

My 90-Day Journey

Posted by TalmidChaim - 06 May 2014 16:45

Hey Everyone,

Thanks, already, for the outpouring of support and motivation! I'm five days into this haul, and still very motivated.

My first thoughts (read: anxieties) moving forward, however, are related to what happens when this initial dopamine rush of optimism fades, as rushes are wont to do. We all know, especially as men with addictive and obsessive personalities, that there's a biochemical fix associated with new and exciting things. The GYE journey, for me, now, is new and exciting. But what happens after ten days, twenty days, B"H...90 days? I'm beginning to see the wisdom in the old adage, one day at a time. But I'm also eager to benefit from the erudition of the veteran (and freshman) tzadikim here on GYE.

Thank you so much!

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Re: My 90-Day Journey

Posted by TalmidChaim - 21 May 2014 22:33

Thanks, Gibbor -- very helpful, as usual. I've been reading Dov's posts, and really trying to internalize the concepts that you have just mentioned. I've heard those points made, in one form or another, by many people here. It definitely makes perfect sense in theory, but in practice, I'm finding the idea of self annulment to be logically untenable and even contradictory. I don't mean to be a pain by replying to your awesome post (and it is) with another set of questions, but I don't want to just nod, agree and move on. I want to "get" this stuff.

So, you talk about "ego", and the necessity to make it "not about ME." Like I said, in theory, this makes sense, I want to be a total hosit and leave it all to HaShem. But on the other hand, we're supposed to help ourselves as well, taking the steps *with* HaShem. Now, by doing this, we are asserting our ego, our self, our neshama, the sum, totality of our being -- however you want to define it. There's a difference, after all, between *having an ego*, which connotes seeing oneself as the all important center of everything, and *being an ego*, which, strictly speaking, means

having a mind, a will, a right to self-determination. And it is my ego who is making the decision to visit GYE, to avert my gaze from temptation, to study a daf gemara instead of browsing shmutz -- all things the program recommends my ego, that is, *I*, do.

This is the central paradox I keep running into here again and again. I am being told to ignore the trappings of my ego, and at the same time, galvanize all that is my ego to ignore temptation. Where is the role of free-will in all of this?

It's not precisely a Torah thought, but it's been echoed here a lot as well: HaShem helps those who help themselves. So how do I help myself without involving my ego?

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Re: My 90-Day Journey
Posted by cordnoy - 21 May 2014 22:44

JDI!

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Re: My 90-Day Journey
Posted by dms1234 - 21 May 2014 22:58

TC I loved your post a few hours ago about living one moment at a time.

But if I point out a subtlety in your post that makes a big difference.

TalmidChaim

but I'm really trying to implement this whole "worry about the moment" thing."

I think this is correct But the "worry part" is precisely the problem. You should be "focusing" on the moment not worrying. See worrying is fear, and fear brings us down. Being scared is not good for us. Instead of being worried and frantically going nuts about our life, we need to be relaxed and also focused. This means 2 things. (1) Baruch Hashem right now life is great and put my mind at ease. (2) Focused means even though my mind it as ease, i am still paying attention to the world around me and anticipating: "Should i walk into the mall?" "What route will i take to minimize the damage?"

So try not to worry and put your mind at ease. Focus on the moment. One moment at a time. One day at a time!

KOL! Keep on Living!

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Re: My 90-Day Journey

Posted by TalmidChaim - 21 May 2014 23:07

Excellent point! I agree. I have anxiety disorder, so the word, "worrying" is probably just embedded into my vocabulary. You're right: I have to work on not worrying (and getting rid of that word from my vocabulary). Thanks again!!!

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Re: My 90-Day Journey

Posted by gibbor120 - 22 May 2014 01:27

Sorry to be a pain again, but I also learned here that it's not about "getting this stuff". "Understanding" it will do nothing for my sobriety. Many of us (myself included) suffer from trying to understand and analyze too much. (Again, ME being in control. I need to understand it.) Much of what I have learned from dov, and this site, is 12 step based (although i never went to a formal meeting).

They stress "action", not philosophy. Again, I can't explain it that well. Reading dov's stuff will likely help and confuse you. Some of it still confuses me, but he has seen a lot and has been sober for over 17 years now I think. He hasn't been writing much lately, but he comes and goes.

He may start again soon. He also leads a phone group which helped me.

Don't worry about philosophy. Do what works.

Sorry if I'm unclear. I'd rather be unclear and sober, than know it all and act out!

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Re: My 90-Day Journey

Posted by sonoftheking - 22 May 2014 01:57

Hi Talmidchaim. It is not contradictory at all the fact that you are supposed to do the right thing i.e. free will, while simultaneously there is not supposed to be a "you" in the first place aka ego.

The free will which is there for you to utilize to do the right thing, is done via "your" soul which is a chelek elokai which is really hashem in essence. That is what "you" are.

"Your" work of quashing the ego, which is the yetser hora,

is done via "you" not allowing the ego, aka the yetser hora, which masquerades as if it were "you" to be dominant.

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Re: My 90-Day Journey

Posted by TalmidChaim - 22 May 2014 02:04

Hey Gibbor,

Thanks again. In essence, you explained (or, rather, illustrated) your idea very well. Trying to understand everything is a form of control, and control is problematic.

