

Trying to clean up while struggling religiously
Posted by youknowwho - 22 Sep 2023 14:39

Hello to my fellow GYE warriors!

I figured I'd give it a shot at introducing myself a little bit, as I've read many threads here and value the growth and journey of all the amazing people over here!

My original goal when I got to this website a few months ago, was to deal with my addiction to porn and masturbation. It was getting way out of hand and it really disturbed my quality of life.

Thankfully, I have hit 90 days and I am shocked and amazed at how this was even possible, I had already written myself off to be a porn watcher and chronic masturbator for the rest of my life!

This is no doubt due to joining this website, reading the forums, chatting, and connecting via email/phone to some wonderfully amazing people here, and I want to finally say a **huge** public thank you to you all!!!

I owe my newfound life to this place, and I hope I can continue staying away from p & m.

Due to the fact that I have been clean from p & m for a while, I will leave that part of my life out of my story (for now) and perhaps revisit it in a later post.

What I would like to address, with as limited details as possible, is that I have been struggling mightily with cleaning up the rest of my act while also struggling with my religious identity.

For a good period of my life (not from birth) I was involved in an extremist, abusive and controlling group.

Thank Heaven (and I praise Hashem for this every day) I am done with that.

But it resulted in a massive religious identity crisis, which I am still struggling through.

I wanted nothing to do with religion, I am numbed by many aspects of it. The pain in some areas is almost visceral, like being scalded when getting too close to a hot fire.

Certain things about our way of life are too painful, and I just dissociate from it.

What does this have to do with GYE and addiction?

Well, the truth is, that although I am free of p & m for a nice while, there are other things I have experimented with as I have gone through my journey.

I started watching movies, and saw hundreds of them, and many were literally soft-core porn

films.

(I must say that thankfully, I don't remember when I've watched a movie last, probably a half a year, but it's not so much "b'sh*tah," I just haven't got the brain space to put myself into a good emotional movie)

I started finding meaning in non-Jewish music. What can I say? I enjoy it, and nothing really moves me like that, I identify with the lyrics and passion. I'm not talking about outright prust music, but certain genres appeal to me and I cannot go back to Yiddish music, I have tried to and didn't hold for more than a few days.

I also started browsing YouTube as a mindless escape, and very often a clip of inappropriately dressed women pops in and I just watch it without feeling too guilty about it.

From a religious point, I understand that this is against the Torah, but I have no strength to care. I am close to Hashem, I talk to Him every day, and I feel that Hashem understands my struggles, my exposure, the sexual abuse and religious abuse that I have been through, and that He loves me unconditionally.

But from an addiction standpoint, If I truly want to "clean up", I know I can't be staring at shikshas/tic toc dances etc.

And I'm not even *talking* about the frum woman aspect, which I'm sure many people can relate to, I fall a lot with peeking glances at hot frum women and of course I should not be doing that, it's feeding the beast!

I know that addiction to porn and masturbation is like addiction to a drug, dopamine. I know that if I continue "feeding the drug", even in small quantities, I will not achieve full recovery.

But I am just so mixed up with it all, it's so hard to kick, and religious ideas don't talk to me. I don't want to identify as an Ultra-Orthodox Jew, I wish I could leave it all behind.

As part of the backlash of what I've been through, I've delved into Jewish history and have read stuff from non-traditional (read: non censored) sources, and I'm scared to death of the path open before me...I see corruption, dysfunction, and abuse and a load of BS in our "system", and coupled with the experience I had been through, it makes me want to run away from it all!!

If not for my wonderful wife and children, whom I love so much, I probably would have long ago left it all behind for a new life.

I feel trapped in my religious identity, not sure how to find solace and clarity, how to find a steady voice in my head to see through all the BS and serve Hashem as a true servant as I'm sure He wants me to be.

I feel trapped in the loop of feeding the little monster in my brain and I sometimes feel so alone and sad because even ideas, insights, and encouragements make me crazy.

I am sorry for sounding negative and embittered, but I'm just pouring my heart out, and maybe just by writing about it, it will feel better.

In any case, I hope to continue documenting these little ups and downs, and I look forward to continuing to be part of this amazing forum!

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Re: Trying to clean up while struggling religiously
Posted by foolie - 28 Nov 2023 18:17

[chancy wrote on 28 Nov 2023 18:02:](#)

[chaimoigen wrote on 23 Nov 2023 02:08:](#)

Coming late to the party here.

