

A journey to Hashem

Posted by zvi - 20 Mar 2013 23:54

I am a teenager, aged 16 years old. Since I was 12, I have had lust-related problems. As I have got older, the problems have got worse. It started off with the odd thing, here and there- I was only 12, so I didn't really know what I was doing. I vaguely knew I shouldn't be doing what I was, but it didn't interfere with my life much. As I got older, and I started to find out what I was doing, and the severity of the Aveiros, my 'little problem' developed into an addiction. For the past 2 1/2 years, I have been acting out on a regular basis (at least once a week). Then, finally, I had a clean streak. A proper clean streak. For 66 days. But then it came back. I didn't even see it coming. All I knew was that I was on the computer, doing some school work, and then suddenly I was looking at images that I shouldn't be looking at, and before I could stop myself, I had been motzei zera levatala. Again. That was two months ago. After that, I lasted 14 days, but then it was over. I was doing the aveiros again, but on a much greater level than before. As it stands now, I'm only keeping myself clean for between 1-3 days at a time. Two nights ago, I acted out twice. I was depressed, angry with myself, and- unfortunately- angry with Hashem. How could He do this to me? Didn't he see that I wanted to stop? That I wanted to be close to Him? Anyway, the next day (i.e yesterday), I joined GYE. I'm currently on my second day clean, B'chasdei Hashem. But it's not going to be easy...

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Re: A journey to Hashem

Posted by Chachaman - 30 May 2013 20:47

I'll let Dov answer the other stuff (because I honestly don't know the answers to the other questions--right now I'm reading the garden of emunah though, and it's giving me food for thought), but as far as the Netziv story goes:

Do you think the Netziv, when he decided to start learning, said to himself "look, I'm going to go out and become the Gadol Hador, start a huge Yeshiva, write important sefarim, etc."? No. He just wanted to learn and do his best. We do the hishtadlus, Hakadosh Baruch Hu supplies the results.

In my opinion, the point of a day at a time is EXACTLY THAT: To do our best--but just for one day! Also, in my opinion, as recovery is about starting to truly live and not necessarily about fall v. no fall, part of recovery (for me at least) is trying to reach my true potential. One day at a time.

Hang in there! KOT!

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Re: A journey to Hashem
Posted by Dov - 31 May 2013 02:21

Good points, thanks.

Do you think I have gotten anywhere at all in this life so far?

If you met me when I was 15 and piggybacked on my heart and eyes to see *all* I was living then, you would have come to know a struggling youngster wanting so very badly to be great, yet masturbating in the shower almost every time - because he really only felt any *greatness* when he was the main actor in a fantasy where he was having his way with a beautiful woman who wanted him so. It was bigger and more colorful than life....well, 'life' as it was then seemed puny indeed. Sweet, precious schmutz was the only thing that really felt 'real' to me. The only time I really felt alive and full of zest. Well, that and when I'd read R' Aryeh Kaplan's gorgeous books...they felt so real, so spiritual...but I sat and waited for that big music to play in the background of life and just couldn't hear it. Nu. Whats a fellow to do until the Good Life starts?

If you met me when I was 20 you would have seen a confused, intensely spiritual but self-obsessed and lustful fellow. He was high on Torah in Eretz Yisroel - but the next year feeling lower than the curb. I was *certain* that I was rejected from 'The Derech' after having left the holy land and a life of toraso-umanuso. A bidieved man, now. You would have seen a young man who never does anything on time, breaks or loses everything he has that is of value, can't (or won't) make decisions for himself, expects davening and learning to fix him *in ways that they were never meant to*, who takes little if any real responsibility for himself - except when it comes to bashing himself for failure (he did that like a virtuoso...well, that and masturbation.), etc. But I still figured I should have all the good things in life, why not?

If you met me when I was 25 you would have seen a man who is married a year and is slipping back into his pattern of lying, acting the part of husband well enough to get-by but feeling certain that he married the wrong woman. She was not spiritual enough - and not sexual enough, for me (I deserved both, of course!). Seeing his life as a lonely journey off 'The Derech', it was pretty cold on those long nights...and days, you know. Well, porn was certainly sweet enough to keep me warm...though I knew it was killing my marriage and sanity. "But why can't I have the

sweet porn and *still* be succeeding at enjoying all of marriage? Why is my relationship empty? Why is my yiddishkeit only experienced as a struggle? WHERE IS THE SHALOM BAYIS **IN ME**? Does this ever get good? Will someone tell me?" I went from Rebbe to Rebbe, from sefer and self-help book to sefer and self-help book, eventually alienating all the people closest to me more than anyone else (yet still ever the 'nice guy' to those I did not have to really accept day to day!)

