long time now.

And for the most part, I am able to stay away from hard core porn sites, except on rare occasions.

But certain types of soft core porn, I seem to not be able to break away from checking out, time after time after time - anytime I am slightly bored or need a break, or even if I am busy...I just cannot seem to break away from the urge to check out

I know that the answer that I should just be stronger has not worked. I have said several times in my Rosh Hashana sermons that the biggest emotion that I have often is embarrassment - the same stuff I was klopping al cheit for last year is still here, and I have not even changed a bit despite whatever other things I have done in other areas of my life and growth...it is so embarrassing and frustrating that I cannot pull myself away and waste so much time, kocho's, and feelings on it - especially if truth be told, I enjoy it when I look, and feel only partially guilty about it.

I am not sure what the tachlis of posting this is, but that's about it for now.

Kol Tuv,

Your newest colleague

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Re: Hello folks

Posted by oisvorf - 26 Jul 2010 04:43

[Jooboy wrote on 23 Jul 2010 21:48:](#)

Shmen,

Nice to see you back.

I have your experience often and I'm certainly not going to tell you that you are or are not an addict.

a garden variety Yetzer Hara that with a reasonable amount of will I can fairly easily control

An addict certainly can not control his addiction. If he can then he is indeed not an addict. But from a Jewish perspective, Chazal were quite clear that we in fact absolutely do not have the power to control the yetzer harah. "Ilmolai Hkadosh boruch hu ozro, ayno yachol lo". If God would not help a person, he would be unable to overcome the yetzer.

It seems fairly black on white. Addict or not, we do not have the ability to overcome the yetzer without his help. Important for all of us regardless of our label.

Thanks for the chizuk jooboy (somehow that sounds pejorative, but hey, that's the name you chose.

Anyway, I wonder about this. Yes, of course, you quoted Chazal accurately.

However, it **cannot** mean that , in general, we do not have the power of free will, and that we are not held responsible for our choices.

The Torah and Chazal are replete with far too many instances of telling us that we DO have the power and the responsibility to make the right choices between good and bad. There are so many psukim to choose...how about this from Parshat Hashavua

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Arguably, the entire purpose of our lives is to exercise our free will and make choices and resist the Yetzer Hara. So it cannot be true that we totally incapable of doing that, in general.

Nevertheless, this whole forum is for those of us who have not successfully been able to consistently make the right choices in life, and yes, to the extent that this is an addiction, maybe we no longer have a choice. But I think that it is important that we not hide behind the addiction label to abdicate our responsibilities to make those choices that we are able to. We should not get down on ourselves, and we should focus on the positive. But when we can successfully wrestle with the Yetzer Hara, let us make sure we try our best.

Of course, this is a drasha that could go on for a long time....just a quick reaction here.

Shmendrick

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Re: Hello folks

Posted by Jooboy - 26 Jul 2010 12:29

The Torah and Chazal are replete with far too many instances of telling us that we DO have the power and the responsibility to make the right choices between good and bad.

Arguably, the entire purpose of our lives is to exercise our free will and make choices and resist the Yetzer Hara. So it cannot be true that we totally incapable of doing that, in general.

Agreed.

There are many things about which we can make choices. I can make a choice to not go into McDonald's and eat a cheeseburger but honestly I don't really think the Y"H is even trying to win that battle so perhaps I have a full range of free choice.

However, if I am walking down the street and see one of the tourists here in NY with only a tiny amount of clothes on, the Y"H is coming out with both guns blazing. At that point I have the responsibility to make a bechira to not look but my ability to be successful resides in God giving me the power to not look. On my own I do not have the strength to consistently make the correct decision. I do however have the ability and strength to ask Him to help me.

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Re: Hello folks

Posted by destructive cycle - 26 Jul 2010 15:00

Here is a quote from SA white book, which I think may shed light on your discussion. Knowledge alone won;t help us. But it sure helps creating a clear path for recovery.

[SA, White Book, page 26\]](#)

[I see now that in all my religious striving and psychotherapy I was waiting for the miracle to happen first, that I should somehow be zapped or wrote:](#)

I didn't realize that the essence of being human is to have free choice. God doesn't want to remove from me the possibility of falling; he wants me to have the freedom to choose not to fall.[/u] I'd been praying self-righteously all along, "Please God, take it away!" not realizing my inner heart was piteously whining, ". . . so I won't have to give it up." There was belief in God without surrender. That belief availed nothing! I had never died to lust.

The essence of recovery is learning how to tap into the greatest gift G-d gave us: free will. As addicts, we do not know how to use it. And in recovery we learn how to use it. The first step is learning how to surrender, which simply means to put down the toys. Yes, it is a choice. Sex is a choice. Porn is a choice. And WE need to make that decision on our own. You can daven for inspiration, if you wish, but the decision will come from you. Hashem can grant you ratzon, but he will not force upon you the the decision. His true ratzon is for YOU and ME to decide and act on our decisions.

So, my dear friends, in honor of this wonderful Tu B'Av, I am erasing all my porn movies that I have amassed and turning over a new leaf. FOR REAL.

Thanks for letting me jump in on the discussion.