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Re: Trying to clean up while struggling religiously
Posted by youknowwho - 28 Nov 2023 20:59

Dear Friends,

I've wanted to share some thoughts that have recently been vibrating in my mind.

Sometimes, as I wander and peruse the vast libraries of GYE, I bump into old threads of years ago, names like kugel, cholent and schnitzel, to name just a few. And the many other great users of the past.

I don't know why, but sometimes it leaves me with a lingering sadness.

I often wonder, where are they now?

"Last visit date, Jan. 2019".

Are you okay? Are you still clean? Are you still so vibrant and full of the courage, spirit, fight and depth you've brought to the dusty and endless pages of GYE?

What about your wives, kids, and other people you've written about. You've shared your

struggles, your trials and your triumphs, and now you're gone...I hope you know of only happy tidings.

It also gives me newfound appreciation for the old hands still on board, who are still here, trucking on, as they have been forever, continuing the holy task of inspiring and helping people who struggle in this dark and difficult challenge.

I don't know why I feel this way, maybe it's a weird kind of nostalgia. A certain morbidity. I don't know why I'm sharing it, but I think maybe because it makes me think that I too will one day be gone, and all that will be left are the endlessly long pages of posts and threads...what *difference* does it all make?

It makes me think of the mortality and frailty of life. The transient nature of our stay on this Earth. Kind of morbid, I know, that's how I sometimes think.

These thoughts sometimes drive me to act out and numb those feelings.

But one thought gave me solace, and leaves me happy and encouraged...

There is no doubt, that all these posts, comments, connections, chats, friendships, thank you's...and the rest of it, there's no doubt that **it makes a difference**. The difference it makes is as *real* as the people who read them.

Every little bit of light you can bring into someone's darkness, is building another world of eternity.

And perhaps when Moshiach comes, these infinite pages of GYE, so full of hope and light to many a lonely soul, will proudly be read out to the whole world.

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Re: Trying to clean up while struggling religiously
Posted by iyh2023 - 28 Nov 2023 21:02

Is this next weeks editorial for Mishpacha?

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Re: Trying to clean up while struggling religiously
Posted by iyh2023 - 28 Nov 2023 21:04

You should know that i had those same exact feelings when i was going through all the old

posts and it was interesting that you had the same. I hope they are all doing well and are in a better place then when they started.

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Re: Trying to clean up while struggling religiously
Posted by Hashem Help Me - 28 Nov 2023 21:11

The beautiful fact is that many people graduate GYE after cleaning up their lives and simply move on. Yes, their written comments remain behind and are "oseh peiros" by giving validation, chizuk, and advice for many years after they were written. These quiet forum threads are the testimony to the success of GYE and the tzaddikim here.

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Re: Trying to clean up while struggling religiously
Posted by chaimoigen - 29 Nov 2023 00:31

No man is an island.

Each of us has an individual pathway to walk. (If you're really feeling morbid, Tom, I might say that each man owes a single death to pay at the end of his road).

Yet we touch and move each other's trajectories in a million, billion ways. Like ripples in a pond, the words we say and things we write; our every interaction with each other - radiates outwards and changes the shape of **all** of our paths...

We are all different, forever, for having known each other.

I can't think of a better way to showcase this truth than what goes on in these forums. We don't know who each other are, most of us will never shake the other's hand or know his true name. Won't meet for a drink, (outside of Bardy's now-quiet pub).

Yet I know that notwithstanding that, I am forever changed by my deep connection with so many

here.

You see: When a Neshoma touches another, the effect is **NITZCHYUS**.

Grass may grow long and undisturbed over unused usernames and quiet threads. Guys have moved on for many reasons, many due to "graduating", as HHM said. Yet please remember that just as the posts, conversations, connections and human touches remain saved and accessible in the depths of these forums- so too is our striving, connection and steps towards growth, together, that which lasts forever.

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Re: Trying to clean up while struggling religiously
Posted by adam2014 - 29 Nov 2023 09:56

I feel the same way about my own personal path. Even though I am so far from "Graduating" from GYE (That makes me laugh even writing this). I know that someday I will stop getting up in the pre-dawn darkness and sit with my coffee and type away on GYE. My hopes and fears are more on display here than anywhere else on the internet or in any form of writing. I am sharing things that only a short time ago, I never thought I would ever share with anyone, let alone some Yids on an anonymous website.

