

Reaching Out for Help on Shabbos

Posted by Kedusha - 12 Nov 2010 15:45

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**Disclaimer:** Nothing posted on this thread, or anywhere else on the forum, should be relied upon for Halacha l'Maaseh. As to whether a Sheilah should be asked, see replies # 110 & 112.

**[Note that the first few pages of this thread relate to an earlier version of this poll. Many of the issues raised have been addressed in the way the question is currently worded].**

What do you say, Chevra? This is a question that has been on my mind for quite some time.

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Re: Reaching Out for Help on Shabbos

Posted by cordnoy - 24 Jan 2016 15:45

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[9494 wrote:](#)

[cordnoy wrote:](#)

I must say as a person who was in sa for quite some time.....

As a person who has had sponsors....

As a person who sponsors others.....

I think people are taking our disease way too extreme.

Yes, everyone should ask a posek, but until then, kindly learn hilchos shabbos.

And regarding marijuana, I think some posters here have been usin', for otherwise.....

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Masturbation = pikuach nefesh!?

Well, step one says my life is unmanageable.

I guess that means I'm close to death.

Cords, its really not clear what your point is? Your two posts seem 2 contradict each other?  
Could you explain a bit more?

The quoted second post was a bit sarcastic.

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Re: Reaching Out for Help on Shabbos  
Posted by cordnoy - 24 Jan 2016 15:49

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If one has a desperate need to act out and the only alternative is to have relations with his wife but she's not in the mood (for the third straight time), what should he do?

- A. Rape his wife?
- B. Divorce her?
- C. Act out?
- D. Desecrate Shabbos?
- E. Write a fourth step inventory?

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Re: Reaching Out for Help on Shabbos

Posted by Dov - 15 Mar 2016 22:01

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I agree with **Cords** that the risk of 'sinning by porn use' or 'sinning by masturbation' is not pikuach nefesh...but:

I see things differently *as regards addiction I see things differently* than Cordnoy seems to describe them and am close with one posek who generally sees sobriety in all addictions as pikuach nefesh (his p'sak will depend on the particular circumstances of the person, of course). And there are other poskim I know of who do just the same, b"H.

But...is this a topic for GYE's forum? I don't think so, and perhaps this is what Cordnoy was really after. The majority of people here (and certainly most of the many teenage ones) are not addicts at all. Most here are just good, frustrated yidden struggling against their yetzer horas - and I believe they should be *treated* that way. GYE will forever be the place for *all* yidden who struggle with lust to come for comfort and help in struggling against their yetzer horas, first - and for the addicts among them to find a doorway into recovery, second. For the latter group, it is pikuach nefesh and nothing less.

So I doubt many guys on GYE should ever consider being mechalel Shabbos in order not to masturbate themselves. Neither would be any way to spend Shabbos, for them. In contrast, for an addict like me, I doubt there is any hope for recovery until he or she is ready to be mechalel Shabbos to stay sober.

Finally, **Shlomo24** wrote:

*"I definitely think that these shailos should be asked to a posek. I know of many people who got heterim and I remember hearing a psak as to why the person **SHOULD** call, that he shouldn't feel guilty doing so. Different than what kedusha was saying."*

I agree - but want to say that this very rarely happens in *non-recovering* people. For the shaylosh is rarely asked correctly. Few Rabbonim are given the correct information. They are often asked, *"I masturbate sometimes R"l and even on Shabbos. When I make a call (during the week) to a friend, I sometimes stop. Now, can I make a phone call on Shabbos to stop myself from being nichshol in hz'l?"* That shaylosh missed the entire point for the posek, so his p'sak was irrelevant, and wrong for the situation.

Now, if the guy told the Rov *how often* he masturbates himself *and* the setting; *how* he sneaks his access to porn, *how often* and for *how long* he watches his porn; how many years ago he *started* his habit; and the risks he has taken to continue doing those things....then the shayloah was asked in true context and can be answered correctly. Of course, the average Rov is very embarrassed by any explicit discussion of these facts and rarely probes further than the poor, terrified guy is comfortable telling. So the p'sak is usually DOA.

Thank G-d there is recovery for us and so many people *are* doing better and *are* b"H clean! Life is **so** much better without the distraction of lusting.

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Re: Reaching Out for Help on Shabbos  
Posted by Workingguy - 16 Mar 2016 00:11

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Wait, so just to be clear- you're saying that for an addict like you you have to be ready to be mechalel Shabbos and that it is pikuach nefesh for you? With all due respect to you as a major inspiration on the site and someone with long term sobriety, when you throw down two statements like that I think you should back up your statement. You go from saying that it isn't a topic on the forum to saying those two things. Of course there can be instances that it is- if someone's addiction actually take him to places of pikuach nefesh, then what's the question? And there are all sorts of sugyos of whether a person should do a smaller sin to save themselves from a bigger sin (mareh Mekomos available upon request if I have the time) so that's a possibility as well.

