

## The Start of My Freedom

Posted by tzadikatheart - 02 Oct 2024 19:59

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Hi everyone. I raise my voice now for the first time here, but I've been listening to all yours for some time now. I've decided to muster the energy to get a significant post out now that it's Rosh HaShana. Perhaps this post and attempt to become clean will be my defending angel in Shamayim.

I'm going to start off with my story. Then I'll explain what kind of help I think I need. Please feel free to comment anything you think will help me!

Here goes.

So, I've had sexual tendencies for a really long time.

My first pull toward such content was literally at 5 years old. There was a day that I was so curious to see what a female breast looked like, that the second I got my hands on a free computer away from my parents, I looked up an image of bare breasts. To this day I remember that image. I got very freaked out at the sight and quickly plugged out the computer, shutting it off.

It's not normal. My hormones shouldn't have been that active at just 5 years old. I still can't explain it. But that experience was just the start.

Like many of you, I grew up with parents oblivious to the challenges of technology and growing men. By 6th grade I was handed a smartphone to do anything and everything I wanted, filter free. I don't even think my parents knew at the time that you could filter a phone. It wasn't a thought in their mind. Not even a possibility that their child would experiment with such things.

Well, I got instantly hooked. I was consuming tons of porn all throughout 6th - 8th grade. The funny part is that I didn't know how to masturbate at the time. Like for some reason I didn't put together how to do it. So I would just watch for hours until I had something else urgent to do. I couldn't "finish" a session because I didn't know how to release. In 9th grade I figured it out and I just went on a deeper spiral then. It didn't help that I was in a modern orthodox school with promiscuous girls, dirty minded classmates, etc. I was just surrounded by filth but didn't even realize it was filth. I didn't think much of it. I knew it was like a little bad but I knew everyone was involved with it so I just stayed careless.

After high school, I went to yeshiva in Israel. I finally woke up to what Judaism was about. I become frum, "flipped out", whatever you wanna call it. And I started the battle. And I fought. And fought. And fought. I was overall successful in Israel. But I didn't manage to cage the beast. Once I was back home, with unfiltered devices again, it was tougher than ever.

I had better days and better weeks. I had worse days and even worse months. But I never stopped fighting. I tried so many things. Nothing really worked. I was in a yeshiva college, so I still had regular Sedarim and all, so I wasn't like disconnected from learning and Yidishkeit. But it just stayed tough. I was pretty up and down for the next 2.5 years (ages 19-21)

Then something interesting happened. In February this year, my parents brought up the subject of Shidduchim to me. I was 21 then (turned 22 this summer). They asked me if I was interested in starting. I didn't say no, but I didn't say yes. I kind of just left it as "we'll see I guess if anything happens...". Two months later my sister told me she has a great girl for me to go out with.

Although I was still struggling with P&M, I was managing to go clean easily for 4-5 days at a time back then, so I said yes to go out. Maybe it was against my better judgement. But let me point out something.

I went out with this girl for 3 months (before I broke it off as I realized we just aren't the best match... story for a different time). Those 3 months, I had no urges. No desire for porn. I loved the girl and I just wanted to give and give and give to her. I didn't fantasize about her. I didn't view her sexually. I cared about her on an emotional level. And interestingly enough, I wasn't like super attracted to her physically to start. But I gave it some time and grew to like her personality and character traits a lot. That's kind of what built our relationship. It was like a gap in me got filled and I just wasn't interested in P&M anymore.

But as I began to realize that we just aren't a match and decided I was going to end the relationship, my urges began to resurface, after 3 months in hiatus. And right after we ended, there I was again with the unfiltered devices at home. My sessions were pretty frequent for a couple weeks from June - July, but I managed to slow it down by August time.

And here I am. At the start of October. I have not dated a girl since. Not because of any reason in particular - I just haven't gotten a Shayach suggestion yet. And it's just been up and down all throughout September. I stay clean pretty easily for 4-5 days more or less, then I fall, and the whole cycle repeats. But I need a long term solution. I can't expect my future wife to fix this problem. I need an internal change.

So I ask of you guys-

What do you think of my situation?

