

**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 ColinColin - 11 Sep 2019 20:29

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1000 Days

That is a gargantuan achievement.

Mazeltov!

Keep taking it day by day.

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Re: Lessons Learned

Posted by one\_day\_at\_a\_time - 11 Sep 2019 21:00

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mazel tov!!!!!!!

what would gye be with out you!!!

?hashem should bencheh you to continue to inspire the chevra here and be mekadesh shem shamion

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Re: Lessons Learned

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Posted by Hashem Help Me - 11 Sep 2019 21:53

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[one\\_day\\_at\\_a\\_time wrote on 11 Sep 2019 21:00:](#)

mazel tov!!!!!!!

what would gye be with out you!!!

?hashem should bencheh you to continue to inspire the chevra here and be mekadesh shem shamion

Whatever I have accomplished b'ezras Hashem is your doing Reb "One Day At A Time". 1,000 days ago you reached out to me and convinced me to be brave, put shame on the side, and call you. You held my hand and made yourself available to me day after day after day for a very very long time. You even agreed to meet me in person when I felt that it would be beneficial for me, something you had not done before. You are still available when a tough moment occurs, but more important you have become a real chaver. I and many others will be maker tova for life. May Hashem repay you b'kiflei kiflayim!!

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Re: Lessons Learned

Posted by Hashem Help Me - 11 Sep 2019 23:03

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Although 1000 is a milestone, what is more important is understanding that there really is no difference between day 1 and day 1000 if the mind is healthy and kosher. Yes, a streak of x amount of days is mechazek someone that he can b'ezras Hashem be in control, as well as be a mechayev "I don't wish to ruin my streak". However of much greater importance is rewiring the brain.

I will try to share some points that were helpful for me, and hopefully will help others.

1. Sexuality is a koach Hashem put into this world. Lets examine a different force that Hashem endowed us with, electricity. Its power can be harnessed to light up hospitals and yeshivas, pump life giving water, among myriads other tikun olam accomplishments. Unfortunately it can be used in a destructive, even murderous fashion as well. When such an unfortunate occurrence takes place, it means one has corrupted a gift/brocho given to Man to better the world, and has used it against the Benefactor who so graciously gifted it to us. Similarly, sexuality, an incredible force, was given to Man to resemble Hashem and procreate. And in reality when a couple is involved in bringing children to this world, chazal tell us that Hashem is in some way part of the goings on, as a 3rd partner in the development of the fetus. The actual act itself is the pinnacle of intimacy between a husband and wife, if they are living a truly intimate life outside of the bedroom consisting of loyalty, care, concern, support, love, patience, respect, and selfless giving. We refer to such an act as menucha, for when appropriately together, we are returning to the original male/female joined matzav of Adam HaRishon before Chava was separated from him. The human nefesh (of all mankind, regardless of geographic location, culture, or religion) yearns for this state of intimacy and calming satisfaction. This is using the koach of sexuality for true tikun olam -giving, uniting, procreating, all in a G-dly manner causing a nafshiyus'dig uplifting pleasure of serenity, satisfaction, true calm, and yes - holiness. Our Western "sex is evil" poisoned minds must be rewired to understand that our forefathers and the tzaddikim of all generations engaged in sex as avodas Hashem with both components of bein adam l'chaveiro (spouse), and bein adam l'makom. When one unfortunately views pornography he is being trained to corrupt that incredible force and use it selfishly to use and abuse others. The "stars" on the screen have to "protect" themselves from becoming pregnant, so having children is simply out the window. Intimacy, love, loyalty, and care are totally non existent. Its all about my pleasure. Menucha?! Erotic is the goal. Holy? Uplifting? Better sex means more and more animalistic and objectifying. That great brocho Hashem granted to Man is perverted beyond recognition. Of course one who has received his education in the online college of sex cannot fathom how tzaddikim have children. The ironic twist to this is that the pleasure of pornographic sex as compared to the real thing is as negligible as the beauty when comparing a cheap neon light to an awe inspiring magnificent sunset. To be continued.....

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Re: Lessons Learned

Posted by Hashem Help Me - 12 Sep 2019 01:55

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1 (continued). We established that pornography is absolute poison and chas v'shalom will cause major issues in marriage. Not only the obvious danger of the wife finding out that her supposedly frum husband is watching filth and that she is obviously "not enough for him", but even if never caught, the damage is horrendous. As nice as he may be to his wife, there is a most powerful underlying programmed message that his wife is his object, his toy, his "kosher

masturbating tool". It is tragic to think that one can be married for decades, and without even realizing it, selfishly use and abuse his wife. Once one has come to the realization that this is the reality, his heart and mind should be ready to undertake to never watch pornography again.

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Re: Lessons Learned

Posted by gyehelp2017 - 12 Sep 2019 14:12

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[Hashem Help Me wrote on 12 Sep 2019 01:55:](#)

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HMM, your post should be (theatrically speaking) hanging in all the streets of town (instead of all those horrible ads.....). You pointed out so well what sexuality is in it's essence, and how we corrupt our minds with all the porn etc. stuff out there.

