

15+ years of battle - The Final Battle that will lead to victory

Posted by Ykv_schwartz - 08 Feb 2009 21:10

I have been battling this menuval for over 15 years since the age of 16. For the first time in my life I have a social network to reach out to and connect. I have made many attempts to breaking this terrible habit. But I will now once start from over again with what I hope will be the final battle that will ultimately lead to victory. Anyone reading this who feels moved or has encouraging words or words of advice, please share them with me. It will give me chizuk to know that I can give chizuk to others. It gives me chizuk knowing that others want me to succeed and want to give me chizuk. So please do not refrain from even the smallest comment. You never know how far your words can reach.

I have been clean now since Feb 4. I spent last night (Feb 6, motzai shabbos) and today in intense teshuva. For the first time in a long time, I felt the signs from Shamayim that I will be accepted back again. I was so encouraged by these signs it made me focus more on how to continue to work on myself to rid myself completely.

Here is my declaration of Teshuva(based on chovos Halevavos)

Today I am doing Teshuva for the terrible sins of masturbation, spilling seed, gazing at inappropriate material, and all other related sins. I realize full well that I have done these terrible acts. These acts are disgusting and despicable in the eyes of Hashem. Hashem despises them being done. They taint the body and soul.

Great Punishment awaits me for violating these prohibitions; I am afraid of your judgement. And although Hashem has not already meted out retribution for my sins, my sins are still preserved in the book of iniquities; nothing is forgotten from Hashem. I should not think that the reason I have not been punished already is because Hashem let this one slide. On the contrary, He know full well of my deeds but delays retribution to give me a chance to do Teshuvah. This is done out of the the great Chesed of Hashem. For according to the attribute of justice, I deserve to be punished immediately. But, Hashem in his great and infinite chesed gave me a chance to do Teshuvah. I thank you Hashem for granting m such privileges, for creating the concept of Teshuvah. I CAN FIX MY WRONGDOINGS!!!!

But not only this Kindness do you do for me but countless amount of kindness do you shower upon me. But in return for your graciousness I rebelled against you, while in fact I should be praising, thanking and be pleasing in your eyes.

Woe to me for committing these Sins. For instead of receiving great reward in this world and the next I am receiving just a minute and temporal amount of pleasure for my sins. And although I received at least this little amount of pleasure, I will be receiving great amounts of pain due to the punishment in this world and the next.

I, Therefore, take upon myself to remove myself from these sins and return to you Hashem. And although, I realize from the beginning that this will not be easy and I will have to face tough battles with the Yetzer Harah, I am willing to fight and I will never ever give up, no-matter what happens, and I am confident that I will win.

And I end with a plea to you, Hashem. For I realize that without your help I am unable to properly do Teshuvah. I therefore ask of you that now that I have pierced a hole the size of a needlepoint, you widen it like the opening of the Ulam.

May we all be Zoche to Teshuva Shleima

-ykv

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Re: 15+ years of battle - The Final Battle that will lead to victory
Posted by Dov - 13 May 2009 16:40

Thanks for all the chizuk!

Please see the Sfas Emes on the laughing of Sara imeinu and also regarding her discernment in the defective tz'chok of Yishmael about fourteen years later. If I understand him correctly, he explains that she did teshuva immediately, which is why she said, "I did not laugh." By then, she did teshuva. Then Avraham (or Hashem, per some) responded to her: "No, you did laugh," meaning, since her teshuvah was only from gevurah/yir'ah (being the typical derech of Sara imeinu who balanced Avraham avinu's chesed *K'negdo*), and when you do teshuva from yir'ah the aveira is not eliminated, only made a shogeg, for you know better now... This is the meaning of the words, "*ki yareiyah* - because she was afraid", that is, she did teshuva of yir'ah. The Sfas Emes goes on to say that the reason that Avraham did **not** recognize Yishmael's tz'chok

