

my story.....Confessions of a Frum Internet Addict

Posted by ramatganinternational - 11 Nov 2010 17:07

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What I am about to set out to you today is something that I have been longing to do for a long while. I wanted to catalogue my feelings and thoughts about a matter that has been directly effecting my life for well over the last decade. You may ask why I haven't done so yet. The answer for this question is oh so simple. Immediately after this year's Rosh Hashanah 2010, I did something that I have been meaning to do for many years. I freed myself from the shackles of the Internet. When I say 'freed' I mean to say that I got to grips with my heart and soul and installed Covenant Eyes on my computers with all the added filters etc.

Ok, a little about who I am. My name is Yechezkel, I am 33 years old. I live in Jerusalem - Israel where I have a family of 6 Bli Ayin Hara. I run a successful business from my office in Ramat Gan. I am from England originally and have been living here for the last 9 years.

I come from an extremely frum family – all my siblings besides my brother with whom which I share the business with here are either in Kollel or klei kodesh. I was brought up and educated to the highest standards of both yiddishkeit and frumkeit.

I was lucky to have been partnered with the most wonderful wife and seeing as her family lived in Israel we decided to settle in Israel.

The internet emerged on the worldwide scene during my teens and developed at a fast pace during my early married life. Whilst maintaining a settled program of learning before Shachris and in the evening as well as earning a trade during the day – I was the typical frum ba'al haboss, living a relatively comfortable lifestyle, bringing up my children and infusing in them the rich heritage that both I and my wife received from our parents. My advice was regularly sought on a wide range of communal matters. I had become an askan in my circles and my stature in the community was one of respect. I was proud of my family and looked on with deep pride when my parents and in-laws visited us. I knew they were proud of me at what I had achieved.

This image I had constructed was all but a screen – a fa?ade of who I really was and what my inner being and soul really looked like. In truth, I was well and truly addicted to the internet and all its terrible associated family. Yes I was able to put on a front as a normal frum man when it came to life away from my computer screen. Yes I was able to preach to my children and portray an example of how a frum Jew should behave, yes I was able to learn the Daf day in day out, but behind all this a lustful and dark man lived. It was a clear case of split personality. Away from my computer I lived the life as depicted earlier on but once I was under the spell of my computer and the internet, I transformed into an animal – yes an animal I am ashamed to say. I will not delve into what I got up to and what I spent time watching on the internet but suffice to say I was addicted to it and it ruled my life, my heart, my brain and most of all my soul.

Year after year resolutions came and went in Elul, year on year I wept through T'fillas Zakoh and klapped the al cheits with every intention to make the coming year a one that removed me from the world of the traps that lay in wait at the end of my fingertips as I typed addresses in my browser. But year after year the temptations were too great, too tantalizing to refuse. I had to feed my addiction I had to nurture my lust and satiate my appetite for everything that is immoral.

It wasn't long before those good intentions and resolutions were lying discarded in the garbage.

Life events and simchas came and went with me posing as the perfect family member and mentch whilst in essence I was putting on a show. I was putting on a show that I had perfected over the years – that of total fakery and deception. After all how would anyone ever find out? How would anyone know? Why did they need to know anyway? What difference did it make to them anyway? I motored through my life watching the world go round and making excuses to myself on how to justify my actions thus allowing me to somehow have a clear conscience of what I was doing - I guess one of the hallmarks of an addict.

This is not the platform with which to describe how the internet is the perfect tool of being able to realize one's fantasies behind a screen of total anonymity. The purpose of this script is both for me to read back and draw strength from as well as for others to read and maybe relate to.

