

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

Posted by ramatganinternational - 11 Nov 2010 17:07

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 neshomoh 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 ur-a-jew - 18 Nov 2010 16:31

I'd be curious to know how many of us saw the events of September 11th unfold before our eyes, said we would change (maybe actually did change for a while, particularly since we had such a strong Yom Kippur that year). And years later we were back looking again at porn.

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Re: my story.....Confessions of a Frum Internet Addict
Posted by ZemirosShabbos - 18 Nov 2010 16:46

i drove by the first WTC bombing aftermath in '93 and saw the 9/11 attacks (second plane hitting) with my eyes.

unfortunately, it did not cause me to change. the image of the fireball is a painful one for me, though.

bottom line is that there needs to be the confluence of the experience and the 'open' state of the witness, the will and desire to change. otherwise it's all ho-hum after a while.

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Re: my story.....Confessions of a Frum Internet Addict
Posted by frumfiend - 18 Nov 2010 17:07

I didnt find out about the crashes untill five hours later. I was to busy watching porn. My wife came home later and began talking about it and i had no idea what she was talking about.

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Re: my story.....Confessions of a Frum Internet Addict
Posted by Dov - 18 Nov 2010 17:42

Well said. As for me, I haven't the luxury of being concerned at all with the afterlife, as I certainly never got *sober* because of yiras Shomayim, and - though the weight of guilt was devastating - it didn't hold a candle to my insanity. Though I certainly *believe* in consequences for aveiros, the fear of future pain of this world or of the next - never helped me quit. In my opinion, that is one of the things that shows me that I have a mental illness. It's plum crazy to risk a nice job, a marriage, my integrity, my relationships with my children, *and* my Olam Haba for a temporary adventure that always makes me thoroughly miserable. And the "Oh, just *please* clean me up and take me back!!" close/far relationship with Hashem was just plain stupid. It was not 'ratzo vashov', as the s'forim seemed to be telling me. It was *stupid*.

While I may have hesitated or even desisted from **doing** a few lust-related aveiros a few dozen times over those terrible years - that has nothing at all to do with my *sobriety*. Acting out only 10% of the times I *want* to is **still** going to eventually ruin my life - totally. Eventually there will be nothing left...except for that lovely *s'char* for resisting 90% of the time.... Woopee.

That is not avodas Hashem, as far as I am concerned.

And sobriety certainly has nothing to do with willpower, for when it comes to lust I have none. I have not gotten any stronger. And I would not be surprised if it turned out that I do *not* live sober very much longer, c"v. To the contrary, I will be shocked if at the age of whatever, when I am 'ready' to die, I am still sober.

It *was* a freebie; it *is* a freebie, and - if I remain sober tomorrow - it *will* be a freebie. I do not deserve to be sober.

So if He gives me no *s'char* *at all* for desisting from acting out for 60 years or so by the time I die, I will have no complaints. For it wasn't mine, at all. Besides being a good man, a decent father and husband, and an eved Hashem, I am a recovering pervert, as my wife and many friends in SA know, and I hope to *die* a recovering pervert. And that is just the way I like it.

What madreigah I am considered to be on by my Best Eternal Friend, whether I am looking forward to *s'char*, or onesh, and all other considerations that I am powerless over are out of my lexicon, thank-G-d. That's all His business now, and forever, not mine. All that stuff is just too confusing and self-absorbing for me and never did me a shred of good in the first place. It is all poison for me. Poison, poison, poison. And I sincerely believe that He wants me to ignore the 'accounting' part of my situation completely and leave it to Him, especially with respect to my lust.

Finally, I need to remember that my sexaholic

What *is* my business, is what I *do* with the sober life that He gives me today and whether I treasure it.

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

Posted by yechidah - 18 Nov 2010 18:10

[dov wrote on 18 Nov 2010 17:42:](#)

What madreigah I am considered to be on by my Best Eternal Friend, whether I am looking forward to s'char, or onesh, and all other considerations that I am powerless over are out of my lexicon, thank-G-d. That's all His business now, and forever, not mine. All that stuff is just too confusing and self-absorbing for me and never did me a shred of good in the first place. It is all poison for me. Poison, poison, poison. And I sincerely believe that He wants me to ignore the 'accounting' part of my situation completely and leave it to Him, especially with respect to my lust.

