

### Lessons Learned

Posted by Hashem Help Me - 03 Sep 2018 23:39

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It has been quite some time since I have posted on my own thread titled "My Story and G-d Bless GYE". Being that those submissions are in the balei batim forum and therefore off limits to all our single friends here, I figured if I wish to post, it's time to open a new thread.

BH we are at day 627. That's a big number. A number that represents a chunk of life. Different seasons, various occasions, many opportunities, a kaleidoscope of challenges. And with Hashem's help (and as I have written many times - with the help of some great GYE chaverim - specifically "one\_day\_at\_a\_time") I have stayed clean.

During this period of growth I have made some observations. Firstly, as a rebbi of mine used to say - no specific type of yid has the "copyright" on yiras shomayim. Eye opening to me has been how individuals from very varying lifestyles all truly want to be close to Hashem. It is not just lip service. It is genuine. I am humbled and amazed how even so called "modern" Jews walk determinedly against the tsunami wave of decadence, indecency, immodesty, and liberalism which is trying to inundate the world and destroy every vestige of holiness in its path. These dear teenagers, married fellows, and even post middle aged heroes ignore the current threatening to drown them and keep moving forward. And of course, being that this scourge does not discriminate, all kehillos and "types" are affected. GYE is like the Kosel - one can find every type of yid there crying for help. In summary, everyone wants to be kadosh v'tahor. Imagine how proud Hashem must be.

A second observation. So many unnecessary tears, so much unnecessary pain. How many bochurim stay clean while in yeshiva and camp only to fall within hours of returning home on their parents' devices which have not been properly filtered. The anguish these boys share is heartbreaking. These are boys who will not enter an internet café or library. They avoid public transportation except when absolutely necessary. They are careful in the street. They are the

brave ones who picked up the phone and shared their most personal and embarrassing secrets with total strangers from GYE. But spending a weekend at home where every other room has an unfiltered device....How naïve can people be? How many drashos have been given, and articles written, and people really still think "it cant happen in my house"?! Is the convenience of unfiltered internet worth these churbonos? I am not passing judgement on anyone specific - just publicizing the very painful issue.

Number three - There are many helpful ideas on GYE. Each successful person here will tell you about the "cocktail" he used to break free. A combination of all or some of the following: shiurim, forum, chats, Taphsic, chizuk emails, 90 day chart, phone conferences, therapy referrals, 12 steps, and of course tefilla, guide people from the abyss of the sewer to the summit of a life of freedom. However I believe if a poll were taken, a great majority of people would credit the human connection as the main weapon in the arsenal that blasted them through and saved them. To hear, and even better, to meet and see, an individual who struggled and now is clean, is a tool that is extremely powerful. It shatters the destructive mindset of "it's impossible - no one gets better". Sitting by therapists, as helpful as they are (and they are part of many people's recovery), is not nearly as powerful as someone being honest and telling you what he used to do and how he stopped. Someone who "has been there and done that" can help rewire the unhealthy thinking and give new perspective - there simply is life, even without sex. Plus one must learn the true and Torah perspective on sexuality. One must be educated that he has been poisoned by the evil and filthy portrayal of an act that we now know is uplifting and elevated, even holy. We are more open to be reeducated by one who initially believed as we did. Secondly, that real person can hold your hand in those first days and weeks when it is really difficult to get started. He can give you the chizuk to get past the withdrawal period. He is an anchor. Thirdly, when you see a successful frum fellow standing before you, you realize you are not the rasha or loser you thought you were. You really are a nice good person who has a struggle. That knowledge gives one more self esteem and resolve to get started. Based on my personal experience I would advise any newcomers to figure out which safe person on the site appears to resonate with them, and then carefully - in the beginning anonymously - reach out and let someone help them.

Lastly (for now), we see a sad issue. So many people join GYE and then disappear. They had hisorerus, found the site, joined, maybe even posted, and then they are gone..... It is incumbent on those of us who have tasted success to make ourselves available to help others. We know the pain anguish anxiety depression and turmoil these chevra are experiencing. We know where their eyes and hands are - even though they don't want to be doing those things - and we have

the ability to help. Some will argue, "I don't know what to do". Others will say, "Now that I am better it isn't good for me to be focused on this so much". True, but its payback time. Do something. And if you really can't, then at least daven your kishkes out for all the strugglers. And of course - give a nice donation to that great place that got us all back on track - the very holy mosad GYE. If not for them, where would I (and you) be today?