I want to know- is my issue habitual or lust? If it's lust, how do I learn to control my lust? Lust is what will kill a marriage. I need it under control.

If it's just habitual, obviously I will still keep pushing to end it, but perhaps marriage can help then? Perhaps that's why I was able to stay clean easily without urges while dating that girl?

Can you guys help me figure out the root of my problem here?

And so what's my next step? Unfortunately I can't filter those devices at home- they're not mine, they're my family's. And I don't want that to be the solution anyways. I'm tired of "running" from the problem. I want an internal change. I want to be able to feel it in my bones that this is not good for me, and to be able to act on that feeling. Is that a reasonable goal?

I've also been in touch with a user here I think some of you know - Muttel. He inspired me to get involved with the forums, so here it is.

Looking forward to meaningful conversations and sharing inspiring stories with you all. Shana Tova

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Re: The Start of My Freedom

Posted by tzadikatheart - 07 Oct 2024 17:04

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[upanddown wrote on 07 Oct 2024 13:29:](#)

Dear tzadikatheart,

My heart goes out to you! What a difficult (but courageous) journey! I totally relate with all the feelings you describe, especially the despair you're having at the moment. You're going through a difficult phase. But you should know that it's all normal. Don't get so upset about it. So many of us have been in a similar situation but eventually succeeded. I have been there as well. Hit rock bottom. Falling is sometimes harder than winning.

The fact that your struggles started at such a young age definitely makes it more difficult (might be worth going for some therapy btw).

I also started young, at the age of 5 I had a certain weird sexual habit (that I'm embarrassed to share even though it's all anonymous here...) and at the age of 7 years old I would masturbate whenever I could (climax without ejaculation). At 9 years old I had a friend with whom I would get together every few days to do some sexual stuff... Then, at 11 years old I was abused by an uncle on a weekly basis until my bar mitzvah! By me it was an escape. My parents were fighting day and night and - from a very very young age - I took responsibility. There was immense tension at home, talks about divorce... really tough times... so I ended up indulging in my sexual fantasies... about the girls who would give me the love and warmth I so desperately needed... I discovered pornography (my parents were also naive so we had an unfiltered computer during all of my teen years)... it was a comforting and warm place to escape to but ultimately it left me with a brain that was damaged and wrongly wired. Wired to think that I can't manage without. So even once I left my home and went to Yeshiva and eventually got married to a wonderful wife - I couldn't stop. No matter how much I tried, I fell again and again. Each time harder than the one before. I had years of despair. The more I felt the more numb I became and the less motivated I was. I was furious. I was ready to give up all my yiddishkeit... but BH with the help of GYE I've managed to break free and I'm seeing the light at the end of the tunnel... Apologies for writing so much about myself, I got carried away... but I guess it's comforting for you to know that other people have also had a tough journey and that despair is very normal. It's just another challenge to overcome.

As I once heard from a great Mechanech: ?????, ??? ????? - despair is not from the ???, it's from the ????? ?????.

Don't give up!

"Try your best and Hashem will do the rest" - I promise it works!!

Speak to friends. Post on your thread. Read TBOTG (see link in my signature). Take it ODAAT. Celebrate even the smallest wins. And iyH no doubt you will succeed!

And if you need another bit of motivation and reason why you should get this beast under control, then maybe read [this great post](#) (by choosemyshem).

Looking forward to hearing from you updates...

Stay strong,

UpandDown

Wow such a story. It hurts me so much to read it, but it gives me so much strength and hope when I see that you still got up and fought against this beast of a Yetzer Hara anyway.

Really I can't explain this feeling I have inside when I see others who are struggling and are vulnerable with each other, and get up and fight every day. I have holed up and hid this part of me for 10 years. Connecting with others and hearing stories like yours gives me a new strength I've never felt before. Thank you so much

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Re: The Start of My Freedom

Posted by tzadikatheart - 07 Oct 2024 17:07

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[BenHashemBH wrote on 07 Oct 2024 15:45:](#)

Shalom Brothers,

There might be something to learn from these seemingly odd behaviors for such a young child. At 4-5 years old are my earliest memories of desires that needn't be detailed. The thoughts and things felt good, and I wanted more. I fantasized a lot about it too.

