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YOUR
EYES!**



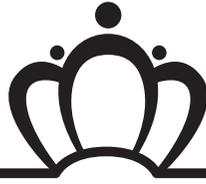
אוזר בגבורה

GUIDING A BACHUR
THROUGH STRUGGLES IN INYANEI KEDUSHA

A HANDBOOK FOR REBBEIM AND MASHGICHIM



Adapted from the recorded workshops
on the topic of kedusha given by
Rabbi Efraim Glassman



קונטרס

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DISCLAIMER: This booklet is intended to provide those who listened to the accompanying recordings of Rabbi Efraim Glassman's workshops with a printed version of the material. However, this material should not be viewed as a complete treatment plan. Rather, the goal is to familiarize and educate Rebbeim on this topic.

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אוזר ישראל בגבורה

ברכה זו היא על המצוה שיש בידינו, שאנחנו חייבים לחגור ולהפסיק בין לב לערוה, כדי שלא יהא לבו רואה את הערוה, וכדאיתא בשולחן ערוך (ריש סי' ע"ד).

עוד יש לכוון כפשטו: אחר ישראל בגבורה על הגבורה, שהקב"ה אחר לנו גבורה ועו להתגבר על היצר הרע, כי צריך לזה גבורה גדולה. ושנינו (אבות פ' ד): איזהו גבור הכובש את יצרו, שצריך להתגבר מאד על יצרו ולא ישמע לו בשום אופן, ויעבד תמיד את ה' בתמימות, בלי שום קושיות ועצלות, ולא יתפעל משום בן אדם, ושום דבר בעולם לא יעביר אותו מדעת קונו, חס ושלום. ואמר (ביצה כה) מפני מה ניתנה תורה לישראל? מפני שהן עזין, פירושו, שיהיו יכולים להתגבר מאד על כל המכשולים ומניעות ויקיימו את התורה תמיד. (עולת תמיד פ' ט)

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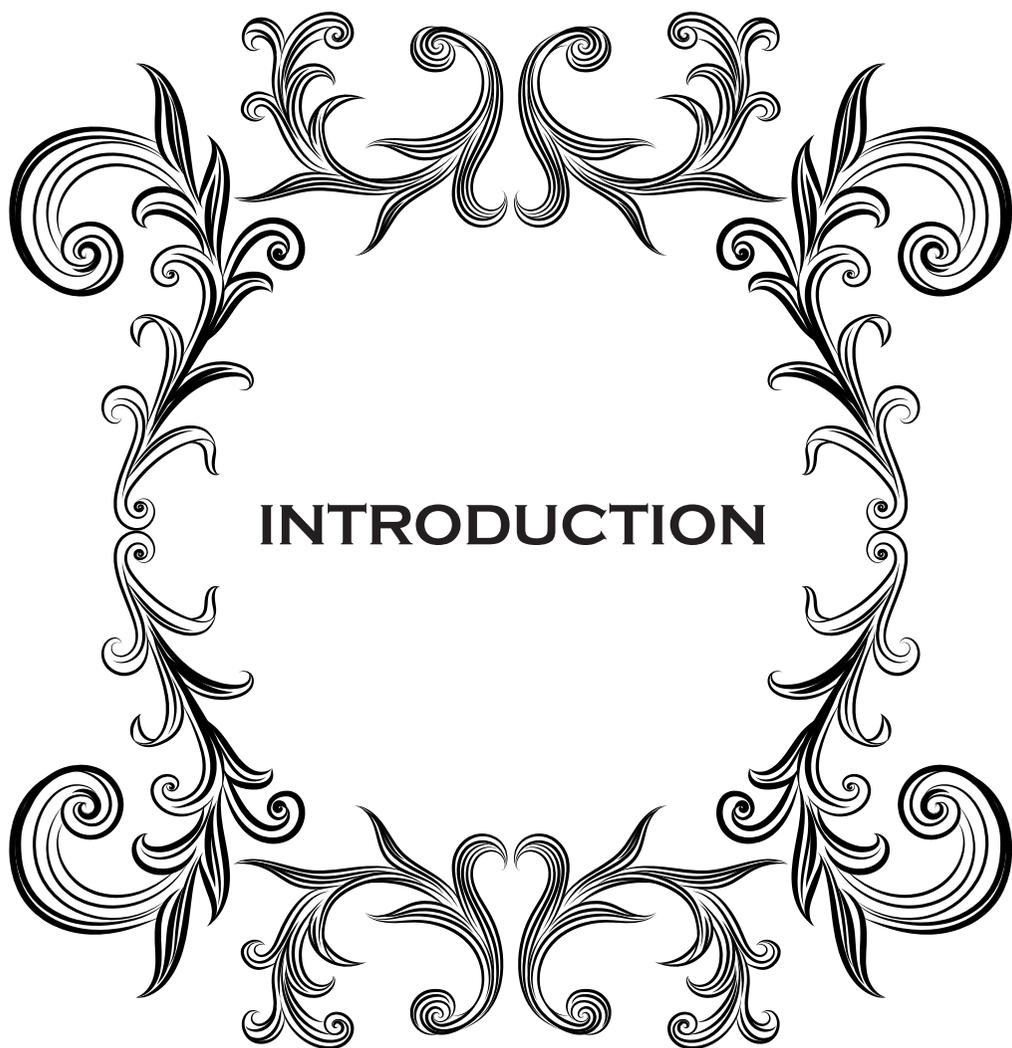
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INTRODUCTION

