

Kivisi Hashem - The Ups and Downs of My Life

Posted by vekiveisilo - 18 Aug 2024 22:56

Dear rabboisai, achai v'reyai, chavrei GYE hakedoshim,

I'm a relatively new member here at GYE and I would like to share my story, something I've thought about doing for a while now but hesitated because I questioned whether there is a to'eles in it. But I think that for a few reasons it makes sense to do it. Firstly, to hopefully make some new chaveirim, which is always very helpful!! Secondly, to acknowledge those who have helped me so far (you know who you are)! Also to have a place to post further developments in my journey. And I have an upcoming challenge which I definitely could use some moral support in, and I think sharing it will go a long way toward that. Anyways, after all the hakdamos, here goes:

My experience started as a young boy of 12 years old. I used to follow the news avidly on the frum news sites from the computer at home (which was filtered, just not quite enough), and one day I followed a link on one of them which took me to the original article on a secular site, where I saw on the side of the page a decidedly inappropriate image. That was the beginning of the end... I started going back to that site hoping to see more, and then moved on to other sites, venturing further and further into the web of shmutz. I was petrified of getting caught, and I was a very ernste kid, so it took some time, but eventually I was completely hooked. (At that point I wasn't watching actual pornography - that was a red line by me, mainly because of a rather distorted logic that anything the outside world considered okay couldn't be so bad, but if they already considered it wrong then it was takeh shameful and I wouldn't do that - but everything up to that point.) I would use every opportunity I had when no one was looking to follow my new pastime. Along with this I also (discovered and) started to struggle terribly with masturbation.

(A side he'ara: I've heard from many people an attitude that it's close to futile to protect children from the dangers of technology, because "if a kid is looking for it, there are ways he'll be able to get it anyways", as if there are in the world two categories of children, those who are innocent angels and those who are just bad kids looking for evil. I think this is probably pashut, but my experience was completely otherwise. (Aside from the many inherent technical difficulties with the above argument, but that's a different discussion.) I had, before stumbling into shmutz online, already begun to notice improper images in the street and elsewhere, and to desire them. And I knew that the internet was a place one could access such material (this was about a year after the Citi Field internet asifah) and that our home computer was not sufficiently protected from that. But never did I even consider going down that road - that was simply something one didn't do; that was for "bad people", not for a good kid like me. Until I actually encountered it, and that a) enticed me to look for more, and b) took away the stigma of it to a large extent. So while there might be some children who do have in their nature a strong inclination for lust and that leads them to seek out such opportunities, I would imagine that most are like me. If anyone has thoughts on this inyan, please share with me.) This situation continued and worsened for over two years.

When it came time for me to enter mesivta, my parents chose for me a yeshiva in a different

city. This proved to be my yeshuah. I remember that last night before I left home, I sat down and binged on all of my "favorites" - I couldn't imagine going an entire Elul zman - forty days! - without access. But Hashem had rachmanus on me. Going to yeshiva, and especially that first Elul/Yamim Noraim in a yeshiva environment, was absolutely life changing. In addition, the mashgiach chose for some reason to devote one of his shmuessen that zman to the subject of the internet and its dangers. Not that I needed him to tell me that, I knew it quite well already, but somehow it still made a roshem. I came home with a firm resolve to not use the internet at all, and it actually worked! Over that year, this resolve sometimes wavered, and I would think to myself, "Okay, next time I'm home I'll just give in and watch," but b'chasdei Hashem whenever I was home I pulled through. I still struggled heavily with masturbation, though, but I was sure that as far as my internet problem was concerned, it was a thing of the past. When I was in 10th and 11th grade, I opened up to my rebbeim about my past and present struggles. They were, baruch Hashem, unbelievably understanding, compassionate, and very helpful in guiding me both in dealing with the guilt over my previous mistakes as well as improving my actions going forward, and I managed to acquire some level of control over my behavior.

