

I can rely only upon myself (Gem. Avodo Zoro 17a) -- boruch's journal
Posted by boruch - 22 Jan 2009 18:30

Day 3 and posting. Thank you all for a life-saving and life-giving forum. Thank you Guard for caring and being there for all of us.

This will not be a journal about struggling daily with tempting situations and near misses. This will be a journal of a different type of struggle entirely. A struggle to steadfastly refuse to get caught up in the cat and mouse game of revolving door cycles of urges and relapses and to keep absolutely, totally and single-mindedly focused on the big picture --- developing day, by day, with Hashem's help, the inspiration, enthusiasm, strength, energy and determination to ultimately emerge completely victorious in a lifetime conquest of addiction beginning today --- with no relapses.

Hashem should help me in my quest to achieve from today a lifetime conquest of addiction and to inspire others to strive for what they had best only dared to dream of. To achieve what they were totally convinced was impossible. With your Will Hashem, we should in great numbers prove that what many and even most had believed was impossible and what some had believed was counter-productive is really very doable if we only learn how to turn directly to You for Guidance and how to implement your Will, one step at a time.

In days of Old when Jews like ourselves desperately needed Guidance from Hashem they would approach the local novi or prophet who would show them how to use their personalities, gifts and talents to follow Hashem's Will and Plan. Today, sadly we have no nevi-im, prophets and so we cannot get access to such ready-made and customized Divine Prescriptions.

However we still have a Torah and if we know how with Hashem's help we look directly and genuinely to the Torah for guidance we can go much further than we ever dreamed was possible.

And so as just one piece of a holistic approach to beating addiction for life with Hashem's help on this thread I will struggle to focus on a 12 week recovery program (almost ninety days) based entirely and directly on studying Torah sources as they were always studied and interpreted in our classical seforim.

The starting point has to be the most striking description of extreme addiction that we find in Chazal (to my knowledge at least). The source is the Gemara in Avodo Zoro 17a dealing with Elazar ben Durdia, who, the Gemoro tells us, was so addicted that there was no prostitute anywhere with whom he had not sinned at least once.

The title of my journal is a direct quote of the dramatic declaration of Elazar ben Durdia, as recorded by the Gemoro, that after a life of total and absolute failure to curb his worst instincts he finally confronted his sexual addiction. He cried out with tremendous intensity, "I can rely only upon myself" (Gem. Avodo Zoro 17a). The Gemoro records that amid the ensuing events a voice from Heaven announced that Elazar had in that moment earned himself a prominent place in the World to Come. Rebbe (R' Yehuda Hanasi) adds that not only has Elazar ben Durdia earned himself a prominent place in the World to Come, additionally he is now referred to as **Rebbe** Elazar ben Durdia because he serves as a role model in the fight against addiction.

So, inspired the example of **Rebbe** Elazar ben Durdia and enlightened by the insight revealed by the Holy Tanna, Rav Yehuda Hanassi, Week 1 of my 12 week recovery program looks like this:

12 - WEEKS TO RECOVERY

WEEK #1 -- Personal Responsibility --- I take 100% ownership of my addiction.

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Re: I can rely only upon myself (Gem. Avodo Zoro 17a) -- boruch's journal
Posted by boruch - 25 Jan 2009 22:52

[guardureyes wrote on 25 Jan 2009 22:14:](#)

Baruch, could I ask a favor? Let me hold a "white flag" on behalf of all of us here on the forum and ask if you could please keep the kid gloves on when posting... I know you have "deep" reasons for challenging us here and again, but most of the people on this forum are Poshuteh Yidden who are broken hearted, simple minded and looking to do Teshuvah with sincerity. I'm

just afraid that if you keep up this tone of rhetoric, you might end up hurting some people's feelings. So with all due respect, let's try and keep kid gloves on while posting on the forum if it's Ok with you. I hope you understand.

Kol ma she'omeir lecho baal habayis asei... from now on, kid gloves only (unless by special request to the contrary and I only take PayPal)

And once I am pausing for reflection, if there is anyone whose feelings I have hurt in any way, I do apologize, it's all too easy when trying to build Iron resolve and strong determination to steamroll others and so, any and all excuses aside, please accept my deepest apologies. And if you do have a complaint, please feel free to email me or even post, if you prefer.

[guardureyes wrote on 25 Jan 2009 22:14:](#)

Let me reaffirm though, that we are truly happy you joined the forum, and you have already shared many good posts with lots of good advice. And indeed, your IRON resolve and new Torahdik ideas are a breath of fresh air, and I'm sure you will be an inspiration to us all. Keep posting, but imagine you were talking to a broken hearted person who wants to hear Chizuk and

I truly hope Guard that you are not that broken Yid, I am beginning to get concerned that the submission thing may have gone too far...

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Re: I can rely only upon myself (Gem. Avodo Zoro 17a) -- boruch's journal
Posted by boruch - 25 Jan 2009 22:58

[Ano Nymous wrote on 25 Jan 2009 22:24:](#)

It seems to me that you have come here with a resolve not only to change yourself, but to change the system and to change others. You must realize that the only thing you really have the power to change is yourself. When others see that you have succeeded in changing yourself using a new method, they will be more inclined to try your method. The goal of this forum is to help people change. To me it doesn't really matter how. I agree with many of your points, but I don't agree with your method.

