

My Journey L'chaim Tovim

Posted by Lchaim Tovim - 22 Jun 2022 20:57

This is my first post but I've been lurking for years. Years which I've shed many tears...tears of sadness...tears of shame...tears of fear...tears of anger. Anger at myself, my rabeim, women in the street and Hashem.

There were times that I felt hopeful and times that I felt hopeless. Surrounded by people yet so alone. Trapped in a prison that I had created with my biggest enemy my mind, as a cell mate.

I didn't understand why I was wired this way. Why I was the only one that a simple chol hamoed trip could be so disastrous. What was the use of everything I'm doing, of my trying to be a good Jew when I am such a bad person. If I'm chayiv misah bidei shomayim and can't do teshuvah, what is the purpose of my life.

I know, when I'm married and have "pas b'saloi" it will finally be easier. But it wasn't and what now. Not only is what I am doing affecting myself, but I have a wife and a couple of kids now as well.

Then I saw the ad "now when I shake the rabbi's hand, I no longer feel ashamed" (or something like that. Could it be? Are there other people out there that are like me??

I joined GYE and saw that not only was I not alone, but that some people had fallen lower than I had and had picked themselves up. All my life it had been drilled into me that the highest aspiration was to be a Talmud Chochom but now I saw tzadikim...real tzadikim, lamed vuvniks even. I learnt so much from so many people on the forums, that I decided to pick myself up and that I too could become a tzadik.

I was going through a terrible time financially and told Hashem, I can't make more of a hishtadlus for parnassah than I already am doing, please let this nisayon be the zechus I need. I was clean for 173 days, when previously, I had never made it past 3 days. I was convinced my life would change, I was starting over, becoming a new person, surely I was going to have Siyata Dishmaya. I started writing a book on shemiras einayim and the struggle but...

Not only did my financial situation not improve it got worse. I was so depressed in a place of complete Yiush that I fell after 173 days.

I was so angry at Hashem, Hashem I attempted the impossible, you know what a broken person I am inside. Why? Why? Why?

After that over the next few years there were more downs than ups. I felt that I had completely reverted back to my old self. Interestingly enough, my financial situation stated getting better. But I always had this tickling feeling in the back of my mind. What if I hadn't fallen after day 173, was that my Yosef Hatzadik moment and I failed???

I decided to try again, it's been about a year now of trying again, never making it past 2-3 days but now I'm at day 12.

Sorry for the long post but I will continue b'ezras Hashem with why I feel like it will be better this time around and why I decided to post.

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Re: My Journey L'chaim Tovim
Posted by Trouble - 28 Jul 2022 19:10

[Lchaim Tovim wrote on 28 Jul 2022 18:48:](#)

Thank you YFM, Connected and Avrohom.

It's not so much that I really care about how they could do it and not me. I think it's more the confusion I feel. ?I'll try to express the mumble jumble in my mind but I'm not sure how coherent it will be.

I took off my browser and filtered everything as those were obvious things that I had to do. I guess the question is regarding everything else-trying to put filters all over my life (taking off my glasses for example). Why am I being so extreme in all these areas? **this question doesn't seem to be addressed to us.** It's because I feel that I am powerless over lust and I can't do what's "normal". I can't have access to these things and I have to be in fighting mode so that when temptation arises, I will be successful.

Or not.. **is this a question?**

Is all my obsessive prep that I am doing consuming me? **yes.** Is it causing me to think about situations of lust all day? **yes.** Am I burning myself out? **not necessarily; it depends upon the future.** Am I ready to do this for the rest of my life? **only you can answer this accurately, but my hunch is no.** What will I do when faced with a challenge I did not prepare for? **again, only you can answer this, and this one - even you can't provide a definite answer. my hunch says that in the near future, you will succeed, longer term, i'm not sure.**

But if I don't, **don't what?** how will I overcome temptation staring me in the face? What will I do when I am in a situation that I failed a thousand times before? **are you forgetting all about your past successes?**

Am I supposed to give up living like everyone else and having all these things **no** or am I supposed to give up living life like it's one big battlefield **i'm confused on the grammar** but then **if what happens?** what do I do?