Years later, I looked back and thought I must be broken. I was born with this quirky thing and probably it messed me up for life. It wasn't fair.

It wasn't my fault, but I didn't really concentrate on whose fault it was. At some point I recognized that it was Hashem's 'fault'. He made me that way. On purpose. I had no seichel, no real choice, no clue about anything really.

So the question then becomes: Why did Hashem design me and my circumstances to be this way? What was and is the purpose of it?

My conclusion of what the purpose was, is that it set the trajectory of my development - at least in a large part. All the emotions both then and in subsequent years have surely shaped how I feel and think. In good ways and in seemingly not great ways (everything that Hashem does is for the good, I just don't have an understanding of all His ways).

What is the purpose now? Well, following the previous thought, there is a reason for me to have had that experience. Hashem gave it to me, and therefore it must play a role in His mission for me in life. I don't know if I did what I was supposed to with it yet or not; but it is inherently good somehow. It's no longer something I'm ashamed of or confused about. Hashem chose it as my nature, and now it's my job to figure out how to nurture it appropriately and fulfill its potential as He intended.

"Sometimes when we're in a dark place we think we've been buried; we've actually been planted".

- Someone, and also Rabbi YY

At least that's how I think about it.

Curious to hear your thoughts?

Kol tov

Yes a big factor is to not necessarily look at this as a annoyance but as an opportunity. Hashem gave us this challenge and therefore it must be for our ultimate best, even with our fallings. BZH we should be able to take advantage in the way Hashem designed us to.

I use this to remind myself that I didn't do this to myself, and also this is normal. It's OK to struggle, and Hashem knows how hard we try. We just have to keep pushing and be proud of all

the things we did and do accomplish

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Re: The Start of My Freedom

Posted by tzadikatheart - 07 Oct 2024 17:10

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[eerie wrote on 07 Oct 2024 16:53:](#)

How are you doing today, Tzaddik?

Of course, it's the simple truth that you, and all of us, have so much to be proud of!!!! The YH works overtime convincing us that all that we do is worthless because of our shortcoming in this one area. And that's utter nonsense! You have so much to be seriously proud of! Just look at yourself! You are truly amazing! Keep up the good work, keep smiling, and keep working at this, **with simcha!!!!**

Hi Eerie, thanks so much for checking in. Today has been good bh! I gain so so much Chizzuk getting emails that tell me someone just posted on my thread. Seeing other people's stories, seeing that people understand me and are cheering for me - it's made all the difference in how I feel at the moment of the battle with the Yetzer Hara.

It's one part of my life that I battle, but I beat that Yetzer Hara in so many other places, and I will continue to fight and slaughter this beast until I stand proud and tall on top of it!

I'm heavily wounded but I am healing, thanks to you all. Please keep the thread posts coming )! Let's beat this together

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Re: The Start of My Freedom

Posted by odyossefchai - 07 Oct 2024 18:54

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[tzadikatheart wrote on 07 Oct 2024 17:10:](#)

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Hello fellow Jew.

And fellow struggler

And fellow complainer!!

Three for three!

I also don't know why Hashem gave me this crazy test. Definitely during my teenage years I felt I was not in control of my own body. Similar to someone who has Parkinsons and cannot control the shaking, I felt hopeless. I probably carry a lot of trauma from those years.

I'm reminded of a story.

A Baal Teshuva had a very inappropriate tattoo and whenever he went to the mikvah, he would always try to hide it. One time on Erev Yom Kippur he went and the mikva was bumper to bumper. Of course, he slips and falls flat on his back and the whole mikva goes quiet while everyone stares at his tattoo.

An older gentleman who has numbers on his arm from Auschwitz, reached out his arm and says, "We both have tattoos that remind us of painful times in our past. Come, let's get up together and go into Yom Kippur!"

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Re: The Start of My Freedom

Posted by Muttel - 07 Oct 2024 18:58

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What a powerful story!

Tzadik at heart, you need a new username! You're not just a tzadik at heart!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!! You are a tzadik in action who struggles with a very powerful YH.....

