

victory

Posted by rashkebehag - 06 May 2009 21:15

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I have struggled my whole life. not with extreme addiction but always was tempted to peek into books in drug stores or magazine stands, i never bought anything but the peeking and looking was a terrible experience. When i heard of the internet and its dangers it only made me curious. When I got internet The dam burst. Again, I never downloaded any thing but whatever was free i would look at and I learnt a lot of disgusting things. I tried Covenant Eyes and it helps but i lie to my partner that is was one of my workers etc. there have always been ups and downs in my struggle. Recently my son brought home a book about shmiras enaim and I read it and got a lot of chizuk. Then I discovered this site. So, with both things together and covenant eyes I am pretty clean now and don't even feel the pull. of course one is never free and can always fall but right now i feel no urge to click on to any thing bad. I have subscribed to the chizuk line that u email and i read it every day. you bring down amazing things. yasher koach

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Re: victory

Posted by rashkebehag - 10 May 2009 16:54

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berdichev, you are really great in trying to help us all. I want to report that I am starting my third clean week. the posts, and reading all the work that people are doing in this area is alone enough to help me keep it up. I only want to know where the 90 day goal came from . should one feel safe after that milestone or is it just a goal to aim for and then one must start again?

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Re: victory

Posted by the.guard - 10 May 2009 17:21

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Dear Rashkebahag,

Please read Tool #8 of the Guard-Your-Eyes Handbook

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Re: victory

Posted by Ykv\_schwartz - 10 May 2009 17:28

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[rashkebehag wrote on 10 May 2009 16:54:](#)

I only want to know where the 90 day goal came from . should one feel safe after that milestone or is it just a goal to aim for and then one must start again?

After 90 days the battle becomes much easier, as your brain begins to get rewired. But, in truth, it may take years to fully rewire your brain. In short, a person should never feel safe. Chazal say, as you know, never believe in yourself until the day of your death. The Rabeinu Yona points out in the fifth medreiga of teshuvah, daaga, how crucial it is for a baal teshuvah to never feel safe from sin. He explains that we should always feel worried that the potential of repeat aveira is possible. He concludes by writing the that he who feels assured after repenting, has a greater chance to return to sin. Perhaps at a later time I will elaborate on his beautiful words and explain them in greater detail. But it is all explicit. Take a look.

As for me, I went six month completely clean without any urges and then fell. I attribute that fall to lots of things. One of the greatest causes of my fall was this Rabeinu Yona. I did not fully internalize the midah of daaga that makes a person always conscious of his own past.

I know this is hard to swallow for some people, but this is the truth from our Rabbis. But, great concern should be taken to first work on the the earlier steps of teshuvah before even thinking of this yet. And the first step for an addict is just simply azivas hachet, which goes far beyond than simply not doing aveiros.

May your search for perfection and teshuvah see no bounds!

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Re: victory

Posted by bardichev - 10 May 2009 18:31

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Dear rashkebehag.

I am so thrilled that you are starting your third week that is really terrific. When I was in my first 2 weeks I monitored myself hourly. When I started the 3rd week I kept track on greater intervals. To be perfectly honest my goal was to come into Pesach without falling. 40 days was not even on my horizon I actually hand drew a chart which only had 30 on it. I felt that if I were to make a goal that was too much I would never keep it.

I would like to say there are a few things that I can attribute my success so far Bli Ayin Horah. (Some of this might be repetitive from other posts, sorry)

A. I was able to break free.

That I attribute to all that I read and internalized here on the forum and on the site. I realized I'm an addict I realized I was in a self-destructive situation. I realized that other people who sound so normal and rational had the same problem and are dealing with it successfully.

B. I was able to stay clean.

This part is the hardest part because that is where all the work is. Staying clean is a struggle I feel the part that makes it doable is that we are able to post one another in real time. Plus this forum replaced my addiction not that I have any confidence to say I trust myself, but I do feel that by being constantly in touch with people who recognize my problems can help me deal in a positive way.

C. Momentum

There is a real vibrancy here you can feel the excitement and energy. The wall of honor is a great motivator. The fact that you have to monitor yourself and you see the results up on the board is a terrific way to keep up the good work.

