

Work in progress

Posted by Vehkam - 02 Jan 2022 18:43

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Trying to post here on a somewhat regular basis so that I stay on course. I have to rewire my thinking patterns of over thirty years! I set the counter to the last date that I fell in masturbation. I have been able to stay away from other things for longer. I thank hashem for his kindness in helping me to this point.

this shabbos I was in Florida. Obviously there are a lot more nisyonos. I definitely was more successful than other times in not following my eyes and gazing with the help of GYE. (Not to say that I was successful in every instance- at some point my feet just took me in the wrong direction even though my mind was saying- STOP!)

One thing that helped me alot was a shiur I heard recently that describes the power of a tefila that one has immediately after he withstands a nisayon. When I feel a possible weakness to a temptation, I quickly resolve to turn away and then I immediately daven for something that is very important to me. Each small victory is another tefila. I don't want these nisyonos, but if they are coming anyway at least I have the opportunity to use them for something very meaningful.

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Re: Work in progress

Posted by Markz - 01 Jan 2023 04:15

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[Vehkam wrote on 01 Jan 2023 03:40:](#)

Part of My speech today in Shul. (The rav was away and it was my turn to fill in)

I would be remiss if I didn't talk about the five words in this weeks Parsha that I believe are the battle cry of a Yid in liberal America 2023.

We are surrounded and inundated by ideas and images that threaten our kedusha. There were times in history that they had similar nisyonos but there was never a time that had the technology to go along with it. It is impossible to completely shelter from all of this that is knocking down our doors and breaking our windows to get in.

When I grew up the descriptions of sodom and the like seemed so far-fetched. Today we see it in front of us. Everything has been normalized and it is being shoved down our throats.

Each of us needs to understand and recognize ANI YOSEF.! I am faced with the Temptations just as YOSEF did on a Daily basis. There is no way to get away from it. We cannot bury our head in the sand and think that we are protected. Every day a person must recognize that ANI YOSEF!

There is only one way for a person to be successful in standing up to these nisyonos. A person must also ask himself every single day. HA'OD AVI CHAI? Is my passion and desire to serve my father in heaven alive. Is my desire to serve Hashem stronger than the desire for the temptations of the street?. Is my father alive within me?? It is only this passion that will keep a person focused on his goals in life and keep him separated from the perverted messages that our society seeks to poison us with.

ANI YOSEF, HA'OD AVI CHAI?

This is the battle cry of a yid as we live in liberal America 2023.

Bruce: *Yankel, What are you collecting for?*

Yankel: *Oh - we want to extend the Rabbi's vacation for a few weeks, because our in house speaker is amazing!!!*

Bruce: *Pass the hat - I'll donate too!!*

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Re: Work in progress

Posted by Eerie - 01 Jan 2023 06:07

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Hi my holy friend! I love it, your dvar Torah is a true "??? ??? ????", that the way to battle all of this is by lighting the fire within us to search for closeness to our loving Father. Beautiful! I'm with Yankel and bruce, btw:)

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Re: Work in progress

Posted by sleepy - 01 Jan 2023 16:47

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Each of us needs to understand and recognize ANI YOSEF.! I am faced with the Temptations just as YOSEF did on a Daily basis. There is no way to get away from it. We cannot bury our head in the sand and think that we are protected. Every day a person must recognize that ANI YOSEF!

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sorry markz but it looks like your avatar is going off the derech, such a big "chup" in 24 hours?

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Re: Work in progress

Posted by Emes-a-Yid - 03 Jan 2023 00:44

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Nice message to the shul vehkam, and thanks for the share posted

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Re: Work in progress

Posted by Vehkam - 15 Jan 2023 19:08

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I believe that last week was the hardest week for me since I have become clean. It started with a very vivid dream that I woke up from on Sunday morning. There was an intense feeling of pleasure that continued after I woke up. This was despite the fact that I did not ask for and intellectually I did not want this physical pleasure.

