

I'm Finally Here

Posted by Birshusi - 20 Apr 2016 05:43

This post is over a decade in the making. A decade of struggling, falling, disappointing myself, and a whole lot of tumah.

The first time I watched porn was completely by mistake; actually it was more like mis'aseik. Someone in my house had been watching before me, and it was in the relatively early days of the internet when many websites used the Windows Media Player on the computer's desktop as their video platform. I, an innocent eight or nine year old, opened WMP stam, and up popped a video that, although not immediately apparent what it was, was clearly going somewhere. So I watched. And what I saw then remains to be the most explicit, obscene sight I have ever seen. An entire world had been revealed to me, one that I couldn't believe actually existed, but one that was just as intriguing as it was disgusting. I spent the rest of that Friday afternoon in my family's closed-door computer room, googling for more of what I had just viewed. What I ended up finding was eight year old stuff, but pritzus at its worst just the same.

I don't remember specific incidents after that affair; there must have been something. But a few years later, the iPod Touch came out, and I desperately wanted one, because it was cool new tech and I was a curious kid. My generous parents bought it for me, and of course made sure to remove the Youtube app and Safari. Shkoyach. A couple of sports apps later, and I had easy access to whatever I wanted to see, whenever I wanted to see it. Every night, I'd come home from school, and drown myself in whatever my imagination dreamed up. This went on for over a year, with me feeling worse and worse about myself as time went on, with numerous honest attempts to stop all ending in depressing failure.

[Agav, I always knew that I wouldn't cross certain lines. For some reason which maybe I'd be able to explore with the oilam here, I only allowed myself to see basic porn, but not the worst of the worst, if you chap what I'm saying...]

One night I had enough of myself. I went downstairs to my father who was in the kitchen preparing to go to sleep, and I said to him, "Can we talk?" He chapped right away. We sat down on the couch, and I told him how I'd been using my iPod ever since he bought it for me. Long story short, he was incredibly understanding and supportive, and I felt renewed. He took my iPod at my request, and that was that.

For the iPod, anyway.

We still had computers without filters, which meant that any time I was home when nobody else was in the house, I'd find myself in the same chair, finding more garbage to enjoy, and to suffer from. (I also found books in my house that contained everything I wanted to see, just in writing.) I still remember my Rebbi asking me once how my off-Shabbos was, and how difficult it was for me to just smile and say "Great, boruch Hashem." What a shahkrin.

But that issue would sort of fade, because my parents got a good filter, and I started to become more of a masmid and more attached to my learning in general, which I realize now is a tremendous neis considering all that my eyes have seen and my brain has absorbed.

But it was always there, a problem whenever I was home and alone, the draw to the computer magnetic and suffocating. Slowly it has become more of a constant mindset than a periodic struggle. Whenever I'm home, it's not a shailah of if I'll end up on the computer, but when, for how long, and how bad it will be.

My mind is now dominated by the desire to see an attractive woman, and when one does come close, I feel basically powerless to look away. It is so bad that driving is sometimes dangerous for me, because when you're in a frum neighborhood and there's a minivan coming your way, you can bet that the driver is wearing a sheitel and makeup, and I want to see. And even worse than that, this thirst for lust leads me to violate people's privacy, which besides for being extremely selfish, could land me in jail if I'm caught.

I've thought about all this for a while, and have finally admitted that this cannot be chalked up to normal male behavior, but rather, I have a lust problem, and I guess it could be an addiction. I can't go on living like this, because it messes with my basic functioning, menuchas hanefesh and my ability to shteig. I had planned to join GYE at the beginning of Bein Hazmanim, but I was so busy that I barely had time to sit at the computer. I naively thought that I might be okay. But first yesterday and then today, I caved (fell?), and it's clear that if I don't act now, I might never get this yetzer hora under control.

If you are still reading until this point, I can't thank you enough for getting to know me. I need the oilam here to help me become like you - focused and determined to remain pure in a world of shmutz. I really hope that I'll be here often, feeling the support of other Yidden that are fighting the same battle I am. Because I really want --and need-- to get myself under control.

Yedidcha,

Birshusi

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Re: I'm Finally Here

Posted by Workingguy - 06 May 2016 13:41

[markz wrote on 06 May 2016 01:02:](#)

Actually I love you guys - never forget that

As is well known, my blunt / sharp posts due to my mild aspergian traits have caused others to drop my karma, yet I'll continue trucking because my end goal is your success

I do not want to gate crash on this party, but I am misunderstanding something here

[Birshusi wrote on 05 May 2016 22:21:](#)

I'm love starved, I want affection (and I get both from my parents, but I want affection from a girl who I connect with. I don't think that needs any more explanation.), and if I can't have it, my mind is going to try to find the next "best" thing.

