

Nedarim, Issurim, Face-to-Face

Posted by nederman - 07 Oct 2011 03:25

I was an active sexaholic for about twenty years, then I was sober for four years by keeping a neder.

The neder was basically doing teshuva for forbidden arousal (including the wife unless she requests attention) "as soon as possible." The mechanics of the neder is that arousal is a side effect of the forbidden action (looking, or thinking.) If caught early, confession and regret cause the arousal to recede, as you would expect, since teshuva wipes the sin away. If you let it go too long you can't catch up, you generate forbidden thoughts faster than you can confess them. The urgency to keep the neder, i.e. to keep you on your toes, derives from the fact that the neder generates issurim when violated. Hashem can cause your children to get hurt if you want Him to. This is what I did. I slipped three or four times in four years. Minor injuries. All in all, a fantastic deal.

Unfortunately I did not know about addiction and the difference between sobriety and recovery, therefore I did not consult a therapist. As a result I did not recognize the resentment I felt towards my wife as a product of my own addiction, something that was my responsibility to fight. I was a "dry drunk." However the neder worked.

I believe the neder took the edge off the addiction. Today I am trying to be a good boy and use SA meetings, which are much more normal. I didn't appreciate that one is not supposed to make nedarim. But if our gedolim do not provide us with guidance in the neder area they will not have absolved their duty towards Hashem. When I told my local posek about my problem and the neder I had made (I had to annul it over a technicality, I was confessing in the middle of davening ...) he didn't bat an eyelash.

If I could go back I would make the same neder. I would put a time limit on it of thirty days, and renew every thirty days, and I would consult a cognitive therapist to learn how to live in olam ha-ze without running away from it.

Another thing that helped is issurim. Hashem took away all my money, and this also had a tremendous positive impact on my addiction. Issurim is actually what stopped me from using porn. Hashem broke my laptop computer around the time I started putting on a tallis (I am a ger.) From then on I could only sin using memories (I need my computer to work.)

I also think that we will not have been our brothers' keepers if we do not go out there and talk to the bar mitzvah boys - not to the parents - to show them on our own faces what they are thinking about getting into. "He who believes, his words are heard." The boys have to hear it from the addicts. They need to hear how this behavior will affect their lives in practical terms, namely relationships with women and arrested development, not threats of punishment in olam ha-ba.

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Re: Nedarim, Issurim, Face-to-Face
Posted by obormottel - 09 Oct 2011 06:14

Hi!

This is a lot to digest and I'm still post-Yom Kippur weak, I hope to find time tomorrow to address all your points, they seem very well thought through.

I just wanted to say on the spot, that I agree 100% with having to talk to boys. Noone is doing it or taking responsibility for it, and then we act all surprised when a 15-year old comes to this forum saying he doesn't know how to stop touching himself. And 99.9% don't ever come here or anywhere else, they just keep ma****ng till they do develop an addiction which ruins their lives.

Thanks for bringing this up, chaver.

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Re: Nedarim, Issurim, Face-to-Face
Posted by Blind Beggar - 09 Oct 2011 18:22

I do actually make a shevuah which helps my sobriety. GYE has their own brand of shevuah called TaPhSiC which is **safe** and effective. You can read all about it in the Handbook which is found in this link:

1) The GuardYourEyes Handbook

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Re: Nedarim, Issurim, Face-to-Face

Posted by obormottel - 09 Oct 2011 20:24

Blind Beggar pretty much summed it up. There is a use for nedorim in what we're trying to accomplish, and TaPhsic method outlines the parameters. But given the severity of this, and the fact that the Halocha frowns on nedorim, it should really be the very last resort, imho.

Also, you said it well: nedorim take you away from oilom haze, but that's not what Hashem intended. That's why a Nazir has to bring a sin-offering, because he removed himself from an important part of this world, even though he did it for Hashem's sake.

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Re: Nedarim, Issurim, Face-to-Face
Posted by nederman - 10 Oct 2011 13:19

Regarding talking to boys: I see that you agree that it's not being done. I would like to do it, I would like to go to schools around the country anonymously and talk to small groups of boys and tell them my experience. But I think it would make sense to have some kind of organization set it up. For example they have the Seed program, which sets up young men to go spend a few weeks in the summer to teach Torah. Somebody is matching the men to the communities. Also, I think that if there were other people doing it my wife would be okay with it. A great motivation for people to volunteer to do it is that (I think) our own yetzer will be greatly decreased. I wonder who would have the ability to set this up.

Regarding vows, I did not find your reference in the Handbook, but I googled the acronym and I found it in this document:

www.guardureyes.com/GUE/PDFs/ebooks/The%20TaPhSiC%20Method%20July2011.pdf

It's a tremendous discussion of how the vow should be designed. The vow I had made is critically different from the vows described in that document. Whereas the GYE vows are after the fact, my vow was before the fact. As the document explains vows before the fact can easily be violated. For example, it would be counterproductive to swear "I will never act out." The reason is because that choice is removed from the addict, by definition. Therefore my vow was after the look or the thought, including my wife unless she has declared herself available (my wife is a sexual abuse victim and cannot save me from lust, without destroying the marriage.) The vow was to "do teshuva asap" after the look or the thought. This works because the arousal is payback for the sinful thought. Teshuva removes the aveirah and the payback. Regarding the problem of removing myself from the world, your explanation of the vow of the nazir does not resonate with me. According to my Rav's interpretation of the Ramban, the reason the nazir must bring a korban is not because he made a vow, it's because he is terminating it, i.e. he is going "down." Indeed, a lifelong nazir never brings a korban. But the value of the vow is not lost if it terminates. The yetzer ha-ra is reduced after the vow terminates. Therefore there is

tremendous value in keeping the vow. Afterwards we face a much weakened enemy. Even though I go to SA meetings now, I look back on my five years' sobriety through the vow as evidence that that yetzer is not invincible. The one downside of the vow is that it generates more yetzer, however it makes it possible to defeat it consistently each time (out of fear.) So instead of saying "I am sorry I looked at her when she is not in the mood" one hundred times a day you'll say several times more. But it's a good proposition to do that for a few months, perhaps, and to receive a diminished yetzer. And there is a price to pay at the end, also. Though I could not bring a korban I did pay a price. Hashem will do the math.

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Re: Nedarim, Issurim, Face-to-Face
Posted by kidushashem - 10 Oct 2011 19:42

I've been thinking so much about how I would like to speak publicly about my experience.

I was thinking about speaking to parents as well. At all these rabbinic gatherings that I always read about, they tell parents about the dangers of internet and they relate some horror stories but I think it would be a world of difference if someone got up and said "I wish my parents came to one of these meetings before I got addicted" and then tell their story. I would love to do that.

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Re: Nedarim, Issurim, Face-to-Face
Posted by nederman - 10 Oct 2011 22:19

We basically need two networks, one of people who have something to share, and one of consumers of that information. I think we can round up a bunch of people here on GYE for the first group, but I don't know how to go about the second group. Perhaps we could do it by word of mouth. We start with one menahel and we ask him to tell two other people, then those people tell two other people. This is just a list of people who are interested. As far as matching, we try to match speakers to communities that are not likely to know them, obviously no names.

It's not easy but I feel it's got to get done somehow.

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