

Want to be BT again

Posted by BT Again - 18 Nov 2021 17:12

Hi everyone. This is my second thread on here--I haven't updated the last one in a while, and frankly, I need to be more open about my struggles than on that thread, so I'm restarting my journal.

I'm a fairly newly married mid-20s guy (no kids yet), went BT a few years ago and Torah is unbelievably important to me. When I think about what I want to accomplish in my life, the big things all have to do with raising a family and practicing Judaism. Despite this, I have really struggled to keep a consistent practice. When I went BT initially I was on fire, but that fire eventually smoldered and I became a pretty irregular davener/learner. Part of it was that I never addressed my porn problem until the last year or so. Since "burning out" I have always kept shabbos and kashrus fully, put on tefillin daily, followed taharas mishpacha, wore tzitzis/kippah, among other things, but my davening and learning has been lacking.

For more details of my specific situation, I live in a pretty "out of town" community in the US. My city has multiple shuls, erubin, kosher food, learning opportunities, etc. but it's still a fairly small frum community. In fact, most of my friends are not religious as there's not many frum people around my age here.

Something changed in my brain recently, I don't know what it is, but over the summer I felt a real drive to increase my religious practice. I've always wanted to have a closer connection to Hashem but didn't have the drive for a while. These days I prepare divrei Torah to share at the shabbos table most weeks, daven shacharis with a minyan more days than not, started to add in mincha/maariv, added learning b'chavrusa once or twice weekly, prioritized hanging out with my few religious friends, and learning for at least a bit daily (minimum 30 mins listening to a shiur on my commute). I've felt like I'm going "BT Again" hence my name.

Sounds great, right? Well, I feel like I'm burning out again (hard to describe how exactly, but I've been struggling to get to minyan), and I'm still struggling with porn and masturbation (henceforth referred to as P and M). My usage of both has gone down immensely, though: in the last month I've refrained from M more than 75% of days and I've only looked at P three times. This is a lot of progress, as even a year ago both were multiple times a week if not daily.

My Jewish practice and recovery are deeply interconnected. When I use, I don't go to shul, and when I go to shul, I don't use. I really want to be more religious, I love learning and davening, I

want to be an active part of the Jewish community, I want to live a holy life, and I want to have kids who are frum and inspired. And I know that my P and M habits hold me back from this. If I can really make davening and learning integral parts of my life, I feel like I will be much better positioned to overcome my addiction.

If anyone has tips for me on my religious journey, please share. I'm also wondering about how to pull away from internet and phone use in general. Even outside of recovery, I dislike using the internet or my phone. I've deleted all of my social media which has helped. Does anyone know of a way to properly remove my ability to use the browser on an android phone (more permanent than disabling the app as I can't uninstall it)? I would prefer that my phone has no browsing capability, ideally keeping my current phone though I may buy a kosher smartphone in the future.

I will keep this thread updated for accountability.

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Re: Want to be BT again
Posted by BT Again - 17 May 2022 17:46

Had a fall on Sunday and again today after doing one of the designated distractions in my Taphsic shvuah. In response I'm increasing the intensity of the distraction in hopes that it works next time.

Both of these falls were for emotional comfort, and came out of feeling depressed and/or tired. Both were also after days that I didn't do the each of the four things in my daily plan, and both times I felt worse after. Just a reminder to myself that it doesn't help!!!

Also I keep reminding myself what I really want to do--live a Torah life, go to shul, learn, get work done to provide for my family.

I continue to be clean from looking at shmutz--holding at 66 days.

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Re: Want to be BT again
Posted by BT Again - 20 May 2022 22:10

Fell again today. I'm having a really hard time with staying clean when I feel apathetic/depressed, and in those times I don't even care about the taphsic knas. Invariably these times happen after not sticking to my good habits for days at a time. I just need to stick to the plan.

On the bright side, 70 days no porn!

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Re: Want to be BT again
Posted by BT Again - 30 Aug 2023 03:54

Alright rabosai, it's time for me to revive my thread. Connection is the way to overcome these nisyonos, and I'm ready to bring more of it into my life. I hope to update at least a couple times a week going forward.

Since my last post over a year ago, I have gone through a lot of challenges. The biggest challenge I had contributed greatly to a fall last October after 134 days clean. Since then, my ability to stay clean has gone up and down, as well as my connection with Yiddishkeit and my overall mental health. One person who has helped me tremendously is Hashem Help Me--he is truly a mensch and is doing so much for Klal Yisroel.

Today, I am seeing a lot of the brachos in my life. I have to be fully present for my family, for Hashem, and for everyone and everything in my life that deserves my commitment. To do that, I need to stay clean and move forward.

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Re: Want to be BT again
Posted by Captain - 30 Aug 2023 13:02

Welcome back!!!

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Re: Want to be BT again
Posted by BT Again - 11 Sep 2023 20:41

I hope everybody is having a good and meaningful Selichos week (or month if you're Sfardi). This week in particular, I'm feeling serious and motivated to continue positive change overall. Not to say that my shmiras eynayim in the street and keeping pornographic images out of my imagination is going perfectly, but I am noticing the problematic looks/thoughts as they come and consciously trying to stop them. My concerns right now are keeping up/increasing good habits that give me real emotional comfort (keeping me away from lust), and making sure that my current inspiration is solid enough to last past Yom Kippur.

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Re: Want to be BT again
Posted by Hashem Help Me - 12 Sep 2023 14:55

Do you have any partners?

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Re: Want to be BT again
Posted by BT Again - 12 Sep 2023 20:47

Except for my check-ins with you, I do not. I've had a lot of trouble keeping up a regular partnership.

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Re: Want to be BT again
Posted by Hashem Help Me - 14 Sep 2023 11:24

Maybe consider it.

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Re: Want to be BT again
Posted by BT Again - 18 Sep 2023 20:35

BH I had a wonderful and meaningful Rosh Hashana. It feels like a new start for me and I'm feeling motivated in all areas of life, including in kedusha. I'm concerned, though, that the motivation/inspiration won't last in any significant way. I'm thinking about just picking a couple of things to focus on that I've found support the rest of my goals/growth. One thing I've noticed that during good times in my life, everything is going well--work, davening, learning, eating habits, exercise, shalom bayis, relationships, etc. However, trying to work on everything all at once isn't effective. The answer, I'm starting to think, is that certain habits/focusing on areas of my life do the most to keep motivation going. The question is, which habits should I focus on to support everything else?

I will spend some time thinking and journaling on this over the next couple days. Right now, my thinking is that minyan, exercise, and talking with growth-focused friends are the most helpful.

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