D. Communication

What I was suffering from as an addict is that I thought I was the only lonely person on this

planet who is struggling with shemiras einayim .The fact that I can communicate with other people who are open and honest who are dealing with the same issues gives me the proper frame of mind to stay focused on that goal.

#### E. Love

What many people have to deal with is differentiating between love and lust. Lust is the wild spontaneous sensation of self gratification. Love is the opposite. On this site we are taught to control the addiction of lusting remove its veneer and search what you really are looking for which is love.

#### F. Hope

On this site everyone is given a second chance. This is the optimization of HABAA LITAHAR MISAYYIN OISO.

Finally to answer your original question I don't know where 90 days came from but it is an excellent motivator.

Humble and happy

Bardichev

p.s. this post was checked by spell-check

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Re: victory

Posted by the.guard - 10 May 2009 18:31

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Dear Yaakov, the Rabbeinu Yona's approach is for normal people. **But**, as you will see in today's e-mail (#474), "daagah" is **the opposite** of the way it works best for most true addicts :-)  
As you yourself say, Azivas Hachet - breaking the vicious cycle - that is the only concern at first. And even later, Daaga may not be appropriate for us... (notice I say "for us").

See also #13 and #20 in the "Attitude Handbook".

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Re: victory

Posted by the.guard - 10 May 2009 18:36

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Wow, Barditchev! What a beautiful post! Would make a great CHizuk e-mail :-)

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Re: victory

Posted by bardichev - 10 May 2009 19:18

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Wow, Barditchev! What a beautiful post! Would make a great CHizuk e-mail :-)

what a compliment. I just edited it .

Tizku limitzvos

h&h

bardichev

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Re: victory

Posted by Ykv\_schwartz - 10 May 2009 19:35

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[guardureyes wrote on 10 May 2009 18:31:](#)

Dear Yaakov, the Rabbeinu Yona's approach is for normal people. **But**, as you will see in today's e-mail (#474), "daagah" is **the opposite** of the way it works best for most true addicts :-)  
As you yourself say, Azivas Hachet - breaking the vicious cycle - that is the only concern at first.

And even later, Daaga may not be appropriate for us... (notice I say "for us").

See also #13 and #20 in the "Attitude Handbook".

Guard, I love you a lot, but Rabeinu Yona is not conveying an approach, he is conveying a truth. I read today's email and I did not understand what you are referring to. Why would daaga not be appropriate for us. On the contrary; a person who was addicted for 15+ years (that's me), to think he is free from sin and can go back to life normally must be an utter fool. And I stated above, I was foolish. I thought that I am free forever. And I failed. The life of a baal teshuva is not the same life of a non baal teshuvah. Let me present a parable. If a person is a reckless driver and then ends up in a car accident, don't you think he will drive his car with extra care going forward? He realizes the potential of danger inherent in his actions and he therefore takes proper precaution. He now has confidence as he drives his car, but still drives with a careful eye.

As I stated above, a person needs to be ready to absorb this. Step by step. And to concentrate on too many item at once will lead to downfall. I have lots of patience in my growth. But to run away from it, is missing the boat of teshuvah and life completely.

And I do not think that Rav Nachman disagrees with this. I doubt he will disagree with Dovid Hamelech. Rav Nachman was a very deep thinker, and to quote him too loosely can often be dangerous. For instance, he is well known for his other statement about the terrible sin of sadness, especially when it comes to sin. Does Rav Nachman deny the concept of charata? Of course not. If you look the Rav Nachman inside you will see he is discussing a very fundamental issue of teshuvah. He points out that there is a tightrope syndrome when it comes to charata. On one hand one NEEDS to regret; and on the other hand he must make sure not to get depressed. He gives advice on how to do this. The same goes for daaga. Daaga is a tricky thing. And daaga is the root of creating Gedarim. On one hand one must realize the potential danger inherent in his actions as has been proven from his own past actions; and on the hand he must have confidence that he will not fail. Just look at the man on the tightrope at the top of the page. Realizing that he can easily fall, makes him walk much more carefully. You think he walks on the rope the same way he walks on the street. If he did that, he will fall. That is daaga.

