

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 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 Dov - 29 Nov 2010 21:49

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I love the Rebbe Reb b!

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Re: my story.....Confessions of a Frum Internet Addict  
Posted by ZemirosShabbos - 29 Nov 2010 22:27

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i second that!

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Re: my story.....Confessions of a Frum Internet Addict  
Posted by frumfiend - 30 Nov 2010 14:03

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He doesnt think he needs help. If cv he will realize he needs help he will come back dont worry.

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Re: my story.....Confessions of a Frum Internet Addict  
Posted by ramatganinternational - 30 Nov 2010 17:01

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Hi all!

Wow! never thought i'd be missed so much!

Sorry, I've not posted, I was in France for a family simcha! that's all! No need to panic!!

I have to be honest, I was holed up in a hotel in central Paris and had several opportunities to use the hotels internet service or even one of the many internet cafe's in the city centre but guys - get this.....I didn't want to put myself in a position where I could sit in front of a PC again WITHOUT protection!!!!!!

Actually, I'm quite amazed that I held out but at the end of the day - I DID!

I tell you guys for free - when I said my life has changed, I wasn't making a blank 'we've all heard that before' statement. I was telling you the whole truth. I would never have envisaged that my life would be so much better, so much cleaner, so much purer now that I have CE.

I am almost in shock as to how I can see what a blinding bolt of lightening this whole ordeal has done to me.

But now that I'm back - I'm back for good!

So good to be back too!

Looking forward to hearing from y'all soon!

Much love,

Yechezkel

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Re: my story.....Confessions of a Frum Internet Addict  
Posted by Eye.nonymous - 30 Nov 2010 17:06

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I GUESS THIS MAKES IT AS ONE MORE OF THOSE "dahn l'kaf zchus" stories.

WELCOME BACK!

--Eye.

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Re: my story.....Confessions of a Frum Internet Addict  
Posted by ramatganinternational - 30 Nov 2010 17:14

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Hi Eye,

U hit the nail on the head!

I was thinking how to post whilst I was away. I even wanted to use my brothers PDA (I've disabled internet on mine) but due to all the balagan of the simcha in addition to the fact that i was apprehensive about going on GYE on someone elses private phone - I decided to wait till I got back!

But now I'm back! Nice and warm in Israel - it's freezing there!

By the way, Dov is a genius! Love reading his posts!

Much love,

Yechezkel

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Re: my story.....Confessions of a Frum Internet Addict  
Posted by ZemirosShabbos - 30 Nov 2010 17:17

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welcome back Yechezkel!

glad to hear you are ok

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did you bring back any mini Eiffel towers for us here on the forum?

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

Posted by Stuart - 30 Nov 2010 17:28

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phew!

Maybe we should create a signout sheet next time someone goes away so not to get the whole chevrah worried and everything.

Continued Hatzlacha!

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

Posted by ramatganinternational - 30 Nov 2010 17:35

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mini eiffel towers!

lol! so over hyped, its just a mass of triangular steel leading up to nothing - no point!!

ha ha!

Thanks Stuart for the welcome back post!

much love,

Yechezkel

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Re: my story.....Confessions of a Frum Internet Addict  
Posted by ur-a-jew - 30 Nov 2010 18:50

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[ramatganinternational wrote on 30 Nov 2010 17:01:](#)

Actually, I'm quite amazed that I held out but at the end of the day - I DID!

Welcome Back Yechezkel. Understand that it is the above-quoted statement that had us all concerned. Because no matter how long we've been sober, given where we are coming from and what we are capable of doing when left to our own devices, we too are all (or should be) amazed when we make it to the end of each day, still sober.

Continued Hatzlacha and glad to hear all is well.

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Re: my story.....Confessions of a Frum Internet Addict  
Posted by Eye.nonymous - 30 Nov 2010 21:59

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[ramatganinternational wrote on 30 Nov 2010 17:14:](#)

Hi Eye,

U hit the nail on the head!



...much better than hitting my thumb.

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Re: my story.....Confessions of a Frum Internet Addict  
Posted by Yosef Hatzadik - 30 Nov 2010 22:19

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[ramatganinternational wrote on 30 Nov 2010 17:35:](#)

mini eiffel towers!

lol! so over hyped, its just a mass of triangular steel leading up to nothing - no point!!

but, our lives are a mass of stuff that all lead up to ONE POINT!!!!

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Re: my story.....Confessions of a Frum Internet Addict  
Posted by ramatganinternational - 01 Dec 2010 11:58

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Hi all,

just want to wish y'all a happy channuka.

this will be my first channuka in years as a true jew.

may we all merit that the flame of the channuka lights glow deep in our hearts and continue to warm our souls for the months ahead and may we utilize the ness of channuka and make it our personal target that just like the oil lasted for 8 days, we should be zoiche that we remain clean and pure for 8 decades.....it is possible!

And just like the chashmonaim - a small band of fighters overcame all odds to beat the mighty antiyochus - so too, us - here on this forum, although we are small in numbers - may we have the collective strength to fight the mighty YH and defeat him.

finally, may we all be zoiche to greet moshiach tzidkenu bimhera beyomeinu - omain.

much love,

yechezkel

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Re: my story.....Confessions of a Frum Internet Addict  
Posted by Eye.nonymous - 01 Dec 2010 19:30

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HAPPY CHANUKAH!

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