

Want to be BT again

Posted by BT Again - 18 Nov 2021 17:12

Hi everyone. This is my second thread on here--I haven't updated the last one in a while, and frankly, I need to be more open about my struggles than on that thread, so I'm restarting my journal.

I'm a fairly newly married mid-20s guy (no kids yet), went BT a few years ago and Torah is unbelievably important to me. When I think about what I want to accomplish in my life, the big things all have to do with raising a family and practicing Judaism. Despite this, I have really struggled to keep a consistent practice. When I went BT initially I was on fire, but that fire eventually smoldered and I became a pretty irregular davener/learner. Part of it was that I never addressed my porn problem until the last year or so. Since "burning out" I have always kept shabbos and kashrus fully, put on tefillin daily, followed taharas mishpacha, wore tzitzis/kippah, among other things, but my davening and learning has been lacking.

For more details of my specific situation, I live in a pretty "out of town" community in the US. My city has multiple shuls, eruvim, kosher food, learning opportunities, etc. but it's still a fairly small frum community. In fact, most of my friends are not religious as there's not many frum people around my age here.

Something changed in my brain recently, I don't know what it is, but over the summer I felt a real drive to increase my religious practice. I've always wanted to have a closer connection to Hashem but didn't have the drive for a while. These days I prepare divrei Torah to share at the shabbos table most weeks, daven shacharis with a minyan more days than not, started to add in mincha/maariv, added learning b'chavrusa once or twice weekly, prioritized hanging out with my few religious friends, and learning for at least a bit daily (minimum 30 mins listening to a shiur on my commute). I've felt like I'm going "BT Again" hence my name.

Sounds great, right? Well, I feel like I'm burning out again (hard to describe how exactly, but I've been struggling to get to minyan), and I'm still struggling with porn and masturbation (henceforth referred to as P and M). My usage of both has gone down immensely, though: in the last month I've refrained from M more than 75% of days and I've only looked at P three times. This is a lot of progress, as even a year ago both were multiple times a week if not daily.

My Jewish practice and recovery are deeply interconnected. When I use, I don't go to shul, and when I go to shul, I don't use. I really want to be more religious, I love learning and davening, I

want to be an active part of the Jewish community, I want to live a holy life, and I want to have kids who are frum and inspired. And I know that my P and M habits hold me back from this. If I can really make davening and learning integral parts of my life, I feel like I will be much better positioned to overcome my addiction.

If anyone has tips for me on my religious journey, please share. I'm also wondering about how to pull away from internet and phone use in general. Even outside of recovery, I dislike using the internet or my phone. I've deleted all of my social media which has helped. Does anyone know of a way to properly remove my ability to use the browser on an android phone (more permanent than disabling the app as I can't uninstall it)? I would prefer that my phone has no browsing capability, ideally keeping my current phone though I may buy a kosher smartphone in the future.

I will keep this thread updated for accountability.

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Re: Want to be BT again

Posted by wilnevergiveup - 18 Nov 2021 18:07

Welcome back!

I wonder if you would enjoy some shiurim from Rabbi Akiva Tatz. Here are some links to shiurim from him on staying inspired.

akivatatz.com/e8-getting-high-staying-high/

akivatatz.com/e9-inspiration-and-disappointment/

akivatatz.com/e10-ordeals/

There are hundreds of other shiurim on many different topics there.

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Re: Want to be BT again

Posted by committed_togrowth - 18 Nov 2021 18:54

Hi BT Again,

As a fellow BT I resonate with your story! First, I would take in how much you have grown already! It is incredible that you are putting on tefillin, keep kosher, and observing shabbos. That's huge!

Do you have a rabbi that you are close with and have you spoken to him about your feelings of burn out? I had growth in Judaism explained to me like this. There is a mountain with gold bars sprinkled all over it. Your job in life is to get to the top of the mountain while collecting as much gold as possible. If you grab all the gold in sight, you will quickly be weighed down and you won't get far from the bottom. We have to balance our gold collection so that we will make it to the top, but if we aren't honest with our efforts and do less than we can we will arrive at the top painfully aware that we didn't make the most of our opportunity. I'm still growing and navigating these things myself, but I find this analogy helpful.

As far as avoiding burn out, here is my approach. I have certain "non-negotiables" that I will not compromise on (putting on tefillin and davening shacharis for example). But during some weeks, I will have to scale down certain areas such as learning so that I don't exhaust myself. Of course I don't **want** to have to scale anything down, but sometimes it is a temporary necessity. And my non-negotiables ensure that I am still growing closer to Hashem and not backsliding. As we grow we become capable of taking on more and more, but we don't want to grab too many gold bars at the beginning. I hope this helps in some way, wishing you lots of

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Re: Want to be BT again

Posted by wilnevergiveup - 18 Nov 2021 20:15

[committed_togrowth wrote on 18 Nov 2021 18:54:](#)

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This is true for FFB's as well btw.

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Re: Want to be BT again

Posted by BT Again - 19 Nov 2021 06:07

Thank you willnevergiveup! I'll check em out.