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Re: Lessons Learned

Posted by Hakolhevel - 17 Dec 2021 14:34

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[Trouble wrote on 17 Dec 2021 14:15:](#)

[Hakolhevel wrote on 17 Dec 2021 14:13:](#)

I recently came to the epiphany, that if my wife did follow my exact instructions to act out what the people on the screen do, I wouldn't be able to fully enjoy it, because I will always be analyzing is this exactly what I want and how I want and the looks that I want.

In other words, what I realized is porn and masturbation are the ultimate escape from reality, and it's not that if it was acted out in reality I would enjoy itit.

That being said, during the act porn and masturbation are very pleasurable, which is why its so hard to stay away from. But I shiuldnt kid myself that if only these scenes would happen in real life I would be happy and wouldn't want the porn and masturbation.

And the few times I got my wife to do these fantasies, I was not satisfied at all.

if, however, she would do it w/o instructing her, you'd definitely enjoy it!

Yes, I would enjoy it as it would be her natrual expression of love and not a forced one. Plus, assuming I would be in a place where I would NOT expecting a certain type of performance.

If I have any expectations, there will certainly be faults in the performance. Heck even in performances on the screen, I'm used to skipping the parts I don't care for, how do you do that with a live person? I'd need to have a remote control on them for it to live up to my "fantasy" which is keshmo ken hu. A fantasy. And it can and never will be FULLY a reality.

It can be different, or similar and very fullfilg, but I would need to give up the fantasy mindset first, which is totally focused on exactly what I want.

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by doing the things you like, as long as she likes them as well; why would you need to 'skip' anything?

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Re: Lessons Learned

Posted by wilnevergiveup - 19 Dec 2021 06:14

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[Hashem Help Me wrote on 17 Dec 2021 12:20:](#)

Hi. I received an email and responded to it. Please feel free to comment with any additional advice that i can forward to this chaver. Of course also feel free to disagree with my response...

His question: **How do I deal with wanting to watch porn when I'm not married because it's natural to feel the need to want to have sex and I cant have it prior to getting married so what am I supposed to do.**?My response: Porn is not the sex of marriage. That is why it never satisfies, and leaves one feeling dejected. Example - It is natural to want to have a warm hug after a long challenging day; would you say hugging a doll would help? It has to be real. Of course not. Same with sex. The natural drive for sex that we are wired with is not focused on ejaculation - if it was, we would be satisfied when masturbating - and even secular studies that surveyed the general public find that the typical American male feels a form of depression after masturbation and after having sex with their spouse in a pornographic (selfish) fashion. The natural drive for sex is harnessing an intense investment of physical and emotional energy and directing it into a giving connection. It will never be satisfied by watching strangers act out sexually, and masturbating to that, or having sex with a stranger, or even with one's wife - if done in an exclusively self pleasing manner. The guys that manipulate their wives to participate in actions/positions that the wife really does not want to do, all wonder why they feel so low post ejaculation... You may find what i am going to say now as weird, but it is true. A real replacement for marital sex is to get involved in a chessed organization. Channel that drive for passionate giving and connection, use all that latent energy - both physical and emotional, take that hyper focused concentration (used while viewing or masturbating) and do something really special for someone else. You will feel like a million dollars - which is what one feels like after having real sex, the right way.Please also realize that if you watch pornography now, you will chas v'shalom poison your brain. Besides chalila causing shalom bayis issues, the irony is, you will not be able to enjoy the incredible real pleasure of sex, which is completely different and exponentially greater than anything pornographic style sex can ever offer.

I love it!

Maybe it would have been even better to change the word "never" to "often" or "many/most people find" and the phrase "you will not be able to enjoy the incredible real pleasure of sex" you can say "you will be making it very difficult to enjoy the incredible and real pleasure of sex."

Very clear message, thanks!

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Re: Lessons Learned

Posted by Ish MiGrodno - 19 Dec 2021 08:54

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Dearest Rabbeinu HHM Shlit"a, this is an unbelievable post.

Please forgive me, but I must humbly respond that your words would not have moved the dial for me (when I was in the throes of taavah) for the following 3 reasons:

1) While the natural drive for sex quite possibly does not revolve solely around ejaculation, that does not mitigate in any way the fact that we men **are very much wired and driven to ejaculate** (unless I am missing something). How did you address this?

2) True that we feel like garbage after porn/masturbation binging...but we also experience a significant sense of relief (especially if our taavah is anxiety-driven). If this is not validated, you have neglected to address a major component of the endless cycle.

