

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 Eye.nonymous - 31 Dec 2010 07:53

Hello Naftali.

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Re: Naftali's log

Posted by Yosef Hatzadik - 18 Jan 2011 22:51

Naftali Z goes behind the curtain & the rest of us don't get to see anything from him anymore!
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Re: Naftali's log

Posted by returner613 - 19 Jan 2011 18:56

ok ok - you got me, i'm really sorry - kinda fell off the 'public' forum for about a month as you said (and frankly, I haven't been posting that much on the private one either)

I'll try to get back to posting soon. (Realistically over the weekend or early next week) Definitely alot of stuff to write about...

Short version though:

on the positive side: I've been involved in a 12-step group, made good progress on Step 1, made some positive strides in my relationship with wife, and started doing a quasi-tapsic thing to supplement the 12-step stuff (although it's a bit crazy - and may have been a mistake - I'll write more on that later...)

on the negative side: acting-out-wise, the past month has been a complete mess. Although I'm slowly getting back to where I was before (about a week clean now) - but it has been an extremely rough month - one week I was acting out almost every other day... and even now).

I know that I need to keep on trucking (etc), and I do feel that the past month was full of positive steps that will I"H take me much closer to recovery... but in the interim - much much much work to be done

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Re: Naftali's log

Posted by silentbattle - 21 Jan 2011 07:51

Please keep us posted - we care about you!

And remember - fell, shmell. What's is past. What will you do NOW?

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Re: Naftali's log

Posted by Eye.nonymous - 21 Jan 2011 07:58

I think, our acting out is a good indication of how well everything else is REALLY going.

Or, perhaps, we are ACTING better towards our wives so we think the relationship is improving. BUT, we haven't changed our DESIRE to act nicely towards our wives. Therefore, though on the surfact we might seem to be doing better, we are inside just getting more resentful. It's the attitude that need the most work.

Just a thought.

--Eye.

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Re: Naftali's log

Posted by returner613 - 07 Feb 2011 09:48

Hello Tzadikim, Gibborim & fellow travelers!

I haven't posted in ages - still have a ton of stuff to share! (hope to do so soon)

Anyways, just wanted to write a quick post & share some great news:

Boruch Hashem, my wife gave birth to a baby boy yesterday!

have a great day everyone!

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Re: Naftali's log

Posted by Jooboy - 07 Feb 2011 14:14

Mazel Tov!

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Re: Naftali's log

Posted by ZemirosShabbos - 07 Feb 2011 16:02

Mazel Tov!

lots of nachas, mitoch harchavas hadaas, gezunt and kol tuv!

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Re: Naftali's log

Posted by Yosef Hatzadik - 07 Feb 2011 17:27

MAZEL TOV!!!

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Re: Naftali's log

Posted by Rising Up - 07 Feb 2011 18:46

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Re: Naftali's log

Posted by Dov - 08 Feb 2011 03:49

MAZEL TOV!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Mazel Tov to you and your wife and may Hashem give you both the zechus of raising this cute little yiddle to Torah, Chupah, and ma'asim tovim!!

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Re: Naftali's log

Posted by Eye.nonymous - 14 Feb 2011 20:38

I think maybe I made it at least in time for the bris...

MAZEL TOV!

--Eye.

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Re: Naftali's log

Posted by silentbattle - 24 Feb 2011 13:27

Mazal tov - how are things going with all the hecticness?

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