And thanks, SonoftheKing -- that's some very deep stuff. I really have to meditate on what you're saying, as it is not readily clear to me. It is definitely a hashkafah with which I am not entirely familiar, so I want to move carefully and deliberately into that territory.

Thanks to both of you, though. I really, really appreciate you trying to elucidate everything for me.

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Re: My 90-Day Journey
Posted by TalmidChaim - 22 May 2014 10:23

Still clean! 1 day, and back on the chart!

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Re: My 90-Day Journey
Posted by unanumun - 22 May 2014 19:21

Talmid Chaim, i had a thought that might help you.

I know by me there is a point that i have an internal debate and then either win or lose and then it is all over.

sometimes it might be that i am about to click on something on the internet, and in my mind i say yes, no, yes , no etc.

but once i click it's finished until the fall is fallen.

perhaps it would help you to figure out that point is with you. I mean I assume (perhaps wrongly, correct me if need be) that some point between when you write your post that you just fell and don't want to fall again and until when you are in the middle of the act, you had that point the you consciously gave in due to lack of ability, control, desire or whatever reason.

perhaps if you can focus on what debate goes through your mind, you can help yourself prepare to win the debate.

just a thought

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Re: My 90-Day Journey

Posted by TalmidChaim - 22 May 2014 19:22

Still going clean, but I'm in the *danger zone*. Lately, this has been when I've fallen. Also, I'm starting to really understand how the addict's mind works.

I remember reading here that the TaPHSIC method doesn't work as well (or, at all) for addicts. No explanation was given as to why it didn't work, but I could only assume it has to do with those annoying dopamine goggles addicts wear. You know, the ones that filter out reality and zoom in on the object of temptation. Well, lately, I've been trying to implement some of the principles of the TaPHSIC method (without the shvuah). When a temptation shows up, I tell myself that I have to wait 4 hours before giving in. It's been working, to a certain extent. In fact, for the times that I have fallen this week, I did not implement the 4 hour rule. So there's definitely something to it.

However, this morning, a minor, little thing triggered some lustful thoughts. I tried to think about (implement) the 4-hour waiting period rule, but another side of me, a stronger side it seems, emerged and started pushing the resolve away. It was definitely a biochemical surge; I felt a distinct change in my physiology. I hate to say it, but a craving starting to creep into my brain, the kind that dictates thought AND action.

So I understand why addicts, who suffer from a chemical dependency on lust, might have a hard time with TaPHSIC method. I was battling not just my thought processes, but also my bodily processes.

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Re: My 90-Day Journey

Posted by cordnoy - 22 May 2014 20:27

Good morning,

My name is Avrom and I am an addict.

I am addicted to lust.

I have been for over 30 years.

I am powerless over my thoughts.

Possible trigger:

Warning: Spoiler!

For the past 150 days, that thought is not allowed to penetrate any further...period! whatsoever. There are several methods used and none of them involves biochemistry or psycho-analysis or

hypnotism.

IMHO...and I may be a thousand percent wrong.....the more you focus on the chemicals and the neutrons, the more that urge and desire will keep bitin' you in the butt (there I go again).

sorry.

b'hatzlachah

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Re: My 90-Day Journey

Posted by Machshovo Tova - 22 May 2014 20:46

[cordnoy wrote:](#)

Good morning,

My name is Avrom and I am an addict.

I am addicted to lust.

I have been for over 30 years.

I am powerless over my thoughts.

Possible trigger...

For the past 150 days, that thought is not allowed to penetrate any further...period! whatsoever. There are several methods used and none of them involves biochemistry or psycho-analogy or hypnotism...

Thanks for sharing. Interestingly, just a moment ago someone shared on Duvid Chaim's call a vort from sefer mogen dovid on the mishna in perek avos -

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That when you encounter a sight which triggers you, you need to realize that it was sent to you from the One Above so that you should nip it in the bud, and this way it will not grow into a full-blown act of lust.

Hatzlacha

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Re: My 90-Day Journey

Posted by Pidaini - 22 May 2014 20:50

One other thing, (just to add to all the excitement here), it's not about "not me", try making it positive "It's about Hashem" that will automatically push ego aside as the gemara already says "ein ani v'hu yecholim ladur" "I and gaavah can't live together", so if there is ego, then we push away Hashem, but if we bring Hashem in then it forces ego out!!

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Re: My 90-Day Journey

Posted by unanumun - 22 May 2014 21:01

I think that what Talmid Chaim is going through is just the normal process of coming to step 1 of the 12 steps: We admitted we were powerless over lust--that our lives had become unmanageable

I know that it took me a bit of time to come to that realization. I tried thinking this way and that way. and eventually (with all the pushing of the guys) came to my own realization that I was powerless over lust.

Just coming here and seeing a whole new world opens up the eyes to start seriously working on things. then the theories start and eventually we realized that the theories don't do anything, and all the things the other guys tells us clicks.

But each person has to find his own individual way to get to step 1.

Talmid Chaim, you will probably get there soon. As you become more aware of what is going on, it will finally click. we are powerless.

And then all these mean and tough guys that cut us no slack turn out to be our biggest salvation. (heck, when I first started I hated some of the guys, even thought of trying to meet them to give them a punch or two. but now I love you all and can't be more thankful for all you have done for me. I put a major tefilah in at meiron for all the guys here)

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