I don't know if this makes any sense but...

there are too many questions to give just one answer, so please see replies above in bold and red.

after your next response, i am hoping i can give one clear answer (just because it may be clear does not mean that it's right).

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Re: My Journey L'chaim Tovim

Posted by Lchaim Tovim - 28 Jul 2022 19:19

Thanx. I guess it was mumble jumble.

I guess my questions are...

If I'm not in fighting mode, how do I fight when temptation comes up? I'm gonna get sucker punched if I let my defense down.

If I've fallen with something so many times in the past, how can I possibly have it (like whatsapp for example) or keep my glasses on etc?

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Re: My Journey L'chaim Tovim
Posted by Trouble - 28 Jul 2022 20:08

[Lchaim Tovim wrote on 28 Jul 2022 19:19:](#)

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i dislike the word 'fighting,' but the purpose of the 'fight' is to change how your insides work; that will either result in not having temptation at all or being tempted and overcoming even though you are not on the battlefield any longer. and it is for that very reason why eventually you may be able to use whatsapp and you may be able to walk into Jules on the deck with your glasses on.

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Re: My Journey L'chaim Tovim
Posted by YidFromMonsey - 28 Jul 2022 20:53

Had similar thoughts; powerlessness and fighting can't coexist, if you admit powerlessness that means you accept the fact that you're different than most people who aren't powerless, so while they CAN fight it if they choose to, people who are powerless CANNOT fight it off, period.

I know it's a hard pill to swallow my friend, I'm too sick to have had any other choice.

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Re: My Journey L'chaim Tovim
Posted by Vehkam - 28 Jul 2022 20:58

[Trouble wrote on 28 Jul 2022 20:08:](#)

[Lchaim Tovim wrote on 28 Jul 2022 19:19:](#)

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i dislike the word 'fighting,' but the purpose of the 'fight' is to change how your insides work; that will either result in not having temptation at all or being tempted and overcoming even though you are not on the battlefield any longer. and it is for that very reason why eventually you may be able to use whatsapp and you may be able to walk into Jules on the deck with your glasses on.

Once you have defined boundaries ingrained that you will not cross it may be possible to use the parts of WhatsApp that you deem appropriate. You should be able to walk in the street on a summer day without panicking. It is not about letting your guard down it is about gaining clarity about what you will and will not do and learning how to safeguard those commitments and values. Once you have that confidence and are not in crisis you can decide what is appropriate for you b

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Re: My Journey L'chaim Tovim
Posted by Sapy - 28 Jul 2022 21:44

Chaimy, This is a great question, and a somewhat sad one too.... but I do believe for most people, with a lustful history, the point is not of staying tempted but blocked. It requires some

inner work, of at least being able to live with an urge and not get scared, or heal what's the underlying cause that's pushing you to engage in those stuff.

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Re: My Journey L'chaim Tovim
Posted by frank.lee - 29 Jul 2022 01:45

Great questions! - Are you an eved Hashem or
Warning: Spoiler!

Is this avoda sustainable? Are you running away from temptation or fighting it and getting stronger?

I think you are an awesome healthy person, fighting by working on what is the right thing. That is not called running away. That would be to ignore the issue and not do the work.

Someone showed me that the Dubno Magid talks about this in parshas chukas on adam ki yamus baohel, towards the beginning. Check it out!!

Be a fighter, build up your muscles!

I once heard from a gadol - as much as we try to be careful and guard our eyes, like you say taking off glasses, we are still surrounded by the yhr, so keep fighting. Keep the fighter/winner mentality, not the victim, running away.

It is not so much which way you are walking, but your mindset while you walk...

And 1 more thing - you can be dan lekaf zehut that your friends all have filters on their phones...

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Re: My Journey L'chaim Tovim
Posted by Kavey - 29 Jul 2022 03:38

This sounds haughty as I write it so please forgive but for me it helps to center myself around Ratzon Hashem.

- Why do I have temptations others don't? I have an addictive personality...who created me that way? Hashem. So I accept who I am

- How do I hope to maintain over the long term? By taking pride in the moment. It's not a struggle it's an accomplishment where every second counts and then for me at least it's looking back on the mountain I've been climbing and seeing how far I've come and not wanting to lost it.