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Chapter 1:

The Need to Address this Topic

Challenges in *inyonei kedushah* are one of the most sensitive topics. It's a topic we wish we wouldn't have to talk about, but unfortunately, these issues are more common than we would like to imagine them being. We are all aware of how fast the world is changing. We are living in an era that is becoming increasingly difficult and tempting, and the challenges our children and *talmidim* face are at a level which the generations before us never envisioned or had to deal with. Therefore, the many *Gedolim* with whom I have consulted feel that it is a *mechanech's* obligation to understand the challenge, as well as how to help those who struggle with it.

Having said that, what makes writing about this topic so challenging is that solving this problem is far from simple, and no one should be so foolish as to think that they have all the answers. The *yetzer hora* is much stronger and smarter than any one of us. Suggestions that are standard for other challenges, such as changing one's yeshivah or *chavrusah*, will not solve this issue. Many times the problem gets so deeply ingrained in a person that it becomes a way of life. When that happens, it becomes extremely difficult to break. However, this does not absolve *Rebbeim* from dealing with this issue.

The problem is so rampant that we must do something about it, and even if we can't solve it in its entirety, we must do our part. In this booklet, we will be discussing a program of instructions for anyone in the yeshivah system who is trying to help *talmidim* in these areas, whether it is a concerned Rebbi, a *Mashgiach*, or a *menabel*.

The *bachurim* primarily addressed in this booklet are boys who are trying hard to do what's right, yet despite that have found themselves developing certain detrimental habits. Quite often, these *bachurim* can start off with a minor bad habit or a small slip, yet because they are unequipped to deal with it properly, they feel totally lost when faced with this *nisayon*. *Bachurim* quite often ask for help only after they have settled into detrimental behavior patterns that have grown out of their control.

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A struggle in the area of *kedushas Yisroel* will obviously affect a person's *ruchniyus*. However, this struggle also has a considerable impact on the person's emotional stability, which stems from the tremendous guilt he feels. Very often, changes in a person's personality, such as a *bachur* becoming more engrossed in himself, can be traced back to these issues.

There are scores of people who have gone on to develop social anxieties and fallen into clinical depression, all of which was triggered by these *nisyonos*. We must therefore attempt to pick up on issues in the beginning, so we can give our *talmidim* the confidence and tools they need to get through this challenge.

Why this struggle is so difficult

A challenge in the area of *kedushah* is very difficult to fight for a number of reasons.

1. *Success is very often not fully in our control.* (See Section One, Step One.) This is not an easy admission to make, particularly for *bachurim* who are accustomed to being high achievers and having success be in their control. Therefore, when they try to gain control and are met with failure, they feel debilitated. A *bachur* will frequently have to make peace with his situation and understand that this is not an area that can be fixed overnight. He must recognize that while he may not be perfect, he is still doing well by attempting to move forward in life.

2. *The very act of trying to control the struggle makes it harder to deal with.* If a *bachur* is trying to control the issue, then he becomes more conscious of the entire topic, and that itself can exacerbate the problem. This struggle is unlike those in other areas of *avodas Hashem*, where a person typically puts forth a concentrated effort and then by and large is met with success. In contrast, when addressing this struggle, a person will have to learn to relinquish his control somewhat. Doing so is not easy, especially for those who have a rigid and firm personality; they typically need to feel in control of their success, which is often virtually impossible in this area. (See Section One, Step Three.)

