

36 days....(no) koach

Posted by ovadia - 07 Jan 2010 15:14

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Today I updated the chart to 36 days. But its been such a quiet day at work. I really hate having to write this. I just hate feeling so dependant. Why can't I just manage on my own ? I feel so vulnerable and so exposed. But if I don't write then I feel myself thinking "Its only you. Big deal. So you will start the count again. Anyway everyone else seem to have falls eventually." I feel like the old Chizuk is still there but I need a new Chidush. I have been thinking the whole afternoon "break my record or not ??" I just don't have the koach to continue battling. I want to go to sleep and wake up when it is over. Its horrible.

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Re: 36 days....(no) koach

Posted by ovadia - 16 Jun 2010 11:57

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[Tried-123 wrote on 15 Jun 2010 11:48:](#)

I mean look at Ovadia, he has come such a long way, he is so much better equipped to deal with the problem, he has gained life-lasting skills...

But what kills him his that he fell once or twice...

C'mon, this is war... You lost one or two battles but you in the big picture you are conquering worlds... why focus on the one or two failures?

Tried, I love your straightforwardness, but let me explain myself. What kills me is not because I have the all or nothing approach. I really hope that I am more mature than that. I have other points that bother me.

Originally what bothered me was the fact that after a long clean period i really felt that I had got lust out of my system and that it was beneath my dignity. After all when I picture myself now – when I am in a good matzav - acting out it really is absurd. It really does not fit in with who I am.

Obviously I was being naive

Ok so I accepted that I am still an addict. Now I had a new problem. I looked back and tried to understand how I fell. I realised that it was a combination of the unavoidable pritzus day after day and probably a moment of emotional weakness. Click here, click there etc and it was like I was possessed. **That feeling** is what kills me; the feeling of being taken over and of almost helplessness.

Then after the acting out. The mood does not just disappear. So I keep on going doing the daily motions; daavening etc but with what I think is a genuine feeling of timtum halev, a feeling of a spiritual blockage (maybe just imagined) and I feel incapable of snapping out of it.

Besides for that, yes there is a certain amount of "guilt" feeling. I know that in Attitude #26 it says: The Lechevitcher Rebbe (a student of R' Shlomo of Karlin) once went as far as to say that even if a person just killed someone and the knife is still dripping with blood, and he feels unable to stand up and daven Mincha (the afternoon service) with all his strength and heart, then he has not yet tasted from the waters of Chassidus!"

But I am unable to relate to this. It seems to me callous after acting out to just carry on life as usual.

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Re: 36 days....(no) koach  
Posted by ZemirosShabbos - 16 Jun 2010 17:02

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hi ovadia,

the feeling of helplessness and being taken over by a outside force may well be just that. the nature of this addiction is that it exercises overwhelming power over us once it gets in the door. meaning that once we have the feelings of restlessness and neediness the lust presents itself as the easiest and most effective remedy for the situation and we cannot fight it. **we are not powerful enough.** we need to sidestep and parry. we need to give the struggle over to Hashem. tell Him exactly that: "I have this feeling of desire/lust/itch and i cannot fight it, please hashem take the fight from me, you can battle it, i can't". while i do not understand how this works, the fact is that it does.

what i have found for myself about the feelings after a fall is that i feel like 2 cents (or worse). but if you think about it, when we did not fall and had a "good day", how do we feel then? do we feel that we can go to Hashem with a shopping list of requests because we were so "good"? we can never fully adequately fulfill our responsibilities towards Hashem or our fellow man, there is always the missing detail, the missing ahava and yirah, the vested interests, etc. So in essence when we have a fall we might have a sense of what we are actually "worth".

the point is that Hashem loves you and accepts you and wants to give you what you need even at that point and that won't change if you had a "good" day or not. i once saw in Arvei Nachal (forgot which parsha) that someone who after davening or learning well feels that they are deserving and praiseworthy has not even touched the beginning of avodas hashem. we are all bozos on the bus. we should be "humble and happy" as Barditchev would say. humble because we know what our true value is and happy because we have Hashem's unconditional love.

