

My first Attempt at winning

Posted by musicman - 18 May 2011 16:12

I fought last night, and I won.

It's a small victory, but it's a victory, and it's marks the first time I have meaningfully fought and emerged victorious. And now I have a place to show it off :D

I haven't really started doing any of the proscribed methods and procedures discussed here. I'm really just testing my own willpower and seeing how far I can push myself before something breaks. I don't have any high standards yet. Right now, every thought-battle victory is a life-changing one, and I'm just gonna take this as far as it will go. I don't expect to succeed indefinitely; I won't pretend that the reality of my situation is so simple, and that sheer willpower has a fighting chance in this battle. I'm measuring the enemy, so to speak.

On a side note, there is a show on TV that my wife is fond of (read: I have to watch) called The Biggest Loser. For those who aren't familiar, it's a competition/rehab program for morbidly obese people who are desperate to not only lose weight, but to change their entire self-destructive attitude and live a better life. Most of the show is nonsense, marketing and exploitation of a mental illness, but the season is coming to an end, and the results are nothing short of inspiring. In 5 months, people who were quite literally on the verge of death or serious illness, who couldn't stop their downward and destructive spiral of behavior, who finally decided to reach out for help, emerge as changed people. And the changes are not only physical. If it was just physical, the show would just be a temple hedonism and a typical western idolization of physicality and the "perfect body". The most impressive and compelling changes that take place are the mental and emotional shifts, from broken, depressed, helpless, self-pity cases, to confident, happy, optimistic, and full of excitement to begin their lives anew. It's inspiring to hear these people talk about the way they feel, and not hear the words "and I look great!" Instead, you hear "Thank you for showing me that I can face challenges and defeat my own unhealthy desires," "Thank you for giving me my life back", "Thank you for saving my life". You can see the pure joy of leaving behind a back-monkey and looking ahead.

I want that feeling of freedom, and I want it badly. Now, I have to prove it.

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Re: My first Attempt at winning

Posted by musicman - 23 May 2011 19:04

For my first post in the wall of Honor Board (I moved this thread from Break Free), I wanted to point out that i started my journey on May 17th, 2011, the 29th day of the omer that corresponds to Chesed Shebe'Hod.

Hod, while officially translated as "splendor", is the root of the word Hodaah, acceptance, or humility. Humility is the idea that I know my strengths as well as my weaknesses, my limits and my successes, and I use my ability to know myself as a tool to grow further than I thought possible (This is how Hod acts as a director to Netzach, Infinity). Chesed is the function of taking from your self and giving unconditionally to something external to yourself. The attribute of Chesed manifests itself in the attribute of Hod by taking the idea of humility and turning it outwards to other people. Only when you know your self well can you really help someone in their own struggles. Only when you admit your failings and acknowledge your strengths can you really empathize with another person. If you have false ideas about who you are, how can meaningfully help someone else struggling with their own weaknesses?

That may or may not be apikorsus, but I thought it was an apropos thought. GYE is a unique place, where this Chesed in Hod is really evedent all the time. It's full of people who are realizing, many for the first time, what they truly are and aren't capable of. We are taking this newfound honesty, and helping others immensely by showing them that they can do the same thing; we're paying it forward, as the saying goes. GYE is a prime example of humility being the ultimate prerequisite to strength, especially against a wily foe like the YH, and I'm happy to be a part of it.

PS The shresh "Daled Chaf Hey" has the a gematria of 29. This shresh means "to crush, break". Humility only amplifies the strengths within us, allowing us to crush the obstacles barring us from living a full life.

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Re: My first Attempt at winning
Posted by ZemirosShabbos - 23 May 2011 19:12

those are beautiful ideas!

thank you

much continued success

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Re: My first Attempt at winning
Posted by alexeliezer - 23 May 2011 19:44

[musicman wrote on 23 May 2011 15:37:](#)

Aside from basic ignoring, what are some methods you all have come up with to combat this specific manifestation of our good friend and sparring partner, the YH?

Keep busy!

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Re: My first Attempt at winning
Posted by musicman - 24 May 2011 16:54

ONE WEEK

YH put up a fight last night. For the gamers out there, it was a pretty epic boss battle in the quiet confines of my home. Thanks to GYE and H' (and eventually, utter exhaustion), I prevailed.

This is something I was thinking about last night (definitely with a tinge of Ruach Shtus, but i think it's important anyways). One of the reasons we all embark on this journey is because we know a better life lies at the end. However, in the short term, I think we subconsciously expect miraculous changes to happen in our lives due to our successes. We expect our relationships to suddenly get better, we expect everything to always be a slighter lighter shade than it used to be. What we don't think is that much of this battle is intensely personal, and that much of the

changes that we're going to see will be inside us and not to the people around us. Our spouses/kids will still get under our skin from time to time, we will still have parnassah issues, the stresses of life don't go away even though we're totally becoming a new person from within.

I think it's just another part of the nisayon, a chance for the addiction to tell you "Look, nothing has really changed since you stopped looking at girls. You just think they're getting better, but you're deluding yourself. Everything will stay the same, and you're fighting for nothing." It's a dangerous thought, and I had to some hard work to sidestep it and focus on something else.

Am I alone in these thoughts (and I highly doubt that I am)?