3. *One cannot compromise.* Usually when someone is trying to change a *middah*, he starts to work on himself by slowly moving towards the other side, and he makes

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some compromises along the way. The problem with doing this here is that in most circumstances, compromises are not an option, since allowing certain *aveiros* is out of the question. (There are, however, some exceptions to this.) Additionally, a person typically does not want to compromise when it comes to such a serious issue. Since compromise is usually unacceptable, it therefore makes this struggle more difficult to address.

4. *The guilt produced from succumbing to this struggle becomes nearly unbearable.* There is probably no other *aveirah* that produces the amount of guilt as this one does.

5. *The yetzer hora for this nisayon is very strong.*¹ It is one of the strongest forces in nature. Once a person succumbs to his *yetzer hora* and slips just a little bit, the *ta'avah* develops even more and becomes very difficult to deal with.

Should someone lacking professional training hesitate to deal with these issues

It is difficult to conclusively answer this question, since a person who doesn't know what he's doing can end up causing more harm than good. Having said that, however, we can't afford the luxury of waiting for every person who needs assistance to get the professional help that he needs. This is because the amount of people who actually receive professional help is small, and by the time they end up going for help, their problems have already gotten more severe and are much harder to address. It is therefore incumbent upon *Rebbeim* to familiarize themselves with the issue and how it manifests itself. Only then is there a chance of catching it earlier on, making sure that the struggle does not go too far.

However, a Rebbi should have someone more knowledgeable than he is to consult with, either another Rebbi or a professional. If-- after a certain amount of involvement-- a Rebbi is concerned that he does not see much progress, then he can always back off and ask for help. Be assured, however, that if your motives are *l'shem shamayim*, and you are careful with what you are doing, then nothing wrong should come as a result of your involvement.



(1) קידושין פא:

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Quick Recap:

- Solving this problem is far from simple, and no one should be so foolish as to think that they have all the answers.
- The problem is so rampant that we must do something about it, and even if we can't solve it in its entirety, we must do our part.
- We must attempt to pick up on issues in the beginning, so we can give our *talmidim* the confidence and tools they need to get through this challenge.
- A challenge in the area of *kedushah* is very difficult to fight for a number of reasons.
- It is difficult to conclusively answer the question if someone lacking professional training should hesitate to deal with these issues.

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Chapter 2:

The types of struggles addressed in this booklet

It is important to differentiate between the different types of challenges in *inyonei kedushah*, as the method for treating the respective challenges varies depending on the underlying cause for each one. In this booklet, we will be addressing three of these challenges.

A ta'avah-based challenge

In Section I we will discuss the standard struggle, which is a *ta'avah*-based challenge. This refers to a *bachur* who is either acting out or has been exposed to certain things, and has developed a strong temptation to follow after the urges he now feels. This *bachur*'s struggle is based on *ta'avah*, his natural instinct.

A challenge at the level of addiction

In Section II we will discuss a struggle which has reached the level of becoming an addiction. An addiction is defined as a behavior that overwhelms a person to the point that it disturbs his quality of life. There is also typically some form of lying, cheating, or fooling people involved. An addiction reaches a point where it's so out of control that a person is willing to take big risks for it. He will risk getting caught, losing his job, ruining his family life, etc.

A *bachur* whose challenge has reached this point has usually tried stopping, but couldn't. The strategies needed to help him will be similar to those used in the standard struggle, but the overall process will take much longer and will require many more techniques. Many times those suffering from an addiction need assistance on the professional level as well.

An anxiety-based challenge

In Section III we will discuss a struggle that is based on anxiety or obsessive feelings. There are people who suffer from being overly anxious and nervous, and their anxiety will sometimes manifest itself in the form of *frumkeit*. Because of that, they can become hyper-focused in this area and busy themselves with it an entire

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day. These *bachurim* may find themselves acting out, but in stark contrast to one dealing with a typical struggle, a *bachur* who has OCD or anxiety does not enjoy or look forward to doing it. Instead, he feels almost compelled to do it in order to calm down his anxiety.

