

Open Correspondence with Guard on an Important Issue

Posted by KiviYVY - 15 Mar 2011 16:15

[This is a lengthy dialogue, but Guard encouraged me to post this with the hopes of others contributing and gaining more clarity]

Dear Guard,

First, a tremendous thank you for all I've gained from your site, your forums and your 12 step phone calls. They've absolutely changed my life and I'm greatly indebted to your program.

At the same time I'd like to voice a concern. I've read a little of buzz about this on the forums, but I just wanted to email you directly so the problem is addressed.

This is what happened: I had gained a lot from your site and had some serious conversations with my wife about your site. She was very understanding, Tzadekes that she is, and was sold on the GYE mission. Of course we're normal and we had our share of high emotions and crying, but Baruch Hashem we were able to sort things out favorably.

Being sold on your mission, my wife thought to suggest the site and the women's phone conference to people she knew who were suffering from lust addiction. After some further (painful) research she realized that the phone conference is really only for spouses of real hard core addicts.

For the record, I am technically not a hard core addict, B"H (about Level 3 in the "GYE Program in a nutshell"); I've never hit rock bottom, I suffer from a mild addiction which I suspect is quite common among men in my culture, and my wife and I can testify that our marriage has been absolutely wonderful. Not picture perfect, but a marriage that we can be proud of and that grows with leaps and bounds on a constant basis. Not having a full addiction I B"H do not fully relate to everything on GYE, but I have been successful in drawing out the lessons from the site and the 12 steps that have been helpful for my personal struggles.

Innocently suspecting that she was a codependent, my wife decided to join the Forum for

Spouse addicts and she was absolutely shocked and shaken by what she read; particularly this story - <http://www.guardureyes.com/GUE/Stories/FeatureStory.asp> - which is part of the suggested reading for all newcomers. She was also shocked by the intimate details that women shared with each other about their own marriages. She cried a long time after reading all of that and dwelled on the matter for at least a week before we were able to come up with some healthy perspectives.

After this experience and after my wife's discussion with a prominent Rav and Rebbetzin in our town we came to the following conclusion: Your site is very helpful for real addicts. It's a life saver - no question. However, when it comes to those who are not addicts, in many cases it's better that they do not join your 12-step calls. The Rav told my wife that there are a number of men (and women) that he knows who were encouraged by someone else to avail themselves of your services. These men were not real addicts, just normal men with normal lusts, and the site convinced them that they were addicts, that their disease was for life, and that they needed to do the 12-steps. It's possible that such men might be going down a road which is overkill for them and cause risks to their emotional well-being and their marriages. I, BH, have a good amount of Seichel and have been able to glean from the site what is helpful for my situation. Others may not be as fortunate.

When it comes to women, the risks are far greater. BH my wife was able find closure on this matter by speaking to a Rav and Rebbetzin, but others are not as assertive about the matter, do not consult with the right people, and end up taking risks that there's no need for them to take. Women take these matters very personally and are from the start at risk of not handling this matter with the proper Seichel, with the healthy approach that's necessary. Pushing such women into the 'addiction track' can cause much unnecessary pain.

You will soon be launching an international campaign for your site upgrade and publicity, which is absolutely wonderful. I wish you much success and I completely support your cause. At the same time, it's important that people are directed to the resources that are appropriate for them and not convinced that they need to take more drastic measures than are appropriate. Your "Program in a Nutshell" is a step in the right direction, but at the moment the site does not naturally follow the course outlined in that piece. I read discussion on the forums of setting up the site in a way that is appropriate for non-addicts (Prevention), while real addicts are directed to a special section to login and address their issues (for Treatment & Recovery). This is also a step in the right direction. My wife and I picture the ideal site to be one that fits this model. We picture a site that speaks to people similar to the way a Rav or Rebbetzin would - validating the normal struggles that people go through and providing a Torah Hashkafa for men and women to gain a healthy approach to Male/Female Tayvah, Triggers, Tznius, the Yetzer Hara, and send normal couples on their way with tools for a healthy marriage.

Undoubtedly you have put much thought to this exact issue already and that you are consulting Gedolim on how to best approach it. My intention is only to highlight the severe importance of addressing this. What I've heard from Rabbonim regarding your current site is that it's a wonderful site, addresses an very important issue in our community, *but it's not for everybody*. Your hope is to make your site for everybody so please do your best to address the greater public as is most appropriate and helpful.

