

Naftali's log

Posted by returner613 - 01 Nov 2010 10:35

[Note: this is a copy of my post from the Introduce-Yourself forum. I am placing it here as my initial entry for my 90-log. I don't promise to post updates every day, but do hope to do so a few times a week - or at the very least when significant things happen (either good or bad). I thank everyone for their support and hope to share good news with you.]

I am fairly new to GYE and this is my first post to the Forum.

I am a frum married man and have been struggling with this addiction for approximately twenty years (shortly after my bar-mitzva). The word 'struggling' can mean many things; in my case, some of the meanings are:

- the actual sin of MZ"L, the obvious things that precede it, and the **immense** spiritual damage involved
- a constant sense of shame and guilt, sometimes conscious sometimes sub-conscious... but always always there
- brief periods of progress, success and growth surrounded by longer and longer periods of darkness, failure and despair

If I blamed my problems entirely on the Internet - I would be lying. It is true that at this point, I *think* that about 95% of my SA current issues are triggered by internet usage. However, I had this problem way way before the internet existed.

My first MZ"L was a few months after my bar-mitzva. At the time, I thought nothing of it (actually, I remember being sort of proud). After a few weeks of experimentation, I began thinking that there may be something wrong with it; I did recall that my Father had told me not to ever touch myself there (probably some number of months before) but I figured that on a relative scale it was the same level of 'bad' as staying up way-way past my bedtime. How I wish that I would have asked more about it then...

Experimentation gave way to mild habit; I was pretty sure at that point that it was something weird and that I should stop - but figured that I could do that any time I wanted, so no big deal... Then about midway through 8th grade I found out. I was looking at an english Kitzur Shulchan

Oruch, probably studying for a test, and found a strange sounding entry in the index. Looked it up - sure enough it was talking about exactly what I had been doing - and I was shocked. According to what I read, I had been engaging in one of the worst possible sins. I was embarrassed but was also familiar with the idea of being a Shogeg... so I was filled with a resolve to stop immediately. But I didn't. Days dragged on to weeks, weeks to months, months to years. Having cable-tv in the house (with premium channels) when I was in high-school surely didn't help - *although in retrospect, just as the internet - I would not necessarily blame it as the root cause.* One time, my father even found out indirectly and had a talk with me. While I was deeply ashamed, I was relieved at the same time - since there was absolutely no way that I could do that again afterwards, right? Right? But no... We did have a few more talks afterwards, and soon enough I learned to lie just the right way for them to stop..

When I was in high school, I was absolutely convinced that there was no way I would continue doing that when I went to learn in Israel. That was not the case either, although towards the second part of the year - I read quite a bit on the topic (Reishis Chochma, etc) and bought a small collection of various Chassidic/Kabbalistic sefarim filled with various Tikkunim/Segulos/etc. Though I did very few of these tikkunim, I did achieve some level of growth, cried real tears, and mostly stopped for somewhere between two to three months. That was probably the longest period that I have ever been sober since.

When I went back to the states, the old habits came back quickly (even though I was not watching any tv anymore) and then - THE INTERNET.... While the result (MZ"L) was the same as before, the material was so much more vast. Whatever 'preferences' I had before - could be found within seconds. Anything you could think of could be found.... the abyss was complete.

When I was single, I was absolutely convinced that there was NO WAY that I would keep having this problem after getting married - I mean, how could I? Took about a month for it to come back in full force. Then I remember thinking that when my wife would get pregnant, there would be absolutely no way (I am somewhat familiar with some of the kabbalistic ramifications, so I figured there's no way I could do that then...) - but I didn't stop... Then when my son was born, that was the absolute end... but NO IT WASN'T! I don't want to go into details, but one time that really stands out in my mind is looking at porn while my wife and newborn son are sleeping in the same room. I don't need to go on, I'm sure you know where this is going.

I don't think that I've hit rock bottom yet.... I don't want to hit rock bottom. Although I have some tears in my eyes while writing these words - the truth is that over the years it has begun to hurt less and less. That scares me most of all, because if it hurts then there is at least still hope.

My Yom Kippurs are filled with remorse and kavona. I find that it's one of the few days when the shell opens up and the real me comes out. Every year, on THAT day, I find myself feeling like I finally came back, for the first and last time. Never again will I go back to the filth and darkness. Sometimes I make it to Hoshanah Rabba, more often not. This year I did B"H - but after reading what you guys define as falling, I certainly fell way before then (just not the final result).