how much more beloved in His eyes is someone who does battle and refuses to throw in the towel even when they are battered and broken.

hope this helps in some way

zemiros

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Re: 36 days....(no) koach

Posted by ur-a-jew - 16 Jun 2010 22:56

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Reb Ovadiah. Yes there is no reason for anyone to drop the title simply because you've fallen. The possuk says Sheva Yipal Tzaddik V'Kum. It doesn't say Sheva Yipal the no longer a Tzaddik V'Kum. You've picked yourself up and your moving on, that's what Tzadikim do. So you fit the bill.

I've only been on the site for little more than a week. I read through you whole thread yesterday and I have to say I was quite inspired.

I admit however that I did cringe slightly when I read in your 90 day post "I am sure that there are so many low level addicts out there like me, that don't need therapy or SA groups, just a healthy perspective and attitude, support and communication, realization that you are not alone or the only one and to be given the opportunity to talk from their heart." I cringed because while I would like to believe that I am also a low-level addict and I could make it without going the whole nine yards; I've learned from my wife who is in OA that an addict is an addict is an addict. Whether your low, medium or high level, you're an addict and therefore you need the whole program. Otherwise, it's just not going to work. Thus, while I was saddened to see the ultimate fall, my own feeling is that it is better to learn the lesson sooner rather than later. I am no one to really talk but the 12 steps is the way to go. I see it with people who call my wife. The one's who go half way never make it. If you look at the people that have stayed clean that is what they are doing.

Finally, my partner and I have a system that when we are feeling weak we email the other and wait at certain amount of time during which the otherone opens a dialogue. I find that if you stay committed to it, it is very effective.

Good luck on your continued journey. You are in my tefillos.

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Re: 36 days....(no) koach  
Posted by Dov - 17 Jun 2010 02:09

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*My turn to be the colorful one:*

Thank you Ovadia, you have helped me tremendously.

[ovadia wrote on 16 Jun 2010 11:49:](#)

Thanks Dov, but I hope that wasn't just to make me feel better. It is beyond me how I have helped you.

It brings me closer to being honest every time I read or hear a person sincerely admitting the truth about themselves. So thanks!

....a paradox: After I have acted out, do I say to myself "your intensity in daavening is just a cover up, just be normal" but then I feel that I am being callous about the fall, which is the reason for the intensity; it is a sort of statement to HaShem that I know that I have been bad and I am being serious about it.

If you are certain that you really could stop if you tried harder, then more power to you. But if you are like me and come to see that you are simply unable to successfully stop - and that anything less than stopping completely will ruin your life, so it's not an option....then you will have to accept that you are not bad, at all....but ill. Very ill. I believe be'emunah sh'leima that I have a disease that by all appearances is chronic, fatal, and terminal. Its symptoms are an allergy to lust and fantasy, an obsession with it, and a tendency to gravitate toward it even though it will destroy my marriage, job, standing in the community and olam haba. I am in serious trouble.

But am I sooooo bad - evil - that I prefer these things - am I mechaven limrod Bo? No. That I know. I am a nice and good-hearted man...that's why my habit has me so upset in the first place! But it has no bearing on making me "strong enough" to stop....cuz I am not, for some reason. I am an addict.

If this does not describe you, then as ai said before, more power to you and Yivorech'cha Hashem! But id it is you too, then I hope you will quit looking at yourself in an untrue way - that you are bad. Cuz if you are seeing *sheker*, you will not get *Emess* in return.

The question is if we say to HaShem that we are deeply sorry even though we Know that it is going to happen again, is that meaningless?

Not to be cruel nor apikorsish, c"v, my feeling is that since Emess is *chosamo* shel HaKB"H, the sincerity of a tefillah may not matter as much as the Truth of it. In other words: Why do so many of us not get help from Hashem when we call out to Him and end up acting out on lust over and over anyway? And by the same token, how is it that so many guys in recovery of some sort tell us that Hashem always answers and helps them? Voss izz?!