With much brotherly love,

Muttel

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Re: The Start of My Freedom

Posted by tzadikatheart - 08 Oct 2024 21:13

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[odyossefchai wrote on 07 Oct 2024 18:54:](#)

[tzadikatheart wrote on 07 Oct 2024 17:10:](#)

[eerie wrote on 07 Oct 2024 16:53:](#)

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Yes I've heard that story before. It's so powerful. What I did in the past is a scar, but it doesn't define what I can become in the future. Thank you for sharing

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Re: The Start of My Freedom

Posted by tzadikatheart - 08 Oct 2024 21:18

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[Muttel wrote on 07 Oct 2024 18:58:](#)

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With much brotherly love,

Muttel

This made me smile.

I'll cut you a deal. Once I am clean for a month (We're on day 3 now, been clean since Sunday), I'll change my username to TzadikInAction. So on November 6th bzh!

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Re: The Start of My Freedom

Posted by stopsurvivingstartliving - 08 Oct 2024 22:52

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@tzadikatheart I love this thread! So much wisdom going down from you and the other posters.

It's defiantly a shaky battle and we have ups and downs but I really like the way your approaching it. I love the attitude!

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Re: The Start of My Freedom

Posted by tzadikatheart - 10 Oct 2024 19:27

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Thank you all for your support so far!

I've been having small urges today and yesterday, but just having you guys with me makes it much easier to pull myself together. I really feel and know that people care about me and my

struggle and want to see me be the best person I can be.

This is the first Yom Kippur I'll be walking in to with an actual plan to defeat this Yetzer Hara. Never before had I had anything concrete. It was always some half thought out plan that never worked. Now I have a real support group. A real way of tackling the root of my problem.

The support and messages I see from you guys on this forum really helps me! Please, let's continue to get inspiration and encouragement to each other!

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Re: The Start of My Freedom

Posted by tzadikatheart - 14 Oct 2024 03:48

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Hi everyone.

It is with sadness that I admit that I fell today (right after Yom Kippur..)

To be honest, something pretty tragic happened to me over Yom Kippur (bh everything is OK but it stressed me a lot) and I got overwhelmed today and wanted to distract myself. Obviously I know porn and masturbation is not the answer, but I didn't feel strong enough and gave in.

But I am still happy I went a week clean with the help of you guys. I am looking forward to picking back up and fighting onwards!

Please, I can use a little Chizzuk...

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Re: The Start of My Freedom

Posted by realclean - 14 Oct 2024 04:00

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Hey, I just read your story and it really resonated with me because all in all it's basically exactly the same story as me. I'm also 22 and in shidduchim and I also fell today right after Yom Kippur. Happens to be it was after a 45 day streak of no porn, which I think is the longest streak I've ever had in my life. But anyways, I don't have much chizzuk to say to you other than hey! I'm

here in this too right along with you! We gotta make it out of this together!

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Re: The Start of My Freedom

Posted by odyossefchai - 14 Oct 2024 04:29

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Why don't the two of you have a shmooze on the phone?

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Re: The Start of My Freedom

Posted by Muttel - 14 Oct 2024 08:40

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[tzadikatheart wrote on 14 Oct 2024 03:48:](#)

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To be honest, something pretty tragic happened to me over Yom Kippur (bh everything is OK but it stressed me a lot) and I got overwhelmed today and wanted to distract myself. Obviously I know porn and masturbation is not the answer, but I didn't feel strong enough and gave in.

But I am still happy I went a week clean with the help of you guys. I am looking forward to picking back up and fighting onwards!

Please, I can use a little Chizzuk...

definitely let's pick up and get on the truck!

why not reach out to some of your friends here, we'd love to help!

Looking forward to hearing from you....

With a ton of brotherly love,

Muttel

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Re: The Start of My Freedom

Posted by Hashem Help Me - 14 Oct 2024 11:35

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As has been written about before, Motzai Yom Kippur is a big "fall time" for many. Learning how to self regulate and "land" after all the emotion is a skill that needs training. You obviously went to your old pacifier. Ignore it and move on. You are doing great. A mountain climber who falls into a ditch does not have to roll down the hill. As he badages his scratches, he enjoys the view from the height he is at. B'ezras hashem you will climb to the top and shlep many others along with you.

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