3) I would never, ever - tell a single porn addict to "hold off" for the primary reason of eventually "enjoying the incredible real pleasure of sex." Just as I don't tell struggling talmidim to conquer their yetzer simply to earn olam haba. When it comes to addicts, if the short term benefits are unaddressed, then the gap is simply too great and insurmountable.

**I would humbly suggest that you insert something to the effect that the heroism of conquering creates an unparalleled feeling of success, and that no pleasure in this world comes remotely close to that sense of satisfaction and pride..**

Ramchal says it best in the first perek of his heilige mesilas yesharim:

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These words are certainly not limited to the next world.

Your post may work for a specific type, but I believe that an additional approach must be incorporated for a significant portion of the world of P/M addicts.

With deepest respect and Grodnian regards,

IMG

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Re: Lessons Learned

Posted by Shtarkandemotional - 19 Dec 2021 20:12

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Hey, firstly I'd like to publicly thank HHM for everything he does for klal yisrael, I myself personally AND have friends that were helped so much from HHM, keep going strong! Your a great help! I would like to comment on what HHM said and tie it in with what IMG said In his first point. Often people masturbate (I'm not gonna say watch porn. Cuz that's mainly triggers and often the pull for exciting stuff) because of some sort of built up lust tension they're looking to release.. and masturbation really does give them a strong sense of relief to continue for the next few days/weeks. MY HUMBLE OPINION IS- There's a part to what your saying HHM that we should realize that porn and masturbation really doesnt live up. I'm sure it's true for the people that find themselves masturbating multiple times in a row. Cuz they're just trying to reach some sort of pleasure that obviously isn't living up so they keep needing to do it again. And similar for the porn users because that trains the brain to focus and love the excitement and that causes us to keep wanting more and we forget the actual focus on what sex is. But for some single - non married strugglers that are overall doing fine but fall with masturbation here and there to relieve they're lust. I don't think it's fair and valid to say masturbation isn't giving them much. And that we aren't wired to masturbate. Sometimes we trained ourselves to get something from masturbation. And we have to fill it up with kosher stuff like you always say - exercise. To sort of navigate through that. "I think we can really honestly become aware of this if we ask ourselves REALLY honestly, if it was mutter to masturbate every night without any pictures or triggers etc. would i never fall?" Sometimes masturbation is just another trigger and if we'd be doing it long enough we'd fine something else to excite ourselves. I find this question helpful to understand why we masturbate and where we're holding and what we're trying to get out of it. I had a small story of mine that I once emailed to HHM and this was his reply: sorry it's graphic-

"Today, I was struggling alot. Really wanted the release that masturbation would give me! As I was debating if I should go to the bathroom and do the aveira.. I decided im gonna try another type of outlet instead! In my dress clothes with my white shirt suit pants and dress shoes... I decided to just run! I knew there's no time to think or change cuz or else id might of given in. So I started to run outside and I said I'm gonna run and get an outlet from exercise! I felt like everyone was looking at me outside funny... but I didn't care... as I was running... an interesting thing popped into my head and I think it can be a major chizuk.. So many many times I run and I make excessive efforts to do an aveira! I run and run! How many times do we run to serve Hashem the same way?!? With such passion and excitement and willpower the same as we do



with an aveira when it comes to sexual stuff! Tonight I felt was the first time I'm running to something leshem shamayim! I wanted to share this.. the idea all of us at some point ran and run to avieros with such passion! Let's try to copy our yetzer hara and run to do mitzvos in the same fashion! Tonight for me- it was exercise cuz I so badly needed the relief! It kind of felt funny usually I'm running to the bathroom to get the pleasure.. tonight I ran toward Hashem to get a kosher relief!"

HHM's reply:

"Beautiful! You handled a tough situation very well tzaddik. And you trained your mind to change the script. The script does not need to read "And he had an urge and had no idea how to relieve it other than masturbating, so he went to the bathroom where he unzipped, pulled out his penis and rubbed until he ended up with a sticky mess, and a depressed brain". Instead the script said "And he had an urge, and realized he needed some relief so he ran until he raised his heart rate, releasing healthy endorphines in the brain, and felt great about himself". (You should post your email and my response on the forum - if you want. Guys need to understand they can choose differently.)

Just wanted to clarify that often there is a need we created for masturbation in our brain to calm

and soothe us. And we can have a replacement.

