

Ur-a-jew's Thread

Posted by ur-a-jew - 22 Jun 2010 17:29

My name is Yitzchok and I'm a lust addict.

I first started masturbating in the shower probably when I was around 10 years old. At the time I had no clue that I was even doing something wrong. While I may have occasionally seen naked images as a kid and young teen my interest was I believe no different than any other teen. I think masturbation was common for me during high school. At some point someone taught me the halachos but at that point it was too late. It was some time in my mid-teens that I started actively pursuing lust. For example, my mother liked to read novels and I would read the books she had just to find the sex part. Eventually, I knew which authors were more descriptive and I would go to the used book store and buy other books by that author. While I wouldn't buy a playboy or the like I would look in Vogue or GQ for a naked image that I typically could find. At the same time we had a VCR and my parents were often not home so I would rent Rated R movies and just fast forward to the sex scene. I remember that the video store had on the regular display a video with a note not rentable to under 17. One day I decided to rent it. I came home watched about 10-15 minutes felt too guilty and ran back to the store to return it claiming much to the ire of the proprietor that I had mistakenly picked up the wrong video. When the local supermarket also started renting videos I started renting there and a couple of times took out x-rated videos. While I would at times watch the whole movie I would typically first just forward to the sex or nudity scene. Any opportunity to watch I would grab. When one summer I had my brother's empty apartment which had cable I would go to his house until the early morning hours trying to get in whatever I could. When we went away for Yom Tov and were staying in an empty house, I figured out that if I flipped the channels back and forth between scrambled channels enough times I could unscramble it for several minutes.

When I was turning 20 the age when you're accountable for misa b'yedei shomyim, I resolved to change. I don't how long it took me to get started again but it obviously did. I got married at a relatively young age.

After marriage masturbation stopped, but the lust was still there. I believe there was always some issue in the bedroom that I wanted sex more than my wife. I probably pressured her too much, we were young she wanted to make me happy and the result of it is that now I believe she has an underlying resentment when I get overly in the mood (which one can say is always) which can cause her to shut down completely. My wife has always been complaining to me that sex is always on my mind and she is right.

A lot of my addiction is a blur to me. I know that the advent of the DVD and the internet were

further pitfalls for me. For example, my wife would go up to the country and the times when I was home alone I would rent movies and go back to my bad habits. The Internet didn't help especially when I was in the office. For the most part I have been able to keep my problematic internet out of my house. Moreover, I guess you can say fortunately for me, either because I didn't have the money or because I was worried that it would be easier for me to be caught (other than renting movies) I have never spent money to fuel the addiction. So I never did the phone-sex or have gone to XXX establishments. Unfortunately, with the internet paying for pornography is not necessary there is so much available for free. When I get into my binges and would feel guilty looking at porn I would then look for erotic stories. Even when guilt overcame and I resolved to stop, in the back of my mind I would think to myself: if I would have done this or that I could have probably found something else.

Another problem for me is that I don't need the internet, at some point in my career since I am very computer saavy I had to for my job examine computer hard drives relating to cases I was working on. Generally the first thing I would do is examine the drive for pornographic images. When I had to go away for business it would be back to the same movie habits. Staying up practically all night long just to get in another movie and perhaps another glimpse.

I don't think a Yom Kippur has passed in the past 20 years where I have not made some sort of resolution to stop looking at ma'aros assurios. Yet I also don't think there was a year that has passed that I not in some way broken that kabbalah. Some times have been worse than others. When I was younger, I would often stay late in my office, browse the internet or watch late night cable television sex shows. The guilt was many-fold the watching itself, the not working when I was supposedly working and the coming home too late and therefore not being there to help. For the past five years at least, I have been able to control myself enough to avoid the staying in the office too late problem. But that would just mean that I did what I needed to during the day.