Over the next 10 years I went lower and lower into trying to manage my own life - and just ruined everything I could. Sexual acting out became more intense and more predictable simultaneously. Maddening. How could my god fail me? Life got stupider and stupider...until **I** hit the fan. I could not take **me** any more. No more blaming on circumstances (in other words: on G-d), no more "wife is too *this*," or "not enough *that*," and no more "kids just stink and would be OK if they just did what I want them to!" In a hurry, after a slow burning fire, the whole struggle against Life was just over. Porn was not saving me any more, and I knew that if it were to save me at all, I'd have to ratchet it up to stuff far worse than anything I could tolerate. I was at the edge of the abyss - to lose my very self for the sake of saving myself - or not. But if not, then what? What other way was there?

I came to SA and met other men giving up trying to manage their own lives and learning how to use their addiction to let Hashem in, for a change. People who discover that deflation of my ego is the only way I can live safely. I got sober because I could not afford to use my drug any more - doing that was the one thing that sat me back in that driver's seat again. And I knew I - of all people - needed to stay **out of that chair!** I cannot manage my own life. I cannot judge what is good for me and what is bad. It's time to start living on Hashem's terms even if I will not be a tzaddik. To accept life as it really is. It's not about being more religious, at all. It's about being more sane. Living in reality - G-d is in charge and determines all outcomes. My job is to try and be useful, period. And He makes this path a pleasure to be on. He takes far better care of me than I ever took of myself.

OK, so now my life is quite good. And not so long ago I'd have told you not to bother investing in me. In fact, most of my life I'd have told you not to invest in me! Is my life useless today? Nope. G-d has put me in a position I could never have guessed. He used my years of lying and sperm-wasting and mindblowing fantasy-addiction: to benefit His people.

If I continue on this path till I die at a ripe old age, I will *not* come to Heaven fearing that they will slap me in the face with a biography of "Who you could/should have been". That is because I know that **whoever G-d is helping me become today is far more than I deserve.** That's good enough for me.

And just as an aside, an honest ba'al mussar would tell over the Netziv story and add: "...And I do not know if when the Netziv came to Shomayim they showed him this huger, bigger y'rai Shomayim and Talmid chochom that he should have become - but didn't because he did not learn hard enough all those years. So he may have still failed! We will never know". But they do not *say that*, **because it would ruin the schmooze!** But it is obviously the truth. We like to tie things up in nice, neat packages by saying, "Well, he became 'The Netviz!'," as though that ends the matter and must have been 'success'. Nahrishkeit. So the shmuz is just not honest, as far as I can tell.

I believe that the well-meaning people who say that we ought to trust Hashem in gashmiyus, *but not in ruchniyus*, are chicken, and also dead wrong - at least for addicts. I try to trust my G-d to run my life just fine in every respect. Shouldn't G-d be trusted? I try to do what I think He wants me to do and as long as I am being honest with myself, all will be fine. Eeven when I do a poor job of what He wants me to do, He makes things work out best. And when I start to lie to myself either life starts to get hairy or I start to lust again. It just doesn't work. I soon discover (after doing a little written step work cuz things start to bother me enough again!) that *I have snuck back into that Driver's seat!* Ho, hum, time to get out again. Yechh. But it's no big deal really, for people admit that they screw up this way at SA meetings all the time! Cuz recovery and the steps are not about what people focus on *here* so much (not masturbating), but rather about living honestly with your own G-d.

OK. So in the next post I will try to explain what that had to do with your post - unless you can figure it out on your own.

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Re: A journey to Hashem
Posted by Dov - 31 May 2013 02:23

...yeah, like Chachaman said.

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Re: A journey to Hashem
Posted by zvi - 31 May 2013 12:58

Ok...

Are you saying that I should be less controlling- I don't run the show, and I should simply do what is right without trying to control the outcome? I do see that in me- I'm quite a controlling person. For example, I run my school's weekly parsha sheet, and if one week we're running behind schedule, I'll find myself screaming my head off at my friends who help me run it, and getting very stressed generally about the whole thing, rather than accepting that it will all work out anyway (which it always does). Could that be interpreted as another symptom?

Except with regards to my lusting, I don't use it as a way to hide and escape from reality- at least I don't think it does. Firstly, my shemiras einayim problem doesn't actually extend to porn, b'H. I My major problem is m***. Of course, I have shemiras einayim problems, but its not porn. And when I first started m***, I discovered it by accident. I had some vague idea I shouldn't be doing it, but by the point I found out exactly what it was, quite late on in the game, I was already hooked on it, and however much I tried to stop, I couldn't. When I do m***, though, I don't really know what triggers me- its sometimes stress, sometimes general waves of loneliness/depression (though I don't know why- I'm not lacking in friends b'H), and sometimes general taiva. Could that be connected to what you said? Say I'm feeling stressed because of my school work, and I m*** because of that. Are you saying I should simply say Hashem runs the show, I just need to get on with life and not worry about the outcomes- that's not in my control anyway?