But for so many addicts, even those whose lives are unmanageable and are in twelve steps, it's the farthest thing from reality. And while you make such a strong point when you point out that we can't confuse religion with addiction, and that we have to be humans first, this sounds like you're taking it too far. I don't question your poskim and I'm sure they're reliable, but to make two statements like that- that you have to be ready to be mechalel Shabbos and that it is pikuach nefesh- needs some sort of backing up.

It may not be the place for it, but the conversation started so I think it makes sense to tell people where you're coming from. You're a huge role model here, everyone on the site respects you tremendously, and people are very impressionable. I think that to leave it without explaining it is almost reckless, so if you don't mind, can you please explain how you came to believing the two statements you said?

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Re: Reaching Out for Help on Shabbos  
Posted by Workingguy - 16 Mar 2016 00:14

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Re: Reaching Out for Help on Shabbos  
Posted by Dov - 22 Mar 2016 00:31

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Maybe, maybe not. R' Pliskin wrote that "the value of your communication is what the other person hears."

What will non-addicts hear if I really answer your question here? Probably 'excuses'. They will probably give lots of advice and say, "Well you should have just held on and did x,y, or z." They may see the trees and totally miss the forest. They usually just intellectualize or hashkafa-tize the experience and miss the living, *human* point in it. It's kind of like talking about terror of dogs with a person who is not a therapist. He just can't imagine what it's actually *like* and as sympathetically as he can, miss the most important points.

So I will just say that my experience of using phone sex, erotic literature, having sex with myself (most call it masturbation), and lots of other lust pursuits not appropriate to describe on GYE, taught me I was progressively ill. Mentally ill. For about 20 years.

Years of misreading Chaza"l, chassidus and mussar and many well-meaning rabbonim, gave me false security in stuff that was never *meant* for a sick person. Just as Teshuvah, mikvah use, and tikkun Bris, and marriage, and lots of other things are for suffering normals, not for truly ill people. This is poshut - though many fight it....unfortunately many of those who loudly fight it *are not addicts themselves* so they know nothing of the pain. It's cruel, really. They mean well but are just demagogues - or insecure. I guess they just *have* to attack anything that seems to them to be questioning the perfection of Torah. Gevalt how tragic these people are, misguiding the sufferers by insisting they simply must be as normal *they* are and that the Torah *must* work for them - and then accusing them of lack of emunas chachomim if they question what they are saying. It's a horror.

And years of seeing the main problem with what I was doing as the *sin* in it, drove me deeper into isolation and silent efforts at being a tzaddik instead of helping me quit. I just got worse, over the years. Getting married and finally having real live sex with a real live woman was supposed to help me - but it only hurt me more. After a year or so I realized, to my shock, that it



wasn't gonna solve my problem. Years of desperately trying to change my wife (and failing), was very disappointing and damaging. It was so much easier to blame her...for she had issues too, of course. Who wouldn't have issues, being married to a sex maniac? And besides, all normal people have sex issues, of course. Sex is powerful, mysterious, and easily complicated by normals, too.

All these things convinced me that I just couldn't rely on anybody to help me out. This really sucked, and hurt so deeply. It drew me deeper into myself and I only became more desperate. And I **was** opening up to Rabbis and therapists. Can you imagine the painful destruction of trust that develops for the many who have never opened up to anyone? It's staggering. Loneliness is horrible. And it "just won't leave us alone"...(thanks Wilson Pickett!)

My response to all this was to reach out to help ba'alei Teshuvah learn more Torah (change others to prove I was OK), to work harder on my marriage and the sex in particular (change her so my pain would stop), and to learn more hours than ever (escape into isolation)...and to secretly visit more porn sources and erotic businesses (take a break from all this hard work!).

I was caught by my wife in '95. It was horrible for both of us.

It did not stop me for more than 2 months.

And things just got worse than ever over the next few years.

I witnessed a shockingly close and deadly car accident (involving myself) while driving to act out...and continued on my way an hour later. On another occasion, I was tired because of being out late cruising that night and fell dead asleep at the wheel. I woke up, crashing into the back end of a parked car. Hell of a way to wake up. And, brain-surgeon that I am, I was out again a month later, desperate as ever.

I saw that when searching for and finding porn, my hands were a little shaky, my mouth went a bit dry, I felt giddy - in short, it excited me like nothing else did. Do you get that way when figuring out a tosfos? I doubt it. I saw that this stuff was hitting me on a visceral level. I could bawl through Lecha Dodi - and by motzoei Shabbos I was off to the races as usual, endangering my family life, standing in the community, and doing bad sins...again.