- Burn out. I think you recognize this but for me it's very important to recognize that it's Ratzon Hashem that I take care of my mood. When I have stress at work (which happens frequently) I try to ask myself whether Hashem wants me to be stressed about this and then also considering that He's the one truly orchestrating my parnassa it helps me get my mind out of the situation (also helps me justify taking a break).

- How do you deal with situations? That's where the mentors and partners come in. You were the one who reached out to the chevra and got Trouble to commit to a weekly conf call which I unfortunately missed. I think you know what to do there

- Whatsapp I would maybe say a bit differently from Vehkam. I think being that you've been around the block there is room to 'dip your toes in the water' and see if you can navigate/have changed at all or get out quickly imho

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Re: My Journey L'chaim Tovim
Posted by Lchaim Tovim - 29 Jul 2022 14:19

Thank you guys!

@Trouble, you wrote "the purpose of the 'fight' is to change how your insides work; that will either result in not having temptation at all or being tempted and overcoming even though you are not on the battlefield any longer." Does that mean that while eventually I will hopefully leave fighting mode but for now that's the way it's supposed to be in order to change my insides, or am I supposed to be working somehow on my insides?

@yid from monsey I am absolutely willing to say that I am powerless and I guess that's why i'm in fight or flight mode. I'm to scared that if I am in a situation that there will be temptation that I will fall. That's why i'm doing my bet to try to avoid these situations.

@Vehkam you wrote "It is not about letting your guard down it is about gaining clarity about what you will and will not do and learning how to safeguard those commitments and values" What do you mean by learning how to safeguard those commitments and values?

@Sapy, I definetely want to learn how to live with the urge, I guess I don't feel that I'm there yet and just trying to avoid everything

@franklee It's interesting, I don't have any OCD tendencies in any other areas, I'm a pretty chilled guy as a whole. It's just with this whole lust thing, feeling that it controls me instead of me controlling it which is leading me to try to block it.

@kavey, that does not sound haughty at all. thanx for the chizuk

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Re: My Journey L'chaim Tovim

Posted by Trouble - 29 Jul 2022 14:41

[Lchaim Tovim wrote on 29 Jul 2022 14:19:](#)

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answering the question that was addressed to me: that depends on what method you decide to use. if you choose the 'fighting' method, then yes, you will be fighting and not actively working on your insides, as you might be doing a 'breath-holding' experiment. it does work for some. that

is the theory behind the 'swearing off' concept and the '90-days' streak thingy. or you can actively work on your insides by implementing a program regiment, such as f2f, sa, therapy, meetings, mussar, 12 steps, mentors, book reading, etc.

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Re: My Journey L'chaim Tovim
Posted by Sapy - 29 Jul 2022 14:51

Troub, is there a call? Did I miss that post?

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Re: My Journey L'chaim Tovim
Posted by Lchaim Tovim - 29 Jul 2022 14:59

answering the question that was addressed to me: that depends on what method you decide to use. if you choose the 'fighting' method, then yes, you will be fighting and not actively working on your insides, as you might be doing a 'breath-holding' experiment. it does work for some. that is the theory behind the 'swearing off' concept and the '90-days' streak thingy. or you can actively work on your insides by implementing a program regiment, such as f2f, sa, therapy, meetings, mussar, 12 steps, mentors, book reading, etc.

f2f, I started already. Therapy/SA not gonna happen right now, would definitely want to try without it. Mussar hasn't helped (although I do connect to R' Moshe weinberger's chaburas yosef hatzadik) Regarding the 12 steps, I started reading the white book but don't understand it practically. That is something that I would actively like to do. If you have any book recommendations, fire away.

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Posted by Trouble - 29 Jul 2022 15:53

[Sapy wrote on 29 Jul 2022 14:51:](#)

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god-willing next week; if there are preferable dates and times from folks, you can write them here.

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Re: My Journey L'chaim Tovim
Posted by Sapy - 29 Jul 2022 16:14

I think F2F has some great ideas, how did it work for you?

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