

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 committed_togrowth - 19 Dec 2022 23:29

Hi all,

Been a little while since I checked in. Today marks three weeks clean from porn and masturbation, but it also marks a very difficult day for me. Without going into detail, my browser history was seen by coworker on a computer that pretty much no one else uses by logging onto my account to do a work task, and this person mostly like knows that I watched pornography on that computer. I know this because I had to use that computer today myself for the first time in a while and I saw the suggested sites had a porn site listed. This was a fall I had a while ago, one of the worst days and I did something I would never do in a sane state of mind by viewing something on a work computer. I often have to work alone late nights and Sundays, which presents a great nisayon for me. While this coworker has not directly confronted me, it is almost certain that they know and I feel ashamed and devastated. Trying to channel this pain into a total turn around of my behavior, but I just kind of feel like dying (I'm sorry for the dramatic language). It hurts a lot that even though I've been doing well for the past while something from the past came and bit me. I also can't begin to wrap my mind around the chillul Hashem

involved. Even during this past few weeks clean, I've had the subtle thought of "why can't I just be done with this." While clean I still don't believe I will stay clean. Feeling low and quite broken, but I will find a way forwards.

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Re: Living a holy life

Posted by committed_togrowth - 21 Dec 2022 07:27

Had some pretty interesting reflections today. I found myself towards the end of the day in a state of nisayon. The causes to me were clear, it was the effect of external circumstances that were significantly depressing me and draining me. On the drive home from work I was mentally flipping through possible ways that I may be able to tune out of these negative feelings. Maybe drink some alcohol. Maybe look at something inappropriate. Maybe listen to something inappropriate. I turned on the radio and found a station playing rap music. I thought I might empty my emotions into whatever kind of music was playing, but within seconds I turned it off. It just wasn't me. The total lack of resonance brought me to reflecting on my identity.

I realize that I have a foot in two worlds. One is the world of my pre-religious life. In times of loneliness and weakness I hearken back to memories of old girlfriends and friends that validated me and made me feel seen at different parts of my life. Memories of the partying, the wildness and ego, drawing on vain values to create a sense of self-worth. I miss the comfort that that world had and some of the people, and in my heart I know I can't and will not go back to that period. Dwelling on it is a sort of misdirected nostalgia. The other foot is in the world of avodas Hashem. My goals in learning. My davening. Visions and dreams of the type of family I want to raise, what kind of person I want to be. Standing between these two worlds I find myself feeling deprived of a past world I can never re-enter and yet unable to dive into the next one. I realize I have stranded myself in the middle, neither here nor there.

There is a truth to who I am, and it does not exist in this no man's land. The problem is, I don't understand who that true self is. I am disconnected from it. It's a weird feeling, but lately I have been switching to a third party view of myself in any given moment and wondering who this person really is. I am trying to connect this person back to how I felt what I was five, or when I

was twelve, times when I felt a more true and salient identity and I marvel at the gap between myself now and who I was then. And, this lack of self-understanding leaves me without the tools I need to align myself and draw satisfaction from my life. When I look at my daily external actions, what I pour my life energy into, it looks like I am trying with all my might to enter the world of avodas Hashem. All I do right now is work and learn, I fight so hard for learning opportunities, I toil in learning Hebrew and Aramaic, I am desperate to be able to learn a blatt gemara. I try my best to daven with a minyan whenever possible, and I am doing everything I can to make it to yeshivah, start dating, and G-d willing start a family. But, there is a gap between the external way in which I invest my energy, and my internal feeling of connection to that mission. I wonder if this is a normal part of growth, that the external manifestation of my desire is coming from a deep place, but my everyday internal world has not yet caught up. I still want the old world and often do not draw nourishment from the new one, so I look to the place where I can find grounding and nourishment in my solitude and existential ambiguity, which is pornography, which is in truth poison. I have not thought about my struggle with kedusha in this perspective before, but I think this gap between my internal and external mode of operation, and the transitional point at which my identity currently sits are a fundamental cause of my difficulties. Not sure if this will be intelligible to anyone, but thank you for reading regardless. And by the way in case you saw my last post on this thread, that situation was resolved, and so I deleted the post.

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Re: Living a holy life

Posted by Hashem Help Me - 27 Dec 2022 21:49

A post with gadlus, pure gadlus. You will iyh be an awesome father one day...

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Re: Living a holy life

Posted by Teshuvahguy - 27 Dec 2022 21:55

[committed togrowth wrote on 21 Dec 2022 07:27:](#)

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Wow. Just wow. As a late Baal Teshuvah there is so much I want to say to you and ask you...this is a similar feeling to me, having lived for more than 50 years in the party world and now living in Hashem's world. I need to gather my thoughts. Thanks for this truly amazing post and the opportunity it just gave me to address my similar issues. What a bracha that you wrote this.

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Re: Living a holy life
Posted by committed_togrowth - 28 Dec 2022 05:30

Thank you guys for your feedback. HHM, that means so much to me that you said that, and Teshuvaguy, I'm so happy this was helpful for you. Reach out whenever you want to chat I'm sure we can learn a lot from each other.

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Re: Living a holy life
Posted by committed_togrowth - 29 Dec 2022 03:55

Doing well this past week BH. One thought has been on the forefront lately: as a Jew I have such low self-esteem. I can't put my finger on exactly when this started, but I realized this past week that I feel truly bad about my avodah. I'm noticing things not specific to my struggle in this area (each berachah I say without kavanah for instance) feels like a significant downer. This is a bit of a slippery trap to be in. I'm wondering how others have climbed their way out? As it stands my perceived failures colossally overshadow my perceived successes.

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Re: Living a holy life
Posted by Teshuvahguy - 29 Dec 2022 04:12

[committed_togrowth wrote on 29 Dec 2022 03:55:](#)

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I'm dealing with the same kind of thing, so I'm interested in any responses. Your last line could have been written by me (but not as eloquently). Not for nothing but I don't think you are giving yourself an objective look. Go back and read your first post on this thread. A couple of years ago you started becoming religious from a totally non-religious background. Look what you are concerned about today...the quality of your avodas Hashem and you are pained if you lack what you consider sufficient kavanah. I'd say your self-esteem should be pretty good knowing all you've accomplished in a short time. Keep pushing my friend. And I do mean "my friend." I'm here for you, as a BT who also doesn't give himself enough credit. Let's both keep reaching for the highest levels!!

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Re: Living a holy life

Posted by Vehkam - 29 Dec 2022 05:09

[committed_togrowth wrote on 29 Dec 2022 03:55:](#)

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It might be helpful for you to try the exercise on page 201 of the battle of the generation.

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Re: Living a holy life

Posted by Captain - 29 Dec 2022 14:37

[Vehkam wrote on 29 Dec 2022 05:09:](#)

[committed_togrowth wrote on 29 Dec 2022 03:55:](#)

Doing well this past week BH. One thought has been on the forefront lately: as a Jew I have such low self-esteem. I can't put my finger on exactly when this started, but I realized this past week that I feel truly bad about my avodah. I'm noticing things not specific to my struggle in this area (each berachah I say without kavanah for instance) feels like a significant downer. This is a bit of a slippery trap to be in. I'm wondering how others have climbed their way out? As it stands my perceived failures colossally overshadow my perceived successes.

It might be helpful for you to try the exercise on page 201 of the battle of the generation.

The book itself could also be helpful. Especially Appendix A (see link to the book in my signature below)

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