

Living a holy life

Posted by committed_togrowth - 29 Oct 2021 04:06

Dear Chevra,

After a few months of visiting this website and quietly gaining chizuk by reading the incredible posts from this community I've decided to speak up and introduce myself. Over the past couple of years I've become religious starting from an almost entirely non-religious past. Hashem's Torah has transformed my life and imbued me with a new and deep sense of purpose, and it is my greatest desire to live each day with a sense of purpose, perfecting myself and living in connection with and recognition of Hashem. My path in Torah has led me to face the matter of shemiras habris, and in this I've encountered a great challenge. After many failed attempts at breaking free, late into this past Elul I found the resolve to pull myself out of the pit again. Since then BH I have been clean for a couple of months, but I still struggle greatly with temptation. The last time I fell I learned two things: I am not in control, and, more than anything, I want to live a life of kedusha. These two acknowledgements shocked me out of my sleep, but alarmingly I can feel over time that the clarity I gained from my last fall is diminishing. So, I've decided to jump in here to reinvigorate my journey. I look forward to growing together with each of you!

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Re: Living a holy life

Posted by Lchaim Tovim - 07 Jul 2022 13:47

I feel for you brother, your going though a difficult time.

The fact that you say this is the lowest you've fallen so far, yet at the same time you are also able to say...

"The only thing I have as a clear reflection right now is I need to accept my life, and to connect with Hashem and find simchah where I am. This is my path and this is where Hashem wants me to be right now, that much is clear to me".

This is absolutely amazing and very inspiring to me. Thank you!

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Re: Living a holy life

Posted by Lchaim Tovim - 07 Jul 2022 13:48

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Re: Living a holy life

Posted by committed_togrowth - 08 Jul 2022 05:24

Had a clean day today BH. I actually feel very happy and proud of this one day. I think I've been forcibly humbled into the ODAAT approach, I see why people emphasize it so much on here.

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Re: Living a holy life

Posted by committed_togrowth - 21 Jul 2022 04:53

I don't want to go into details, but last week was very rough. Back to back falls over several days, using masturbation as a coping mechanism in a way that I haven't since starting this journey. I was operating with blinders over my eyes, totally deaf to my life goals and values. I can pin it on some genuinely difficult things that happened last week, but that would be a mistake. The longer I hold onto excuses and blame things on external factors, the longer I will delay my growth. Surprisingly and almost paradoxically there have been some very bright patches popping up in my ruchnius. I've been connecting in a very clear way with a desire to serve Hashem. When I say the word atah in my davening, I feel as if I am actually talking to Him instead of just tossing my voice out into the universe and hoping something sticks. When walking around in a state of nisayon I start to think about all of the love and chesed Hashem has shown me and my eyes drift back down to where they should be because how can I look when I know how much He loves me? I have a lot of work to do but I am on course. Wanted to check in with the chevra here, it's all too easy to disappear when things aren't going well...

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Re: Living a holy life

Posted by Lchaim Tovim - 21 Jul 2022 18:52

To see someone with back to back falls while going through a difficult time yet be able to pick himself up and say "I can pin it on some genuinely difficult things that happened last week, but that would be a mistake. The longer I hold onto excuses and blame things on external factors, the longer I will delay my growth."

To me, this is inspiring. Thank you for sharing.

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Re: Living a holy life

Posted by strugglingWithMyself - 22 Jul 2022 12:26

...Surprisingly and almost paradoxically there have been some very bright patches popping up in my ruchnius. I've been connecting in a very clear way with a desire to serve Hashem...

Not assuming, but this sounds to me like the famous Dov post on the [Nuclear Reset Button](#).

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Re: Living a holy life

Posted by committed_togrowth - 22 Jul 2022 15:37

Could be, but I am consistently exerting effort in my learning and tefillah. I am more inclined to think that because I trying hard in those areas and I am not letting everything in my avodah go just because I am struggling currently in this one area particularly, I am still finding ways to connect and feel positive. Doesn't feel like a rise and collapse sort of cycle.

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Re: Living a holy life

Posted by frank.lee - 23 Jul 2022 23:02

Wow! Hatzlacha!

it reminds me of a thought i had today. I live in a pretty religious place but still on the street i

have opportunities to guard my eyes. I try to look away right away and say to myself, to Hashem, thank you Hashem for such beauty in the world, and for the opportunity to not look, and for my eyes that can see, and for taavas that help me etc.

I think it can be easy when we train ourselves and thank Hashem...

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Re: Living a holy life

Posted by strugglingWithMyself - 26 Jul 2022 16:01

That's an amazing thing!!! Please ignore my last post then, and keep on growing in Torah!!

