

How I used GYE & the Arizal's 4-step program to break a 30-year lust addiction

Posted by alexeliezer - 31 Mar 2011 19:16

Although this is my first post, I have benefitted from the GYE community for the past 2 years. My purpose in writing is to share with my brothers what worked for me in the hope of helping. I was lost in a very severe lust addiction for 30 years, starting pretty much from puberty. Gazing (live and in pics), fantasy, intrusive thoughts, obsession with various fetishes, self-pleasure. Numerous cycles of teshuva every Elul invariably ended in relapse soon after Succos.

All this while raising a frum family, learning Gemorra daily, listening to hashkafa tapes and attending shiurim.

It was only when I discovered GYE that I learned for the first time that I was an addict. I read voraciously and subscribed to both emails. I gained tremendous chizuk (encouragement) from those who told their stories on this forum. I made a commitment not to look at women (other than my wife) and still believe that this is the most important key to success. This is not easy. I love to look at women, and work with many young women at my job. I pinched my inner thigh if I caught myself looking, and in the beginning my thigh was quite bruised. Eventually, it got easier.

When intrusive thoughts (images, fantasies) entered my mind, I recited the following: "Ribbono Shel Olam I am powerless over lust and my life has become unmanageable. Only you can restore me to sanity. I turn my life and my lust over to your care and ask you to please heal me from this illness of lust. I don't want to lust. I only want you and a relationship with you." In the beginning, I probably said this dozens of times in a day. Now it's maybe once a month.

I worked on not lusting after my wife except when we were in the bedroom. I've gotten much better at this. This too is an important step for married men. The yetzer (evil impulse) tells us this type of lust is ok. [Late edit: since being on this forum, I learned that even lust [i]in the bedroom [i] isn't healthy either. Rather, the goal is healthy sexual attraction and interaction, utilized to bring us closer.]

This was right around Rosh Chodesh Nisan 2 years ago. I was then given a recording of a shiur about the hidden power of the Pesach Seder to overcome any yetzer hora (evil impulse or trait). I recommend downloading it from www.JerusalemPulseradio.com well before Pesach and listening to it twice so you can prepare properly and get the most out of this incredible power of the first Seder night. The title is "Higher order of the Seder." The speaker is Rabbi Yaakov

Labinsky of Aish Hatorah. He explains how to use the four languages of redemption and the four cups of wine to free yourself from the bondage (avdus) of the yetzer hora to a new level of freedom (cheirus)*. It worked a miracle for me. I have had NO RELAPSES in the following 2 years. After a couple of months I unsubscribed to the emails and have, for the first time, assumed a normal life. My connection with Hashem continues to grow immensely, my learning is going much better, my home is more peaceful. For the first time since childhood, I am alive and well.

I am now ending the selfishness of not sharing my story and not helping others suffering with this addiction. To be honest, I did not feel qualified to help because I did not follow the whole 12-step program. I also wanted to move on and not get dragged back in. My approach worked for me. No approach works for everyone. If I can help one person, that would be a success. I will monitor this thread, and I can be reached by email if there's anything I can do.

*I've posted a synopsis of the shiur here:

www.guardyoureyes.org/forum/index.php?topic=3750.0

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Re: How I used GYE & the Arizal's 4-step program to break a 30-year lust addiction
Posted by Me3 - 31 Mar 2011 19:28

Thank you for sharing your story. I have a couple of questions.

[alexeliezer wrote on 31 Mar 2011 19:16:](#)

I don't want to lust. I only want you and a relationship with you." In the beginning, I probably said this dozens of times in a day. Now it's maybe once a month.

Why? Is your relationship with Hashem not important anymore if you are not lusting?

[alexeliezer wrote on 31 Mar 2011 19:16:](#)

I worked on not lusting after my wife except when we were in the bedroom. I've gotten much better at this. This too is an important step for married men. The yetzer (evil impulse) tells us this type of lust is ok.

Forgive me, but what did you mean by that?

[alexeliezer wrote on 31 Mar 2011 19:16:](#)

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Why?

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Re: How I used GYE & the Arizal's 4-step program to break a 30-year lust addiction
Posted by Yosef Hatzadik - 31 Mar 2011 19:39

[alexeliezer wrote on 31 Mar 2011 19:16:](#)

To be honest, I did not feel qualified to help because I did not follow the whole 12-step program.

GYE is NOT **SA!!!**

We are NOT a program based on the 12 Steps. It is ONE of MANY tools which are recommended as available to those who need them. (Even **Dov**, GYE's greatest 12 Stepper, says so!) Your describing another method of getting free, a method which actually worked for you, is VERY MUCH APPRECIATED!!!!

