

Coming Clean with my Rav

Posted by Kedusha - 28 Jan 2010 20:36

I've been having an anonymous e-mail correspondence with my Rav since September regarding GYE and related topics. Recently, I suggested that we could work together better if I were to end the anonymity, and my Rav invited me to do so. But I held back. And then, the Ribbono Shel Olam decided that the time had come, and caused me to sign my real name by mistake.

I didn't notice my blunder until the next day. I wrote my Rav as follows (with minor edits):

Dear Rav ***, Shlita,**

I understand now why you didn't respond - I see that I signed my real name inadvertently, and you didn't want to embarrass me. Thank you for being so considerate.

However, as I indicated in my earlier e-mail, perhaps it was time to end my anonymity in any event (with you, that is), so there's no real harm done. The Ribbono Shel Olam was indicating that the time had come.

Anonymity can be good, but not where it gets in the way of accomplishing for the Klal.

For example, I don't think it would have been possible to get the Rosh Yeshiva's Haskama for GYE if he would not have known who he was dealing with. Similarly, perhaps there is some way that we can work together now that you know who I am.

Most people are still in great denial of this problem. For example, Mishpacha Magazine's Family First had to change the story line of their current serial "Shattered Glass," due to outcries of protest from numerous readers. Also, GYE plans to put an ad in the upcoming issue of *** with the Rosh Yeshiva's letter on the adjacent page, all with the Rosh Yeshiva's permission. The editors are in a bit of a quandary - they're not sure if they want to publish the Rosh Yeshiva's letter in their family magazine, but the Rosh Yeshiva wants them to publish it. We'll see what happens.**

Boruch Hashem, I've had the privilege of becoming quite involved with GYE, something that would not have happened had I never faced this Nisayon. The Rosh Yeshiva agreed with my assessment that helping others in this area is considered Teshuva Mei'Ahava - because it's using one's past aveiros as a springboard to do good.

Anyway, I'm grateful to be where I am in my personal life, and grateful that the Ribbono Shel Olam has given me the opportunity to help others on such a large scale, thanks to the opportunity that GYE, and its dedicated administrator present.

Sincerely,

***** a.k.a. *****

My Rav Responded as Follow (with minor edits):

Reb *****:

Wow! I thought it was someone in the shul as certain things I said were being quoted here and there - only a ***** regular could have known. In fact, I hung up the [Rosh Yeshiva's] letter this morning already and I was curiously waiting to see if ***** [my pseudonym] thanked me soon or not - vyter indicating that he is a mispalel by us. However, I did not try to figure out who you are.

You are right - the Rosh Yeshiva would only push GYE once he knew who he was dealing with. Even I kept a bit of an arms-length with someone anonymous (sorry if I was cold at times in response - I had to play it that way with someone anonymous).

One thing I am not clear about. Did you invent GYE and maintain it or did you join something already in existence and push it? [What made my Rav possibly think I invented GYE?]

Any way I could help - let me know.

Kol tuv.

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Re: Coming Clean with my Rav
Posted by briut - 29 Jan 2010 21:02

[Kedusha wrote on 29 Jan 2010 14:47:](#)

If my Rav wants to put someone in touch with me, I would ask him to give the person my anonymous e-mail address. I would refer the person to GYE.

Hmmnn... Refer to GYE alone?? ... A good step, of course. I've got to ask, though: would there be a stage ripe for any 1:1 emailing, or a "live" cup of coffee, or perhaps even "sponsor" them if you figure out they're serious? There's a lot I don't understand about this kind of forum, yet. Still, I wonder if there's some middle ground so that you might take these amazing kochos you've been building up and, maybe apply them face-to-face?

You had mentioned a "deep reason you heard from Dov." When you get a chance, could you fill me in? Or others out there, who might have some insights for me: I'm not sure how to build enough "comfort factor" for you and your loved ones, but I wonder where the cloak of anonymity might end.

There's probably a range of views on the question of "coming out" to folks in the hometown, even if it were your Rav himself who asked. Again, maybe some "more experienced" members can chime in -- I'm just a newbie. What's the protocol here, if there is one?

Anyhow, thanks for the honesty in all this. It's all tricky. And have a great Shabbos. - Briut

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Re: Coming Clean with my Rav
Posted by imtrying25 - 30 Jan 2010 20:35

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Re: Coming Clean with my Rav
Posted by Kedusha - 31 Jan 2010 02:24

[imtrying25 wrote on 30 Jan 2010 20:35:](#)

Briut, please be careful with my kedusha'leh. Hes very sensitive!