As I stated, many people have a hard time swallowing this. But Rabeinu Yona calls this foolish

to not have it. He also writes that a person is sure to fail by not having it. So why would we want to ignore the words of our Rabbis without any proof that things have changed? Guard, I am curious. Do you honestly disagree with this? Do you think that a "*cured*" addict can feel free from sin forever? Do you believe that is what Hashem wants from us? If I am not mistaken, the whole backbone of 12 steps is the realization that we are always addicts.

rashkebehag,

I am terribly sorry for bringing this into your thread. My main point was just to bring out that we should never feel cured from this, as I brought from our Holy Rabbis. I also mentioned that it does get easier after 90 days. But, actual rewiring the brain, and destroying the neuron connections in the brain that are associated with pleasure may take years to undo, depending on the severity of the addiction. There are people who attend 12 steps for many years after being "cured". Regarding the actual avodah of daaga, I agree with Guard that at the elementary levels a person should focus solely on azivah, as I stated above. But this goes far beyond just refraining from sin. This means removing the mind from sin. As you stated so beautifully above, bringing ourselves to the madreiga of not wanting to sin. 12 steps helps a person focus on this.

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Re: victory

Posted by mggsbms - 10 May 2009 19:38

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well said berdichev !!

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Re: victory

Posted by the.guard - 10 May 2009 20:25

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You are right Yakov, but I don't think we are disagreeing. We need to worry to make sure that the tightrope is tied securely before we start walking on it. But he who actually walks the tightrope worrying, will fall. Instead, we need learn to lean completely on Hashem, as in the story of R'Meir Premishlaner in e-mail #452 [here](#).

As Dov was saying in today's e-mail. Don't "worry" if we are doing Teshuvah properly or not, don't worry if we are tzadikim or not, leave all those things to Hashem. Instead, just walk with

Him in perfect faith. **Don't look down** or you may fall. Don't look how much farther you have to go, or you may fall. Just put one foot in front of the other for right now. And that's easy!

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Re: victory

Posted by Ykv\_schwartz - 10 May 2009 20:49

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[guardureyes wrote on 10 May 2009 20:25:](#)

We need to worry to make sure that the tightrope is tied securely before we start walking on it.

It is hard for me to understand your message through your poetic parable. What exactly is the tightrope in your parable. Isn't the tightrope life? Do we have a choice? Isn't the tzadik the one who who realizes that his whole life is one big tightrope. Isn't that the whole point of Rav Nachman? The GRA writes regrading the Yesod V'Shoresh H'Avodah that he was zoche to attain such a masdreia?

[guardureyes wrote on 10 May 2009 20:25:](#)

But he who actually walks the tightrope worrying, will fall.

Ashei Adam M'fached Tamid!

[guardureyes wrote on 10 May 2009 20:25:](#)



Instead, we need learn to lean completely on Hashem, as in the story of R'Meir Premishlaner in e-mail #452

He who leans on Hashem constantly worries.

[guardureyes wrote on 10 May 2009 20:25:](#)

As Dov was saying in today's e-mail. Don't "worry" if we are doing Teshuvah properly or not, don't worry if we are tzadikim or not, leave all those things to Hashem. Instead, just walk with Him in perfect faith. **Don't look down** or you may fall.

Why Not? The Rabeinu Yona says not such nice thing about people with such an attitude. Why should a person listen to Dov over Rabeinu Yona. No offense. But we are not exactly comparing apples to apples. Teshuva is our commandment. Does Hashem put tefillin on for you? Does Hashem say brachos for you. The same goes for everything in life. Hashem wants our efforts, the results are up to him.

[guardureyes wrote on 10 May 2009 20:25:](#)

Don't look how much farther you have to go, or you may fall. Just put one foot in front of the other for right now. And that's easy!

A true eved Hashem is only excited to look forward to all the years of growth ahead of him!