Still, I did do something very different this year on Yom Kippur. I was a bit more honest with myself and with Hashem than usual. I told him straight out that while I have chorota, and never ever want to do this again - I know that I say this every year. I'm not stupid and I know plenty of practical ways to improve my situation (ranging from a serious daily accounting, daily mussar reading/chizuk - to seeing a therapist privately) but why WHY am I not taking these steps!? Hashem, you have to help me help myself - I don't want to be saying the same things again next year. (This is of course a dramatisation, the above words were not exactly my thoughts/words - but it was something to that effect...)

A few days before Hoshanah Rabbah, when I was very close to final breaking point, out of desperation I started typing a plea to Hashem into a google search (I know it sounds tacky, but I do that sometimes...) I don't remember the exact text of it, so will not attempt to reproduce it - but the general gist was how I was frustrated and wasn't meeting my obligations and goals. I don't remember there being any mention of MZ"L or related keywords.. Anyways, something really weird and amazing happened. Even before I clicked on Search - all the results on the page disappeared and the browser was trying to load a page from the guardyoueyes.com forum. It never loaded, but I figured that you don't get more of a direct answer than that - so I typed out the url and after ten minutes of reading felt my first breath or relief in years. Not relief that my problems were solved, but that this was solid proof that I'm not the only one out there and that THERE IS HOPE.

(This is completely an aside, not important to what I am writing, but I wanted to write a bit more about how I found GYE. I would not call the above a 'miracle' - although it is one to me on a personal level. I am a computer programmer, and specialize in web applications. So I kind of understand what happened - to a point. Google has a new feature called "Instant" which shows you results as you type your search. Also, I have a few virus-protection plugins that slightly change the content-results coming in from google. That together explains why all the content 'disappeared' from my screen before I even hit search (i.e. the sentence had so many keywords that google somehow narrowed it down to one site, then gave up, but the plugin was already trying to analyze it & got stuck.. or something like that). It doesn't explain why content from the GYE started automatically loading in the progress bar without my hitting anything though - and though I was not able to reproduce it after trying a bunch of times that day, I'm sure it that it was due to a google/plugin/firefox glitch. Except that it wasn't a glitch to me - to me it was Hashem reaching out to me and showing the way forward. One very practical point that comes out of this, personal inspiration aside, is why didn't I find GYE in the past; I use the internet fairly frequently - read blogs, news, etc... The answer, I think is that I don't really go on Jewish sites that much (other than debka.com - to whatever degree that's jewish). Perhaps there's a way to do an advertising campaign via Google AdWords that somehow targets orthodox men... I realize that this would not be simple to do but in any case food for thought & it's something that I would be glad to contribute to financially...)

Anyways - I've been using GYE 'lightly' for the past month. The first week was full of renewed resolve. Afterwards less and less, but all I was doing was randomly reading articles and entries in the handbook - not doing anything else. However, I think that I am ready to really jump in

now. Over the past week I have:

- signed up for daily chizuk emails (which I try to read, although not every day yet)
- downloaded the guidebooks
- started attending a weekly introductory phone group (Elya's)
- created a 90-day profile (have been clean 5 days now)
- requested a Sponsor (*From my communication with the parter-admin, it doesn't look like any sponsors are currently available. I'll hopefully be set up with a parter soon, so I'm looking forward to that. Still, if any of you reading know of a good Sponsor who you think would be available, please let me know! !*)
- joined the forum (obviously)
- installed & configured K-9 on my computer. (*I have not yet given the password to anyone. This is because I have very specialized uses for my computer, and need to make sure that I can use it for several weeks without any problems from the filter. After a month (maximum) once I am satisfied with the configuration - I will give the password over to either a partner/sponsor (assuming I have one by then) or to the password gabbai*)

Things that I plan to do in the near future:

- join a responsibility-group (in about a month)
- join the noon SA group (when they start a new cycle)
- possibly install an accountability program in addition to K-9 (*tried this in the past, but didn't have a good experience... if I get a partner/sponsor who I build a good relationship with, perhaps it will be a viable option*)
- possibly use some form of the Tapsik method described on the site
- work on true Teshuva (combination of SA steps + some Tikkunim that I am familiar with & have been planning on doing)
- if all above don't work out for over ~half a year - I will contact one of the professional therapists referred to on your site

I realize that this post was LOOONG... I just felt like I had to get it all out (or most of it, anyways) after keeping it bottled in for so long. If you made it this far I really appreciate it. Any advice and/or chizzuk would be greatly appreciated.