Over the course of the week many recollections of pleasurable encounters kept coming into my head. I did my best to move on to think about other things but somehow these thoughts kept

popping into my head at random times.

I try to keep my schedule busy so as not to have time for such thoughts. In the past this together with focus on my passion to serve hashem was enough and I did not have to deal with recurring thoughts.

On Wednesday I felt like I was really on the defensive. I have to admit that the yetzer hara was getting to me. For the past many months the idea of me giving in and acting out was not something I could possibly contemplate. After all, I suffered so much from my addiction and have gained enormously from stopping. Still the yetzer hara was throwing all sorts of physical fantasies at me and I could sense an ever slight change of resolve and focus.

I know that the yetzer hara works slowly and deliberately. I didn't want to allow this change in resolve to happen without a strong push back. I went on the offensive. I threw my passion into davening to hashem to help me in this fight. I added extra learning time. I also identified some of the factors that may have added to my weakness and will be on guard to make sure to the best of my ability to avoid those factors.

With thanks to hashem I can say that things have calmed down. I appreciate being in touch with Eerie and his genuine concern each day. It was a hard week but I do believe it was a learning experience too and I am grateful for that.

I am still learning Gemara with three boys each night and I hope to make a siyum with them on a small perek this week. I also am looking forward to the Daf Yomi siyum on nedarim. I may try to finish early and make a siyum this shabbos.

One year ago I was just beginning my search for a therapist. I have to constantly remind myself on the one hand, how far I have come and in the other hand, not to take anything for granted.

As always thanks to everyone here for being so supportive.

Vehkam

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Re: Work in progress

Posted by Eerie - 15 Jan 2023 22:35

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My dear, holy friend, that's what friends are for. You were the first person to reach out to me, and I remain eternally grateful. It is so inspiring to read about you fighting the YH in real time, your resolve is unreal. Yes, you are right that we must always remain vigilant, the YH never sleeps. BH you are fighting him today from a healthy, normal position. That doesn't mean he's out of ammunition, but you are in a place where you can go through the regular tests of mankind, and fight back exactly the way you did. Sometimes the enemy brings out stronger weapons, those are the harder nisyoinois, and every nisayon is there so that we can grow through overcoming it. It was time for you to take things to the next level, so you got this test. **AND YOU PASSED WITH FLYING COLORS!!!** Keep on trucking, my friend! And keep us in the loop so we can all continue to be uplifted by you

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Re: Work in progress  
Posted by Vehkam - 20 Jan 2023 13:24

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Finished reading the battle of the generation this week. starting again tonight. i still gain from it every single night.

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Re: Work in progress  
Posted by sleepy - 22 Jan 2023 05:04

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[Vehkam wrote on 20 Jan 2023 13:24:](#)

Finished reading the battle of the generation this week. starting again tonight. i still gain from it every single night.

keep it up!

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Re: Work in progress  
Posted by Vehkam - 23 Jan 2023 05:25

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Tonight I read chapter 3 of the battle of the generation. I remember The first time I read this chapter almost a year ago and cried when I read the following paragraph on page 35.

“ Yet perhaps the most painful part of this episode is when we give up on our dreams. feeling permanently stained by our sins we believe we can no longer become what we dreamed of. even if we know that we should never give up on our dreams no matter how low we have fallen, emotionally we feel that anyone who has fallen this badly can’t become great. we wanted to become special and significant and instead we feel doomed to be inferior forever. There is nothing more painful than this feeling. “.

This pain was so intense inside of me and it was such a relief to read the author describing it.

The difference between living with dreams or without them is almost as significant as the difference between life and death.

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Re: Work in progress

Posted by sleepy - 23 Jan 2023 05:34

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very good point,still struggling with that thought and it has broken me. the only positive thing that has came out from such a thought is "ok sleepy you wont have an influence on others, and wont be able to inspire others , or change others for the better.but there is one person who you can still make an impresion on and can change that person, and that persons name is sleepy." i hope Hashem will be happy with that ,and accept that little contribution in makeing this world a better place.