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Re: How I used GYE & the Arizal's 4-step program to break a 30-year lust addiction
Posted by alexeliezer - 31 Mar 2011 19:50

reply to me3

I still ask hashem to heal me from my addiction (in the bracha of r'faenu) and I ask for the relationship in many places in davening. I only recite the whole long tefila when I am attacked by inappropriate thoughts, which baruch Hashem is quite infrequent now.

Regarding lusting after one's wife, I recommend Rabbi Sholom Arush's book "Garden of Peace. A marital guide for men" Basically, I'm not staring at her provocative parts and thinking lustful thoughts about her unless it's soon before an anticipated encounter, or during.

I unsubscribed to the emails because I stopped reading them. I didn't feel I needed them, and even felt that in some way they made me think about what I had finally put successfully out of my mind.

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Re: How I used GYE & the Arizal's 4-step program to break a 30-year lust addiction
Posted by Me3 - 31 Mar 2011 19:58

Thank you for the clarification. I've read Garden of Peace several times. Addicts find that they never really fully put this addiction behind them (Something to do with the brain being trained to react to certain stimuli) no matter how long clean. Therefore, I wouldn't stop reading the Chizuk emails.

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Re: How I used GYE & the Arizal's 4-step program to break a 30-year lust addiction
Posted by shemirateinayim - 31 Mar 2011 20:00

[alexeliezer wrote on 31 Mar 2011 19:50:](#)

reply to me3

Regarding lusting after one's wife, I recommend Rabbi Sholom Arush's book "Garden of Peace. A marital guide for men" Basically, I'm not staring at her provocative parts and thinking lustful thoughts about her unless it's soon before an anticipated encounter, or during.

See also ???"? ?????? ???? ??????.

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Re: How I used GYE & the Arizal's 4-step program to break a 30-year lust addiction
Posted by ben durdayah - 31 Mar 2011 20:03

Wow!

GYE and the Arizal -that's some shidduch...

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Re: How I used GYE & the Arizal's 4-step program to break a 30-year lust addiction
Posted by laagvokeles - 03 Apr 2011 19:50

its '????' ??? that ????? ???? and not 12 steps....

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Re: How I used GYE & the Arizal's 4-step program to break a 30-year lust addiction
Posted by alexeliezer - 05 Apr 2011 18:31

Response to Laagvokeles:

I did benefit from some of the 12 steps, I just didn't do the whole program. Realizing and admitting that I am (and therefore always will be) an addict was the first important step. Knowing that I therefore couldn't take even one "drink" remains an important extra motivation not to gaze. Equally important for me was accepting that I was powerless over the addiction and turning over management of my lust to Hashem. This is difficult to understand and accept

at first, but it works. Posts from the various veterans on this site were very helpful in understanding how to implement this. Of course, there still has to be a degree of self-control.

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Re: How I used GYE & the Arizal's 4-step program to break a 30-year lust addiction
Posted by laagvokeles - 05 Apr 2011 18:39

[alexeliezer wrote on 05 Apr 2011 18:31:](#)

Response to Laagvokeles:

Knowing that I therefore couldn't take even one "drink" remains an important extra motivation not to gaze

no 12 steps needed for that ???? ???? ??? ??? : ??? ????? ???

[alexeliezer wrote on 05 Apr 2011 18:31:](#)

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Re: How I used GYE & the Arizal's 4-step program to break a 30-year lust addiction
Posted by alexeliezer - 06 Apr 2011 16:34

No argument here!

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Re: How I used GYE & the Arizal's 4-step program to break a 30-year lust addiction
Posted by alexeliezer - 06 Apr 2011 16:36

For those who won't download the whole shiur mentioned above, I have posted a summary in the Beis Hamedrash section of the forum. Hatzlacha!

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Re: How I used GYE & the Arizal's 4-step program to break a 30-year lust addiction
Posted by Dov - 07 Apr 2011 16:32

[laagvokeles wrote on 05 Apr 2011 18:39:](#)

[alexeliezer wrote on 05 Apr 2011 18:31:](#)

Response to Laagvokeles:

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[alexeliezer wrote on 05 Apr 2011 18:31:](#)

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[Yosef Hatzadik wrote on 31 Mar 2011 19:39:](#)

[alexeliezer wrote on 31 Mar 2011 19:16:](#)

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Yup, "the 12 steps" is not GYE, SA is not GYE, and so you can take a nice, relaxing shower now. Chill, brother.

When the ARIZ"l-solution guy above shares with us that he would talk to Hashem directly about his lust and schmutz use, he was accepting that he does not have the power to overcome it.

Period. He admitted that he needed Hashem to help him out.