I cannot express how much appreciation I have for the people who made this site and community and continue to make it thrive. While we all have our missions in life, and don't necessarily always know what they are - I am SURE that you are making major roadwork in Shamayim. I hope to some day not only be thanking you but contributing as well - although there is so much work to be done beforehand...

Thank you again & chotzlocha to everyone here

- Naftali Z

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Re: Naftali's log

Posted by Yosef Hatzadik - 07 Dec 2010 17:11

Thats the spirit!

Draw on available resources & adapt them, touch 'em up a bit, make them match the ideal that we're striving for!!!!

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Re: Naftali's log

Posted by ZemirosShabbos - 07 Dec 2010 17:18

[Naftali Z wrote on 07 Dec 2010 17:08:](#)

Hope I didn't dissapoint you

not at all!

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Re: Naftali's log
Posted by Yosef Hatzadik - 07 Dec 2010 17:25

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Hatzlacha looking forward to getting to know you better.

Same here FF!

Thank you, and I totally hear what you're saying about studying the steps vs. living them. With mitzvos there is a huge difference between limud vs. assiya - and that extends to so many other questions in my mind regarding the steps, I'm at a point (I think anyways) where they are no longer in forefront - and I'm ready to move into action.

Will I"H be starting on actual step-work over the weekend.

I'm really excited about this new journey to growth and sanity!

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Re: Naftali's log

Posted by returner613 - 10 Dec 2010 07:25

aspects of life. While I still have some lingering hashkafa / myshkafa (if you know what I mean with Hashem's Chessed - six days clean

B"H it's been a relatively solid week, with only a handful of very minor (*on my level, anyways*) slips. Between being pretty busy work-wise & posting here - I really didn't have that much temptation or desire for my 'regularly-scheduled' program.

My major victory this week was actually not in the area of guarding my eyes, but instead guarding my mouth. I was B"H able to refrain from telling my boss a hilarious, true, and very inappropriate story that happened at work recently. You know that feeling when there's something that you really really want to tell someone? It was one of those.. I knew inside though that if I told it to him - the fact that it came from my mouth would somehow bring my mind into the gutter. I know it probably sounds trivial - but it was hard for me, and I'm happy that I didn't tell him.

So that was the week thus far..

However, as I was on my way back from work today, I could feel the old thoughts&lusts slowly creeping up through the cracks to the edges of my mind. Not to a point where they're conscious thoughts/fantasies, but more like I'm walking in the forest and they're all hiding behind the trees and bushes - until the time is right to spring the ambush.

I don't think that ambush will be tomorrow. I'm still feeling too strong & anyways it will be a rather short day (with hopefully, some respite at night - hameyvin yavin). Obviously, I shouldn't let down my guard - take it one day at a time, etc - since we never really know. Still... I suspect the attack will come on Motzaei Shabbos. I always seem to have so much less strength then.. the last two times that I fell after a 1-week streak were both on Sat. night..

I'm going to try and daven extra hard on Shabbos for Hashem to fill my heart with emunah and rescue me from this nisayon. I'll also try to limit my time on the computer on Motzaei Shabbos to just answering emails, posting here, and work-related stuff. No entertainment on my computer (even solitaire!) - unless it's together with my wife. I'll read, learn, snack, take a bath - heck maybe even go to sleep at a normal hour (banish the thought!).

I"H on Sunday I'll be starting 12-step work - so I really hope that, be'Chasdei Hashem, I'll be going into it with some purity..

have a great Shabbos everyone

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Re: Naftali's log

Posted by silentbattle - 10 Dec 2010 07:42

Sounds fantastic - always good to plan ahead.

And congratulations on controlling yourself - that's terrific!

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Re: Naftali's log

Posted by Eye.nonymous - 10 Dec 2010 07:50

[Naftali Z wrote on 10 Dec 2010 07:25:](#)

My major victory this week was actually not in the area of guarding my eyes, but instead guarding my mouth.

I think there's some sort of kabbalistic thing that says guarding our mouths and guarding our bris are deeply connected. This means, by guarding our mouths, indirectly, we are also making it easier to guard our bris.

--Eye.

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Re: Naftali's log

Posted by ZemirosShabbos - 10 Dec 2010 15:40

sounds great, Naftali, a great victory in keeping your mouth shut even when you have something juicy to say, i know how hard that can be. and you are aware of your weak times. try
and out of trouble. old-fashioned but it works. . keep yourself busy

haztlocha rabbah

have a great shabbos

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Re: Naftali's log

Posted by Tuvia - 12 Dec 2010 21:28

Naftali,

Amazing story! I wish you much haztlocha; may you merit many brachos.