as quickly and as deeply as Sarah did was because Sara reacted to the whole vikuach there by embarking on a "program" of learning everything she could about the difference between kosher and nonkosher tz'chok and working on it so she'd never mess up again. Thus, she ended up at a higher level of discernment than did Avraham (who had never made the mistake in tz'chok in the first place)! He then says that this is the definition of **teshuva me'ahavah**. After we learn from our mistake and cause (or, more likely, allow Hashem to cause) a change in our behavior **because** of the cheit and teshuvah process, Hashem considers the aveirah a mitzvah. (Which mitzvah is it? Perhaps the aveira becomes the mitzvah of teshuva, thus the word "teshuva" - return of the potential in the aveirah to reality - maybe?). That, the rebbe writes, is what chazal mean when they say that with **ahava** the cheit is converted into a mitzvah. This sounds like what Guard is talking about, but it's a nice vort, too, so enjoy!

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Re: 15+ years of battle - The Final Battle that will lead to victory
Posted by the.guard - 13 May 2009 23:02

Wow Dov, thank you! I had a feeling that using the past in the right way was Teshuvah Me'ahava and makes it into Zechuyos, but I didn't have any Mekor for it.

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Re: 15+ years of battle - The Final Battle that will lead to victory
Posted by Ykv_schwartz - 14 May 2009 05:21

Wow,

I am so honored to have a lineup on my thread of three amazing posts from guard, me and dov. Thanks Guys, that was great chizuk.

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As I know you directed your question to me originally, the words have been taken from my mouth (keyboard) and been expressed in a beautiful way. One basic idea you should understand is, that as much as all of us can try to give insight, all of us together probably cannot give me than 25% of the truth. The reason is because learning how to grow from your pasts is learning who YOU really are, and what your strengths are. This is something only you can see. And this is a lifetime goal. Though, the more we talk about it and give each other chizuk, I hope we will be inspired to understand our own selves and grow from there.

I do have what to add to the wonderful ideas that have already been stated. However, for now, it is best to absorb the words of these three great tzadikim. Too much at one is not a good thing.

Guard,

The concept of teshuvah meahava that turns zechuyus is well known from the gemara. The value of the sfas emes that dov presented to us, in terms of insight into teshuvah, is that he gave a clear cut definition to teshuvah meahava. And that definition is precisely what we are talking about here; learning how to grow from our pasts. By doing so, dov explained to us the greatness of this avodah; that it turns our past into zechuyos.

Once again, thanks guys. I hope to take the day or two to absorb all of this. And when I get a chance, to explain to yy and anyone else more about this great concept.

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Re: 15+ years of battle - The Final Battle that will lead to victory
Posted by Ykv_schwartz - 07 Jun 2009 05:22

B"H, today marks 120 wonderful days of sobriety.

The new life is a great one.

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Re: 15+ years of battle - The Final Battle that will lead to victory
Posted by the.guard - 07 Jun 2009 09:33

That's great news Yakov. I updated your chart on the WOH!

Ano, who is helping some people himself, wrote me today:

I was reading a parenting book this Shabbos by Rabbi Horowitz, and I came across something very inspiring in light of what has happened here. You may have heard the idea that when one does teshuva, all their previous aveiras are turned into zechusim. I've often wondered what that meant (as did the person in the quote I will bring from the book). How can I so easily turn 7 years of constant aveiros into zechusim? So when just this week I stumbled on this in Rabbi Horowitz's book, I was amazed. And I quote "A distinguished rabbi recently approached me and asked me to share a personal experience of his with my readers. Nearly 30 years ago, a young man who came from a very distinguished Orthodox family and who was no longer observant approached him in shul on Yom Kippur. This individual informed the rabbi that he felt drawn to attend Yom Kippur davening despite his nonreligious status, but that he was troubled by a nagging question. Somewhere in the recesses of his mind, he remembered hearing from his rebbeim that if one repents out of sincere love for Hashem, all his previous sins are transformed to merits.

"Come on, Rabbi," he asked. "Do you really believe that? How is it possible for Hashem to consider everything that I have done in the past few years as mitzvos? Do you have any idea how many terrible things I did? How can God ever accept me back? I might believe that Hashem could wipe my slate clean, but how could the things I have done ever be considered mitzvos?"