The summer after 12th grade, I decided that the time had come to loosen my gedarim. It was getting very inconvenient to never be able to go online, and I felt sufficiently secure about my ability to control myself, so I decided I would use the internet provided someone else was in the room. This was a bad idea. Within just a few days, I fell again. And again. And again. I can't describe how devastating that was. A nisayon I had been successful with for four years, which I thought I had conquered - and now I found myself watching the same videos I had viewed so many years before. B'chasdei Hashem, though, I picked myself up after that summer, and continued as I had before. I was shortly thereafter even able to be mischazek in shmiras habris, limiting my falls to bein hazmanim only. But when I went to learn in Eretz Yisrael a few years later, I once again started struggling. Maybe because I was out in the street a lot more, and much more exposed to women, both modestly and immodestly dressed, but either way controlling my thoughts and actions became much more of a challenge. The sad result of this was that when I came home for Pesach bein hazmanim last year, I once again fell. And deeper. I now crossed the line into actual pornography. Once again, it was quite devastating. I went back to Eretz Yisrael, and didn't have the opportunity to watch, but I wasn't the same. I began to think I would have to struggle with this forever. I lost much of my cheshek for learning, for davening, for avodas Hashem - let's just say it was the worst summer zman I ever had. And though I promised myself that I wouldn't repeat my mistake, almost every bein hazmanim since then I found myself falling again. After this past Pesach, full of disappointment and despair, I came back to yeshiva (now in BMG) with a resolve to turn a new leaf. From now on I would conduct myself with kedusha and tahara! No more fantasizing and masturbating for me! But that was a pipe dream. My mind was a cesspool, full of all the junk I had just poured into it. How could I possibly maintain a clean mind, when images and scenes constantly popped into my head, beckoning me to indulge? So I would go a few days staying clean, then fall. Then feel terrible and resolve never again. I think the cycle is familiar to many.... I did not know what more I could do. (I could have maybe spoken to my rebbeim, but I didn't think it would be effective, plus I was rather embarrassed to still be struggling with this as an older bachur.) But once again, Hashem has infinite rachmanus, and He didn't abandon me.....

I walked into the coatroom one morning at the end of Iyar on my way to first seder, and I saw taped to the door was a sign - a little piece of paper that would change my life, put there by a yungerman - a tzaddik yesod olam - who needs no introduction on this forum. Suffice it to say

GYE - Guard Your Eyes

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that his caring and concern for his fellow Yidden knows no bounds, and he is literally moser nefesh (it's not easy putting up those signs without anyone seeing, and it's rather time-consuming to shmooze with the fifty-plus people who reached out) to help those who need it, all with sensitivity and compassion and sincerity and wisdom and experience and a genuine desire to be mechazek and reassure and give guidance to others. It's not an exaggeration to say that I quite literally owe my life to him. (If you are not familiar with IWLR and his BMG signs and incredible selfless activities in reaching out to others, please see [here!!!](#))

Anyways, I was more than a little skeptical that he could help me, but I reached out and called the number on the sign. We spoke for a long time, and he shared his wealth of knowledge and experience with me. He told me about GYE, directed me to Rabbeinu HHM for further help, and gave me a copy of The Battle of the Generation. But most importantly, he gave me Connection. To speak, and later meet, with a fellow ben Torah who had gone through similar experiences and struggles as I had - it was mamesh life changing. I had always known that there were others who struggle, you read about it sometimes in the magazines or elsewhere, but I had never actually spoken to someone who could understand exactly what I was going through, with whom I could feel comfortable sharing all sorts of feelings and challenges knowing with certainty I wouldn't be judged or looked down upon for it. The shackles of loneliness were released, the fetters of silent shame and suffering shattered. I had someone who I knew was rooting for me, whom I could speak to at any time if things were rough. A new world was opened before me, and my life hasn't been the same since. It hasn't always been easy since, to maintain control over myself and to stay clean, but the playing field (or battlefield should I say) is completely different. I've since had the further zechus of getting to know other chaverim from GYE - each one has helped me so much, added a new dimension to my perspective and provided such warmth and support!!