I too have to use the internet a lot with my business since it's all online and I am amazed at how you found GYE (from your original post).

I look forward to reading more from you!

Tuvia

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Re: Naftali's log

Posted by returner613 - 14 Dec 2010 09:10

[Tuvia wrote on 12 Dec 2010 21:28:](#)

Naftali,

Amazing story! I wish you much haztlocha; may you merit many brachos.

I too have to use the internet a lot with my business since it's all online and I am amazed at how you found GYE (from your original post).

I look forward to reading more from you!

Tuvia

Thanks Tuvia!

I've been following your thread over the week to0, and you're taking great steps towards self-awareness and progress.

Let's grow together!

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Re: Naftali's log

Posted by returner613 - 14 Dec 2010 10:11

be'Chasdei Hashem, 10 days clean

So you wanna hear something funny?

If any of you remember - late last Thursday night, I wrote how the week had been going well - that I was still feeling 'strong' - but the familiar thoughts/desires were beginning to creep up -

and I predicted that Motzaei Shabbos would be the 'BIG ATTACK', based on prior experience. (And based on that prediction, resolving to avoid my PC as much as possible, and doing other things for relaxation that night..)

Well.. .. about 15 minutes after writing that on Thurs. night, with all that reported 'strength' - I had a pretty huge slip. Friday was hard and full of more slips. Sunday was better, but by the end - was a mess. So basically - I survived the weekend, but completely battered.

So what's funny? Motzaei Shabbos was completely struggle/desire-free. And not just that, I didn't wind up distancing myself from entertainment on my PC that night (games/movie) as I said that I would... but still no struggle. So, the only night of the weekend that I had thought would be hard - was easy - and the rest of the weekend - which I thought would be easy - was a mess.

I guess that I understand myself, the world, and certainly this problem - a lot less than I thought I did!

(or one can argue that the Yetzer Hora purposely did this to confuse me, but - in practical terms - that's really saying the same thing)

In looking over my Thursday-night post, I realize that I used A LOT of 'power words' - such as *"ambush", "still feeling too strong", "shouldn't let down my guard", "attack", "seem to have so much less strength than."* While it is true that I've started working on Step 1 (admitting powerlessness) - I think that deep down (subconsciously/emotionally) I'm still thinking of this as a personal battle/struggle that I am waging against the Yetzer/myself/the-world. And not just that, I think that even as far as the 'battle' metaphor goes - my model of this is less rooted in applicable Hashkofa concepts (of which there are many legitimate ones)..... rather I'm beginning to realize that my inner/emotional concept of 'struggle' with this problem - is some weird mix of Freudian psychology and a Dungeons&Dragons RPG game (*complete with hit-points, stats, monsters, bosses, and a HERO with a dark past.... he's made it through the week, now the eevil weekend is beginning - can our hero beat the dragon boss and make it to the next level?? Tune in!*) in other words - completely adolescent.

It's not that there is no basis whatsoever to looking at it in that way... there is some, and it fits some classic Cheshbon-Hanefesh/Middos improvement approaches. But those are for sane people with normal problems. It really goes completely against what I need to focus on as a lust-addict. Instead, I need to work on truly beseeching Hashem for mercy and guidance every day, reach out to Him & others for help BEFORE I take that peek and start slipping, and STOP

analyzing everything in terms of 'patterns' of struggle vs. 'strength'. Yes I need to have a growth plan, and I'H 12-steps will serve as a big part of that, but my lifetime recovery has to be day to day - period.

I did start with a 12-step group on Sunday. Have not done much step-work yet (other than the above realization) - but hope to work more on it this week.

What I need to say (with humility) is: Hashem, **thank YOU** for saving me from major nisyonos today (monday) - even though I was a complete shmedrick in the afternoon and almost got into trouble. May it be the case tomorrow as well (minus the shmedrick part)!

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Re: Naftali's log

Posted by ur-a-jew - 14 Dec 2010 14:14

Naftoli many problems can be avoided with a good filter and/or webchaver. Try them you won't regret it. Continued hatzlacha.

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Re: Naftali's log

Posted by ZemirosShabbos - 14 Dec 2010 15:32

Naftoli, it's a pleasure to read your post, you are heading in the right direction, to the RBSO!

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