Challenges not addressed in this book

The challenge of *yi'ush*

There is another difficult challenge, one we will not be addressing in this booklet, and that's somebody who has given up the fight and made peace with his situation. This *bachur* might tell you, "You're right; I know that what I'm doing is wrong. If you give me a magic way to get rid of it, then I'll pay you a million dollars for it! However, I'm not ready to put up a fight. You have no idea how much I held myself back until now. I simply can't continue fighting this battle any more." Any *shmuessen* told to such a *bachur* will not help him, as he feels he knows all the answers. He has come to a point where he doesn't believe he can stop and doesn't even want to hear.

A word of caution is in place when dealing with such a *bachur*. He might come to talk with you about his issues just to show that he's trying to do something, but deep down he has no real interest in changing. A person like this can burn you out. You could spend hours upon hours in sincere talk, telling him so many good things, but still get nowhere. This is because his problem stems from the fact that he's missing the willpower and belief that he can do it, and if he doesn't have that basic backbone, then all of your suggestions are not going to help him.

You therefore have to be careful; if you sense that a *bachur* isn't ready to hear what you have to say, then it's important to stop. Now is not the time to address the issue, because if you speak to him before he's ready to hear what you have to say, then when the right time does come, he won't be able to accept it because he heard it already. You could tell him, "I would love to help you, but there's no point in talking about this issue at this time, because there's obviously something much more that's bothering you." You must first address the issue of why there's no input on his part, and build up his confidence in other ways. Only after the motivation is back in place, could you then begin to help him move forward.

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The challenge of disinterest

Another challenge that we will not address in this booklet is someone who is not interested in changing and says, “I don’t care; I’m doing what I want to do.” Such a person will require a different type of mentoring to get him to the point where he should want to change. The truth is that such an attitude is not typical; usually a person’s conscience will steer him in the proper direction. If someone seems to be lacking his full conscience in this area to the point where he can’t imagine stopping, then it is likely that something in his development was thrown off-track early on. Such a case is much more severe and will require help from someone with more time and experience than the average *mechanech* has.

Our discussion throughout this booklet, however, will mainly be focused on working with a *bachur* who:

- is sincere and wants to improve, and
- who listens and follows through on the suggestions that are given.



Quick Recap:

- This booklet will address techniques to help *bachurim* with a *ta'avah*-based challenge, as well as a challenge at the level of addiction and a challenge based on anxiety. It will not address a challenge of *y'ush* or disinterest.

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Chapter 3:

How to identify struggling *bachurim* in the classroom

There is no clear method for how to identify someone who is struggling with this *nisayon*. Plenty of *bachurim* have had problems for years that went completely undetected, and when it was later discovered, nobody could have imagined that it was ever an issue. In fact, many people are able to hide it completely. However, there are frequently certain symptoms that you can pick up on, which hint to a strong possibility that this may be an issue for a particular *bachur*.

It's crucial to remember, though, that even if you do notice certain symptoms, you must still proceed with caution before going full-force ahead in trying to help. The general *mehalach* when working with someone should be to approach the topic slowly and cautiously, and let the conversation flow naturally. You should always keep in mind that you may be 'barking up the wrong tree' and be on the lookout for feedback from the *bachur* that will direct you further. This is because there's no way to know for sure that this issue is the underlying problem, and much damage can be done if one jumps to premature conclusions. For example, if someone is overly confident that he knows exactly what's happening with a *bachur*, he may say to him, "What's the problem? Is this-and-this going on? And is the reason you're doing this because of such-and-such?". Remarks of this nature will most probably do more harm than good, for several reasons:

- a) The *bachur* may not have been ready to open up to you yet.
- b) Your conclusion may not be right, and making assumptions can easily lead you down the wrong path.
- c) Even if you are right and the person is ready, this is not the right way to get him to take care of the issue.

A List of Symptoms

We will now present a list of symptoms that may be apparent in a *bachur* struggling with this issue. However, it is important to bear in mind that each of these symptoms can be related to other problems as well. You therefore have to

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rule out other possible causes before deciding that the symptoms are related to a problem in *inyonei kedushah*.