The rabbi was quiet for a long moment, not really knowing how to respond. He then softly informed the young man that one day in the future he might wish to take all the mistakes and experiences of his youthful rebellion and utilize them to assist others in similar predicaments. Thanks to his past, he would better understand how to help others. "When that happens," said the rabbi, "your actions in the past will all become zechusim - for you, and for the children whose lives you will save."

The rabbi informed me that this young man eventually devoted his life to helping wayward teens, and is currently heading a program in Eretz Yisrael that has, over the past two decades, enabled hundreds of at-risk teens to regain their footing and become proud, productive members of our Torah community."

That's the end of the quote from the book. I feel the same way about myself. How can my countless sins in these areas be converted to zechusim? When I use the experience to help someone in a similar predicament, I am converting my past misdeeds into good.

And we hope that you too, Yakov, will continue inspiring us on the forum and helping in "other) for many years to come!

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Re: 15+ years of battle - The Final Battle that will lead to victory
Posted by Ykv_schwartz - 07 Jun 2009 17:51

Thank you Guard! That was very encouraging.

Today, being Sunday, I went to the kosel to daven for everyone on this forum. I davened with all my might tehilim 56,59,40, and 51, in that order. I read all the names of people on this forum that are in my list. I then asked Hashem to assist everyone on this forum in their fight against the yetzer hara. I asked hashem to remove all desires for p**n and related filth from everyone. I asked him to give us all wisdom in dealing with our personal struggles. I then said "protect us from that machine and monster we know as the internet". When I said those words, I burst into tears. And I am crying now as I write, remembering my afternoon today at the kosel.

I do not know why I burst into tears. But I think it was for a few reasons.

One is that I began to remember my own struggles, which B"H I have been removed from, and remembered how painful it was. This brought out pain of my past.

Two I then began thinking of all those that continue to struggle, and I felt the pain of my fellow yid. I relate to your pain, my dear friends. This was so painful to me to feel yidden in distress.

Three The idea that our enemy is a machine is scary. The koach dimyonos(imagination) has been so badly tampered with and manipulated by evil people who are thirsty for money. This idea scared me and I started to cry.

But as much as the yetzer hara is strong, we need not strengthen ourselves against him and take G-d to battle with ourselves and not be scared. Yes we must be fearful that he can attack any moment. Yes we must be fearful that he can always come up with new tactics. Yes we must be fearful that he pretends to be our friend. All this helps us be on guard and never act carelessly. But when that battle actually comes, we must get into the ring with confidence. We must show him determination. We will make it clear to him that we will fight and we will prevail.

The first halacha in shulchan Aruch is to wake up like a lion, by **strengthening** ourselves. The first **TaZ** explains that this halacha is referring to the milchemes hayetzer. A gibor means

someone who conquers his yetzer. A lion fears no one. When we wake up we must strengthen ourselves like a lion and not be scared of the yetzer hara. We must have confidence. Unbelievable! The first thing we do in the morning is not saying modeh ani, but rather feeling confidence against the yetzer hara, the same way a lion has confidence and fears no one.

When we wake up next morning, let us shout our loud "I will definitely not look at p**n today. I will not be sucked in by the fake promises of the yetzer hara"

May we all be zoche in conquering our yetzer hara, and to continue to grow in this area. It never ends till the day you die. As long as we live the yetzer constantly gets stronger and creates new tactics. But we should all be zoche to have our heads on straight, recognize the potential danger lurking in our paths, never blink an eye for a second and always walk with confidence that when he strikes, we will win.

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Re: 15+ years of battle - The Final Battle that will lead to victory
Posted by the.guard - 08 Jun 2009 11:12

Beautiful Chizuk from Yakov, as usual!