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Re: Living a holy life

Posted by committed_togrowth - 21 Aug 2022 02:34

Been a little while since I posted on here. For a few weeks I got into such a cycle of failure and falling that it felt unproductive to come on here and post everything that was going on, would have been too much focus on the negative. Baruch Hashem for the first time in about six months I got to take some time away from work and see family. Once I came home to the support of family and got some breathing space from work, the whole struggle changed. I went from barely clinging on and simply not coping each day to not even giving a thought to lust. With the daily barrage of stress and loneliness removed I didn't even give a thought to going on the computer. A huge reminder to me of the importance of family, relationships, and taking time to rest and be present. The past few weeks of struggle were the product of a many months long intense period of burnout, though this will sound like a broken record to anyone who has read my forum. I'm leaving home and heading back into the thick of work and a very triggering environment in the next couple of days. I pray that Hashem keep my grounded and healthy. I have decently strong gedarim in place, but the strongest protection I can have is staying psychologically well. There is some fear that when I return from my trip I will also return to the very dark reality I had created for myself, but I feel ready to step back in. Today is also one

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Re: Living a holy life

Posted by committed_togrowth - 04 Sep 2022 07:27

Wanted to share some reflections here. These past few weeks have BH been quite a time of renewal for me. I know most of what we talk about here is our struggles with porn and masturbation, but I recently made a choice that I believe is strongly related to this issue. Recently, I decided to stop drinking alcohol. My drinking habit has been a large source of stress and anxiety for me for a long time. It was something I had spoken to my family, to my rebbeim, and to my therapist on multiple occasions. Funnily enough the answer I got from each source was very similar. That my level of drinking was "normal" and within the recommended range for adult men. That as long as I was doing it in the evening really it was fine. That the fact that I could "control" my drinking meant I did not have a problem. But, it was the very fact that I **had to** control my drinking that produced such strong feelings of stress and anxiety. Controlling it really meant that I was always subconsciously wrestling down an inclination to drug myself with a depressant chemical. As I came around to making my decision to stop, many of the reasons I rationalized to myself on why I drank fell away. That I like the taste, that it relieves my stress, that it's fun etc. The simple fact was, I wanted to numb myself and experience my life less.

So much of my attention has been put towards working on P&M that it is surprising to me that of these two habits, drinking is the one I have dropped first. It wasn't a shift that I was expecting or even one that I thought was possible. The sheer magnitude of my stress had made even thinking about not drinking just about impossible. I want to share a beautiful drasha on the month of Elul that I heard recently which has really helped this shift. The Arizal explains that the passuk discussing arei miklat "???????? ????????? ????????????? ??????" contains the roshei teivos for Elul. As I heard it explained, it is noteworthy that this is actually the only explicit reference to Elul brought by the Arizal, although of course the Torah is replete with hints to Elul. Much of our usual thinking about Elul is a time of pressure. With Tishrei around the corner, there is a huge inspiration, but also a huge pressure to improve ourselves. This pressure can cause us to overlook perhaps the central aspect of Elul, which is that it is a time of refuge. When someone must flee to a city of refuge and makes it, there is a sense of relief he has in getting there and knowing he is safe. This is a feeling we should have when we enter Elul. We have made it through the year. It is a time to just be where we are and connect with Hashem.

When I look back on the past year in a holistic sense, I actually am amazed by how much I was able to get done in the various spheres of my life BH. And yet, those strivings came with a cost. I became a less healthy person. I became someone who was frantic and anxious, someone who was occasionally and unfortunately too often embittered. I arrived at the gates of this Elul in a heap. I was too tired to keep all of the different plates spinning. So tired that really the only thing I could do was give up in a certain sense on forcibly constructing the life I thought I need to be living and to just ask Hashem to teach me how to live because I honestly do not know how. If you were to ask me six months ago what I thought my Elul would look like, I would probably given a perfectionist vision of me exerting myself in all areas of ruchnius, studying morning and night around a full time work schedule, davening with perfect kavanah etc. Instead, what I have experienced is a clarity on how to live firmly within my limits. A clarity on how much

healing I need in my mind soul and body, and enough headspace to actually take steps towards that. It has become clear to me that I have been ill, and for a long time I was so scared of being ill that I only wanted to run away from it instead of getting better. BH I finally want to get better. It seems so obvious that if you are in pain or sick the thing to do is to identify and remove the cause! And yet for so long I haven't even tried to figure out what the causes are or admit that I was unwell, perhaps because I thought it was impossible to get better. It became obvious to me in this reflection that I no longer want to drug myself with alcohol. I no longer want to be so strung out. All I want to do is that which I am capable of doing, and to live in a relationship with Hashem. I thank Hashem for providing me with this month of refuge to heal. I think perhaps the highest form of "shteiging" and the best preparation for Tishrei I can do right now is to become healthy. The simcha and sense of I relieve I feel when I think about the path of recovery I have started is something I have not felt in years. We should all merit to become healthier and more whole people this Elul and move into Tishrei with a renewed sense of self. Thank you for

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Re: Living a holy life

Posted by committed_togrowth - 08 Sep 2022 20:27

Two weeks clean BH. Best two weeks I have had in a long time. I referenced it in my last post, but ditching alcohol has provided me with a window into working on myself in a much more authentic way than was possible while I was drinking. I think this sort of general work that is being done is having fortunate spill over effects with the P&M struggle. Hoping to keep the train

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reading if you made it through this whole thing

Re: Living a holy life

Posted by committed_togrowth - 15 Sep 2022 01:09

Day 20 BH. Today was probably the hardest day I've had in the while in the sense that it was very overwhelming and full of triggers, but my skills in emotional regulation are definitely improving. Was able to get through it with my head on my shoulders.

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Re: Living a holy life

Posted by nafrub - 19 Sep 2022 09:37

DAY 27!!

i cant belive that i am b"h up to here

in the last few years i was never clean for so long in one go

from one side i am feeling much better but still need to work hard

vhashem yazor.

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