1. *If you notice a change in mood or interest--* Several examples include the following: a) if you see a *bachur* who has always been happy-go-lucky, but now is losing some of that *chiyus*; b) if you see someone who liked to play ball with the other boys, and is no longer doing so; and c) if someone was learning well or *davening* with a *cheisbek*, but now he's slacking off. All of these could signal a problem in *inyonei kedushah*. Although there may be other reasons for why this could occur, nonetheless, if you don't know of any other reason and notice such a change, then you have to be concerned that this change of behavior could be stemming from guilt. The *bachur* may feel that because he did something so wrong, he's no good and no longer deserves to be amongst the other *bachurim*.

2. *If a bachur suddenly seems very tired--* If a *bachur* had always been coming to yeshivah well-rested but now seems tired in the mornings, it could be an indication of problems in *inyonei kedushah*. Perhaps the *bachur* spent a lot of time at night watching things on a smartPhone or listening to the radio, and as a result has difficulties staying awake the next day.

3. *If a bachur is spending a lot of time that is unaccounted for--* Anything that seems odd in a *bachur's* attendance procedure could indicate a struggle in this area. If a *bachur* 'disappears' for lengths of time, whether staying in the bathroom or just leaving the *Beis medrash* with no good explanation for where he's going, then there is an indication that something further might be happening.

4. *If you notice a dazed look on a talmid's face--* (This may be the strongest sign that a *bachur* is struggling with *inyonei kedushah*.) When a *bachur* seems to be deeply engrossed in something that is unrelated to anything in front of him, with his mind heavily focused on something other than what is going on, then it may indicate that the *bachur* is fantasizing entire mirages of *shmutz* in his mind. I find this most commonly occurring in class or during *davening*.

It is important to differentiate this from a *bachur* who is just sitting and daydreaming in class. In contrast to the daydreamer, this *bachur* sits with his eyes focused on something around the room, yet one can discern from the look on his face that his mind is racing.

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5. *If a bachur begins bashing the system--* When a *bachur* had previously been doing everything fine, but now uncharacteristically knocks the very same things he had been doing, it might signify a problem in *inyonei kedushah*. This sudden change in attitude frequently comes from a feeling of uncomfortable with oneself. A *bachur* may begin to ask rhetorical questions in *Yiddishkeit* such as “Who says this is important? I know many people who do this thing that you claim is no good. Nobody else is doing any better than I am”, or comments such as “*Ach*, what you’re telling me is too *Yeshivish!*”.

Remarks such as these provide the easiest escape route for him to feel better about himself. It is also possible that a *talmid* may come over to you with *sfeikos* and questions in *emunah*, yet a struggle in *inyonei kedushah* can be at their root. The guilt and pain that stem from struggles in *inyonei kedushah* could be causing the *bachur* to attack or question the system he was part of.

6. *If a bachur develops a social anxiety--* Another indication of a problem is when a *bachur* who had previously been well-adjusted among friends and comfortable with other people, suddenly becomes quieter. This could very well be a sign that he feels uncomfortable about his situation. The reason for this reaction is because a person tends to feel that other people view him the way he views himself, and if a person sees himself as being guilty or no good, then he begins to feel that other people notice that negative aspect of him, too. (This is a natural instinct and happens even though it has no logical basis.) The result is that a *bachur* will likely recoil, becoming much more introverted.

7. *If a bachur begins to have fears about death and Gebinnom--* These can frequently stem from a *bachur*’s feelings of guilt. If he has read what it says in certain *sefarim* about some of these *aveiros--* that such a person is *mechuyav misah*, or is like a *rotzei’ach--* then he could begin to think that he deserves such an onesh because of what he’s doing. He could therefore develop a fear of death. (For a proper understanding of how to explain the words of *Chazal* on this matter, see Section One, Step 7.)

8. *If a bachur negates compliments that are said to him--* When someone feels guilty, he can often discount any positive emotions that he has because of the burden of the negative feelings that is weighing down on him. He may negate anything good you will say about him and say, “No, I don’t really know how to learn”, “It’s just a show”, or “It was only today that I did well”. Such a *bachur* might feel that if the other person knew the real truth of what was happening in his life, then he wouldn’t say

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such a thing. As a result, the *bachur* thinks that he doesn't deserve the compliment, and he is unable to believe that he really has value.