I look forward to the day that I can stop doing this and needing such daily inspiration and coaching. Let my words and everyone's words be a lasting legacy to all that come after us. Let future Jews know that what they are going through isn't new and that they are not alone.

I would love to have a get together with a group of you guys for a drink someday. That would be AWESOME. I know that it probably will not happen, but I smile to think how nice it would be to shake your hand and give you a hug and a stiff drink and just say Thank You!

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Re: Trying to clean up while struggling religiously
Posted by chancy - 29 Nov 2023 19:05

[foolie wrote on 28 Nov 2023 18:17:](#)

[chancy wrote on 28 Nov 2023 18:02:](#)

[chaimoigen wrote on 23 Nov 2023 02:08:](#)

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I love FRED! I wish I were that brave!

Percy? no!!! Im not a yesman

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Re: Trying to clean up while struggling religiously
Posted by chancy - 29 Nov 2023 19:26

Dear Voldemort (its shorter than youknowwho, and im not afraid to say his name)

I feel your sadness coming thru on my end and i understand that feeling all too well. Since a very young age i've been obsessing with death and loss.

that had caused me to fall many times, I just couldnt handle the pain and the fear. Let me share how i've gotten to grow from that.

Since I saw no way to heal myself and force myself not to think about morbid subjects, i figured if cant go away from it, let me study it and face it like a man.

I started reading and learning about spirituality much more, since we are frum yiden, there is a lot on these subjects in our holy sforim.

I wanted to feel my soul more and go deep inside and feel what it means to be without a body and just be a soul.

After many years of work, I understand now the following truths

Death is not the end, of course we all believe that, but most of us never think into that, we need to. Once we die, our bodies stay behind and our souls become free to see and feel things it couldnt while still connected to a body, It can hear much further and feel how a sin is dirty and

how it effects everything.

After a few days an angel will come to escort the soul up, it depends how holy a person is how long this takes. But if someone is holy and his soul is pure he can go right to Gan eden Hatachton and that Friday night will go up to Gan Eden Haelyon. If his soul is not pure, he will encounter many struggles along the way.

I can go on for a long time, but this is not the place for it.

All i wanted to say was this. Dont think of this world as fleeting and passing, Whatever we do here is what will decide where we go when we die.

If we continue to fight the good fight and stay the course and cry to Hashem to save us, meanwhile we do everything we can to get close to Him by learning and davening from our hearts, doing all mitzvos we can and abstaining from all aveiros, and if we fall cv we repent and keep fighting, once we die, we will see the greatness we have achieved from this fight! The only way to get higher and grow our souls and our connection to Hashem is thru struggles, especially in this area which is so difficult.

Hashem knows everything and He sees our pain and suffering, at the end of the day we are only fighting because He told us to fight!

Stay in the fight, but think about why you are fighting, not for you, but for Him!

Hashem give us strength to win this war and see the salvation soon.

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Re: Trying to clean up while struggling religiously
Posted by foolie - 29 Nov 2023 19:38

[chancy wrote on 29 Nov 2023 19:05:](#)

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I suppose you can be a Bill, Charlie or George you know you are running out of options if these don't Appeal to you, you can be Frodo instead

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Re: Trying to clean up while struggling religiously
Posted by chaimoigen - 29 Nov 2023 20:08

Chancy,

?Your words are deep and beautiful, like a deep, clear mountain stream.

Thank you.

I think perhaps you may be Neville Longbottom. He knew suffering, and struggles. He faced death and worse, in the eye. . But in the end, 'twas he who conquered both his fear of friends and you-know-who, and vanquished the serpent....

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Re: Trying to clean up while struggling religiously
Posted by youknowwho - 29 Nov 2023 20:21

That settles it, then.

Professor Albus Percival Wulfric Brian Dumbledore/chaimoigen has spoken.

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Re: Trying to clean up while struggling religiously
Posted by Ybird - 29 Nov 2023 21:37

Wow, i just bumped into that thread, i had actually found out of this whole thing a year ago when my wife bought home a small travel size shas, ummm in english, but after reading the covers i)

i watched all 8 movies in a period of about 8-9 days, its actually like the yetzer horah, it starts small and cute, but it gets bigger and more shmutzig later on

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Re: Trying to clean up while struggling religiously
Posted by BennyH - 30 Nov 2023 01:22

[chaimoigen wrote on 23 Nov 2023 02:08:](#)

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Do I need to now watch Harry Potter to discover who Sirius is?

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