

Here At Last

Posted by Asopher - 20 Dec 2013 02:24

Dear fellow GYE forum members,

I hesitate to call you fellow members, because this is all so new to me, so strange, a bit overwhelming, and I feel boy-like shyness returning, though I am far from being a boy.

My porn addiction goes back for more than four decades. With the internet, it has reached close to a daily basis. In the last few years I have made great efforts to stop. Using a meditative technique, I succeeded for almost two months, and wow, did I think I was fabulous. I was celebrating, I was crying with joy and thanks. I felt lighter, I felt renewed. And then I dropped. And my drop seemed to push me even lower, due to the height I had reached. And since then, though still trying, I never reached abstinence for more than a few days at a time.

But on Sunday Dec. 7, I felt particularly low, because the night before, Motzai Shabbat, when the home was quiet, I fell again, and for a long time, so that it cut into my sleeping time. And I felt particularly hateful of myself, because I thought, wow, I don't break Shabbat to watch the computer(Thank God; I am sure that for some this too can be a struggle), but I could not last the small section of day that was left before sleeping. And I stayed up so late that it cut into the next day, and I awoke not only groggy(with sort of a post-porn hangover) but just disgusted with myself.

My wife sensed it, asked what was going on, if I was alright. I told her I was just in a bad mood(like duh). I wonder now, as an aside, how many bad moods, depressions, cynical answers, impatient snappings, I have imposed upon my family because of my struggle and the accompanying sense of self-hatred.

Later that day, going through e-mails, I found and opened the daily GYE chizuk, which I had signed up for a short time earlier, but not read daily. I pushed myself to open this one immediately, and saw an announcement for a yearly gathering here in Yerushalayim, the very next evening. I knew I had to sign up.

But when I arrived, I wanted to turn around and leave. I felt myself hunch up and try to shrink, as I have done so many times through the years, slipping in and out of stinking theatres with scratchy movies, and peep-show booths by bus stations and slimy waterfront bars. And these men, fellow Jews, some young, some older, talking and joking, laughing and hugging, did not seem to be carrying the load I was carrying. It couldn't be. This must be some kind of interest group or mild support group.

I was wrong, of course, and subsequent testimony from some men knocked me out, stunned me, by their blending of confession, of struggle, of feelings of ignominy surpassing my own, along with tremendous exposure and courage. I was riveted, I was moved, I was close to tears at being in a room where so many men could say openly, without hunching or turning away, that they did THIS, struggled with THIS, neglected a child or their work because of THIS. When, one by one, men around the room stood and admitted their addiction, and how long they were clean, I could barely move when my turn came, and had to push myself up, because only at that point

did I really accept the realization that this was my place, the place I needed to be. And, far from hunching and slouching and slinking away, I could stand tall and proud and straight-shouldered and open, at least in the knowledge that I had taken the step to be here, like these others and with these others.

Oh yes, I could return to my pit, but not without knowing that there was an alternative, not without purposely and consciously rejecting the life lines that were cast toward me. I knew I had to immediately, this very evening, push forward and take action, to keep the momentum going.

Finding a group, connecting to phone calls, starting the Big Book, reading through the archive of GYE articles and e-mails, has been a bit of a balancing act, in the midst of Jerusalem's record snowfall. If anyone had told me on the Sunday morning that I awoke disusted with myself(again), that I would remain sober for the next twelve days, I could not have believed it. Yet here I am, hopefully shedding, neuron by neuron, this obsession that has gripped my brain since a painful adolescence.

I feel that all these efforts are half-blind gropings. I don't know yet which are more effective and which less. I do not want to judge them. But the fact is that I am sober, one day after another, slowly re-building my foundation of myself. I have a long, long way to go, I know. I have fear of falling again, and that the fall might convince me of the futility of even trying. I am much more cautious now than during my earlier short-lived period of breaking free.

Writing this is one more way of reaching out, of taking action to try to pull myself forward and out. I am amazed to find myself writing this to all of you. I am amazed to know that you are out there, and that you all are wrestling with your own private pain. I feel that I am clumsily casting out a single strand into darkness, hoping that this is the start of a strong web of support and connection, but not quite believing it at a gut level.

Two points I would like to make before closing this first effort of reaching. First, I was really struck when Dov, speaking to our gathering by Skype, spoke of staying sober one day at a time. Of course, I have heard this thinking before but it really hit home, just to focus on staying free and shedding this pattern for this day. Only this day exists. Many many thanks to Dove for saying this in a way that really penetrated.

But this leads to my second point. While I have heard many people say that in the problem there are blessings, in the past this has sounded like hopeful gibberish to me. But if I concentrate on this single day of not acting out, of making solid, good, conscious choices, then I expand the possibility of finding the beauty and miracle inherent in each day. I want to tell myself today not only that this will be a day of NOT doing something, but of YES doing something else. I am not only refraining form acting out, not only cleaning out the gunk, but also recognizing beauty, joyfully and gratefully accepting blessings, and celebrating my choices of re-directing energy, of re-channeling obsession into productivity and creativity. And that, for me, right now, is the brachah inherent in this daily struggle and unfolding.

Many thanks for listening, and many thanks for being out there, Asopher

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Re: Here At Last

Posted by tryingtoshteig - 20 Dec 2013 02:37

Wow, I don't know what to say to that other than....

Welcome! We look forward to getting to know you!

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Re: Here At Last

Posted by Gevura Shebyesod - 20 Dec 2013 02:47

Welcome! That was so moving and well written.

Much Hatzlacha on your journey, stick around and keep writing!

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Re: Here At Last

Posted by skeptical - 20 Dec 2013 03:19

Welcome to GYE!

I could relate very much to your story.

You're in the right place, as we all are or have been there.

I'm looking forward to getting to know you better.

Hatzlacha!

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Re: Here At Last

Posted by cordnoy - 20 Dec 2013 06:43

Welcome!

Wow!

And now i lose the distinction of being the "four-decades" guy.

Welcome aboard....and trust me...there won't be "five decades."

anyway, who thinks so far ahead?

just for now....

b'hatzlachah

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Re: Here At Last

Posted by Pidaini - 20 Dec 2013 09:39

Welcome to GYE!!!

I relate so much with the thought of how many "bad moods" and lashing out I must have done to my wife, and I'm *only married 3 years!!*

You have come home, I must have met you there by the convention, I'm part of that roudy OINK group.

What did end up doing? meetings? calls?

Stick around here buddy, (it's not enough, but it's a lot of fun!!)!!!

Post away and KOT!!!!

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