From my unprofessional understanding addiction is when the outlet is out of control

Perhaps you are not addicted (No unprofessional guy here can tell you).

However "if you can't have it, your mind is going to try to find the next "best" thing".

Is that ok for you? Is that 'not a problem' similar to the first point I raised in my last post here?

I can argue with your mom - you can't

[inastruggle wrote on 05 May 2016 23:56:](#)

It's really important to realize how **not** sick it is to fantasize and lust after women

I beg (on my knees) to disagree

So...

Karma down, and I await to hear your kind respond...

My knees are hurting...

Nu!!!

I think this is a great conversation, and my biggest success is from realizing that I'm not an addict in my book and how much the shame and the label contributed to my problems. Markz, if I remember correctly you also decided that you weren't an addict. So here are some points.

1) What difference does it make? We want to succeed, so spin it to yourself in the best way that will make you succeed. If being an addict helps you, go for it. If not, don't be.

2) It is definitely normal to desire women. R Wolbe wrote that it is almost impossible for single boys not to struggle with masturbation. The question is where it goes from there. If you have bad coping and regulation skills, it will go from the "normal" amount to out of control. If you're exposed to pornography, which studies show causes the same parts of the brain to light up as cocaine, then it will probably go way past normal. Even a person who was married with a healthy, normal sex drive would probably go overboard of his wife was always ready and willing. So I think you have to differentiate between the beginning of the desire and struggle, and where it's at now. My therapist pointed out that people who have healthier emotional selves don't necessarily struggle the same way because they want to spend more time in the real world than escaping, and they may have healthy enough relationships to reach out for help right away. The 12 steps also subscribes to the idea that it is the out of controlness of our lives that pushes us to act out. So I'd agree that the desire and struggle is normal, but available pornography and a hyper sexual society, and our own emotional problems can easily take that way out of control.

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Re: I'm Finally Here
Posted by eslaasos - 06 May 2016 14:57

WG, this is what I would have written had I known how to. Thank you.

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Re: I'm Finally Here
Posted by Birshusi - 06 May 2016 15:24

[markz wrote on 06 May 2016 01:02:](#)

The quote thing isn't working, Here's what markz said:

"From my unprofessional understanding addiction is when the outlet is out of control

Perhaps you are not addicted (No unprofessional guy here can tell you).

However "if you can't have it, your mind is going to try to find the next "best" thing".

Is that ok for you? Is that 'not a problem' similar to the first point I raised in my last post here?"

It's definitely a problem, but it's not necessarily a problem with my brain. It's a problem because the Torah says that I have to control myself, just like I have to control myself from speaking lashon hara.

"inastuggle" post=286849 date=1462492568It's really important to realize how **not** sick it is to fantasize and lust after women

I beg (on my knees) to disagree

I gotta agree with ina on this one. Over the last two weeks, I've seen things and have had

thoughts that gave me pleasure, and I began to get angry and frustrated that I just can't control myself. And then I remind myself, this is totally normal. And magically, I calm down and go vyer feeling positive and encouraged to keep improving. It's working. I haven't fallen once since I joined GYE. If instead I keep telling myself that I have an **addiction**, it feels like an insurmountable defect and I'd just get depressed. Obviously if someone really truly has an addiction, he's got to face it and learn to manage it, whatever it takes. But if I can have this mindset, that I'm a normal male doing my best to follow the dvar Hashem, and it works to keep me clean, I would think it to be obvious that this is the correct approach.

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Re: I'm Finally Here
Posted by eslaasos - 06 May 2016 15:34

Birshusi,

Just because it's productive to maintain a positive mindset doesn't make it true.

That being said, it seems to me you view the state of addiction as binary, i.e. either you are or you're not. It seems to me (this has been debated often here) based on my experiences that there is a range of how healthy/unhealthy my behavior patterns can be and I fluctuate along various stages of this range, with hopefully an overall trend upwards.

So, I agree with you to focus not on your medical condition called addiction if that is counter productive, but maybe at the same time be cautiously aware that even normal people can end up "addicted".