9. *If it becomes hard for a bachur to get up in the morning--* This obviously can be coming from many causes. Many times, waking up late runs in families or is the nature of a child. In such instances, waking up late is obviously unrelated to this issue. However, waking up late can also be a result of *nisyonos* that occurred the night before, which leave a *bachur* with strong guilt feelings when he awakens the next morning. These feelings drain him of the energy he needs to get himself out of bed, as his bed becomes a 'safe haven' for him.

10. *If it's hard for a bachur to go to sleep at night--* When a person doesn't feel good, then at the end of the day he often looks for some kind of 'action' that will provide him with a feeling of fulfillment. It's very hard to go to sleep at night on an empty feeling, and he will therefore delay his bedtime. (As a head counselor in a sleepaway camp, I've noticed that the *bachurim* who give their counselors the hardest time going to sleep, are those who feel unsuccessful or are not part of the *chevrah*. Because they don't yet feel that they've had a day, they often push off going to sleep.) Another reason that going to sleep can be difficult is because the *bachur* may fear that he won't be able to withstand a *nisayon* that often comes to him before he goes to sleep. He will therefore try to push off sleep as long as he can.

11. *If you notice shifts in mood--* This is different than what was mentioned earlier in number 1 about changes in a *bachur's* mood or interests. We are referring here to a different kind of shift in mood, where for three or four days a *bachur* may feel positive and can be doing well, but then there's a dip for a while, and negative feelings overtake him. Then his mood comes back up for some time, after which it once again falls back down. These ups and downs could be related to how well he's dealing with this issue.

12. *If a bachur displays an unexplained irritability--* When a *bachur* is struggling in *inyonei kedushah*, he can suddenly become intolerable of other people's flaws and get annoyed by any little thing. This is because someone who feels that he's not able to tolerate himself and live with what he's doing, often projects his own feelings onto others around him. He's so unhappy with himself, that he becomes unhappy with others and blames them.

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13. *If you notice talmidim clinging too much to each other-- Bachurim sitting too close to each other or spending too much time together does not necessarily indicate an issue. However, if you notice a higher level of attachment, then you should ensure that there is no foul play going on.*

This list is quite long and inclusive, and every Rebbi has obviously seen these symptoms amongst their *talmidim*. As was mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, this does not mean that everyone who displays any of the above-mentioned symptoms is struggling with *inyonei kedushah*; what it does mean, however, is that any one of the above symptoms can be triggered by a struggle in this area, and a Rebbi should be aware of it.



Quick Recap:

- There are frequently certain symptoms that can be seen, which hint to a strong possibility that this may be a problem for a particular *bachur*.
- The list of symptoms is quite long and inclusive.
- Any one of the symptoms can be triggered by a struggle in this area, and a Rebbi should be aware of it.

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Chapter 4:

How to Open the Discussion

This topic is obviously very private, and a person naturally feels that discussing this uncomfortable subject is overstepping his boundaries. We will therefore provide some tips on how to initiate this discussion. If done with care and sensitivity, it could provide a *bachur* with the help he truly desires, and with a sense of relief that feels so liberating that he will be glad to have opened up to you.

To begin with, if you notice any of the symptoms that were mentioned before and are concerned that *inyonei kedushah* might be the underlying problem, then it is possible to hint to the *bachur* that you are available to talk about this topic. This can be done in a classroom setting, such as when discussing these topics in the weekly parshah, or on an individual basis, such as going over to the *bachur* and asking him about the symptom in a general way.

You might say to him, “You know, I’ve noticed something is not quite the way it used to be. You used to be (learning better / coming on time for *shacharis* / more happy overall / etc.), and now I find that (you’ve been having a harder time / you’ve been coming a little bit late / you’re a bit quieter / etc.). It could be that I’m mistaken, but I decided to mention this because of what I’ve noticed. Is there anything going on, or am I just imagining things?”

With such a preface, you aren’t violating the *bachur*’s boundaries by putting him in a defensive mode and telling him that there must be a problem with him. Rather, what you are doing is conveying to your *talmid* the message that you care about him, and are available to help, if he so desires.

Possible responses a *bachur* might give

The following are three possible ways that a *bachur* may respond when approached, as well as the proper reaction on the part of the *mechanech*.

1. In the event that a *bachur* responds by saying, “I don’t know what you’re talking about,” then the best thing you could do at that moment is to apologize.

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Simply tell him that you made a mistake, and then leave him alone. You don't want to pressure him, because doing so will do more harm than good. If you push him to talk before he is ready, then he'll never be willing to come back to you when he is eventually ready to talk.