Much Hatzlacha!

Here is my followup to Guard's response (Guard is in quote boxes).

Thank you for reading my long email and taking my concerns to heart. I've understood from your site and it has been confirmed by your response that you approach your mission thoughtfully and sincerely and always seek out the most appropriate course of action Al Pi Torah. Please see my comments and responses below:

Guard Eyes wrote: Thank you for your well thought out and respectful letter, from the heart. Your concerns are very important, and we are indeed addressing them as best we can in the new website design, which will be based on the "Program in a nutshell" from the start. Your letter has helped us gain even further clarity on this issue, especially in regards to Miriam's CODA call which is indeed only for the wives of real addicts.

Thanks for saying this. It's encouraging to know my voice is being heard and is making a difference. As you said, Miriam's CODA is only for wives of real addicts. My wife did call in once to listen in and her heart goes out to these women. She was struck by what seemed to be a "tough love" approach, the labeling, and the exposure to sordid details.

If I may ask just a few questions. 1) What level of addiction do you see yourself in regard to our

"Program in a nutshell"s 8 levels? (see attached).

Level 3. I reached my 1st 90 days rather easily, without much help from the Forum and without the 12 step calls. After 90 I fell and struggled for 2 months or so, peaking at a month. Entering a mini cycle of falling I felt a more desperate need to do something concrete and I read the INCREDIBLE GYE handbook (printed out a pocket size copy I could pull out to read 5 minutes here and there) and started listening in on the 12-step calls periodically. Duvid Chaim encouraged me to start participating in the calls, which I was very hesitant to do, but now I share my voice on the calls from time to time.

2) Do you think that for your level, the 12-Step calls of Duvid Chaim may have been too much? In other words, do you think it might have been Yatza Secharo Behefsedo for you? If yes, what particular aspects of the approach do you feel might have been the hefsed?

I think I mostly gained from the calls, but as I said - I think I have a good dose of Seichel and self-esteem about these things. I know that others might not approach the matter with as much Seichel, label themselves as addicts, and find themselves treading in the shark infested waters of labeling themselves as hard core addicts and treating their pneumonia with chemotherapy. I don't think I lost much of anything from the calls, except for time out of my hourly-waged work day.

3) What shook up your wife so much in the "Feature Story"? That guy didn't even use the 12-Steps at all.

It was the exposure to the intimate and unsavory details of his life. She feels there was no need for her to even know about these things, and other things she read on the forums, and it only made her more nervous about things like protecting her son from the issues the writer of the article faced. As just one example, it's certainly unproductive for her to be nervous about her son taking a bath! The truth is that what's described there likely comes with a background of abnormal domestic issues, maybe abuse or trauma of some sort, and should not be framed as something that "can happen to anyone."

4) Did you see yesterday's chizuk e-mail #980? Coincidentally (I hadn't even read your letter yet), it deals with how to tell the wife, and what to say and do...

I read it and I completely agree with it. You can see my personal notes on my own discussions about this matter here - www.guardyoureyes.org/forum/index.php?topic=3231.msg86326#msg86326 . I also once wrote you a thank you note, the "we felt newly married" note that you published in the Chizuk email recently.

GYE has no "hidden agenda" at all, and I don't mind you posting this on the forum because it may help others gain clarity as well, but maybe let's wait until you answer the questions above, and then we can include some of your answers in the letter you post as well, to help people have more clarity on where you're coming from...

Thanks for your easy-going'ness about this. "GYE has no "hidden agenda" at all" really says it all. Your sincerity with this project is really rare and I believe it has been a driving force behind your success. May Hashem continue to give you this strength of character and grant you much success in reaching all those who are crying internally for the help they so desperately need.

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Re: Open Correspondence with Guard on an Important Issue
Posted by geshertzarmeod - 15 Mar 2011 21:58

uh oh o

I have sense a tsunami coming.

Find high ground, quick!

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Re: Open Correspondence with Guard on an Important Issue
Posted by oblum - 15 Mar 2011 22:00

[geshertzarmeod wrote on 15 Mar 2011 21:58:](#)

uh oh o

I have sense a tsunami coming.