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Re: Work in progress  
Posted by Vehkam - 23 Jan 2023 05:41

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Overcoming the challenges (according to the mesilas yesharim) is the purpose of life in this world. It is what makes us significant and great. (And ultimately deserving on some level of hashems reward). So you are 100% correct- the only person we need to change is ourselves.

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Re: Work in progress  
Posted by sleepy - 23 Jan 2023 06:09

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[sleepy wrote on 23 Jan 2023 05:34:](#)

[Vehkam wrote on 23 Jan 2023 05:25:](#)

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and thats why i cant give up on myself because improveing sleepy is all i have left in this world

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Re: Work in progress

Posted by iLoveHashem247 - 23 Jan 2023 13:54

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[sleepy wrote on 23 Jan 2023 05:34:](#)

[Vehkam wrote on 23 Jan 2023 05:25:](#)

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in my experience, I have seen that the best way to make an influence on others is to work on myself, and not be ashamed to share with people who will gain from it, that I have struggled, and I am working on my struggles

People appreciate seeing a real person just like themselves who continues to aspire and doesn't give up

I get the strength from my role models who act the same way

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Re: Work in progress

Posted by Vehkam - 10 Feb 2023 05:25

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This is a two part post. Part one is important for me to document but part two is more emotional....

## Part 1

It has been difficult to post recently. Boruch hashem I've been busy. Between work, maintaining the house, teaching at night and dating there really hasn't been any extra time.

At times I wonder if I have plateaued. Am I continuing to grow? Sometimes it is difficult to know especially when things are relatively stable. At those times it is gratifying to be able to come back here to my thread and see where I was holding twelve months ago. Or even six months ago. It becomes much easier to see that yes I am continuing to grow.

I ordered the battle of the generation from Amazon one year ago. Since then I have read it cover to cover more than six times!

I didn't even start therapy until the end of March last year! Now I no longer need to go very often.

I am learning considerably more in the last few months and I am teaching as well.

My rov even asked me to speak in Shul when he was away.

While I am proud of my recovery I no longer see myself exclusively through the lens of recovery. Without question recovery was the catalyst but the desire to live a life that will bring nachas to hashem is no longer rooted in recovery. I just want to be close to hashem.

this is the most exciting time of the year. Purim is coming and I can celebrate that closeness without inhibitions. Nissan is already on the horizon and I am waiting with heightened anticipation for that month in which we celebrate Hashem taking us out from a world of darkness and connecting us to a world of light. Pesach will always be the yomtov on which I celebrate my personal redemption.

## Part 2

Last year about this time I was on my way to recovery. I was committed and hopeful but still very much unsure of myself. At some point I was cleaning up at home and I came across a bag of stuff from my previous forbidden life that I had stashed in the back of some shelf. (This was not anything explicit but at the same time it was very much connected to my forbidden activities).

My first thought was that I better get rid of this asap. Then I had an inspiration. I wanted to feel what it would be like to bring a korbon Pesach. I decided to save the stuff until erev Pesach. I continued to work at spiritually cleaning myself.

On erev Pesach I davened early. Then I took my bag of stuff and drove to the dumpsters that were set up near my neighborhood for extra garbage on erev pesach. I sat in my car and said tehillim with tears streaming down my cheeks. I davened that hashem accept my korbon as if I had brought a real live korbon pesach. Then I threw the bag into the dumpster and left. It is difficult to describe the connection that I felt at this moment

While I am far from perfect, I wont have such a korbon to bring this year. I daven from the bottom of my heart that we will all be able to bring the korbon pesach in yerushalayim this year. But if somehow it is still not the time for that, I will be somewhere someplace in my car saying tehillim with tears streaming down my cheeks. Asking hashem to remember last years korbon, to help me stay on this path and to please allow my words to continue to inspire others to do the same.

I don't know why I was never able to write about this. I thought about it but somehow never found the right tone to describe this very personal moment. I thank hashem for inspiring me with the words to do so at this time.

Best wishes

Vehkam

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