Over years of doing these things I came across many gimmicks. I discovered that as long as I could enclose myself in a yeshiva and escape from all responsibility of olam hazeh and intellectualize everything, I'd remain clean. And it worked for the better part of two years. I never spilled seed in Eretz Yisroel. Wowee, what a milestone. Not really. When I came back to earth (my parents, G-d save me), I reverted to the 14 year old I was when I first started escaping from life as a masturbator and porn-worshipper. It was so depressing.

I had Rebbis who seemed to help - even though one important one turned out to be a molester himself, nebach. One Rabbi heard my story and told me I would be OK if I only learned Tanya. Another told me I need to help my wife become much more sexually liberal with me. A shrink told me I needed to learn how to find real pleasure in the life I had. Another shrink told me what I was doing was not quite as bad as I thought it was...well, I sure *felt* like an empty man, and I knew it was not just about guilt. I was horribly alone and there was no one who could cross that horrible barrier with me. No one to hold my hand. Nobody **showed** me what freedom was and nobody could prove to me that I could really get it. Instead, they tried to instruct me in **how** to become free - *even though they were not technically free, themselves!*

They were either not addicts *themselves* - so they could never demonstrate to me me what I needed and could only lecture me. I had no idea if they really *knew* I could live free. You know why? Because the truth is that **no Rov should ever share the details of his own sexual foibles with the public, to help the public. It would only serve to lower the standard of behavior for the masses, and they know it.** And that would be tragic. Sadly maybe, the pulpit is not the right place for the whole *truth*. It is for the right lessons demonstrated for all to see. The Rabbonim *are* our standard bearers whether they are really that great or aren't. That's their job.

Besides, no Rov will really admit all the garbage going on in his head and (sometimes, R"l, his) deeds). For he knows that if word were to get out, he'd lose his job! And I can't blame them.

So no Rov could help me and no sefer could help me. That became clear.

The only person who ended up helping me was the therapist who had the humility to say, "You have already tried therapy and medication, and marriage, and religion, and other things all to try and control your life - and failed. This may be the missing link." - and she handed me a card with a goy's name (and his wife's name) written on it. after hearing me pour out my whole story

w all the gory details, she suggested I call another (sober) sex addict and ask him about the 12-step group he attends.

The reason I went to that therapist in 1997 was because the last time I had acted out my lust before that, I hit a barrier. I knew It was not working for me. That I had to go further if I was gonna try to make this sexual acting out work for me, maybe. But I knew that if I did, I would have to let go of my G-d, my family and children, an would lose my marriage. Even my parents would not be able to accept how I had thrown their daughter-in-law and grandchildren away. And I felt a bit like going ahead with it. For sweet lust has nothing like it, does it? Nope.

I was terrified at my own dance on the edge of that insane knife, and felt like gehinnom was open right at my feet. I went home from that establishment, terrified, shaking. It was erev Shabbos and I was going out of my mind like never before. Everything had failed for me, I had failed everything, and yet here I was. Someone **had** to help me somehow. I became ready to jump and called an addictions counselor, on my own. My wife would know and she was already jaded, our marriage was in some sort of PTSD still, it didn't matter. She heard me arrange the session and smirked, "More money thrown away, Dov. Whatever."

I called the number the humble therapist gave me on the back of that card.

Jeff had the humility to offer to meet me at the place he attends his weekly meetings 30 minutes before the next meeting and to tell me his story in about five minutes. He then asked me if I think I belong here, or not. I said yes, was terrified, and walked in with him. I sat down and proceeded to hear a room full of grown men tell my story in twenty different ways, some crying, some laughing, none showing off. Just honesty for it's own sake. I was astounded this existed. Sober perverts?

But it was **not** their admission of the same *behaviors* I was doing that made me feel they were 'telling my story'. Rather, it was the words they used to describe **what it is like to be this way - to be me**. I related to them as only another sick person can understand a sick person - and some of them were free of the behaviors for months, some for years. Here they were, in the flesh. Not showing off, just 'OK'. I had found my brothers on a deeper level than I had ever discovered before and they were right here calmly sitting together with me. Some were Jews and some were goyim. Where they started out from was obviously irrelevant - we all ended up at the same terminus. We were all right here sitting quietly together. Right here in a classroom attached to a church building. Gevalt that was weird for me.

And I have been sexually sober together with them, one day at a time, ever since. Attending that meeting has been the anchor of my ability to live as a frum yid, husband, father, son, shul-goer, worker, etc. I'm alive and real. No 'username' needed here. My life now is a gift from Hashem, my G-d. Not your G-d, not their G-d, only mine - my very own Precious G-d. As we say, "Elokai" and many tzaddikim are madgish means just mine like a ben yochid alone in the entire world, just with Him. I love Him forever just for my sobriety alone, let alone all the other great things He has given me to enjoy since starting in sobriety and recovery. They were all empty before. As others have said, my worst day sober is better than my very best day unsober.