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Re: 15+ years of battle - The Final Battle that will lead to victory
Posted by Ykv_schwartz - 05 Jul 2009 05:24

Feb 5 was the first day of sobriety for me. Today I stand with 5 months of sobriety. Feb 5 was the day I finally picked myself up after a 3 months relapse and made a strong decision in my heart to immediately remove myself from all by misconduct. I knew my sins but could not get myself out. And on that day as I heard hesped after hesped for Rav Noach zt"l, I was able to rev up the courage in my heart to finally admit how I am wasting away my life and I said, never again. My Hashem continue to assist me.

B"H, it has been a wonderful five months. Five months of constant growth and five months completely clean of any sort of lust. I find it somewhat humorous that at the start of my journey,

I kept track on my cheshbon hanefesh chart how many times a day I would get hirhurim. And B"H, that line of the chart has long ago fallen off the chart.

I still continue to daven to Hashem to protect me from any sort of nisayon and if a nisayon should ever C"V happen, I should have the wisdom and strength to get myself out of it.

I have been continuing in my avodas hateshuvah, step by step, based on Rabeinu Yona. I am starting sheviras hataavos today.

I continue to look into myself and fix the "broken wires".

I continue to do vidui on my past.

And above all, I continue to see how my past has been an impetus for growth for the future. I look to the future with wide eyes excited for eternal internal growth.

May we all be zoche for a full teshuvah

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Re: 15+ years of battle - The Final Battle that will lead to victory
Posted by the.guard - 05 Jul 2009 10:46

There are two type of guys on this forum. Talmidim of Battleworn and Talmidim of Dov.

R' Dov's talmidim need to get off the 18 wheeler truck and get onto a tricycle; easy, slowly, SAFE and **REAL**.

Battleworn's talmidim are able to get off the 18 wheeler truck that was careening out of control

and get onto a rocket ship headed straight for the heavens!

Yakov is a true example of Battleworn's Derech in action!

"Ailu Ve'ailu divrei Elokim Chaim". Each person to their *Shoresh neshama* and their *Kochos*.

How fortunate are we to watch these two derachim in action on this forum.

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Re: 15+ years of battle - The Final Battle that will lead to victory
Posted by 7yipol - 05 Jul 2009 18:45

To R' Yaakov; Ohev Habrius v'ohev haemes,

MAZAL TOV on reaching 5 months!

Once again, your true nature shines through! Whenever you personally accomplish something, you somehow manage to pull others up together with you. The fact that you started after hearing the hespeidim for Reb Noach zt'l is so true to form. Not only have you elevated yourself, but every clean moment is a zchus for Reb Noach too! How many of us could ever dream of helping the neshama of a tzaddik like he was?!

It goes almost without saying how many of us you have helped here on the forum. I personally have no words to express my hakaras hatov to you for all the ways you have helped me over the past 3 weeks since I joined GYE.

May Hashem's chesed always be clearly seen, and may you and your whole family be a source of nachas to Hakadosh Baruch Hu forever.

7up

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Re: 15+ years of battle - The Final Battle that will lead to victory
Posted by Ykv_schwartz - 05 Aug 2009 09:27

Tu B'Av and six months of sobriety

As I look into the grave to see if I am dead and then notice that I am still alive, I look up to heavens with joy and yell, "there is life! There is Hope! There is a future!"

As I finish burying my addiction, I pause to thank Hashem for not allowing my dark past from spoiling my life. I thank him, as well, for assisting me in finally burying my past, as I rid myself of this addiction.

As I I dance at the chasunah of a Benjemanite man and a daughter from another shevet, I realize that the past is gone and we are embarking on a new era. The days of Sinah are behind us, and the days of Ahavah and Achvah are ahead of us. I then turn inwards and contemplate that the yetzer hara has weak powers today because when there is achdus, there is no yetzer hara.

As I continue to divert my eyes from all immodest material and strengthen myself day by day in the areas of kedusha, I look at my wife, contemplate true spiritual beauty and sigh with relief "Sheker hachein V'Hevel Hoyefei, etc..." I turn inwards and realize that all peace in the world emanates from true and perfected shalom bayis. This is the secret to our ultimate victory.