Prior to last Rosh Hashana, the situation with my wife was getting very frustrating and I realized that this was crazy. When I was a teenager I had a chasidische rebbi I used to learn with during the summer. Two things that he had told me that had always stuck with me. First, that it was a chesoron in emunah to watch a Rated R movie and second that he was involved in the preparation of shabbos food packages which required him to drive a truck to the city. He said he never drove alone since the temptation of a hooker was too much for him. I always felt guilty about the former statement since Rated R would generally be good compared to what I was watching. At the same time I could never believe that he would actually be tempted to go to a hooker. This past year I finally realized that if there is someone that I could talk to it was him. I told my wife that I was going to speak to him about the lust issue but the real reason was to finally admit to someone that I had a problem with porn and to get an eitzah. Just revealing the problem to someone was such a relief. He told me that how he also had temptations but his wife was his masgiach and he (with her help) planned his life in ways to avoid temptation. Since that time I don't think that I have sunken as low as I have in the past. The addiction has not

stopped. For example, my facebook account under an anonymous name has all sorts of unbecoming "friends." While there is generally no outright nudity they are pretty close to it and I'm always on the look for it.

Then I found GYE. I found tools and friends and a system. And while it has only been some two weeks (since I discovered the site) my life is changing. I am not embarrassed to work through the program. I have a forum where I could just speak out my feelings and desires and get encouragement. Everything that I do has GYE in my conscience to try and evaluate whether I am doing the right thing. I am forever grateful to everyone who started this site and to Hashem because for once in my life I actually feel there is hope.

While I sometimes question whether I am addicted or maybe just normal, after all I have never done, and I am not tempted to do some of the things that others here have done. What makes me sure that I am an addict, is the inability to stop despite the fact that I know the damage that it causes to me. I may be a smaller-time addict, but I am an addict nonetheless and I realize that I can't go on living like this.

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Re: Ur-a-jew's Thread
Posted by aaron4 - 22 Jun 2010 20:32

Dear Ur,

Your story reminds me of my own as well as so many others here on GYE. It's scary how easy it is to get hooked and how difficult it is to extricate yourself later. But if you learn one thing only, know that it is possible to break free. You do not have to be a slave to lust. This was a huge revelation for me since I convinced myself that my actions were "normal". That popular culture was simply more in tune with reality and that if a radio sex therapist said masturbation was part of life, that was probably true, and seforim that said otherwise were simply out of touch. Of course she also said that affairs were part of life too...but I chose to disagree with that because luckily I didn't have any so in THAT area I could be "frum". Little did I realize it was all rationalization. If I'd had an affair, it would have immediately become "normal" too. My actions dictated my values...instead of the reverse!

Although breaking free is possible, it's not easy and it takes time. Unfortunately, our brains have been wired for lust as a result of many years of training. It isn't easy to erase those

pathways and see the world correctly. But with work and time, it will gradually improve.

In my experience, one of the most significant side effects of this addiction is that you live in an alternate reality and not in the "real world". Your actions may be real but your emotions are disconnected from them. In your mind, you're somewhere else, on Planet Lust. The goal of recovery is to re-connect your mind and your body. To bring your mind back from its endless and pointless lust-soaked fantasies so that it's focused on whatever you're ACTUALLY doing.

Here are 2 improvements that I've noticed in my own life after working on this for a while. They may sound subtle, but to me, they're life itself.

First, when I see something on the street, I can sense the smallest spark of lust, even if I'm not pursuing it. Self awareness is key and I count this as a blessing. But now, along with the old feeling of excitement, I also feel a tinge of pain since I know that this can kill me. My mind is slowly getting the message...

Second, things that the rest of the world views as a perversion used to be a thrill. I won't mention them here. They still have the ability to light a spark...but I can also see the other side for the first time, the perversion, for what it is. These reactions can be simultaneous - lust and disgust...but oh how happy I am that my glasses are clearing up!

Good luck and keep posting.

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Re: Ur-a-jew's Thread

Posted by Dov - 23 Jun 2010 01:03

These parts hit me hardest either because I related most directly to them, or because I feel the meaning of the 1st step in them most:

When I get into my binges and would feel guilty looking at porn I would then look for erotic stories. Even when guilt overcame and I resolved to stop, in the back of my mind I would think to myself: if I would have done this or that I could have probably found something else....