Shomer shared with us a very important GR"A. We must not forget it. The GRA writes that our whole purpose in this world is to fix one particular thing. This is the one area that we are having the most difficulty. We are to devote our whole lives to fixing it. That is why Hashem sent us

here as a Gilgul. To ignore it, would be missing out on our mission in this world. Yes, you need to hold on to Hashem and come close to him. But that is like the people who want only "spirituality" in life and forget about all the mitzvos.

Now back to main discussion. Guard, do you believe that the brain can be rewired after 90 days? Can he assume that life is back to normal? Can he assume that he like all other people? Does a baal teshuvah need to act differently? Should he forget about his past and pretend like it never happened? These are fundamental questions.

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Re: victory

Posted by the.guard - 10 May 2009 21:15

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I wish you would have time Yakov, to read the handbook. But as you didn't seem to have time yet, I will quote:

*We may have tried to do Teshuvah many times in the past, but the standard model of Teshuva (Azivas Hachet, Charata and Kabbala al Haba) doesn't work for us very well anymore. Addiction is a type of disease, and our Sages understood the nature of addiction as Rebbe Asi said: "The Yetzer Hara in the beginning is compared to a strand of a spider web, and in the end like a rope that is used to tie cattle". Even more so, in this area where our Sages have said: "The more it is fed, the hungrier it gets". Our Sages also recognized that once a person repeats a particular sin a number of times "it becomes to him as if it is permitted". Therefore, the standard Teshuvah techniques are not usually sufficient in our case anymore. The nature of the addiction is analogous to someone standing on the railroad tracks while he watches the train bearing down on him, and yet he can't move himself out of the way. And as Rabbi Twerski puts it in his book "Addictive Thinking": We place our hands on the stove, get burned, and yet we feel compelled to do it again.*

*Therefore on GYE, instead of the standard Teshuvah model, we begin to change our entire attitude. We learn the tools and techniques of how to sidestep the Lust, instead of trying to fight it head on. And we learn how to give our disease over to Hashem and live with His help, instead of trying to use our own strengths to fight something so much stronger than us. With the proper guidance, we start to see a genuine change in ourselves that we never believed was possible.*

Rabbeinu Yona was not talking to people with a disease. And you, Yakov, although you once

were an addict, there is something different about your experience. As you said yourself many times, Hashem seems to have done a real miracle for you and saved you completely from lust. I have seen this phenomenon with another two people on this forum, both of whom had ADHD. It may be connected. But in normal cases of "addiction", we need to take a different approach than the standard Teshuvah model.

As far as your question if our brain gets rewired. The more distance we put between us and the addiction, the easier it gets. There was one recent scientific study that showed that 90 days can change an addictive thinking pattern.

**Please read tool #8 of the handbook, as well as Principle #1 in the Attitude book.**

People, please I'm begging you. Read the handbooks. I spent a full month on them, I was up many nights without sleep to finish them. Please read them. They are the foundation.

But not only that, I need your feedback! Help us perfect them. We are laying the foundations here for *Klal Yisrael* in this area, until Moshiach's time!

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Re: victory

Posted by Ykv\_schwartz - 10 May 2009 21:46

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Guard,

I actually did begin reading the handbooks. They are very well written and I hope to work through them slowly. They contain important lessons and I should not do it one shot. This is like doing chazara on all the yesodos I learned on GYE. Thank you.

The truth is that I had already read the paragraph you quoted. I was actually a bit disturbed with this paragraph. I was debating whether to contact you about it. Apparently, you do not understand what teshuva is. Teshuvah is not an approach or a method of removing oneself from addiction or from sin for that matter. It is how to come close to Hashem and react when one resolves to remove himself. It is true that the actual methods of fighting one's yetzer hara are not so readily available in the words of chazal. The cheshbon Hanefesh already makes this observation. That is why people need therapists, 12 steps, GYE and the likes. Once a person is free, he needs to begin to grow from his aveiros. He needs to have charata and vidui. This

builds a person and brings him close to hashem.