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Re: A journey to Hashem
Posted by Dr.Watson - 31 May 2013 14:43

[zvi wrote:](#)

Ok...

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Reading this is very interesting. It describes perfectly where I was at your age. every word of it

is true of me then.

I was also hooked before I found out that it was ossur, and I also only M'd with no porn. when I found out I tried to stop but couldn't. I told myself that I'm sure when I get to yeshiva it will be much easier to control and it will be fine. It was at first, but it wasn't too long before I was telling my chavruso mid-seder that I needed the toilet and went to do the aveiro. Again, no porn, no real reason to be doing it except for the habit / addiction / compulsion I'm not quite sure which.

OK, no problem, when I go to the next yeshivah it will be easier to control. And it was at first, but it wasn't too long.....

OK, no problem, when I get married it will be easier.....

For me the porn only started later when M'ing became boring and like any addiction I became desensitised to it and needed more and more. In the case of porn more means variety and novelty.

I'm not giving advice, I have none to give, all I'm saying is that you're lucky to be here so young and you can work on yourself before this problem becomes worse.

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Re: A journey to Hashem
Posted by zvi - 31 May 2013 16:18

Looks like I held on too long...

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Re: A journey to Hashem
Posted by broadlife - 31 May 2013 16:27

Calmness is key.

Shabbat Shalom.

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Re: A journey to Hashem
Posted by zvi - 31 May 2013 19:46

This time its different though- Bechasdei Hashem, I have not got depressed after my fall. I was for a bit, but some music got me back up...

Instead, I'm going to take the positives from this. What caused my fall? Images on the Internet. I've realised that I've been spending too much time on the Internet. So what do I need to do? Cut down on Internet usage. So I've made a taphsic not to use the Internet on Sunday with a knas of saying the whole sefer Tehillim that day.

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Re: A journey to Hashem
Posted by broadlife - 31 May 2013 23:22

Instead of saying all of those tehillim, how about a few tehillim with very very deep kavannah and crying to hashem to be there with you every step of the way?

The goal is to create a relationship with hashem in which you feel that he is with you **every** step of the way and at every moment.

So in that sense quantity of tehillim doesn't matter. Its the **relationship** which will save you and bring you to spiritual heights and love of life and the people around you.

Have a great shabbos!

At least that's the perspective that worked for me.

How about the next time you fall/have a problem. instead of saying tehillim, you go out and do some chesed!? If we have trouble in our relationship with hashem, the best way to improve that relationship is to work on our relationships with people and the world around us.

I cannot think of a better avenue than chesed.

I wonder why thats not pushed by GYE as much as TAPHSIC/SHVUOT/90 DAYS/NO TV/ etc...

Honestly, its not only about stopping its about starting to live and that starts with real relationships.

Im writing this to myself too...

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Re: A journey to Hashem
Posted by Chachaman - 03 Jun 2013 09:22

I agree with you broadlife, but if I want to do something, and I am looking for adequate motivation to stop doing something:

Is "I have to say 150 tehillim without kavanna" or "I have to say 3 tehillim with kavanna"/"I will do 3 acts of chesed" more discouraging? I think the 150 tehillim is more of a motivator.

Zvi--like you, I've identified some things about myself, and I've found such self-reflection very

helpful: we realize that we have a problem of sorts, and though that problem won't go away over night, it's good to be conscious of it so that we can work on it.

For me, sometimes m* (without imagery) stems from plain old boredom. If you go underwater, you will eventually not be able to hold your breath any longer. So that's where the start living comes in.

Good luck! Read back over your log, compare yourself to where you were when you first started, and you'll realize that you've come a long, long way! KOT!

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Re: A journey to Hashem
Posted by zvi - 03 Jun 2013 20:47

I personally have to agree with Chachaman here- while 3 perokim with kavvana would be better if it wasn't a taphsic, for a taphsic it has to be something that takes a long time... like saying the whole of tehillim.

I may repeat the experiment some time soon.

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Re: A journey to Hashem
Posted by zvi - 04 Jun 2013 19:47

I've been thinking recently (gasp! I thought! wow!) that I may have revealed a bit too much about myself on GYE- if anyone who knows me were to read this thread, I'd be surprised if he *didn't* know who I was. What do you reckon I should? Go back through my old posts and edit stuff out?

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Re: A journey to Hashem
Posted by gibbor120 - 04 Jun 2013 21:38

. I'm not sure what you are referring to, but if you really think it gives you away, then sure, edit some stuff out. In all likelihood, though, no one will figure it out anyway.

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Well I haven't figured out who you are yet

Re: A journey to Hashem
Posted by zvi - 04 Jun 2013 21:40

Thanks

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