

Fridays and sadness

Posted by simchastorah - 10 Feb 2023 07:52

Friday morning I often look at porn and masturbate, I have no work, so less on my plate. My wife goes back to sleep, so no issue there. I'm especially in danger right now because I'm feeling gross, because yesterday something embarrassing happened to me, and I had something of a conflict with a coworker. Lately the way that I would deal with this is to escape into fantasy land, and then hate myself for the rest of the day. Then to get away from hating myself, I'll smoke a little weed, which just makes me feel more depressed.

Additionally I'm struggling right now because my wife is dealing with extreme anxiety. She's not so mentally well, she's on 3 or 4 different medications, but still is in a state of struggling to get anything done because of her anxiety. On top of that, we haven't been together in around three months, she hasn't even gone to the mikva because of issues in our shalom bayis. I also unfortunately have trouble being attracted to her, because of weight gain and some skin problems.

So right now there is a side of me that wants to just throw seichel to the wind and watch porn. But I really really don't want to do that. I want to be close to Hashem. And I want to behave in a way that I can respect, so that hopefully over time I can handle the different external difficulties in my life without feeling so compelled to seek comfort in these unhealthy ways.

The truth is, I walk around feeling pretty bad about myself a lot of the time. I was badly abused and bullied for around a year at age 13, though not sexually abused b'h. I still walk around with these bad feelings about myself, and when anything goes wrong, it's magnified many times because it's compounding the bad way that I already feel. It's very hard for me to bear all of these feelings, and I turn to porn, masturbation, weed, and some alcohol to deal with them. Unfortunately they all have terrible costs. So I need to learn to deal. Hashem help me.

I generally keep everything to myself, because 1) I don't want people to look down on me, 2) I know that everyone is dealing with their own stuff, some more than others, and I don't want to burden them with my stuff and 3) I know that look down or not, people full of negativity are less pleasant to connect with, and people will not want to associate with me.

Writing this all out, I'm filled with a tremendous sadness. At the same time though, I feel like maybe

I have a bit more of a chance to not descend into the hell of porn and self loathing

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Re: Fridays and sadness

Posted by chaimoigen - 04 May 2023 12:55

Thank you for this tremendous Chizzuk

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Re: Fridays and sadness

Posted by simchastorah - 05 May 2023 06:45

It's hard for me to believe it, but maybe the fact that I struggle with p&m is really not my fault. Maybe I'm a good person, and it's not my fault that I was exposed to this stuff as a kid, as a sad suffering kid, and found something that for a few minutes would rescue me from my suffering. It's not my fault that I was suffering, and it's not my fault that I couldn't help but do this stuff to escape from my suffering. And to some extent I may struggle with this for the rest of my life. And that's not my fault. I am not shirking responsibility for anything that i did 'm'yom amdi al dayti.' But the fact that i struggle - maybe it does not make me 'less.' Maybe it does not make me 'messed up.' And maybe it does not make you 'messed up' either.

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Re: Fridays and sadness

Posted by Hashem Help Me - 05 May 2023 10:55

R' SimchasTorah - you hit the nail on the head! Many rabbonim and therapists have used the term onais to describe strugglers who were introduced to pornography at young ages. Of course, they are not suggesting one should continue being oiver issurim. The point is that one must not view himself as a rasha or a loser - he should understand in what context the bad habits developed - and while being at peace with himself start the process of breaking free. To explain this onais perspective: Guys were raised as temimusdige children, learning, davening, and doing many mitzvos. They were taught to stay away from aveiros, and they did. However, they did not receive any education about sexuality. Nobody immunized them by explaining changes in the body, the issur of masturbation, or the dangers of pornography (this is slowly changing and some kids are BH being prepared for the realities of our hyper exposed and stimulating world). Somewhere between ages 11 and 15 - as youngsters who have not yet developed reasoning skills, yet their bodies began maturing puberty wise - they were introduced to hard core pornography, and the physical reactions to viewing it, including masturbation. Having spoken to many many guys (boys aged 16 and up, married fellows up to 65 years old - yeshivish, chassidish, modern orthodox, chabad, sefardic - successful businessman, maggidei shiur, klal people - this mageifa is everywhere), i can attest that at those tender ages, although the child "feels something is wrong", they never really heard how serious this stuff is and how habit forming watching can be. Remember they are being indoctrinated in this garbage