Find high ground, quick!

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Re: Open Correspondence with Guard on an Important Issue
Posted by DovInIsrael - 15 Mar 2011 22:03

hey gesher.

How's it going..

good thing Guard has provided for spiritual emergencies and damage control...

would not want to see get too out of hand for you, to the point that you reach nuclear
REACTION explosion!

B"H for GYE, and Guard.
I would get on a bridge - but its pretty narrow...

Peace of mind, and a moment of Calm are now considered the most valueable resources in

Japan - and just think, GYE gives it to you free of charge!

dov.ii

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Re: Open Correspondence with Guard on an Important Issue

Posted by geshertzarmeod - 15 Mar 2011 22:09

Who me? Im fine, I was just worried about the wave of comments that o was going to get for his brave stance. Im just an innocent bystander, trying to figure out if I need the 12 steps or if the one step is ok. This issue has been following me throughout the past month and i think its great that this thread is addressing the needs of those of us who feel that we need help (we definitely need help) but arent sure that the 12 steps and the whole kit'n kaboodle is necessary. Just looking for some clarity. So I'll sit back and watch the show.

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Re: Open Correspondence with Guard on an Important Issue

Posted by Me3 - 15 Mar 2011 22:09

I would start countering O's arguments, but the one thing he's proven without any doubt is that he refuses to listen to counter arguments, and quite frankly I haven't the time.

If anybody feels there is validity in o's arguments (there may be a shred or two somewhere in there, if you look carefully enough) kindly look back at his older posts and all the responses written there.

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Re: Open Correspondence with Guard on an Important Issue

Posted by Yosef Hatzadik - 15 Mar 2011 22:19

The following is the way a teenager ended his participation on the GYE forum:

[Chazak Amenu wrote on 16 Jun 2010 02:46:](#)

I did it, my mom and I had a long talk and then my father joined us.

..... we have also decided that even though GYE might be helpful sometimes it is not helping me specifically so i won't be on very much anymore if at all. Thank you everyone!

[Chazak Amenu wrote on 16 Jun 2010 13:14:](#)

Thank you everyone,....

..... pretty much my mom thinks that I am being WAY to hard on myself and being on this website is making matters worse because I am constantly thinking about it an talking about it which keeps reminding me, and that if i take a break from it for a while things will get better, she thinks that mostly my por* issues are curiosity,.....

Thank you again everyone!

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Re: Open Correspondence with Guard on an Important Issue
Posted by ben durdayah - 15 Mar 2011 22:21

Oy li miYotzri, Oy li MiYitzri...

Good night boys.

Please keep it clean.

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Re: Open Correspondence with Guard on an Important Issue
Posted by the.guard - 15 Mar 2011 22:31

[o wrote on 15 Mar 2011 21:51:](#)

Its really unfortionate that we have strayed so far from our original mesorh that people dont even begin to see what wrong here.

Perhaps it would be constructive to divide the site by severity: say teenagers, married for a few years falling only occasionally, married for a long time and still seeing no way out, etc. (dont get technical, just giving examples). I have meet very few Yeshiva Bochurim that really need SA meeting (cause if I'm wrong, pretty much every yeshiva I've been to ought to close there gemoras and focus solely SA...)

Dear o,

There is nothing '*wrong here*'. GYE has no hidden agenda. We support any method that "works" for anyone, and we let everyone post their experience on the forum. So the forum ends up being a big "choulant" of approaches. Dov's approach and the 12-Step method is indeed for the more serious cases, but since many people here seem to need to hear what Dov has to say, he posted a lot and it may not have been what **you** needed to hear.

After dealing with hundreds of frum Yidden with these problems over the past 3 years, and seeing what works for everyone in different levels, we put together something called "[The GYE Program in a Nutshell](#)". I would appreciate it if you could please read it carefully and see how we don't even *mention* the 12-Steps until level 6 (out of 8). And that is the GYE approach.

Just because you hear a lot of 12-Step talk on the forum doesn't mean GYE's approach is mainly 12-Step. If you believe most guys on the forum are in earlier levels of this struggle, let them try the suggestions for levels 1 - 5. If it helps them, good. If not, at least they'll know and have heard on the forum that there are other things to try. That's the whole idea.