As usual, here too you so beautifully brought these points to light. Thank you so much for your clarification, and congrats on reaching 1000 days clean!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

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Re: Lessons Learned

Posted by Hashem Help Me - 22 Sep 2019 04:27

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2. Now that we have established that step one is to clearly understand and firmly decide no more pornography, what is step 2? At this point one must think good and hard if he is doing all that is necessary to protect himself. As a point of view, let's look back 100 years to the nisayon at the turn of the century here in the USA. Shmiras Shabbos came with a price tag of probably losing one's job and not having food to eat. We are not in the position to judge, but from our vantage point in history we can see major statistical differences in the offspring of those who stood up to the challenge (proudly), and those who unfortunately did not. The challenge was awesome. Medicaid and welfare did not exist. People were thrown onto the streets if the rent was not paid. Keeping Shabbos was very costly. In our generation, Hashem is not asking us to starve or live on the street. He is however asking us to *inconvenience* ourselves to stay pure with Shmiras Einayim V'haBris. Filters may slow our computers. Not everything we need at the moment will be accessible. Is that such a big deal? And let's say it does affect our business a bit? Are we not mechuyav to do what it takes to stay ehrlich?! Do we really care? Did we at least ask a shaila? If one wants to be honest with himself he will find that many successful people in the working world have made the move to communicate exclusively with a kosher phone. They keep a tablet or heavily filtered smartphone in a designated place such as their car or office for work related issues only. They greatly minimized using the web for entertainment, relaxation and killing time. They understand the clarion call of all Gedolei Yisroel that the heter for internet use is for absolute NECESSITY. Of course some businesses demand from their employees to carry a smartphone with them at all times. Ok, but what gedarim have been put in place? Can you install webchaver and make your wife (or someone else that you really will be answerable to) the accountability partner? Can you be mekabel to pay a knas if you use that device for any unplanned relaxation/entertainment purposes? This technique has worked for many who have no other choice. In summary, if we have decided that we really want to stop viewing

inappropriate images, have we HONESTLY done all that is possible to be safe? If not, the time is now.

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Re: Lessons Learned

Posted by Hashem Help Me - 04 Oct 2019 03:41

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3. An extremely important next step is to accept yourself as you are. I had to learn that my perfectionist tendencies were poison. Hashem created us with urges and adding to that, we made some poor choices in the past that opened doors that were supposed to remain closed. This unfortunately intensifies our urges. At this moment we can't rewind the script of our lives. We have to face reality that we will unfortunately get triggered and will have all kinds of inglorious thoughts. It will take a long time for all that erotic garbage seared into our memory banks to recede. We will want to watch it again - "please, just one more time" - we will **so badly** want to watch it again. Similarly, the urge to escape tension/rejection or to release stress by masturbating developed into a very bad habit. It will take time and patience to learn healthy and kosher methods to replace masturbation relief. Meanwhile the urge to unzip and "just get it over with and feel better" will exist. We cannot decide that these urges define who we are. Chazal are full of evidence that big tzaddikim had urges. Our job at this point is to focus on the good things we do - learning, davening, doing chessed, etc., and appreciate any baby steps we are taking in the right direction to break free from inappropriate viewing, masturbating, and other related activities. We have pushed shame to the side and reached out for help/admitting our past actions, we have filtered our devices and made other gedarim to avoid triggers (maybe including monetary knasos), and we have begun the process of rewiring our brains about sexuality. These actions are actually true signs of much *charata*, *vidui*, and *kabala l'asid*. This is what Hashem wants. Hashem knows that where we are at today - when we space out, we sometimes will find ourselves daydreaming pornographic images, He knows that when we walk in the street we will **notice** certain "things". He knows that under stress or other emotional pressures our hands may head to their default "touching" location. And for those of us that are married, He knows the urge we sometimes have to try to convince our wives to help us satisfy selfish disgusting fantasies that we learned online. But Hashem is celebrating our ratzon tov to break free and He will help us because He loves us. Yi'ush has no place in yiddishkeit. Guilt is a completely non-Jewish concept. To walk around with the nose down, continuously looking at yourself as a rasha, loser, or shmatte is wrong, absolutely wrong. In fact, usually it just causes fellows to act out again. "If I am a loser anyway..." On the other hand, *charata*, feeling bad to the extent that one wants to positively mend his ways is a very Jewish concept. So face it friends, we are going to have urges, sometimes strong ones, but we simply won't act on them. During an urge, hold your head high, be proud, you are not defined by your urges. Think about all the things you do correctly and how much effort you are putting into this parsha. Most of us will *iyh* develop the ability to say no to that urge using this technique. Hey, I really am a good guy! I am doing what I can and Hashem will help me be in control. I can *iyh* break out of bad habits and unhealthy thinking. (And if you are a true addict and can't use this strategy, get a sponsor and work the 12 steps, learn how to surrender that urge, and be proud that you can *b'ezeras Hashem* stay pure using that *mehalech*.)



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Re: Lessons Learned

Posted by lampowerless - 04 Oct 2019 04:30

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Wow. There is so much wisdom in your last few posts i think it should be required daily reading for anyone who is truly looking to achieve sobriety, in my humble mind sobriety has 3 important aspects to it.