way before marriage is even in their minds, so they have no concept that sexuality has anything to do with normal and healthy intimacy. For many kids, seeing this stuff is massively traumatic. They grew up viewing the adult world around them as safe, with predictable individuals. Parents, the shul rabbi, rebbeim and teachers, the policeman, the mail man, the grocery store owners - these are all safe moral upright people. All of a sudden, they are exposed to very evil looking adult behavior that they cannot wrap their hands around. They are not witnessing healthy love and intimacy. And subconsciously they begin to wonder "My parents that demand me to be erlich and fine do "that stuff"? My rebbi? The rabbi? The policeman?" This is trauma. And no, he is much too embarrassed to approach any adult about this. Sometimes a boy is even afraid that he may have damaged himself physically and can't share that fear with anyone - he harbors that fear for years. So typically, the bochur goes back for more. This is due to the fact that in trauma, one returns to his/her abuser for more - the abuser in this case being the computer. Secondly, being that when one is hyper stimulated by all these erotic sights and sounds one receives a dopamine rush in the brain, boys train themselves to use this fantasy land as a pacifier. Instead of learning healthy ways to self regulate, boys, bochurim and men use this garbage to relieve boredom, stress, anxiety, rejection, or any uncomfortable emotion. Meanwhile at some point, this otherwise erliche bochur at some point discovers the very serious issurim involved and is devastated. He now desperately attempts to stop - but without outside help it is extremely difficult. Yiush - hopelessness sets in. Guys get super broken over this, and again are too embarrassed to ask for help. They view themselves as "the biggest rasha and loser in the world - if only people would know". They feel hypocritical - here they daven long shmona esrei, keep big shiurim for matzah Pesach night, drive their mothers and wives nuts with all kinds of chumras, and meanwhile they are doing terrible things. Many Yom Kippurs are spent in tears over this - but to no avail. (In fact, Motzai Yom Kippur is a common "fall" time due to the need to self-regulate after all the stress of intense davening and fasting). The suffering, the tzerbrochenkeit, the mental anguish is too much for so many otherwise great guys. Rach"l, depression, anxiety, and self harm (even suicide) are unfortunately all too often, serious outcomes of this matzav.

Can anyone not describe the above scenario as anything other than an onais?

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Re: Fridays and sadness

Posted by excellence - 05 May 2023 11:40

[Hashem Help Me wrote on 05 May 2023 10:55:](#)