OK. My new mottos are live and let live, and we live and learn.

[Ano Nymous wrote on 25 Jan 2009 22:24:](#)

On the one hand, you are telling people who are succeeding with the 12 steps to keep going, while on the other hand you are trying to smash the 12 steps to bits. I am completely unbiased because I am not using the 12 steps, but I think you should stop the aggressive bashing of the 12 steps (EVEN though you may be correct) because it may weaken the resolve of some of the people here. If one person here falls off the track because of your posts, is it worth it?

Absolutely not. If I am so ready to give advice I have to be just as ready to take it.

[Ano Nymous wrote on 25 Jan 2009 22:24:](#)

You sound like a very intelligent person, and I greatly enjoy reading all your posts (including the argumentative ones), but you are coming off as aggressive, even though you probably don't mean to. Please try to keep the sass and cynicism to a minimum while keeping the encouragement flowing freely :D

And there in a new spirit is the first post I agree with in its entirety.

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Re: I can rely only upon myself (Gem. Avodo Zoro 17a) -- boruch's journal
Posted by the.guard - 25 Jan 2009 23:12

The Kotzker said that there is nothing as "whole" in the world, as a broken heart.

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Re: I can rely only upon myself (Gem. Avodo Zoro 17a) -- boruch's journal
Posted by boruch - 26 Jan 2009 01:16

[guardureyes wrote on 25 Jan 2009 23:12:](#)

The Kotzker said that there is nothing as "whole" in the world, as a broken heart.

Yes, very true, nothing as whole as a broken heart, but not chas vesholom a broken yid... to paraphrase the novi, kiru levavchem, vlo atzmechem... tear up your hearts but not yourselves...

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Re: I can rely only upon myself (Gem. Avodo Zoro 17a) -- boruch's journal
Posted by boruch - 26 Jan 2009 03:09

Day 6 and posting. Thank you all for a life-saving and life-giving forum. Thank you Guard for caring and being there for all of us.

12 - WEEKS TO RECOVERY

WEEK #1 -- Personal Responsibility --- I take 100% ownership of my addiction.

So we need to get Good and we need to get Smart. How do we get Smart?

Well, the first thing to do is to understand the nature of the problem. Everyone knows Nike's slogan "Just do it". Why doesn't it work for addiction? Why is the battle over addiction so difficult and why do so many fail?

When people see a problem that many have difficulty with, they automatically assume that it's because the problem is very difficult.

That was certainly the case when in the late 1800s Sam Loyd, the prolific Chess puzzlist, offered what was then an astronomical sum of money, \$1000 to anyone who could crack the 15-14 puzzle, which was already all the rage at the time. Many of you will be familiar with at least one version of the puzzle which has 15 sliding tiles in a 4X4 frame. It is usually made with colored tiles numbered 1 to 15, the tiles are scrambled and the goal of the puzzle is to unscramble them so that the numbers are in order. In the 15-14 version the puzzle was initially such that all the tiles were in numerical order from 1 to 15 with the exception of the last two tiles which were first 15 and then 14.

Many people abandoned every day activities and became totally addicted to the puzzle and yet despite all the effort no-one solved the problem and Loyd avoided having to pay out the reward money. You would be forgiven for suspecting that Loyd must have realized up front that he was taking very little risk because he knew just how hard the puzzle was to solve.

Actually, the puzzle was not at all hard to solve. Unknown to almost everyone it was by definition mathematically impossible to solve. Loyd knew that and he never even risked a penny.

Tomorrow with Hashem's help we will explore why, like the 15-14 puzzle, the problem of addiction as classically presented is not very difficult to solve it is by definition absolutely impossible.

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Re: I can rely only upon myself (Gem. Avodo Zoro 17a) -- boruch's journal
Posted by boruch - 26 Jan 2009 23:49

Day 7 and posting = 1 week = shivo nekiim

Thank you all for a life-saving and life-giving forum. Thank you Guard for caring and being there for all of us.

If you are wondering where today's thought of the day is I am posting here <http://rehab-my-site.com/guardureyes/forum/index.php?topic=359.0> in lieu of today's post.

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Re: I can rely only upon myself (Gem. Avodo Zoro 17a) -- boruch's journal
Posted by boruch - 29 Jan 2009 02:25

Day 9 and posting

This is a challenge not getting too addicted to these forums and needs more work. BE"H I'll get back on message over here.

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Re: I can rely only upon myself (Gem. Avodo Zoro 17a) -- boruch's journal
Posted by boruch - 29 Jan 2009 16:36

Day 10 and posting. Thank you all for a life-saving and life-giving forum. Thank you Guard for

caring and being there for all of us.

12 - WEEKS TO RECOVERY

So where were we? And if WEEK 1 is about my taking 100% responsibility, what is WEEK 2?