Why now? Why did I do this life and soul saving action of allowing my internet activity to become accountable to a third party? I would compare it to that of a smoker that wants to stop but simply finds the habit and addiction too powerful to take the plunge. On many occasions I made inroads in downloading the software but never took the final most telling step. I always bottled it at the final hurdle. Then one day a couple of months ago right after the Yomim Nora'im, I was about to revert to my usual weak self when I witnessed a terrible accident in Jerusalem. I was due to catch an early morning bus to take me to work but missed it because an elderly yid asked me to help him with his large suitcases. I sat on the bench next to a cute toddler and his parents and busied myself on my blackberry whilst I awaited my next bus. Then, in a flash, the child ran into the road and was hit by a large truck head on. He flew into the air and hit the ground with a sickening thud. It was clear that he had been killed instantly. His parents' cries were heartbreaking. Hatzala just took one look at him and covered his head with a blanket. Everyone there was in total shock. I had never witnessed anything of this nature before. It was a scene that I wouldn't wish on anyone to have to witness, a young cute child being killed in front of his dear parents' very eyes. A tender neshomah that surely had so much potential to fill – and now extinguished just like that.....

So there I was, mouth agape, clutching my blackberry and briefcase almost in a trance. Why did I have to witness this? Why did I have to miss my bus? Why did the alter yid ask me to help him when there were so many others on the street he could have asked?

I decided that all this was for a reason. It just had to be.

I arrived in my office and did the one thing I had wanted to do for so long. I somehow felt that Hashem was telling me that if this wasn't a wakeup call what is? I installed Covenant Eyes on my computer and set my accountability partners – my wife and father! They would now have full knowledge of what I was browsing on the web.

This was two months ago and now – 2 months later I am a changed man. I have rid myself from my addiction, an addiction that I had so much reliance on previously. I have changed in every way possible – spiritually, mentally and most importantly I am facing the world whilst portraying a true image of who I am. No longer am I hiding behind a smokescreen. No longer do I have those feelings of guilt and shame. Incidentally, my business has thrived and new revenue

streams have been realized – some leads coming from sources I would never have thought were possible.

Why am I writing this? I know that there are many frum men out there that find themselves in similar situations of Internet entrapment. I know that many of you can relate to how I was able to live a life of a split personality – a normal frum yid and that of a cyber animal. And yes, I know many of you out there will agree that whilst all our actions are continuously recorded and monitored by Hashem and we are ultimately accountable to Him, when it comes to the Internet it's a different story. The internet allows your every action to be shrouded in secrecy and this format allows you to push the boundaries further and further safe in the knowledge that no one meaningful will ever know. It's a modern day invention that has become part of our lives and facilitated every yetzer harah and made it all so easy and possible.

But if your best friend knew or your wife was aware of what websites you visited and they saw you every day would you do what you previously were on the internet? No!

I appreciate that it should never have come to this and I pray that the poor child didn't have to die so that I should have to learn this lesson. I should have known and imbued within my heart all along 'hakol goloi ve'yaduah lefnei kisei kevoidecha' and I shouldn't have to rely on the knowledge that my wife and father are aware of my internet activity. But I also know that You will be proud of me for what I did and in effect 'mitoich shloi lishmah bah lish'mah'.

It has brought me closer to You and allowed me to relate to Your Torah and made davening to You such an enjoyable experience. I have done something that has changed my life forever, something I never thought I'd have the courage to do. I feel cleansed and free to get on with my life and face the world with a clear conscience. Thank you Hashem for giving me the strength to make this move and I ask You to help me on my path to be able to serve You with a pure heart.

Thank you all for reading this. May Hashem help us all in our avoda of serving Him with Yiras Shamayim, with purity and sanctity and may we all be zocheh to His brochos in good health ad me'ah ve'esrim shana.

Yechezkel

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Re: my story.....Confessions of a Frum Internet Addict  
Posted by an honest mouse - 26 Jan 2011 15:22

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I'm totally blown away by this AWE & WONDER moment!!! thanks for sharing the chizuk u got!

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Re: my story.....Confessions of a Frum Internet Addict  
Posted by ZemirosShabbos - 26 Jan 2011 15:29

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wow

good for you RG that you felt Hashem doing things for you so clearly

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Re: my story.....Confessions of a Frum Internet Addict  
Posted by ramatganinternational - 27 Jan 2011 12:34

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hey all,

thanks so much for the morale boosting replies and Me3 thats a great song - i'll sing it to the tune of ani ma'amin!  
Hashem is King over all kings...

anyways, i'm making new friends here every day which cant be a bad thing. one thing has struck me - the level of intellect of the members here is magnificent! we should open a college and have training courses for the beleaguered yiedden around the world who are lost without direction. one thing is for sure, this place has taught me much more than i learnt in my 10 years in yeshiva.....

oh yeah and another thing, the best thing about this place is that we can all have a laugh and me thinks that its due to the fact that deep down were all slightly bemused about the very situation we find ourselves in! but laughter is good!