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habits developed - and while being at peace with himself start the process of breaking free. To explain this onais perspective: Guys were raised as temimusdige children, learning, davening, and doing many mitzvos. They were taught to stay away from aveiros, and they did. However, they did not receive any education about sexuality. Nobody immunized them by explaining changes in the body, the issur of masturbation, or the dangers of pornography (this is slowly changing and some kids are BH being prepared for the realities of our hyper exposed and stimulating world). Somewhere between ages 11 and 15 - as youngsters who have not yet developed reasoning skills, yet their bodies began maturing puberty wise - they were introduced to hard core pornography, and the physical reactions to viewing it, including masturbation. Having spoken to many many guys (boys aged 16 and up, married fellows up to 65 years old - yeshivish, chassidish, modern orthodox, chabad, sefardic - successful businessman, maggidei shiur, klal people - this mageifa is everywhere), i can attest that at those tender ages, although the child "feels something is wrong", they never really heard how serious this stuff is and how habit forming watching can be. Remember they are being indoctrinated in this garbage way before marriage is even in their minds, so they have no concept that sexuality has anything to do with normal and healthy intimacy. For many kids, seeing this stuff is massively traumatic. They grew up viewing the adult world around them as safe, with predictable individuals. Parents, the shul rabbi, rebbeim and teachers, the policeman, the mail man, the grocery store owners - these are all safe moral upright people. All of a sudden, they are exposed to very evil looking adult behavior that they cannot wrap their hands around. They are not witnessing healthy love and intimacy. And subconsciously they begin to wonder "My parents that demand me to be erlich and fine do "that stuff"? My rebbi? The rabbi? The policeman?" This is trauma. And no, he is much too embarrassed to approach any adult about this. Sometimes a boy is even afraid that he may have damaged himself physically and can't share that fear with anyone - he harbors that fear for years. So typically, the bochur goes back for more. This is due to the fact that in trauma, one returns to his/her abuser for more - the abuser in this case being the computer. Secondly, being that when one is hyper stimulated by all these erotic sights and sounds one receives a dopamine rush in the brain, boys train themselves to use this fantasy land as a pacifier. Instead of learning healthy ways to self regulate, boys, bochurim and men use this garbage to relieve boredom, stress, anxiety, rejection, or any uncomfortable emotion. Meanwhile at some point, this otherwise erliche bochur at some point discovers the very serious issurim involved and is devastated. He now desperately attempts to stop - but without outside help it is extremely difficult. Yiush - hopelessness sets in. Guys get super broken over this, and again are too embarrassed to ask for help. They view themselves as "the biggest rasha and loser in the world - if only people would know". They feel hypocritical - here they daven long shmona esrei, keep big shiurim for matzah Pesach night, drive their mothers and wives nuts with all kinds of chumras, and meanwhile they are doing terrible things. Many Yom Kippurs are spent in tears over this - but to no avail. (In fact, Motzai Yom Kippur is a common "fall" time due to the need to self-regulate after all the stress of intense davening and fasting). The suffering, the tzerbrochenkeit, the mental anguish is too much for so many otherwise great guys. Rach"l, depression, anxiety, and self harm (even suicide) are unfortunately all too often, serious outcomes of this matzav.

Can anyone not describe the above scenario as anything other than an onais?

This ought to be on GYE homepage and read once a day!

Thanks so much

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Re: Fridays and sadness

Posted by ?????? ?????? - 05 May 2023 11:43

Thank you Rebbi

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Re: Fridays and sadness

Posted by chancy - 08 May 2023 16:24

[simchastorah wrote on 05 May 2023 06:45:](#)

It's hard for me to believe it, but maybe the fact that I struggle with p&m is really not my fault. Maybe I'm a good person, and it's not my fault that I was exposed to this stuff as a kid, as a sad suffering kid, and found something that for a few minutes would rescue me from my suffering. It's not my fault that I was suffering, and it's not my fault that I couldn't help but do this stuff to escape from my suffering.

Rebbi Simchas Torah,

How holy and right you are!

OF course its not your fault, there is a reason why beis din doesn't punish a child under 20 thats because he has no reasoning skills to be able to control his desires. Here for a lot of us were talking about under 13 when we started! I had no idea, and by the time i found out how bad this is, i was in too deep.....

So what then? I dont know..... im in middle of listening to shiurim about recognizing that we don't really do anything! Most of our tzadikkim mention this idea in their sfarim, every deed and thought that comes into our heads and of course every sight and feeling, everything is from Hashem, because He controls everything! The biggest issue for us is to realize that.

Ive asked in other forums about this idea and how this matches with the idea of punishment, its a very difficult thing to understand, but whats certain is that we are not at 'fault' nobody is going to be blaming us and shaming us for being addicts. It would be as cruel as making fun of a cripple and yelling at him to stop fooling around and to start walking like a normal person....

No, you are not at fault! But you can still fight and win and get a handle of this addiction so it doesn't ruin or rule your life.

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Re: Fridays and sadness
Posted by simchastorah - 08 May 2023 19:19

it's true that in general we don't understand how to resolve how Hashem's complete knowledge and control leaves room for us, for our b'chira. However we know with full faith that we do have b'chira, and we have to take responsibility for our actions. Even in this area, I don't mean to shirk responsibility for the aveiros that I've done. Like HHM was saying above there does seem to be an *element* of ones over here, but who can say that nothing that I've done falls within the realm of my responsibility? No one.