The new website we are building now will be less of a "choulant" and will be set up lechatchilah based on these different levels, as you suggested.

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Re: Open Correspondence with Guard on an Important Issue
Posted by Me3 - 15 Mar 2011 22:37

Thanks for dropping by Guard

There are some people who do not belong here.

In fact I've suggested to some of them to leave.

In fact I still wish that they do.

(If you think I mean you, I probably do).

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Re: Open Correspondence with Guard on an Important Issue

Posted by KiviYVY - 15 Mar 2011 22:48

[o wrote on 15 Mar 2011 21:51:](#)

Dont get me wrong - I dont doubt guard's intentions for one second. And I have a ton of respect for him for doing this. G-d knows that (al pi derech hateva) this site wont get his kids married off any faster

I would be certainly Meshadech with him! He's like the Mike Tress of our generation! Guard - maybe we'll speak in 12 years...

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Re: Open Correspondence with Guard on an Important Issue

Posted by MovingUp - 15 Mar 2011 22:57

The new website we are building now will be less of a "choulant" and will be set up lechatchilah based on these different levels, as you suggested.

Guard, thanks for allowing the open exchange on this sometimes heated topic. What you are suggesting sounds like a great idea and also seems like it will placate most people here. May I suggest putting that "GYE Program in a Nutshell" as a prominent part of the welcome package, or for any new member to see. It's something so important, yet hidden away amongst all the treasures on this site.

Me3, you seem like a great guy, but your comments come across as mean-hearted and just as, if not more extreme, than those of "o" (who I do not fully agree with either). A forum is for an open exchange of ideas, not for attacks on other people. Leave it to the moderators to decide which ideas are unacceptable and they will deal with it. Telling people of your wishes for them to

leave is not becoming of you. I understand how it is easy to become heated up about something you are passionate about, but that doesn't make your words any more acceptable. Thanks

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Re: Open Correspondence with Guard on an Important Issue
Posted by ur-a-jew - 15 Mar 2011 23:04

I was sitting next to someone on the train and noticed the following caption to an article: "Better scared than sorry." It think its an apt principle for the men's forum. Better someone think that they are an addict and act accordingly then have them ignore the problem and end up never getting rid of their problem/addiction/whatever you want to call it. And for all the non-addicts who only occasionally dabble in porn if you think it has no effect on your married life, you are living in la-la land.

For a woman, I agree that it's a different story. Woman are too emotionally sensitive and if improperly exposed to all of the addictions on the site the result will be their seeing a predator, adulterer and addict everywhere they turn.

As for the need for the site, I think it was best highlighted by the following quote:

[YVY wrote on 15 Mar 2011 16:15:](#)

I reached my 1st 90 days rather easily, without much help from the Forum and without the 12 step calls. After 90 I fell and struggled for 2 months or so, peaking at a month.

Thank you Guard for everything.

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Re: Open Correspondence with Guard on an Important Issue

Posted by ben durdayah - 15 Mar 2011 23:05

Everyone loves quoting their Rebbe Muvhak

[guardureyes wrote on 07 Mar 2011 17:36:](#)

No one is arguing here.

We are all on GYE because we are Yidden.

Yes, it's true.

Because if we weren't Yidden we wouldn't be here YET.

We would only get here after hitting a lot LOWER bottom, and being on the verge of real death.

So because we are Yidden, we came here much earlier.

But we won't recover just "because we are Yidden and the Torah says it's wrong".

Naaseh Lo Kiheter.

It's not enough for us to know it's morally wrong.

We need to truly "FEEL" that we've hit OUR (higher) bottom.

We need to feel where this is leading us.... into a dark world of depression and eventual death.

And we frum Jews can feel it a lot earlier than the rest of the world.

Sorry for the Megilah, but I hope I made it clearer now why there is no Machlokes between Dov's Mehalech and anyone else's here.

Look Rabbosai, at the end of the day, this stuff (internet P**n) **is** the 'crack cocaine' of S** addictions. So although there are different levels of addiction, and the shailah is which person

needs what pills and when; the underlying concern here is that people may need help which they aren't getting -because an addiction is regressive and aggressive. It make take days, weeks, or years but the nature of these behaviors **just is** that they usually get worse before they can get better.