1. Connection it's important to always be connected and feel comfortable chatting with others when you need help and keep yourself connected to others
2. A very strong Why? Why are you looking for sobriety which in essence is step 1 of the 12 step program. Writing it down and reading it daily is extremely helpful to always remind you
3. Acceptance of who you are/Mindfulness/I am extremely sick and powerless but god is extremely powerful and he will help me so theres no reason to panic as its referred to in the 12 steps. I find that many people who are looking for sobriety are kinda looking to never ever get urges again and of course that won't happen. Real sobriety is about learning tools and mindfulness techniques to accept your urges just as urges and nothing more they aren't that scary at all..... you just gotta "ride those waves" the second we make the urges so scary and get into panic mode we are guaranteed to act out to try to release the panic that we are feeling.

Now just using step 3 without having the strong why or the connection won't work you need all 3 it's a package deal

@Hashemhelpme keep inspiring the world you are an unbelievable person and I have so much to be thankful to you for i have gained more from you for free than all the therapists who i spent a lot of money on.....

Love Yankel

Have a great Shabbos

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Re: Lessons Learned

Posted by Dave M - 04 Oct 2019 12:49

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HHM,

Your posts have been amazing and laced with much wisdom. Ironically, when reading some of the amazing posts on GYE, I have mixed feelings. It's unfortunate that these honest and realistic situations are not discussed more in the "open". I understand that when a Rav is speaking on the pulpit there are certain standards that needs to be maintained. Therefore, when discussing these inyunim, vague terms are used. But there is nothing like honest and untainted words that are more successful in penetrating one's heart.

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Re: Lessons Learned

Posted by Hashem Help Me - 04 Oct 2019 16:47

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Dave M, in response: In "real life" I am very careful with language. After all, our ability to speak is what elevates us from the animal kingdom. The mouth must be kept pristine. However on GYE I found that our hesitance in being open and blunt did not come from a holy place, rather from either fear of the "monster", or from denial. I suffered from both. The challenge became an anxiety producing, larger than life, monster. It would be impossible to stop or exercise **any** control. It was as if the eiver had a mind of its own. Sometimes I wanted to just cut it off. I was angry at it, and boy was I scared of it. I would have to hide erections! It became a separate entity from me, and it was calling the shots. Secondly, denial - how could I, a frum guy, talk about masturbation? How could I share those erotic urges I had. No, they must be shoved into a dark closet somewhere where they don't exist - until of course I plotzed and acted out big time. It took me a long time to be able to even write, let alone say, "I masturbated" or "I watched pornography/sex". The closest I would get would be to write/say "It happened". Then I graduated to writing m\*\*\*\* or p\*\*\*\*. BH I realized that for my refuas hanefesh I had to write and say the words, knowing exactly what I was admitting to and knowing that it was not larger than life. My eiver is part of **me** and controlled by **my** brain. So Dave M, I agree. I wish I could get up in every shul and openly bluntly and beneficially talk about the challenges we all have and be living proof that b'ezras Hashem there is hope. We can stop doing aveiros and we can stop being so tzubrochen. But so far, without gedolei Yisroel instructing otherwise, we have to satisfy ourselves with speaking b'derech remez, convincing rebbeim (including chosson rebbeim) to allow people to **comfortably** bring up the subject, and privately, one by one help whoever we can. Truth to be told, even if a ho'ra'as sha'ah was made to have public discussions, most of us would hesitate being that open. Hey, we have kids to marry off iyh in the right time.....

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Re: Lessons Learned

Posted by Hashem Help Me - 03 Mar 2020 12:33

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Three plus years have passed since b'ezras Hashem, GYE with "one day at a time" and a number of other chaverim saved me. Thank you Hashem.

Having spoken, chatted, and met with many guys here, it is becoming clear how truly widespread this issue is. It is also clear that a tremendous percentage of strugglers want out. They curse the day they were first exposed, and are just so entrenched that they do not believe it possible to "escape". Some have tried various methods, some didn't even do that. This yi'ush is paralyzing.

Somehow we have to get the GYE message that 1. you are not alone and 2. help is available and 3. people get better to more people. Any ideas?

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Re: Lessons Learned

Posted by Dave M - 03 Mar 2020 13:56

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I don't know the answer, but the stigma needs to be removed. I've never heard anyone talk about GYE. I've occasionally seen some advertisement.

Mishpacha magazine seems to have a wide audience in the frum community and prides itself on confronting "uncomfortable" topics. They've mentioned GYE in the past in passing. Would they do a front page feature on GYE?

This is a question for the people running GYE.

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Re: Lessons Learned

Posted by DavidT - 03 Mar 2020 13:59

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[Dave M wrote on 03 Mar 2020 13:56:](#)

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This is a question for the people running GYE.

Things are changing.

GYE did have a full page ad in the siyum hashas magazine and these 'topics' will very soon become something that the mainstream will be very comfortable for open discussion. We will NOT sit back and let our generation go down the drain chas veshalom!

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