What I mean to say is not that I'm not responsible for my actions, some of them I am and some of them I'm not. I am over 20. But the fact that I struggle with this parsha, that it's a real nisayon for me, that it's an element in my life, that it's something which I struggled with as a teenager and as an adult, *that* I don't have to take responsibility for. I don't have to say I chose to have the struggle. I got involved with it at a point in life where it would be absurd to expect me to overcome it, and that created a struggle which stayed with me past that point.

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Re: Fridays and sadness
Posted by Yeshayahu 41:6 - 09 May 2023 03:06

What about those of us (or maybe it's just me) who never did anything wrong as kids and only after getting married KNOWINGLY got involved in this garbage?

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Re: Fridays and sadness
Posted by simchastorah - 09 May 2023 04:03

You are not the only one (just look around the forum, there are others)

You may have KNOWINGLY got involved in this garbage, but did you knowingly create within yourself the magnetic pull that made it seem so desireable and magical? Did you knowingly create the feelings of pain and loneliness that you're trying to numb through escaping into this fantasy world? Was everything going so great, just peaches, and then you calmly decided "hey, how about I destroy my sense of self with porn"?

For me it's easy to say that the struggle comes from before I had full daas because I did get involved with it as a teenager. But that's not really the point. The point is that the parts of me (and you) that cause me to struggle, while I wish they weren't a part of me, don't have to take over my sense of who I am. I don't have to believe I have some kind of twisted porn gene deep within my soul.

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Re: Fridays and sadness
Posted by chancy - 11 May 2023 16:18

[Yeshayahu 41:6 wrote on 09 May 2023 03:06:](#)

What about those of us (or maybe it's just me) who never did anything wrong as kids and only after getting married KNOWINGLY got involved in this garbage?

They should consider themselves lucky..... Im serios as a heart attack....

Its a different world, once your mind is fully formed, things dont get as stuck and warped as when it damaged while still growing.

Im sure its hard but count yourself lucky and thank Hashem that you didnt have this a child.

As young as a can remember myself, I always had this issue, I remember another young boy told other boys not to play with me because im (was) a 'Chazer' that still hurts me! I was in trouble with a few yeshivas because of this issue, I was thrown out twice! At which point my father found out of course!

Do you have a clue how painful that is? Oh Hashem have mercy.....

Dance and thank Hashem and know that you have it easier then some of us. BH!

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Re: Fridays and sadness

Posted by simchastorah - 11 May 2023 17:11

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Re: Fridays and sadness

Posted by Hashem Help Me - 12 May 2023 11:22

[Yeshayahu 41:6 wrote on 09 May 2023 03:06:](#)

What about those of us (or maybe it's just me) who never did anything wrong as kids and only after getting married KNOWINGLY got involved in this garbage?

You are still a product of a generation that is steeped in filth and objectification of women. One of the Roshei Yeshiva zatzal from the past generation said to me "I sit in my sforim shtub (my study) and rarely go on the street, and the toxic air from out there gets in even over here." You saw billboards etc. BH you were spared the teenage years of torment so many others of us experienced, but there is no question that your subconscious was picking up a lot of garbage and sick ideas during that time period.

No one is excusing bad choices that we made; it is just important to be able to accept one's self by honestly analyzing what led up to those poor choices. What happens now? As a self confident guy who is at peace with himself, give yourself a kick in the pants and get to work.

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Re: Fridays and sadness
Posted by chancy - 15 May 2023 20:41

[Hashem Help Me wrote on 12 May 2023 11:22:](#)

What happens now? As a self confident guy who is at peace with himself, give yourself a kick in the pants and get to work.

HHM,

Can you please come and kick me? Ive tried but im having a hard time kicking myself.....

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Re: Fridays and sadness
Posted by Hashem Help Me - 15 May 2023 20:53

Sure thing buddy. Come by and get your well-deserved hug. After that we can take care of the kick as well.

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