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Re: I'm Finally Here
Posted by Birshusi - 06 May 2016 15:38

[eslaasos wrote on 06 May 2016 04:11:](#)

Birshusi (can I say Birshuscha?),

If I may humbly suggest, instead of questioning whether you are an addict, perhaps just ask

yourself whether you have a "problem" with lust, i.e. do you have a hard time controlling it or does it sometimes control you. Do you (repeatedly) engage in thought patterns and/or behaviors that are unhealthy/destructive, although you know you don't want to? Assuming (based on your posts) that the answer is yes, the next question is what to do about it. Maybe this should be discussed with a Rebbi or mentor who actually knows you, and has the experience to be able to advise you. Is that an option for you?

So, back to you, is that an option for you?

I know I have a problem with lust. I do engage in behaviors that can be destructive, as was discussed just a few pages ago.

I have a rebbi who I'm close to, and I'm planning on speaking to him about this soon, especially because the zman starts on Sunday and I need an eitzah how to remain connected to GYE.

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Re: I'm Finally Here

Posted by Birshusi - 06 May 2016 15:45

[eslaasos wrote on 06 May 2016 15:34:](#)

Birshusi,

Just because it's productive to maintain a positive mindset doesn't make it true.

That being said, it seems to me you view the state of addiction as binary, i.e. either you are or you're not. It seems to me (this has been debated often here) based on my experiences that there is a range of how healthy/unhealthy my behavior patterns can be and I fluctuate along various stages of this range, with hopefully an overall trend upwards.

So, I agree with you to focus not on your medical condition called addiction if that is counter productive, but maybe at the same time be cautiously aware that even normal people can end up "addicted".

I think I'm coming across a little bit too stubborn. I'm keeping an open mind, exploring options

and considering everything. I started off thinking there was a good chance I was an addict, and now I'm not so sure. I do have the opinion of my mother, who's credentials are as impressive as), that I shouldn't jump to diagnose myself until I see if marriage helps or not.

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Re: I'm Finally Here

Posted by Birshusi - 06 May 2016 15:48

[abie wrote on 06 May 2016 05:16:](#)

[eslaasos wrote on 06 May 2016 04:11:](#)

Birshusi (can I say Birshuscha?),

Whoever knows why he's called birshusi, raise your hand or say Aye.

(Birshusi, don't give it away)

I'd be very surprised if someone figures out why that's my name.

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Re: I'm Finally Here

Posted by Birshusi - 06 May 2016 15:58

[stillgoing wrote on 06 May 2016 07:08:](#)

[inastruggle wrote on 20 Aug 1974 17:24:](#)

2)How is saying you'd like to have sex with a girl saying she's a sex object? You can respect her intelligence and humanity and still like to have sex, it isn't necessarily a contradiction.

Ina, i'm gonna have to go with Mark on this one. We can't approach marriage like that. The ideal (non-objectify love based) relationship between a husband and wife is filled with respect, love, and caring (granted, that these are not always in ample supply), having relations are then used to solidify that bond and commitment to each other that is already there. Having s with a girl without that setting is simply to satisfy our own sx drive. By using her for that, i would say that yes, we are treating her as a object.

Anytime I get triggered by a random woman on the street, I am using her only for my enjoyment. I'm not thinkin' nothin' about her intelligence and humanity.

At the same time, I know that many men are unhappy in their marriages because their wives don't give them what they need (sources). The world tries to work with the couple to make that happen. I don't think the men just get labeled as sex addicts.

We all have biological needs, and this is one of them. Of course we want to be giving and considerate of others, but there has to be some acceptance of the natural sex drive, no?

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Re: I'm Finally Here

Posted by inastruggle - 06 May 2016 16:37

I have way too much to say. Al rishon, rishon.

[stillgoing wrote on 06 May 2016 07:08:](#)

Ina, i'm gonna have to go with Mark on this one. We can't approach marriage like that.

I agree with almost everything you wrote there. I was just saying that it isn't objectifying women. I think abie is right, this disagreement isn't important. We all agree that lusting and objectifying women is wrong. We have a few minor disagreements as to when objectifying occurs.

[stillgoing wrote on 06 May 2016 07:28:](#)

What I do is act out, mzl, search images etc. - not "normal" things.

That's not normal? Last I checked the statistics, the percentage of men who had looked at porn in the last *week* was 70%

Here's why I feel that labeling yourself as an addict if you're not is a bad idea.

- 1) It can cause yiush like birshusi said. Don't make it harder than it is.

- 2) It can cause you to stop taking responsibility for yourself. I've seen this countless times.

- 3) It will then take up a lot more time and effort to help yourself. If you're an addict you need a lot of help and likely for the rest of your life. If you're not then you need less and you can leave it behind.