Therefore, a lot of pain, suffering, and -yes -**aveiros** can be spared if a person realizes that he may need the tools of **recovery** (none of which are a stirah to yesoidos hadas -aderabbah, you can find a mekor for every one of the twelve steps in the Torah, **if you are open minded**. The 'gilui' however was made by Bill and his Doctor friend!) which is only possible if he **hits bottom while still on top**.

Otherwise, *even if he will manage to stay out of 'trouble' for long periods of time* -he will be living a life of pain and constant struggle -much of which is the result of the fact that he is fighting the Yetzer HaRa -without enlisting the help of Hashem by being mevatel his retzonos to Hashem; **unlike the eitzah of Chazal: (to paraphrase) HaKadosh Baruch Hu Ozro -Yuchol Loi** . This is a tool which some ovdei Hashem don't know p'shat in -until they hear the 12 steps terminology -"surrender".

I too took and take great issue with any of the SA devotees whose initial Shalom Alaichem for any newcomer -even if we're talking about a 15 year old bachur who gets on line to look at girls in swimsuits and m*****s a bit -with the standard (*this is almost a quote of someone very specific, with no intention of offense*), "Hi! Welcome! You'll probably soon see that there's no substitute for a live SA group, as this is the only thing that's worked for me!". **But**, the base GYE program -especially since the moderators take great pains that there be as little triggering/leading information as possible -is absolutely harmless for anyone who has seen p***ography **and has not been able to hold himself back despite the fact that he knew that it was wrong**.

Let's get real, how many guys who have surfed the net for p**n -even those who don't get turned on by these things -not know the definition of most of the kinds of deviancies and associated terminology that's out there in the near and far reaches of the Internet?

As far as the wives are concerned, that's a totally different subject. My Rebbitzen is (and I'm not saying this because I'm partial or a ba'al dimyoin -it's just a fact!) pure as the driven snow, and I would never tell her about my issues (-despite the fact that I call myself ben durdayah al sheim that online -well you know what R' Elazar Ben Durdayah's claim to fame was... Let's just say that there isn't a sha'ar of the 50 sha'arei tum'ah that I did not cyber-experience.) That's just a matter of seichel! And yes, I can definitely agree that the culture shock for the women is

something that has to be taken into account.

Yes, people have to be careful of whose advice they buy into -even on GYE. And maybe the moderators have to pay more careful attention to who's giving what kind of advice and to whom.

Yes, perhaps there should be a greater emphasis on the forum (*and perhaps with guard's whole revamp of the site the connection between the resources on the forum and the blog site will be much clearer*) on **carefully diagnosing one's level of addiction as per the GYE program in a nutshell.**

But if we will get into one of those never ending debates on what is really (IMHO) semantics (addict/ch"v not an addict; 12 steps/Yiddishkeit) and marketing strategy -we will be talking **at** each other instead of **to** each other; and we will be beating a dead horse *and* hockin' a toite ferd'l.

Because many of these tainos are just the same old, "See, I've been saying this for the longest time...", and "Me too!", and "Nu Uhh -that's totally narrow mindedness medaber mitoch groincha..."

I told myself that I wasn't going to throw my two cents in, but I could barely hold myself back.

After all, I'm no tzaddik -just an addict sicko weirdo (does that sound familiar? dov, rebbe reb ber -You **are** missed by all).

Good night,

E

PS I see that some of the points in the post might have been addressed, but it took me too long to write, and it will take me too long to read the 4 new posts and take them into account -so I left

it as is, v'itchem ha'slichah.

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Re: Open Correspondence with Guard on an Important Issue

Posted by the.guard - 15 Mar 2011 23:10

[MovingUp wrote on 15 Mar 2011 22:57:](#)

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I agree. I had plans this week to try and come up with a more updated "Welcoming Package" that includes mainly the Nutshell - but I am so busy with the web development lately that I haven't gotten to it yet. Maybe tomorrow bl'n.

Meanwhile, if anyone welcomes newcomers, try and give him a link to this file.

www.guardureyes.com/GUE/PDFs/Newsletter01/GYE%20in%20a%20Nutshell%202011.pdf

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