The answer might be that until one has an accurate and honest perspective of exactly what their prognosis or disease really *is*, their tefillos are actually something like, "Hashem, please help me stop *so that I will never actually have to give it up!*" or, "I want to be a kadosh - like the tzadikim, so save me from this masturbation and that porn image I saw and can't get out of my mind now - and I promise I will try to be good next time!"...gevalt! I have been there a hundred times!!

"Saving" us then would certainly just *worsen* our problem and our prideful and misguided belief that we do not need to make *real* changes and that we *can* keep on living the same...then it'll be curtains for sure. Hashem really loves us ***that*** much. So, you may have answered yourself!

Hatzlocha!

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Re: 36 days....(no) koach  
Posted by ZemirosShabbos - 18 Jun 2010 15:51

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hi ovadia, how are things doing?

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Re: 36 days....(no) koach  
Posted by Dov - 18 Jun 2010 17:38

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Did the green writing scare you away?

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Re: 36 days....(no) koach  
Posted by ovadia - 21 Jun 2010 10:52

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Dov,

Thank you as usual for your thought provoking comments. After thinking about what you wrote here are my thoughts from a different perspective.

I calculated rationally two of the different reactions I feel after acting out.

Option no. 1: HaShem is angry with me. I had better intensify my daavening and hopefully He will see that I am sincere and let me off.

Option no. 2: I feel so guilty/dejected/depressed that I fell. This causes me to feel that I have damaged my relationship with HaShem. If I intensify my daavening I will feel better with myself.

Both of these attitudes are totally wrong and border on kfira. Firstly, HaShem neither benefits from our good deeds nor is He affected in any way by our bad deeds. He has no reactions to our actions; He does not get angry because we disobeyed His wish nor does He become happy by our good deeds.

The idea of intensifying our Avodas haShem in order to "appease" HaShem is totally wrong. The Netziv calls this bribery of HaShem and is what is meant by the Posuk;

?? ??? ?' ????????.....??? ?? ??? ???? What does this Posuk mean? How is it possible to bribe HaShem? The answer is that the posuk is referring to one who thinks that by intensifying his

Avodas Hashem he will gain favour in HaShem's eyes.

So what is the correct approach. Has my relationship with HaShem changed because of my fall? The answer is that it depends on the relationship beforehand. If we have the give and take attitude then the answer is that we will feel like I wrote before. But if we view HaShem as our Father who loves us and only wants to give to us then even if we fell the relationship remains the same; he still loves us as before. So what has changed?

What has changed is me, not HaShem c"v. Yes, I fell, He still loves me, but I "disappointed" my Taate. I abused the tools I was given and now I have to pick up the pieces. But He is always there, maybe even more now than ever because He wants me to pull through even more than I want to myself. Giving up on Him is the biggest mistake possible.

BTW obviously the green writing completely overwhelmed me because I completely missed what Zemiros wrote before you. After I wrote my post I saw it and I realised that I am not saying anything new. Baruch Shekeevantee!

[ZemirosShabbos wrote on 16 Jun 2010 17:02:](#)

the point is that Hashem loves you and accepts you and wants to give you what you need even at that point and that won't change if you had a "good" day or not. i once saw in Arvei Nachal (forgot which parsha) that someone who after davening or learning well feels that they are deserving and praiseworthy has not even touched the beginning of avodas hashem. we are all bozos on the bus. we should be "humble and happy" as Barditchev would say. humble because we know what our true value is and happy because we have Hashem's unconditional love.

how much more beloved in His eyes is someone who does battle and refuses to throw in the towel even when they are battered and broken.

zemiros

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Re: 36 days....(no) koach  
Posted by ZemirosShabbos - 22 Jun 2010 15:45

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hi ovadia, hope you are well

You would be better reading the green writing as it is written by a true veteran rather than a

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neophyte bozo like me.