Of course Rabeinu Yona was talking to people with diseases. All sinners have diseases. And like I said, many of his words apply more to addicts than someone else. In fact, it was hard for me to relate to Rabeinu Yona until I realized that I was an addict. You see the Rabeinu Yona's 20 principles builds upon redoing life. This is very similar to 12 steps. Most people who casually sin do not feel that their aveiros are any major impediment to their avodas Hashem. Not so for us. We all see this addiction as our number one enemy that blocks us from hashem. Many people on this site describe their yearning to come close to hashem and they just cannot do it. They need to be healed.

Why would an addict have less of a responsibility of coming close to hashem and doing teshuvah. Is there a source for this?

Now, Guard please explain. Do you disagree with the Rabeinu Yona? Should a post-addict feel safe, as rashkebehag asked originally?

I end by reminding everyone here that I learned the hard way. I went six months clean from sin. No urges. And I felt **safe**. Nothing will happen to me. Yom Kippur came coming close to my six months streak and I told hashem, "no more". The second I took my eye off the ball, I was a goner. Two weeks later I fell deep. And it wasn't until I find GYE, three months later that I was able to pick myself back up. So I am talking from experience. The Rabeinu Yona was talking to me. Never feel safe. And there is not need to feel embarrassed of our pasts: **I am proud to be an addict. And I accept it with faith.**

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Re: victory

Posted by the.guard - 11 May 2009 08:14

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Yakov, you are a very holy Jew and I never cease to be amazed at your sincerity, honesty and determination, and how you have learned from the past and internalized so well how dangerous and insidious the addiction is.

Why would an addict have less of a responsibility of coming close to Hashem and doing teshuvah. Is there a source for this?

When someone is drowning, it won't help to stand there and explain to them how to swim, and how we need to be more careful before we enter water, etc... There's only one thing to do, and that is to throw him a life-saver and get him on shore. An addict is someone who is drowning, EVEN if he has managed to stay clean for many months. As we explained in Principle #1 in the Attitude book, once the addiction has advanced to a certain stage, with most people (not with you though for some reason): "once an addict, always an addict". Which means that when we are faced with lust or even fantasies, we are once again drowning and feel powerless. And in such a state, we have to use a "life-saver", which is learning to completely rely on Hashem and let HIM take care of the Yetzer Hara, and let HIM worry about our hearts, and if we are truly sincere or not, and if we are purified or not, etc... We just hold on to him for dear life.

Now I agree though, that for someone who already feels in control when faced with lust or fantasies, and I believe that describes you - Yakov, that the Rabbeinu Yona is an excellent source and tool for true and sincere Teshuvah, rebuilding our life, etc... Like you yourself wrote *"Once a person is free, he needs to begin to grow from his aveiros. He needs to have charata and vidui. This builds a person and brings him close to Hashem."*

But since we are talking on this forum to addicts who are not yet free - at least in most cases, I feel it is best to avoid words like "Ashrei Adam Mefached Tamid", Charata and Vidui, etc... Although these things can't hurt and are indeed a Mitzva, they are not the "life saver".

And as you are one of our greatest sources of Chizuk on this forum Yakov, I wanted to explain to you, Tzadik, that we need to teach people simply how to hold on to the life-saver. We have a disease, and we need to take the treatment **that works**. If we have a flu, we don't go to Rabbeinu Yona. We go to the doctor, even if he isn't religious. There are tools, and B"H they are "spiritual tools", that really work. These tools and concepts are so basic, that they are common to all religions. They are what makes us Human beings with a soul. And we need to learn how to use these basic tools **very well**, before we tell people about fear, worry, Charata, vidui, etc... (See number 10 of the attitude booklet, where we discuss that Yiras Shamayim is alone not going to be enough, but it can PUSH us to learn the proper tools that really WORK).

And that's why I find the experience of people like Dov so precious. They have learned to use

these "treatments" in such a deep and profound way. And today I plan on bringing the third part of Dov's post in the Chizuk e-mail, where he discusses this exact issue that we are discussing now. Should we be "scared rabbits" before the yetzer Hara? And if we are, does it help? And is that what Hashem wants? .... Stay tuned.

I truly value your spiritual power Yakov. But I honestly think that you are on a level one step **higher** than most of us here. Please don't see that as anything but a compliment :D

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