After marriage masturbation stopped, but the lust was still there. I believe there was always some issue in the bedroom that I wanted sex more than my wife. I probably pressured her too much, we were young she wanted to make me happy and the result of it is that now I believe she has an underlying resentment when I get overly in the mood (which one can say is always) which can cause her to shut down completely. My wife has always been complaining to me that sex is always on my mind and she is right. ***(more about this in the 8th and 9th steps iy"H)....***

This past year I finally realized that if there is someone that I could talk to it was him. I told my wife that I was going to speak to him about the lust issue but the real reason was to finally admit to someone that I had a problem with porn and to get an eitza. Just revealing the problem to someone was such a relief. He told me that how he also had temptations but his wife was his mashgiach and he (with her help) planned his life in ways to avoid temptation. (Nu, not *my* way, but 1- who cares? and 2- at least we can all see the awesome power of honesty and integrity) Since that time I don't think that I have sunken as low as I have in the past. The addiction has not stopped.....

While I sometimes question whether I am addicted or maybe just normal, after all I have never done, and I am not tempted to do some of the things that others here have done. What makes me sure that I am an addict, is the inability to stop despite the fact that I know the damage that it causes to me. I may be a smaller-time addict, but I am an addict nonetheless and I realize that I can't go on living like this.

Well, I am also a 'small-time' addict. Welcome to the club. Not much glory here, but glory is probably overrated anyhow!

Congratulations on doing this 1st step work. It is exactly what we are all here to do. At this rate, we might be able to start with #2 by next week!

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Re: Ur-a-jew's Thread

Posted by The Never Believer - 23 Jun 2010 14:00

[dov wrote on 23 Jun 2010 01:03:](#)

At this rate, we might be able to start with #2 by next week!

take it easy, muchacho.

dov, youre like that guy at my corporate early afternoon mincha that finishes shmonei esrei before everyone else and then stands there facing the crowd counting guys as they finish so that as soon as it gets to 9 he can start nudging the chazzan to start.

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Re: Ur-a-jew's Thread

Posted by the.guard - 24 Jun 2010 10:01

[The Never Believer wrote on 23 Jun 2010 14:00:](#)

[dov wrote on 23 Jun 2010 01:03:](#)

At this rate, we might be able to start with #2 by next week!

take it easy, muchacho.

dov, youre like that guy at my corporate early afternoon mincha that finishes shmonei esrei before everyone else and then stands there facing the crowd counting guys as they finish so that as soon as it gets to 9 he can start nudging the chazzan to start.

It's time to start living in the
solution! ;D

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Re: Ur-a-jew's Thread
Posted by Dov - 25 Jun 2010 06:35

Guard has a point. dwelling overlong on any step can be silly, but in the case of the 1st step, it can keep us in the problem. And that's yucky.

But it's OK for one more week if needed. It took me a few *months* to finally write my own 1st the first time, so I'd better shut up cuz you guys are all doing 736 times better than me... :-*
Hey NB, how long do you want to spend dwelling in the problem?

BTW, there are a few people who are joining up and I tell each of them that we will not be accepting people after we are done with the 1st step. It'll just be too discombobulating , certainly for me....feedback please.

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Re: Ur-a-jew's Thread
Posted by kanesher - 26 Jun 2010 20:15

Hey, I just got access...another week would be great.

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Re: Ur-a-jew's Thread
Posted by Dov - 27 Jun 2010 06:34

So it seems. We'll talk iy'H tomorrow at the noon phone thing, and then Tuesday night 9-10 if that should materialize...

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Re: Ur-a-jew's Thread
Posted by chaim2000 - 28 Jun 2010 12:15

i used to feel special (as in special child) because of my story. Now i see we are all in the same boat

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Re: Ur-a-jew's Thread
Posted by chaim2000 - 28 Jun 2010 12:17

It seems like we really all are in the same boat

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Re: Ur-a-jew's Thread
Posted by Dov - 29 Jun 2010 05:07

There is a very special feeling between the members of a group of survivors from the same accident, they say. When we all really believe we are on the same boat, surely we discover tremendous power. We are home together.