-DC

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Re: Hello folks

Posted by yedidya aleph - 26 Jul 2010 20:17

Great News! Hope ur new start of recovery is matztliach! Baruch Hashem bli eyan harah ,after a few week of falling ,i started going to live SA meetings and am now on day 10. (though the ikar is not the day count,rather what is important, today,i am sober).

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Re: Hello folks

Posted by oisvorf - 01 Aug 2010 05:49

[guardureyes wrote on 25 Jul 2010 23:59:](#)

[shmendrick wrote on 23 Jul 2010 17:06:](#)

In fact, I am often satisfied to look at clothed pictures of women who have the body type that I lust after, without needing to see nudity. (Does that count as a slip or fall on the 90 day chart? Is that still a problem with Shemiras Einayim? I know that it is, but is it an acceptable step towards a better future for now? Am I just fooling myself? Interesting questions)

Lusting is lusting. Even the little pinky is as if he looked at "makom torfah" according to Chazal... but if it's without lust, such as a medical student studying human anatomy (assuming he controls his thoughts), he can even see nudity. So it's all in the kavana, **not in the amount of clothes.**

So....

I have been updating my 90 day chart as if I have been clean (67 days now). That means that I have not logged on to a porn site in the past 67 days. I also, BH have not engaged in M during this time.

But I have searched for and looked at and lusted at pictures of clothed (including scantily clad clothed women). :-[

So am I a fraud? Should I say I have fallen and restart my 90 days? Or finish the 90 this way, and start again next time with a higher level (hopefully) of Shmiras Einayim?

Whaddya think???

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Re: Hello folks

Posted by 1daat - 01 Aug 2010 06:01

I'll tell you what I think. What I think is that when I read your posts, and I think about your situation, I am blown away by your humility, your honesty, your plane-spoken way. You are my example of how to be simple before my creator, and I thank you and I love you, and what you do with your count is between you and Hashem, who clearly has blessed you among men.

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Re: Hello folks

Posted by Jooboy - 01 Aug 2010 14:37

I vote to keep on going with your current count.

The yetzer harah loves to tell us that what we are doing is really not working anyway, that we

can't succeed, that we will do better some other time. When in doubt, assume you are meeting the threshold and just keep trying to do better.

True that lusting after even clothed women is not what you are aiming for but as we say in SA, "Progress not perfection" and our sobriety definition includes "progressive victory over lust". What you have sounds like progressive victory to me.

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Re: Hello folks

Posted by oisvorf - 02 Aug 2010 16:47

Thank you so much, guys, for the input! I am humbled by your posts - not the reverse!

Upon reflection, I think that it makes the most sense to continue this 90 day journey, as flawed as it may be. I really look forward to coming to the Yemeil Haddin and being able to say to Hakadosh Baruch Hu:

"I may still be very far from perfection, but I can say with some confidence - I did something this year! I am not exactly the same loser that I was year after year after year, klopping AL Cheit, and promising to change, but then having to deal with the shame and humiliation of showing up a year later without one damn bit of difference! I have made some progress! I really am a bit different now, and I have a renewed confidence that I can actually start becoming the Rabbi that I should be without the same level of inner hypocrisy that I have had to carry around for so long :(...."

I have said to my congregants several times that one of the most important things to think about is that when we say

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We really ask Hashem, "PLEASE! Let me not go through another Rosh Hashana, another Aseres Yemei Teshuva, and another Yom Kippur, and have nothing to show for it!!!! PLEASE let me be able to accomplish something of lasting value this year - and not show up yet again next year disappointing You and disappointing me as well!

So I look forward to finishing my first, flawed 90 days (with hopefully some more improvement

during Elul), and then getting the strength to do it for real ??? once I finish.

May we all have the Koach to really make some progress in the days ahead.

Shmendrick

PS - A special ??? to on making a strong and powerful statement in that direction. You are an inspiration to all of us!

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Re: Hello folks

Posted by ur-a-jew - 02 Aug 2010 17:15

[shmendrick wrote on 02 Aug 2010 16:47:](#)

Upon reflection, I think that it makes the most sense to continue this 90 day journey, as flawed as it may be.

[shmendrick wrote on 02 Aug 2010 16:47:](#)

So I look forward to finishing my first, flawed 90 days

I glad you're decided to stay on the chart and I think you are being to hard on yourself by considering you're 90 days "flawed." I'm pasting the rules of the chart as to what constitutes a "fall":

"8) What constitutes a "Fall" to require restarting the count?

There are "slips" and there are "falls". "Slips" do not require restarting the count. "Falls" do require restarting.

A "Fall" is one of the following things:

- 1) Intentional masturbation
- 2) Intentionally viewing improper sites
- 3) Intentionally calling inappropriate telephone numbers
- 4) Intentionally seeking out and reading erotica
- 5) Worse things, which I need not mention.

In regard to number 2 (and 4), if someone saw something by mistake and then got a little bit carried away and kept looking at it, or even if someone saw a link and couldn't resist clicking on it but then catches themselves within a few seconds, that would only be considered a "slip", not a "fall". However, if someone decides to actively pursue viewing bad sites chas veshalom, that would be considered a FALL and require a restart of the count (by letting us know).