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Re: My first Attempt at winning
Posted by musicman - 25 May 2011 03:24

Sometimes this feels too easy, sometimes it feels insurmountable. I think that might be the most frustrating part of this ordeal. You never know when it's going to hit. YOu have to always be on guard, become paranoid about shmiras einayim (not a bad thing, but hard, and draining), and always be mentally preparing yourself for an onslught, likely to happen when you least expect it.

I guess part of winning ling term in this war is, like in every other war, a good intelligence network. The more experience you have fighting the fight, the better you can learn your enemy's attack vectors and maneuvers. Once you set up the proper defenses to counter the known attacks, you can rest a little easier. The attacks won't stop, but your defenses can defeat most advances. Every once in a while, you're forced to tweak those defenses, strengthen them, and add to them. This is life, and this is spiritual and personal growth.

Many of us are at a point where we are constantly bombarded with brutal and devastating attacks from the YH, some worse than others. We have no defenses, so we feel helpless and hopeless in the dark wilderness of the untamed battlefield. We can only start building defenses if we decide that we can, and we have some help from an external force. As we start building those first primitive walls, we look at the ever-present attacks and wonder how this is even possible. The defenses are being built, but can we do this in the face of the enemy for an extended period of time? It doesn't always seem like it.

This site offers a wonderful advantage. It gives a birds eye view of the global war, and we see the grand fortified palaces built by people in the same situation. We see that with the same strength, the same determination, and the same patience, we can build an equally grand palace of peace, tranquility, and freedom. All of a sudden, we have an attainable goal, and the war seems winnable.

I love this analogy, and I hope to build on it as this journal progresses.

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Re: My first Attempt at winning
Posted by musicman - 25 May 2011 20:08

Today is day eight.

Eight represents the supernatural, the ability for a human being to overcome his natural urges and truly become a spiritual being. 7 is the last physical number, and it's no wonder that my base urges were making a final stand at the beginning of that day. Now that I'm in day 8, I'm focusing on my spiritual self, understanding that I am no longer limited by what my body tells me to do. I am not a slave to my body. It's time for the neshama to take its rightful place at the head of my life, and guide the body in the way it's supposed to be going.

I hope H' continues to deem me worthy of his quite obvious intervention, so I can continue to live my life the way I am supposed to live it.

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Re: My first Attempt at winning
Posted by musicman - 26 May 2011 16:30

Day 9

9 is gematria of Baiz Gimmel daled, which means "to conceal." It is also Gimmel Aleph Hey,

which means "to rise up, become exalted".

Bagad also is used to connote trickery, deceit. That's really the only way we can beat this YH. We know we can't face it head on, because it's bigger and stronger, and it's had all this time to grow. We have to use trickery to fool it into stopping, even only for a day. That's how we ultimately raise ourselves up from our descent.

We should also know that the trickery goes both ways. YH isn't dumb, and will use the same tactics against us. We have to see these as the Beged that they are, a concealment of the truth, that we can do this, that we don't need to be enslaved.

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Re: My first Attempt at winning
Posted by heuni memass - 26 May 2011 17:33

Keep on going.

Make it a full day.

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Re: My first Attempt at winning
Posted by musicman - 27 May 2011 18:30

Day 10

Today is filled with scary Gematrias (I'm starting to like this game :D)

Beiz Daled Daled - To be cut off, alone

Beiz Zayin Aleph - To destroy

Zayin Aleph Vav - A wolf, angry, passionate

Gimmel Beiz Hay - Tall, exalted, haughty

All of these can be interpreted (read: used) in many ways, some good , some bad. If I can channel the energies represented by these words (that sounds pretty holy, doesn't it?) to good use, it will help me in my struggle.

Also, DOUBLE DIGITS! WOOHOO!

Good Shabbos, fellow travelers!

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Re: My first Attempt at winning
Posted by musicman - 03 Jun 2011 18:39

Day 17

I've been dealing with a lot of stress lately. This has just exposed whole new vulnerably areas in my defenses for the YH to attack. My streak has gone unbroken, but I've learned a lot about myself in the recent battles. I think I'm finally understanding why I still have the urge for P and M, and it has nothing to do with the actual pleasures of pretty girls. P and M is simply the easiest means of escapism available. It's easy, fast, and extremely intense in sheer ability to rip you out of reality and into a place where you simply don't care.

I see this manifesting in other areas of my life, and it's something I can recognize now and try to work on.

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Re: My first Attempt at winning

Posted by Kedusha - 05 Jun 2011 15:30

Dear MM,

Your discovery is a very important one for all of us to keep in mind.

B'Chasdei Hashem, the intense pleasure is very short lived, and we feel like garbage afterwards. If it lasted longer, and we felt good about ourselves afterwards, it would be far more difficult to keep in check.

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Re: My first Attempt at winning
Posted by musicman - 15 Jun 2011 20:42

I've been away for a bit. School stress, Shavuos, and a much needed 3-day vacation has kept me busy for the last week or so.

As I come up to the 1-month mark (so hard to believe), I'm noticing that staying away from P is becoming noticeably easier. I'm not even close to level where I can start realistically combating the underlying causes of the urges (Shmiras Ainaim and non-Internet lusts). I'm still in the Break Free part of recovery, I guess. I'm trying to gain some semblance of control before i start combating the tougher issues.

Is this a bad mindset?

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Re: My first Attempt at winning
Posted by musicman - 17 Jun 2011 16:40

I fell.

I'm getting back up.

I learned some very important things in my first clean month, mainly that stress is my arch-nemesis in this war.

As i work through my stress and escapism issues, I'll make it 2 months.

H' help me.

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