It's bein hazmanim now. I hope while I'm home to have a conversation with my parents (gasp!) with the goal of improving the safety of our home, to remove that chelek of the nisayon, for me and for my siblings as well. But that will take some courage.....Hashem should help me veiter as He has until now!

Please feel free to reach out (and if you've made it this far, thank you for hearing me out!),

Yekusiel*

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Re: Kivisi Hashem - The Ups and Downs of My Life
Posted by iwannalivereal - 01 Dec 2024 04:32

Wow! Mazel Tov on six months!

Feels like yesterday when we spoke for the first time, can't believe it's already been six months!

You're always impressed me with your tremendous bikush and drive to get yourself out of this sugya.

ly"h you should continue with this beautiful new life you've created for yourself!

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Re: Kivisi Hashem - The Ups and Downs of My Life
Posted by vehkam - 01 Dec 2024 11:57

Beautiful post. I can just imagine the rbsos watching this with tremendous pride.

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Re: Kivisi Hashem - The Ups and Downs of My Life
Posted by Muttel - 01 Dec 2024 17:04

[vekiveisilo wrote on 01 Dec 2024 03:37:](#)

Today marks six months clean for me. It's a very exciting milestone, one which when I started I didn't believe I was capable of reaching.

- **To understand how to view my previous mistakes, by acknowledging that they happened and they were mistakes, and being wistful for the innocence and tahara I lost, but at the same time to not be broken by it, rather filled with a resolve going forward and a determination to now do my best, understanding that right now that's all that really matters and this is where Hashem wants me and what He wants from me.**

All of this is an ongoing process. I still have much to learn and understand with regard to all of the above points. But I know inside that I am a changed person from six months ago, and what I have been zocheh to internalize thus far will b'ezras Hashem keep me going in the future.

Yekusiel

Mazel tov!!

This post is gold; the highlighted section is a must-read and a must-internalize!!

Keep the profundities coming!!

With a ton of brotherly love,

Muttel

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Re: Kivisi Hashem - The Ups and Downs of My Life

Posted by chaimoigen - 01 Dec 2024 18:38

A beautiful post from a beautiful person full of beautiful wisdom.

Thank you!!

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Re: Kivisi Hashem - The Ups and Downs of My Life
Posted by proudyungerman - 02 Dec 2024 00:37

Mazel Tov!

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Re: Kivisi Hashem - The Ups and Downs of My Life
Posted by minhamayim - 05 Dec 2024 01:49

My dear friend Yekusiel,

Mazel Tov on this milestone. Your strength your shieefos your glatkeit and all your many maalos will take you very far Bez"h. I'm proud to to have you as a friend. May Hkb'h continue to guide you on your path of torah and avodah mitoch yishuv hadaas and yisuv hanefesh.

MinHamayim

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Re: Kivisi Hashem - The Ups and Downs of My Life
Posted by livingagain - 05 Dec 2024 02:16

[minhamayim wrote on 05 Dec 2024 01:49:](#)

My dear friend Yekusiel,

Mazel Tov on this milestone. Your strength your shieefos your glatkeit and all your many maalos will take you very far Bez"h. I'm proud to to have you as a friend. May Hkb'h continue to guide you on your path of torah and avodah mitoch yishuv hadaas and yisuv hanefesh.

MinHamayim

Kivisi and minhamayim are from the most chashuv participants on GYE. Their posts are always articulate and well written. Moreover they always inspire with positive and upbeat thoughts. It's a breath of fresh air that motivates me to emulate them. I hope one day to reach the milestones they have accomplished. Meanwhile I can continue the struggle and try to follow in their footsteps. Ashrey chelkam

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Re:
Posted by livingagain - 09 Jan 2025 01:27

Mazel tov on your Simcha. May you build a Bayis leshaim ulitiferes

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