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Re: Lessons Learned  
Posted by Hashem Help Me - 07 Feb 2022 12:30

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Last night there was a question and answer session with Rabbi Stark from Rabbi Center's yeshiva in Eretz Yisroel. It was incredible. You can hear it by calling 848-777-4769, then press 1, followed by #. There is a short introduction from Coach Menachem. The actual program begins after a few minutes.

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Re: Lessons Learned  
Posted by wilnevergiveup - 07 Feb 2022 18:18

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Rabbi Stark is amazing!

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Re: Lessons Learned  
Posted by 5Uu80\*cdwB#^ - 07 Feb 2022 18:58

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Is there a way I can download this online?

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Re: Lessons Learned  
Posted by joetyh - 07 Feb 2022 19:47

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This is such a powerful powerful speech!!!!

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Re: Lessons Learned  
Posted by have hope - 07 Feb 2022 19:50

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I don't know if that particular shiur is here, but here's the link to all his shiurim [https://www.adereshatorah.com/audio\\_search.php?speaker=stark](https://www.adereshatorah.com/audio_search.php?speaker=stark)

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Re: Lessons Learned  
Posted by Hashem Help Me - 08 Feb 2022 12:31

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Just wanted to share a concept which will possibly benefit the oilam:

The pornography industry has successfully promulgated the notion that sex is a sin. Along with that is a feeling that the "private parts" of a man or woman are "bad". To prove it, they point to the fact that society covers those areas.

Our response:

When one walks into a shul, one knows that there is a Sefer Torah there. However it is usually not visible. It is used on occasions of krias haTorah. Sometimes we see it by special tefillos like

Avinu Malkeinu and the like, and of course we dance with it on Simchas Torah. Isn't it interesting that our most holy item is enveloped in secrecy? What are we hiding? What is "bad" about it? Of course even a little child would answer that this is a ridiculous way to think. We put the Sefer Torah in an Aron Kodesh behind a Paroches because it is so holy, so important, so delicate, and so needed. We are **protecting** it. It is not to be handled by anybody and everybody. Lehavdil, we do the same with expensive jewelry. Items are placed in velvet cases and stored out of sight.

There is one eiver in the body that is called "kodesh", and that is the bris kodesh. It is physically and spiritually delicate vulnerable and sensitive. It is very **holy and very special**. It needs to be protected. It b'ezras hashem is to be used for a great purpose. At the right time it will place some zera in the rechem of a yiddishe mama, and a child will be nurtured in **that holy** place, where a malach teaches that neshama Torah while in a protected safe and nurturing environment. The "event" involved in placing that zera is a holy one - involving 3 partners/shutfim - the father, the mother , and yes, Hakadosh Baruch Hu. Shechina shru'ya bei'neihem. This action has been done by the biggest tzaddikim in all the generations. it is not a sin, nor an action that needs to be embarrassed of. The Zohar HaKadosh refers to tremendous yichudim that take place...

The body parts involved in this process are not dirty, bad, or things to be ashamed of. (Yes, Adam and Chava had busha from their nakedness after eating from the eitz ha'daas - that was due to their comprehension that these body parts can be used by the yetzer hara too...) If any term could be used to explain this to children, or even how we adults should properly view them **and be comfortable with ourselves**, maybe it could be said that this area of the body is muktzah machmas chisaron kis - off limits due to it's immense value.

Comments?

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Re: Lessons Learned  
Posted by DavidT - 08 Feb 2022 16:05

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Comments?

Very well written.

R' Avi Landa wrote a similar point in "Maintaining Kedusha"

No matter how perverse or disgusting a person thinks his thoughts may be, it must be emphasized that this is not the case. His drives, urges, and thoughts are the product of a drive Hashem created and instilled within us. **The privacy of this topic is due to the awesome kedusha connected to it, not b/c it is disgusting in any way.** It might take some time for a person to feel comfortable with this message, but it is a necessary antecedent before working on the struggle directly. It is only after we mitigate the person's struggling with shame (I am bad), that we can then implement a direct strategy of working on struggling with actions of masturbation and porn consumption.

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Re: Lessons Learned

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Not that it makes any difference, but I disagree.

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[DavidT wrote on 08 Feb 2022 16:05:](#)

[Hashem Help Me wrote on 08 Feb 2022 12:31:](#)

"Hashem Help Me" post=377038 date=1644323500 catid=20

Not that it makes any difference, but I disagree.

Please elaborate on your disagreement.

(I don't know about you, but I agree to disagree)

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