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Re: my story.....Confessions of a Frum Internet Addict  
Posted by Rising Up - 27 Jan 2011 19:04

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Does anyone else find it ironic to be singing an Elvis Presley to the tune of Ani Ma'amin? 8) 8)

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Re: my story.....Confessions of a Frum Internet Addict  
Posted by Me3 - 27 Jan 2011 19:11

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Because of this?

I believe for every drop of rain that falls

A flower grows

I believe that somewhere in the darkest night

A candle glows

I believe for everyone who goes astray, someone will come

To show the way

I believe, I believe

I believe above a storm the smallest prayer

Can still be heard

I believe that someone in the great somewhere

Hears every word

Everytime I hear a new born baby cry,

Or touch a leaf or see the sky

Then I know why, I believe

Everytime I hear a new born baby cry,

Or touch a leaf or see the sky

Then I know why, I believe

Elvis

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Re: my story.....Confessions of a Frum Internet Addict  
Posted by ramatganinternational - 27 Jan 2011 20:33

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Right Me3,

From today onwards, your to be knows as Elvis.

E - Everyone

L - Loves

V - Vos

I - ier

S - sinkt

Lol!

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Re: my story.....Confessions of a Frum Internet Addict  
Posted by ZemirosShabbos - 02 Feb 2011 16:38

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hi RG, how are you doing?

did you have an Elvis sighting?

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Re: my story.....Confessions of a Frum Internet Addict  
Posted by ramatganinternational - 21 Feb 2011 15:30

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hi, all

long time no speak.

fear not - ive been here every day reading the posts and taking in all the advice and chizzuk. im not a one trick pony - im here to stay forever. (that's assuming the old age home i end up in has internet access!)

so....you're bound to ask where have i been? how am i doing?

well, im pleased to report - its all quiet on the eastern front i.e. im still being good and keeping out of harms way.

i still owe my successes to the installation of Webchaver and im endebedted to them forever.

im still an addict and still need outlets but so far, so good. ive been working on myself and trying to put into place various measures ensuring that i dont fall.

ive been in touch with a couple of other heiliger GYE users and their input in addition to their concern and care have helped me to no end.

so, until my next post, thank you all for your concern and may we all have the strength to continue the fight in good health!!

much love,

Y

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Re: my story.....Confessions of a Frum Internet Addict  
Posted by bardichev - 21 Feb 2011 16:04

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As we say in america

KEEP ON TRUCKING

In canada

KEEP ON ZAMBONI-ING



Mexico

CONTINUAR GUIADOR

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Re: my story.....Confessions of a Frum Internet Addict  
Posted by ZemirosShabbos - 21 Feb 2011 17:06

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great to hear you are doing good!

kutgw

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Re: my story.....Confessions of a Frum Internet Addict  
Posted by Dov - 21 Feb 2011 17:50

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[bardichev wrote on 21 Feb 2011 16:04:](#)

As we say in america

KEEP ON TRUCKING

In canada

KEEP ON ZAMBONI-ING

Mexico

CONTINUAR GUIADOR

TULUI LANG PO!

Phillipines

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Re: my story.....Confessions of a Frum Internet Addict  
Posted by Me3 - 21 Feb 2011 18:19

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Re: my story.....Confessions of a Frum Internet Addict  
Posted by Dov - 21 Feb 2011 23:21

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Kreegtzich arois mit dem kleiner benkletzufloigenmashinn!

(a ba'al teshuvah in) Williamsburg

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Re: my story.....Confessions of a Frum Internet Addict

Posted by ramatganinternational - 22 Feb 2011 15:17

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all french to me!

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