I see no problem.

). As it is now,

Briut, here's what Dov explained to me: Not going public with our problem isn't simply about avoiding embarrassment. There's something much more important at stake - our ability to remain sober. How does "coming out" put our sobriety at risk? Here's how: There's no way I'm

going public and saying that I'm addicted to pornography, lust, sex, etc. The most I would say is "That's what I used to do - I don't do it anymore." Even though we may have good sobriety, it's very dangerous for an addict to start believing that he's cured, which may happen if the addict tells enough people that this problem is a thing of the past. For this reason, addicts need their privacy, except when it comes to people who have earned their trust.

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Re: Coming Clean with my Rav
Posted by briut - 31 Jan 2010 02:41

Ohhhh. The picture is getting clearer.

In the frum world, you fer sure can't say "I'm (still) addicted."

You probably can't even be very explicit to say "I USED TO do x, y, z." Because tzinius people don't even talk about x, y, z. Or listen to it. Etc. (Which might be part of the *&\$#m problem in the first place -- too much shelter? hmmnn.)

So if people don't want to hear about that, they fer sure don't want to see someone's face on it. Not someone they know.

And that's even on top of the "children in shidduchim" layers.

So, am I getting close? If so, what is it that COULD bring more things public. More roshei yeshiva? More local magazine articles? Gee, I hope it's not having one guy arrested in some movie booth somewhere -- that's all the community needs.

So, guys, I still ask the rest of you: what's the balance between public and private?

(PS: My edit to my last post was really fairly minor, I believe. But I still offer my apologies if I'm

stepping on turf that's too soft for boots. I'm honestly trying to understand, not to injure anyone's sensibilities.)

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Re: Coming Clean with my Rav
Posted by imtrying25 - 31 Jan 2010 23:16

To be honest Briut, i dont think your following Kedusha. But ill let him explain himself. It has nothing to do with shidduchim and frum people. It has to do with staying sober and not fooling ourselves. And now kedusha please take over.....

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Re: Coming Clean with my Rav
Posted by Kedusha - 31 Jan 2010 23:27

[imtrying25 wrote on 31 Jan 2010 23:16:](#)

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Re: Coming Clean with my Rav
Posted by briut - 01 Feb 2010 05:34

Maybe I'm getting a little closer, but I still don't get it.

I know that in AA, there ARE folks who'll go around speaking. They'll say, "I'm an addict, which means a RECOVERING addict, because even my XX years clean doesn't take me out of the parsha of addict." (Okay, if they're not frum they won't say parsha....)

So obviously they're not suggesting that they're "cured." Their whole presentation would be to show how there is no "cure." I don't think that's likely to make the addict deceive himself. (Eh?)

I think I'm hearing something different here. Namely, even if the addict himself is clear about the terms he's using to describe the nature of the addiction and the subject of the addiction, there's somehow something else. I had figured that this something else was either the yuk factor frum folks put on this, or the potential for causing other people harm. Now you suggest that it really IS all about keeping the addict himself from self-delusion. But if Bill W can say "I am an alcoholic, and haven't had a drink in 3 yrs, 2 mo, 4 days" why can't someone from SA say, "I am a sex addict etc etc."

And how does that affect his ability to stay sober?

All this addiction lingo is new to me, so I hope I'm not offending anyone by asking for more detail. You can PM me if this is just too newbie for the forum or too hijack-y of this thread. Thanks.

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Re: Coming Clean with my Rav
Posted by Kedusha - 01 Feb 2010 12:31

I find it too personal to tell the world that this is an addiction that I still face (even if I'm in recovery). Alcoholism doesn't involve such personal, private behavior.

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Re: Coming Clean with my Rav

Posted by briut - 02 Feb 2010 16:10

Well, come to think of it, I now realize that I didn't really even know Bill W's last name, either. I had to 'google' around the Alcoholic's Anonymous site to find it.

(Wilson. He founded AA, in case you've been living in a cave for the past 50+ years. He died in 1971. See, there ARE meiles to the internet :->.)

In other words, I guess 12-step programs keep a closer degree of anonymity than I had remembered.

Pity. But, I realize, if one is going to work the plan, then that means the plan... without trying to dazzle it up with modifications like asking a bunch'a addicts to come out of the closet (so to speak). I stand corrected.

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