And thanks committed_togrowth, I love the mashul about the mountain. One of the difficult things about my community is that it's a revolving door with people moving in or out often. As a result I've gone through 4 rabbis in 5 years. But I really should connect with someone new.

Also going to implement the non negotiables, that's a really good call!

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Re: Want to be BT again

Posted by bego - 19 Nov 2021 11:52

Hi

Thanks for posting.

Personal Opinion Warning

Judaism is hard. It's not the kugel and chulent people say it is. And if it is, you might not be doing it right. Judaism is about Hashem. There are many ways to achieve that, from the rational to the mystical and then a mixture of both. None of those paths are easy. Using shul etc. as a means to drive you is good, but it relies, as you say, on inspiration. That is what Halocho is for.

It tells us we MUST do stuff, even when it's hard. Until we get through the hard times and can do it again from inspiration.

Wow, good mussar shmooze. I must read that to myself....

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Re: Want to be BT again
Posted by Captain - 19 Nov 2021 15:03

Hi,

please check out the Living Emunah books by Rabbi David Ashear. They bring a lot of meaning back into Judaism. You can get them in a sform store or on amazon.

Also please read The Battle of the Generation (link to free download is below in my signature). And listen to The Fight from Rabbi Shafier (link also below). And really if you get involved in anything from Rabbi Shafier they're very good. Check out his website www.theshmuz.com or The Shmuz App.

Hatzlocha

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Re: Want to be BT again
Posted by Louis4sameach - 21 Nov 2021 02:52

Thanks for sharing really appreciate the honesty. What does BT stand for?

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Re: Want to be BT again
Posted by Hashem Help Me - 21 Nov 2021 20:56

Welcome. Great first post. You are obviously one special guy who probably has a lot of inspiration to share. Stay connected here and iyh you will get out of this mess. It appears you are already pretty far along the journey... Hatzlacha.

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Re: Want to be BT again

Posted by BT Again - 22 Nov 2021 03:41

Thank you everyone for posting!

I'm sorry to say that I relapsed last night and this morning. Obviously, I don't feel good about it, I missed shacharis, and I need to stop. Feeling a bit better after doing some journal work, going through three big questions:

- Why do I want to quit?
- Why do I keep doing this?
- What are my triggers, and how can I address them?

I enjoyed the exercise and found some good answers that I hope will help me, and I will keep trying to add to each answer on a regular basis.

I did end up going to minyan for mincha and maariv and had a good davening session. Davening especially btzibbur really helps keep me on this path.

bego: Yasher koach, very true. I often "forget" that halacha is something that I am 100% obligated in, or rationalize away my actions. Any suggestions for drilling this into my head? I'm thinking I should read more books that help with my emunah like Captain is suggesting. Did listen to the Fight and enjoyed; honestly I should just do it again. Any other ideas are appreciated.

Louis4sameach, it's "baal teshuva," I grew up reform and embraced Torah as a young adult.

HHM: Thank you!

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Re: Want to be BT again

Posted by bego - 22 Nov 2021 11:28

[BT Again wrote on 22 Nov 2021 03:41:](#)

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HHM: Thank you!

Hi

I'm guessing Halocho is like most habits - just do it until it is ingrained (I'll leave the "l'oilom yassok etc" for someone else to fill in)

Once it is, it's hard to avoid. But we all have the areas we still find hard. Hence I'm sitting here counting the minutes to mikveh night.... Don't hold yourself to a higher standard than Hashem does.

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Re: Want to be BT again

Posted by Mevakesh, hashem 613 - 22 Nov 2021 16:27

To echo what "bego" said slightly different; I once heard from rabbi breitowitz of Ohr Sameach that when "pitching" religious Jewish life to the non-religious, it would be wrong to describe religious life as the definite *happier* way of life. The more accurate way to describe it would be that religious life is the most *meaningful* way of life. Jewish life can be challenging at times, I don't think anyone will tell you otherwise, but the deep sense of meaning will almost always show up in your life eventually if not immediately.

I don't have specific advice for your particular situation, but perhaps when approaching this battle, don't think of it as a means to an easy and happy life, but rather meaningful, which i is something people crave these days.

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Re: Want to be BT again

Posted by BT Again - 24 Nov 2021 20:00

Thank you everyone for your replies!

I'm sorry to report that I relapsed yesterday morning (no visual stimulation). However, since then

I have been successfully working on using other methods of managing my emotional stress instead of falling. Last night, I meditated, and this morning I read from a sefer. Both successful, so I'm going to keep at it.

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Re: Want to be BT again

Posted by BT Again - 24 Nov 2021 20:02

This is a great post. I often listen to Rabbi Breitowitz's shiurim, he's a brilliant man. Excellent point that I will carry with me.

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Re: Want to be BT again

Posted by BT Again - 25 Nov 2021 18:14

Still clean B"H.

I'm going to also start keeping track of my davening on here, since that's part of my journey. My only "non-negotiable" for now is Shacharis; once I do that for three weeks with no interruptions I hope to add something else.

I've davened Shacharis Monday-Thursday this week; I also davened Mincha Tuesday and Wednesday. Today is Thursday and I intend to go to Mincha/Maariv minyan.

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