As I walk through the streets with big heavy wooden ladders, I tell the enemy (the yetzer hara) not to worry; "these ladders are situated on the ground (they are for gashmiyus)". I then laugh in my heart, because I tricked the yetzer hara, for he does not know, "these ladders can reach the heaven". These ladders are for my mizbayach.

As I finish collecting all my firewood, I bring it close to my heart and declare "B'Ivavi Mishkan Evne, in my heart I build a mishkan".

As I sit lonely in my living room, waiting for my Beloved One to return, I suddenly hear a knock at the door and hear, "Kol Dodi Dofek" (It is my loved one knocking). Ellul is approaching.

As I stand trembling in awe, His holy messenger declares with a sign of great happiness, "Today we are building the Beis Hamikdash". The day of Happiness, is the day of the rebuilding of the Beis Hamikdash. My heart skips a beat. Am I dreaming?

I then turn to my Creator in a moment of true dedication and state: "I am all yours. I hereby sacrifice my entire life to you."

What greater joy can there be.

To My Dear And Holy Brothers and Sisters,

Today I am celebrating six month of sobriety. My journey began on Feb 5. Today is the first day since the start of my journey that I am allowing myself to celebrate sobriety. I will explain to you why.

For 15 years, I actively tried to stop myself from this addiction. Perhaps, I could elaborate on my life in the coming days (if there is interest). But for now, I will convey a brief overview. I went through constant ups and downs. When I was down, I was really down. My addiction saw no boundaries. Even the fear of getting caught and losing my job never held me back. I visited some of the darkest places on this earth. I saw gehennim with my own eyes. My self esteem dropped to the bottom. The following letter (written in summer 2007) portrays my emotions at one of my moments of misery:

"Internally, I am a broken man. I am under constant Depression. I am really a failure to society. I fool the world. I represent spirituality to many people. But inside I am of the most corrupt of beings that walk this earth. I am shining on the outside and dirty on the inside. I am confused about my own self. I sometimes wonder if I have demons inside of me. I feel like Jekyll and Hyde. I am two people in one... I am a hidden man to my family. I am living a lie to my wife. I feel horrible with myself. I fill my wonderful head with junk. I am crying inside. I have contaminated the vessels that hold my spirituality. Every year I hope for a yom kippur,

where I will do a true vidui to Hashem for my PAST aveiros. But comes Yom Kippur, I am still holding on to them...”

And when I was up, I was way up. I usually could not maintain myself for longer than a few weeks.

However, last year (2008), for the first time in my life I was finally able to resist the temptations and break free. I learned a few very important lessons. I realized how much I hate this addiction and stopped my activity immediately. The temptations melted away. I was amazed with myself. I thought a new ear in yaakov's life has finally arrived.

But, six months later, on Oct 28, 2008, I fell again. I was in disbelief at the time. I was devastated. I lost six months in one minute. For the next three months, I wallowed in misery as I continued in my addiction, digging myself deeper and deeper. My became numb to life and spirituality. I continued my life externally as usual. I tried to keep my spirits high; as I knew I would pull out. But, it continued. I began to finally admit that I am addicted and powerless. But, at the same time, I began to fear that there is no hope for me. If after six months, I could not maintain myself, then I must have some internal incurable disease. I thought the only way is with professional help. The future looked bleak...

...then came GYE. At the beginning of February, I discovered GYE and I renewed my commitment to recovery. My life instantly changed. I realized there is hope. The social network of like minded people with similar struggles brought me instant relief. I declared a new battle on my yetzer hara. I realized how small he really was all those years. And so, after 15+ years of battle, I started what I labeled the “final battle that will lead to victory”. I was initailly inspired by Rav Noach Weinberg's levaya, as I cried there throughout all of the hespedim.

But I could not allow myself too much joy until I brought myself back to where I was. I could not see any form of victory until I arrived at six months. And here I am six months later. This is officially my longest streak from the day I was introduced to this filth. Am I not allowed to celebrate?