- 4) It can distort your priorities. I can even count the amount of times I've seen someone post or say something like "right now I need to get sober, I don't care about God". That may be ok for an addict, it's probably not for a normal person.

This isn't an exhaustive list. I think there are a lot more reasons.

Not having success in the past does not make one an addict. I had absolutely zero success before finding gye. I always fell by the time sukkos came around many times on motzei yom kippur. I didn't have any tools before I came here.

I really think the quote I used of rasha shoteh v'gas ruach applies to unprofessionals encouraging people to "realize" that they're addicts. You're hurting them, you're an idiot for thinking you know, and you're a baal gayvah. It's important to realize that posting here, and being an addict yourself doesn't make anyone an expert and certainly doesn't make anyone qualified to diagnose anyone. There's a reason you need extensive schooling and experience to legally do that.

Sorry if I offended anyone, we need to realize our limitations or we can ruin someone's life.

You may just be the reason he deals with lust for the rest of his life instead of leaving it behind.

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Re: I'm Finally Here

Posted by eslaasos - 06 May 2016 16:51

[inastuggle wrote on 06 May 2016 16:37:](#)

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[stillgoing wrote on 06 May 2016 07:28:](#)

What I do is act out, mzl, search images etc. - not "normal" things.

That's not normal? Last I checked the statistics, the percentage of men who had looked at porn in the last *week* was 70%

A lot of what you said is true, but there may be a distinction between what's normal for the secular world, and what's normal for someone brought up in a religious environment. Of course, the sex drive is normal for everyone, but when your entire life is dedicated to a certain goal, then having a powerful natural urge that is counter to that goal creates conflict.

I'm just trying to stick up for SG, but I should really let him speak for himself. I believe what I wrote is true but it may not be relevant to your conversation.

For me, this conversation is getting pointless, so I'm logging out. Have fun.

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Re: I'm Finally Here
Posted by Gevura Shebyesod - 06 May 2016 16:53

Usual does not equal normal, and normal does not equal proper.

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Re: I'm Finally Here
Posted by inastruggle - 06 May 2016 16:57

Edit: I started writing this before the two guys on top of me responded. I think both their points are great.

[Birshusi wrote on 06 May 2016 15:58:](#)

Anytime I get triggered by a random woman on the street, I am using her only for my enjoyment. I'm not thinkin' nothin' about her intelligence and humanity.

I don't think that's called objectifying her. This is either a semantic point or a philosophical one, I don't know if there's a point in debating it further.

[Birshusi wrote on 06 May 2016 15:58:](#)

At the same time, I know that many men are unhappy in their marriages because their wives don't give them what they need (sources).

We all have biological needs, and this is one of them. Of course we want to be giving and considerate of others, but there has to be some acceptance of the natural sex drive, no?

NO.

This is extremely important. I got immense benefit out of realizing it. This is NOT a biological need. It's a biological want. We don't need sex to live, we need water, food, and shelter.

The outside society turned this into a need. I believe that this is exactly why the torah makes us control ourselves. We are humans not animals. We can control ourselves even if the want is extreme.

Many men are unhappy in their relationships because they're wives aren't giving them as much sex as they want. That's because they want it more frequently than women. Too bad. It's not their wives fault that they want it so often and it's not their fault either. It's their fault for letting that urge control their actions.

If you want something and your wife doesn't then communicate. If you come into marriage for your own gratification then you missed the boat. I don't need to be married to know that.

Acceptance of the sexual desire means not to look at yourself like a sick menuval for wanting it. It doesn't mean you should feel entitled to anything.

Saying the word menuval reminds me of a guy who was here before my times named battleworn. I read his story a long time ago but it stuck with me. If I remember right, his wife hated sex with a passion. He learned how to deal with it.

Edit: I realized how bad the last paragraph sounds. The word reminded me of him because he called the yetzer hara that.

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Re: I'm Finally Here
Posted by stillgoing - 06 May 2016 19:09

[Gevura Shebyesod wrote on 06 May 2016 16:53:](#)

Usual does not equal normal, and normal does not equal proper.

Couldnt have said it better myself.

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Re: I'm Finally Here

Posted by stillgoing - 06 May 2016 19:14

[inastruggle wrote on 06 May 2016 16:57:](#)

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[Birshusi wrote on 06 May 2016 15:58:](#)

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Acceptance of the sexual desire means not to look at yourself like a sick menuval for wanting it. It [dosnt mean your ontiled to anything]

A golden post! I would just add though, that it aint always that easy

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