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Re: Ur-a-jew's Thread

Posted by ur-a-jew - 15 Jul 2010 15:00

Ok even though I was only on the call for part of the time last night it was great. Dov it's great that you're back.

The first step finally clicked. What I realized yesterday is that the first step is not simply something you do once. The first step is a chesbon that you make everytime you're presented with lust. It's a chesbon in which you say to yourself I can't live without this lust but I can't live with it because when I give into my lust my life becomes unmanageable. One of the two got to give and since I don't want an unmanageable life the lust is going to be the one that I give up. Now since as an addict I can't live without lust, I'm going to have to turn to someone greater than myself, i.e., G-d to help me.

Now this Chesbon is not a moral cheshbon, e.g., sichar mitzvah Kneged hefsaida. Such a chesbon requires an amount of bitachon, which in the past when confronted with lust I've demonstrated I don't have. By contrast the first step chesbon doesn't require Torah or emunah. I see from my experience that my life is unmanageable even if it were not wrong and even if I would not get punished for it. And I don't want an unmanageable. So far so good.

Now here is the difficulty. Dov has maintained that a first step has to bring us to the recognition that giving into lust would be suicide. The reason this is necessary is because if the alternative is: not giving into lust or suicide, most people will hopefully almost instinctively choose their life. The problem starts when we don't see giving into lust as suicide. If I don't see it as suicide then the first problem is that I may not make the chesbon at all because when I'm not dealing with what I perceive as a life-threatening situation I don't always make chesbonos I'll act without thinking. For example, driving without a seatbelt can result in a life-threatening injury. But most people don't look at driving around the corner as a real life-threatening risk. As a result, there are times when I will get into a car and not buckle my seatbelt. It's not that I don't value my life, it's because I'm not making the chesbon in the first place. If I was on a plane and I was going to jump off I would take a parachute because I know that if jump without it I will kill myself. It's an instinctive chesbon but there is a chesbon.

The second issue with not seeing the unmanagability as suicide is that I may make the chesbon but since its not a life or death alternative I may choose the lust option. To use Dov's moshol even if I am overwhelmed with debt I may go and buy something I can't afford if its not that expensive. If the bank is knocking at my door to foreclose on my house I'm not going to buy a brand new car because however badly I want a new car I want my house more.

So the question I have is how do I come to the realization that looking at the half naked lady walking down the street is suicide for me. While I recognize that looking at the big picture lust has made my life unmanageable and it is slow death I honestly am not at the level where I see little acts of acting out are suicide.

Anybody's thoughts would be most welcome.

Sorry guys if I'm not at step 2 yet. And sorry Dov if I'm thinking but I think that this thinking I

think is actually doing the work, because I'm starting to get a little clarity in the matter.

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Re: Ur-a-jew's Thread

Posted by installed - 15 Jul 2010 16:33

Hey,

The call yesterday definitely cleared things up for me as well.

I understood that if we truly believe that we are not in control, taking the first look is suicide because it is a slippery slope and if we truly believe that we are powerless, taking the first step will lead us to act out and we can't afford it (our life is unmanageable while we lust). It could be that I'm way off...

All the best,

Avraham.

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Re: Ur-a-jew's Thread

Posted by kanesher - 15 Jul 2010 17:09

Thanks Ur-a-Jew

that really cleared up some stuff for me. I mean, I see how often I figure - eh, why not. But it's really not. This thing is cancer which has separated me from my friends, my family, my wife, my God - and has destroyed so much of what I could have accomplished. It has so often made me a shell of a human being, hunting sirens which do not ever satisfy and only torment, leaving me with nothing whatsoever. Killing me slowly, for isn't life made up of days?

Thanks!

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Re: Ur-a-jew's Thread

Posted by chaim2000 - 16 Jul 2010 17:09

its a real shame i wasnt at the meeting. I also feel myself at this crossroad. Do i really care about the fact that i i am addicted to lust. At the same time it is a sign of our progress as a group that we are coming together to the same issues.

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