Now maybe to your question, be"H:

Whenever I would be confronted with a situation in which I felt I would end up acting out my lust and losing what I have gotten, I knew that if I were to go ahead with it I'd lose my life. Not my physical life yet, but that I'd revert back to the empty fake Jew, empty fake husband, empty fake father and fake shul-goer, fake worker at my job, etc. It was a pain I knew I could not revert to. If I did, I might not make it back. Sexual acting out is the only drug I know that can numb me enough from the pain of acting out, itself! And at that last time I acted out, I knew that continuing with this ***lifestyle*** meant choosing a lost life as I would never come back.

This is yehareg v'al ya'avur for me and is abundantly clear. I need no Rov to tell me this. If I did, then where was the Rov's opinion when I was acting out? Suddenly I need to do da'as Torah? It's the kind of 'safek' that is the way of Amalek, if you ask me, and nothing less. I'd rather die.

Die...and I'd also rather expose myself as a sexaholic in a meeting of other perverts like me, if it means I might stay sober today. The thing that so many GYE guys would rather die than do, which is why they are here still acting out their lust and 'struggling'. Giving up one's ego/kavod/shame and opening up is the way I am finding to freedom one day at a time. And so many here would rather die, it seems...and would rather keep acting out the lust fantasies in private.

I am sorry if you do not understand that. I am sorry if you just see sins, here. I am sorry if you just cannot understand how a man or woman can come to the point where da'as Torah just fails them because there are no Torah people who have the ability to relate to them and understand. Instead many Rabbonim fear recovery and attack it because it threatens their monopoly on Answers to all the big questions, especially when it involves sinning.

But I was fortunate enough to be introduced to my program by a sober *alcoholic*. And he showed me that sexaholism is identical to alcoholism, except that *the drug* was different. Overdrinking once in a while does not mean someone is an alcoholic - they will pay a price and move on OK afterward. And the same with this. Compulsive sex behaviors are amenable to Teshuvah in normals, and then they can move on OK (maybe even better than before because b'makom sh'ba'alei Teshuvah omdim...!) - but not for addicts. I need to be sober today or I will descend and surely lose my integrity...will lose my connection to others...will lose my G-d...and *the way I am now*, that's dying, for me.

Sorry if you or anybody else cannot understand that or comes away thinking I am some sort of Reform Jew, c"v. But the gemora has a case of a guy who the chachomim told needed to die rather than hear a certain girl's voice from behind a fence. They saw that **for him** that was mamash gilui arayos and he should rather agree to die though everybody *else* could hear her voice and even see her.

Even though I maintain he was probably *not* an addict, I still rest my case. Close enough.

Thanks for your patience w my long-winded *megillah* (a few days early, no?)

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Re: Reaching Out for Help on Shabbos  
Posted by cordnoy - 22 Mar 2016 00:50

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A megillah worth readin'...

Don't miss an ois!

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Re: Reaching Out for Help on Shabbos

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Dov min Hatorah in bold... found in the end of a Long Megilla, but he's one great ???? ????!!

Posted by realsimcha - 22 Mar 2016 03:54

Dov, despite all the years, I can't imagine the passion that must have been in your heart when you wrote that incredible post. I feel humbled and learned a lot. Thanks for sharing part of your heilige neshama with us, for reminding us what it's all about.

Posted by Dov - 22 Mar 2016 04:36

Markz it seems you are stoned again; Cords is apparently going soft; and realsimcha is just a nice fellow and I can't think of anything crusty to say about him (yet).

Happy Purim!

...the poor guy stuck in the middle!

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Re: Reaching Out for Help on Shabbos  
Posted by cordnoy - 22 Mar 2016 10:33

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I will not defend the line about cord's, except to say that I always post the honest truth....at least, the way I see it.

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Re: Reaching Out for Help on Shabbos  
Posted by Dov - 22 Mar 2016 23:03

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Believe you. I respect your ability to do that and hope I do the same, tho I think I care a lot more than you do about people liking me. It's a problem I have, among others. Nu. But your example helps me let it go with less fear, so thanks.

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Re: Reaching Out for Help on Shabbos  
Posted by David26fr - 23 Mar 2016 10:43

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A real long megillah for sure, and a big torch in my darkness...

I read it from the beginning to the end without losing a word, and it was like a full bucket of fresh water on my face

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Re: Reaching Out for Help on Shabbos

Posted by Al Tisyaesh - 28 Mar 2016 23:23

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@dov i must have read your megilla at least ten times in a row and im still crying

Its like you stole the words from my heart.

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I wish we could read your megilla every purim