Well in answer to the first question we were talking about being Smart and being Good. We said that being Smart is about understanding the nature of the problem of addiction. We used the example of the 15-14 puzzle (see above) to state that the problem of addiction as often presented and as often addressed is not just difficult to overcome, it is impossible to overcome without changing the whole dynamics involved in fighting it.

So what now?

Well, we have not even begun to examine why addiction often becomes so impossible to beat and we are in WEEK 2 and have still not identified what role WEEK 2 plays in the 12 - WEEKS TO RECOVERY.

But first we are going to change gears fundamentally before we continue, so that we can be *shoveh lechol nefesh* --- so that we can appeal to everyone on the forum, in our posts here, everyone from the most *fahrbrente chosid* (fiery devotee) of the 12 steps to the most *fahrbrente misnagged* (fiery opponent) of the 12 steps.

And so, with Hashem's help, I want to share with you some more of the Torah that I have learned from my Rabbeim (Hashem knows that I did nothing at all to deserve the unparalleled Mussar Rabbeim I have had) and some more of the Torah which, following in the footsteps of my Rabbeim, I have discovered myself (Hashem has been very good to me in giving me an understanding of His Torah and the words of my Rabbeim far beyond my own natural abilities, and He knows the extent to which that has been a purely undeserved and unearned Chessed -- kindness).

But first, for now, it is more important for me to share with you **what I have learned from all of**

you and **from my short experience on these forums.**

I have discovered in my time here that I value sobriety and so does everyone on this board.

I have discovered in my time here that I value personal responsibility and so does everyone on this board.

I have discovered in my time here that I value teshuva and so does everyone on this board.

And I have discovered in my time here that we are absolutely and totally be'achdus, and that on these forums we are all ke'ish echod belev echod --- as one man with one heart, we are all here to become better Yidden and better Ovdei Hashem.

And so with Hashem's help we will together look at lessons that **every Yid** who is struggling with addiction can take from Torah regardless of their attitude to the 12 steps and regardless of their attitude on anything else.

May Hashem help us join as one in being ever more successful in all our efforts to serve Him.

(Maybe it's a good thing that there was a pause of several days here, so that I could pause just long enough to be able to wholeheartedly and warmly invite everyone on board for what with Hashem's help will become a shared and united journey of learning from one another).

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Re: I can rely only upon myself (Gem. Avodo Zoro 17a) -- boruch's journal
Posted by boruch - 03 Feb 2009 16:49

[boruch wrote on 29 Jan 2009 16:36:](#)

(Maybe it's a good thing that there was a pause of several days here, so that I could pause just long enough to be able to wholeheartedly and warmly invite everyone on board for what with Hashem's help will become a shared and united journey of learning from one another).

Day 15 and posting... just checkling in briefly.

B"H I am still alive and still very much with the program. Have been falling behind in posts, due to tirdos unrelated to this forum, but B"H have not fallen in my teshuva. With Hashem's help I will post more BE"H on both my WOH threads after I get some important stuff done.

(yes, we really do think we are in control sometimes... Yoshev bashomayim yischok...)

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Re: I can rely only upon myself (Gem. Avodo Zoro 17a) -- boruch's journal
Posted by boruch - 04 Feb 2009 15:34

Day 16, with the program and posting...

Please forgive our appearance during this sobriety upgrade... we will resume posting with Hashem's help as soon as possible...

Please check back frequently.

your friend,

boruch

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Re: I can rely only upon myself (Gem. Avodo Zoro 17a) -- boruch's journal

Posted by boruch - 06 Feb 2009 20:14

Day 18, with the program and posting... Chai yomim...

Please forgive our appearance during this sobriety upgrade... we will resume posting with Hashem's help as soon as possible...

Please check back frequently.

Have a Good Shabbos...

your friend,

boruch

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Re: I can rely only upon myself (Gem. Avodo Zoro 17a) -- boruch's journal

Posted by boruch - 09 Feb 2009 17:48

Day 21, with the program and posting...

Please forgive our appearance during this sobriety upgrade... we will resume posting with Hashem's help as soon as possible...

Please check back frequently.

your friend,

boruch

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Re: I can rely only upon myself (Gem. Avodo Zoro 17a) -- boruch's journal
Posted by boruch - 13 Feb 2009 21:18

Day 25, with the program and posting...

Please forgive our appearance during this sobriety upgrade... we will resume posting with Hashem's help as soon as possible...

Please check back frequently.

your friend,

boruch

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Re: I can rely only upon myself (Gem. Avodo Zoro 17a) -- boruch's journal
Posted by the.guard - 15 Feb 2009 21:46

Please forgive our appearance during this sobriety upgrade...

What do you mean by that?

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Re: I can rely only upon myself (Gem. Avodo Zoro 17a) -- boruch's journal
Posted by Ano Nymous - 16 Feb 2009 11:00

I think he means that although he doesn't have time to say anything more, he just wants to check in and tell us that he is still doing ok in regards to this addiction. When he has time he prefers to make much more lengthy posts (right boruch?). Correct me if anything I wrote here is incorrect.

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