What *is* my business, is what I *do* with the sober life that He gives me today and whether I treasure it.

This yesod is something that I have been trying to learn for many years. It is not just in regard to sobriety that makes this important. It is for anyone that has a specific type of personality, such as myself, where this "yiras haonesh", the fear of retribution causes way more harm than good in the overall scheme of things. Guilt, in certain small measure, to aid in being pro-active may work, but for me, the feelings of guilt have been, as Dov put very well, "poison, poison, poison", and so I do not focus on guilt anymore, and work instead on being self-aware, and by doing so, I relate to God in a unique way that works for me because it is true and it is a relationship that has no false pretenses to it.

I'm not there yet, far from it, but that is my goal.

guilt has its purposes but it can often destroy a person entirely. It almost did me in.

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Re: my story.....Confessions of a Frum Internet Addict
Posted by Dov - 18 Nov 2010 19:37

Dear Yechida,

Thanks for the he'oros and the sharing.

But I was not writing for anyone but Yechezkel.

I would like to know if he hears me...but that's really his business, not mine.

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Re: my story.....Confessions of a Frum Internet Addict
Posted by jewinpain - 18 Nov 2010 21:47

FFTS, there is none such a term in addiction "he's a addict like me or like mike" each addict with his level of addiction and if someone was involved in this addiction as OP said he's clearly an addict and the only way he'll get out probably will be by recovery but this will take lot of time, just stopping is not gana get us anywhere and I'm talking to myself here too, that if I start the 12 steps I know its not enough if I fell of the boat I need to go back up or my life will be in the dumps once again,

Dov is correct about being sober has nothing with yiras shumaim, it never helped and I don't see it helping, we need to be sober just to be sane, than will worry about being a yri shumayim

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Re: my story.....Confessions of a Frum Internet Addict
Posted by Dov - 18 Nov 2010 22:36

Who's worrying about being a yrei Shomayim? He'll help you get that too! Don't worry about it at all. Work, yes, worry, no.

OK, you didn't mean mamesh 'worry', I know, JIP, but it was too tempting to pass up writing that, cuz it really is easier than they make it all out if we chill and keep our noses to the grinding wheel.

And people like Reb b will help us do all that mit ah zing und ah shpring!

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Re: my story.....Confessions of a Frum Internet Addict
Posted by bardichev - 18 Nov 2010 22:51

Zing un shppring

Yess

Who needs a zing and shringg?

I'm pretty sure our new chaver can use a pimms and sabra cocktail

Lchaim ramatgan

Welcome to ur fold

What is your favorite alchohlic beverage?

B. (Barkeep)

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Re: my story.....Confessions of a Frum Internet Addict
Posted by ramatganinternational - 19 Nov 2010 01:37

Hey dov,

i'm hearing you loud and clear.....i just don't quite know how to react to your rant! I may have bitten off more than i can chew! I need time to firstly properly understand what you wrote and then formulate a reply.

I really would like the opportunity to talk to you. Is this possible at all? I'm worried you either have the wrong impression of me or that you feel somehow that i'm missing the point, either way we gotta talk dov.....

Much love

Yechezkel

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Re: my story.....Confessions of a Frum Internet Addict
Posted by ramatganinternational - 19 Nov 2010 01:43

Hi bardichev,

thanks for your welcome, my fav drink has to be vodka with tropicana! Served really cold right after a full plate of chulent. Ahh!

Yechezkel

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

Posted by bardichev - 19 Nov 2010 01:45

Yechazkel

What about th pimms and sabra?

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

Posted by Dov - 19 Nov 2010 04:27

Dear ramatgan fellow,

Do you know how to PM on this forum?

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

Posted by bardichev - 19 Nov 2010 04:32

Don't confuse PM with pimms

A PM from dov os worht its weigt in gold

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