This is completely different from the frum line we all say that "of course, every breath we take is a miracle and we need Hashem for it!" No. That is not anything like the first step of "the 12 steps" - the twelve steps only work if they are **honest** - but the frum line of emunah and frumkeit work just fine even if we don't really believe them. Hey - didn't all of us say those things and even teach them to others? *While* we were still acting out our lust? We obviously had a problem *using* our emunah.

Could it be that we didn't *really* believe that schmutz was *truly* bad for us (no matter what the halocha stated)? Our guts - didn't they tell us differently - that it was sweet and in our very best interest? What about our seichel that told us it was the stupidest idea to act on that lust? Surely we kept doing it because we believed that we **could** tolerate more of it - till after we got the job over with, of course... Then it always becomes clear, the lie...till the next time when we again 'forget'. Why?

Could it be that we also did not *really* believe that Hashem knew what's *really* best for us? That He was not really our Best Friend of all? Weren't we sure - while planning and searching for schmutz and checking out that pretty woman's image, etc. - that the sweetness of the porn, masturbation and whatever else we liked to do was really, really **good** for us? Did we doubt that b'sha'as mayseh? How strong was the doubt. if it was there?

Looking at it as "the YH" actually removes personal responsibility for us. People like to say that calling it an illness does that. Really, I see it the opposite way: recovery says there are things wrong with the way I approach and respond to women, people in general, Hashem, life, and how things make me feel, that leads me to need to use lust. The responsibility I bear in recovery and as an addict, is in recovering the sanity Hashem made me with as a kid (or before).

That's all the steps are about. Nowhere in the steps does it talk about *self-esteem*, and nowhere in the steps does it talk about *lust* - except in the 1st step. As R' Elozar ben Durdaya discovered, **he** had to bring the 1st step with him. Even *Hashem* was not going to do that for him - only the addict (and I do believe he was an addict like Par'oh was, as well) can do that. He is a *yoreh chato'im baderech* - sometimes by showing us (yoreh deyah), sometimes by throwing us (yaro y'yareh)....but that's all he does till we take the personal responsibility and admit - if we are addicts and truly sick - that nothing will work to fix us but Hashem Himself. Not tehillim, not learning Torah, not sex with the wife, not tevillah, not tikun klali - nothing but Retzon Atzmuso Yisborach, period.

That is why the 1st step is the only *real* hisarusa d'l'sata in the program. The rest has nothing to do with lust, drinking, whatever (the problem), and is all about the solution. Any program of action that focuses on being a kodosh or doing teshuvah by constant vigilance to *avoid the drinking, lusting, etc.*, is doomed. Even though it is definitely a mitzvah to stop treifing ourselves up and being kedoshim. That doesn't make it the correct thing to do for us, right now.

Too long a post again. Whoever reads it, drop me a line or PM and yell at me about how wrong I am if you like. But I do not want to create machlokes. For those who are afraid of "blind 12 step-is the-only-way" disease, I am with you. 12 steps **cannot** be the only way! And I am always available to help you dispell that shittah and keep room for the "ARIZ" program", taphsic, hypnosis, or any other program that has at least some evidence.

But I do see the 12 steps as a program of living yourself itno right thinking - very akin to the *words* and *spirit* of "Na'aseh veNishmah". Simple honesty that usually leads to sanity. And I have experienced honesty as a powerful tool for recovery, for those who need it. So I'd suggest it to anyone who has 100% made up their mind that he or she is in deep trouble and cannot get out of any addiction. It has been working for me in every respect so far - I believe you'd do the same.

Love and respect to y'all - **and** believing that 'alexeliezer's eitza will help many,

Dov

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Re: How I used GYE & the Arizal's 4-step program to break a 30-year lust addiction
Posted by the.guard - 07 Apr 2011 16:37

[laagvokeles wrote on 03 Apr 2011 19:50:](#)

its '????' that '?????' and not 12 steps....

all hashem want is we shouldnt do what we want and hold our self back...

if we would get killed by ma--- etc we wouldnt do it....

if someone wants he can

no 12 steps needed

i am happy to see that im not the only one who thinks so

If all Hashem wants is for us to hold ourselves back, so why don't we jut hold our selves back??
After all, it's a PASUK - Lo Sasuru!! Why is that not working for you??

Ela Mai? Something is missing in the self-honesty. Something is missing in our Emunah.
Something is missing in our integrity.

The 12-Steps are just a way of learning some ABC's again. There is nothing in the 12-Steps
that can't be found in Chazal. It is all basics. It is derech eretz. And when put together as a
specific program that is worked together in a group, it has a tremendous Koach.

See this page for where Rabbi Twerski discusses some of these issues:

www.guardureyes.com/GUE/Tips/12StepsQuest.asp

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Re: How I used GYE & the Arizal's 4-step program to break a 30-year lust addiction
Posted by Me3 - 07 Apr 2011 16:40

Guard don't waste your time.

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