In honor of Tu B'Av and six months of sobriety, I am making a BBQ in my backyard. Please join in my simcha. Everyone is welcome. And bardichev, please bring the woodford (or whatever that stuff is called).

Whoever is reading this, please wish me a mazel tov on my thread. I need all the chizuk I could get. As we all know the battle is never over. After a person beats one yetzer hara, another one comes his way. So, please give me tons of chizuk and warm words.

I want to end by thanking the entire GYE family. Each one of you is special. I am amazed with the commitment that each of you fights. No matter how many times you fall, you get back up. I try to read most of the posts, although I do not have time to write. I get tremendous chizuk from reading about your struggles and how you prevail.

With Love, Tears, a Broken Heart, and a Broken Spirit,

Lover Of All Jews,

Yaakov

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Re: 15+ years of battle - The Final Battle that will lead to victory
Posted by bardichev - 05 Aug 2009 10:07

amar Hashem liYaakov..

al Tirah avdee Yaakov

Bachar Hashem biYaakov..

Today the heavens are earth

are meeting

Our Yaakov who only Hkb"H

knows why he was Morid She'ol

VI'YAAL

Our Yaakov who fills our mind with divrei Torah

Our Yaakov who sees the Emes

Our Yaakov who is a shining example of Kamma Gedolah Teshuvah!!

here goes!!

KOL HA'OMER YAAKOV SCHWARTZ CHATAAH... EINO ELLA

TO-EHH

LO CHATTA YAAKOV ELLA LIHOROS TESHUVA LIRABIM!!!

MY BROTHER YKV YOU ERRED IN

PRIVATE

YOU DID TESHUVA BIRABBIM!!

ILLMALEI LO NIFALTI LO KAMTIII

LOOK AT YOUR KAMTII

MAY HASHEM BE WITH YOU EVERY STEP OF THE WAY

CONTINUE TO SHTEIG!!

ONE DAY WE WILL ALL SEE THE BATTLES YOU FOUGHT THAT CATAPULTED YOU TO
THE GREATEST HEIGHTS THAT YOU NEVER THOUGHT WERE POSSIBLE!

YOUR BROTHER!

bardichev

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Re: 15+ years of battle - The Final Battle that will lead to victory
Posted by 7yipol - 05 Aug 2009 10:12

R' Yaakov, how rarely I cry. In general the tears dried up years ago.

But your post(s) brought me to tears. Tears of pain over your struggle to which we can all relate, and tears of joy that you have reached this point. I feel your tremendous joy and hakaras Hatov to the Borei Olam as if it was my own celebration. Perhaps because in some ways it really is. There is a connection of neshamas here on GYE which really does make each success everyones, and each setback everyones too.

How I wish we really could be sharing that BBQ; that this dark galus was behind us, that kedusha was lighting the world and our neshamas were ruling.

I know you are there still , reading our posts. If you find a minute here or there to write too, we can only gain. Your active presence is missed.

May I humbly suggest a trip to the vegetable store before your BBQ. Today, you need to say shehechyanu. Your family will see a leechy / mango etc, YOU will see a neshama shining before your eyes, and a dying yh in that grave at your feet.

With the utmost respect and humbleness,

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Re: 15+ years of battle - The Final Battle that will lead to victory
Posted by Noorah BAmram - 05 Aug 2009 11:41

The angels in the celestial spheres shouting kadosh kadosh kadosh are mute in comparison to the tumult arising in all seven Heavens and on Earth below, from a certain nistar on GYE who goes by the holy Name of Yakov, whose SHOUTS OF KADOSH KADOSH KADOSH are causing the very creation to tremble!!!!

We say to you on this tremendous yom tov of yours. the very same blessing that the angel gave

Yaakov our forefather "Do not call him Yaakov rather his name is YISROEL, for he bested the celestial angels!

Vatuchal!!

With Fiery love and respect to a true hero in klal Yisroel

Keep shouting KADOSH KADOSH KADOSH

Noorah

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