Re: 36 days....(no) koach  
Posted by yehoshua - 23 Jun 2010 13:13

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I am reading the thread a bit and want to say THANK YOU DOV, your words are to the point, you give courage. No mistake about it, it is an illness. And there is a cure. In this process perhaps we will find our true self and Hashem, both changeless and eternal.

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Re: 36 days....(no) koach  
Posted by ovadia - 23 Jun 2010 13:19

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[ur-a-jew wrote on 16 Jun 2010 22:56:](#)

Good luck on your continued journey. You are in my tefillos.

Thank you UAJ for your warm post

[ur-a-jew wrote on 16 Jun 2010 22:56:](#)

I admit however that I did cringe slightly when I read in your 90 day post "I am sure that there are so many low level addicts out there like me, that don't need therapy or SA groups, just a healthy perspective and attitude, support and communication, realization that you are not alone or the only one and to be given the opportunity to talk from their heart." I cringed because while I would like to believe that I am also a low-level addict and I could make it without going the whole nine yards; I've learned from my wife who is in OA that an addict is an addict is an addict. Whether your low, medium or high level, you're an addict and therefore you need the whole program. Otherwise, it's just not going to work. Thus, while I was saddened to see the ultimate fall, my own feeling is that it is better to learn the lesson sooner rather than later. I am no one to really talk but the 12 steps is the way to go. I see it with people who call my wife. The one's who go half way never make it. If you look at the people that have stayed clean that



is what they are doing.

Yes I am beginning to believe this although for some reason it is very difficult for me to accept. Maybe it is because I have always sincerely believed that HaShem gives us the Kochos to overcome our Nisyonos on our own. Now I am being told that there are some struggles which cannot be overcome on our own. I suppose as Dov says if I am sick then I need a doctor. It is just very hard to accept.

[ur-a-jew wrote on 16 Jun 2010 22:56:](#)

Finally, my partner and I have a system that when we are feeling weak we email the other and wait at certain amount of time during which the otherone opens a dialogue. I find that if you stay committed to it, it is very effective.

Could you please explain what you mean?

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Re: 36 days....(no) koach

Posted by ur-a-jew - 27 Jun 2010 04:34

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[ovadia wrote on 23 Jun 2010 13:19:](#)

Yes I am beginning to believe this although for some reason it is very difficult for me to accept. Maybe it is because I have always sincerely believed that HaShem gives us the Kochos to overcome our Nisyonos on our own. Now I am being told that there are some struggles which cannot be overcome on our own. I suppose as Dov says if I am sick then I need a doctor. It is just very hard to accept.

I think the whole concept of ezer k'neigdo shows us that there are certain nisyonos in life that we are meant not to get through alone but rather with the assistance of others.

[ovadia wrote on 23 Jun 2010 13:19:](#)

Could you please explain what you mean?

When one of us sees that we are overcome with the desire to act out we email the other and tell them how we are feeling. At that point the partner within a short period of time will email back either words of encouragement, logic or just engage in conversation. Ain adom choteh elah em cain nichnos bo ruach shtus. By bringing another person into the equation who is not under the same stress and who can think rationally it is a way to counteract the ruach shtus and can be very successful in preventing a fall. Often just the back and forth and the fact that you have a listening ear is enough a distraction to prevent a fall. Obviously for it to work you have to initiate the conversation. While the system is not foolproof, I believe that it has worked to prevent some major falls.

If you don't have a partner feel free to PM should the need arise. Continued hatzlacha.

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Re: 36 days....(no) koach  
Posted by trying123 - 27 Jun 2010 18:59

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Ovadia,

I love what you wrote from the Meshech Chochma...

The way you dissect your struggles and learn from them inspires me....

I know you dont like compliments so I'll stop here...

much success....

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Re: 36 days....(no) koach

Posted by ZemirosShabbos - 09 Jul 2010 04:43

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hi ovadia,

how are you doing?

zemiros

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just wanted to rescue your thread from second-page status