Also, each person can set their own criteria for what they consider a "slip" for themselves. But as long as they did not do one of the 5 things above, they can stay on the chart if they want."

That being said, I think all would agree (yourself included) that you want to try to get out of the habit of taking a second look even at fully-clothed women. In that regard, you may want to read over yesterday's Shmiras Ainayim Chizuk List email which quotes from Rav Dessler that "If a parent achieves a particular character virtue - **even after the child is born** - this good trait will

be transmitted to the child." (emphasis mine). In other words, the extra efforts you expend on your own Shmiras Einyayim will influence and have an effect on your son's Shmiras Einyayim, a concern that has certainly been on your mind these days.

Looking forward to coming to the Yemei Din clean together with you all.

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Re: Hello folks

Posted by destructive cycle - 02 Aug 2010 21:23

[shmendrick wrote on 02 Aug 2010 16:47:](#)

PS - A special ???? ??? to on making a strong and powerful statement in that direction. You are an inspiration to all of us!

Thanks. But which statement are you referring to.

shmendrick, you are a great inspiration. I really gained a lot reading these past few posts.

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Re: Hello folks

Posted by oisvorf - 03 Aug 2010 01:11

[destructive cycle wrote on 02 Aug 2010 21:23:](#)

[shmendrick wrote on 02 Aug 2010 16:47:](#)

PS - A special ???? ??? to on making a strong and powerful statement in that direction. You are an inspiration to all of us!

Thanks. But which statement are you referring to.

That would be this one

The essence of recovery is learning how to tap into the greatest gift G-d gave us: free will. As addicts, we do not know how to use it. And in recovery we learn how to use it. The first step is learning how to surrender, which simply means to put down the toys. Yes, it is a choice. Sex is a choice. Porn is a choice. And WE need to make that decision on our own. You can daven for inspiration, if you wish, but the decision will come from you. Hashem can grant you ratzon, but he will not force upon you the the decision. His true ratzon is for YOU and ME to decide and act on our decisions.

So, my dear friends, in honor of this wonderful Tu B'Av, I am erasing all my porn movies that I have amassed and turning over a new leaf. FOR REAL.

That took a lot of backbone and strength, and may it be a true blessing to you.

But, please be with us and stay vigilant - even such a strong statement loses power with time. I remember having, years ago, thrown a way a particularly favorite VHS video (goes back a while), and then for years kicking myself because I missed it so much we need each other and GYE to stay strong. May we all go through this Elul together most successfully!

Shmendrick

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Re: Hello folks

Posted by destructive cycle - 03 Aug 2010 07:14

Thanks so much for spitting back at me my own words. I am glad to see that my words penetrated more than my heart.

And thanks so much for you important caveat back to me. It is very true. Your story about he is one that hits home so much. I, too have plenty of such stories. But for now I will share the following quote from recovery nation, which echoes your yesod:

[quote="recovery nation]

So, in preparing your road to recovery, you will need to prepare yourself for a time when you might feel empty inside. It will come after the euphoria of beginning your recovery, and it will come after you have put an end to your desire to continue your life the way that it is. This period may last a few days, it may last a few weeks. Rarely, will it ever last longer than that. And in those few weeks, your goal will be to recognize this emptiness, and begin to fill it with the values and the dreams that you believe in.[/quote]

It speaks for itself.

-DC

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Re: Hello folks

Posted by oisvorf - 24 Aug 2010 17:26

Well, friends, flawed or not, here I am at day # 90. ;D .

I am not quite sure what to think about it.

On the one hand, as discussed earlier, it is a far from perfect 90 days. It includes plenty of slips, not being careful enough about looking at women on the street, web, and elsewhere -- I still am drawn to looking at clothed pictures and what goes for clothed on the street . . . a far cry from true shemiras einayim. :-\

On the other hand, I can say with some pride that I have not engaged in 90 days in looking at porn, m*, talking to women that I know are dangerous for me, and have not had an emission, B"H 8)

So, it is a step forward. and I am very grateful to all of you who have helped me get there.

But I worry. I know that truth be told, the Yetzer Hara has not really been that difficult to deal with. I think with a combination of getting older, plenty of other stressful things going on, etc, I have not had as much of a ???? as I used to.

I wish I could think that this is a result of working the program. But I know that i have not worked it nearly enough for that to explain it.

So I worry. I fear that one day it will hit me, and I will have let my guard down, thinking I have this thing beat, and I will be overwhelmed. Because my history is such that the good times have never lasted too long.

Yet I will take today to savor - thanks to you all for your help and good wishes

Your Chaver,

Shmendrick

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Re: Hello folks

Posted by david712 - 24 Aug 2010 17:54

Shmendrick,

Huge **Mazel Tov**.

As for your fears- One little point. I think you are correct with your "So I worry. I fear that one day it will hit me, and I will have let my guard down, thinking I have this thing beat, and I will be overwhelmed. "

I find to do 1 week, a month or a year we can find inspiration or white knuckle or whatever gets us there. However, for long term we need a ***real program***. No do it yourself. It wont and can't last.

Please keep us posted on your accomplishments.

Keep us inspired.

David.

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