This is because when a *bachur* tells you that everything is fine, the message he is trying to convey is, "I don't want help," and if he doesn't currently want help, then you probably can't help. However, you've still accomplished a great deal. You have shown the *bachur* that you sincerely want to help out and that you're sensitive to his feelings by respecting his privacy. The *bachur* will then feel more comfortable placing his trust in you, and he will be more willing to come forward when the problem gets worse and he is ready to ask for help.

2. Many times, a *bachur* will acknowledge that he is experiencing the symptoms mentioned in the previous chapter, and that he wants to rid himself of them, yet he is unaware of their cause. If this occurs, you should obviously not get straight to the point, as you don't yet know if he's ready for such a discussion. What you can do instead is give a long list of possible causes for this type of behavior. For example, you might ask the *bachur*, "Was the new *Maggid Shiur* too hard for you? Is your *chavrusah* not working out? Are you having difficulty going to sleep on time at night? Is everything okay at home?"

After having listed numerous problems unrelated to this area, you should add at the end, "You know, there's one other thing that could sometimes affect a person. It may or may not be the issue for you now, but it is a possibility. Sometimes a person--myself included-- has a specific *yetzer hora*, and that *yetzer hora* can get the better half of a person. Afterwards, the person feels very guilty, and that sense of guilt causes him to feel uncomfortable. When someone has that feeling of discomfort, it will often not allow him to be his regular, natural self. If you're feeling that something changed in the way you've been acting, then it's likely that something caused you not to feel good about yourself. Feeling guilty about something would be a possible answer to explain these changes in your behavior."

At this point, you have to watch the *bachur's* reaction. If he says, "Hmm... No, I don't think it's related to any feelings of guilt," then you know that it may or may not be related to *inyonei kedushah*. However, since the *bachur* didn't take you up on your offer to discuss it, then it's important to give him his space and leave him alone. You could tell him, "You might not realize what is bothering you now, but if you

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think about it later on and discover the cause, then you can feel free to come discuss it with me. Don't worry; nothing you say will surprise me. You're not the first boy who came here, and whatever it is, we'll deal with it together."

3. Finally, if the *bachur* does allow you into his secret, you should realize that you only have this one opportunity. If you mess up the first time, you probably won't get a second chance. It is therefore imperative that you create a solid foundation of trust between you and your *talmid*, as will be discussed below.

Pointers for speaking to a *bachur*

There are several general pointers that one should bear in mind when having a conversation of this nature with a *bachur*.

1. *Give the proper attention*-- If a *bachur* comes over to you to discuss this topic at a time when you won't be able to give him the proper attention, then you should tell him something along the following lines: "This is a topic that's very important, and I would like to spend time discussing it with you, but it needs my *yishuv hada'as*, and I don't have the time right now. Let's make up a good time to talk." If, however, you try to answer him too quickly, then you will end up doing more damage than good. The *bachur* will feel that he built up the courage to expose himself to you, yet in return he just got cold water splashed in his face. You therefore have to be careful to respond with patience and make sure you send the right message of care and concern.

2. *Maintain confidentiality*-- After a *bachur* has revealed his secret to you, you should give him your word that everything will be kept completely confidential. A *bachur* has to know that you will not share what he told you under any circumstances-- not with other *Rebbeim*, *chavrusos*, or even his parents. Together with this commitment comes a real responsibility, since if his secret is ever violated, then the *bachur* will never trust you-- or anyone else-- again with this issue. Having said that, you should bear in mind that if a *bachur* is acting inappropriately with others, then he may have a *din* as a *rodeif*. In such a case, a *sheilah* should be asked about whether the situation warrants for you to violate what you told him.

3. *React with sympathy and respect*-- Your goal in the conversation is to keep a close relationship with the *bachur*. Since he just shared with you a very personal and

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private issue, you have to make him feel comfortable. You don't want to show him that you're surprised or disgusted with him, as that will distance him. If there's any sense of disappointment, he will feel rejected and hurt. The *bachur* must genuinely feel that you are not looking down on him because he's done this. This cannot be just a show; rather, you must truly believe that he is a *tzaddik* for putting up the fight. As you listen to him, you have to be able to sympathize and genuinely say, "That must be so hard for you." Let him know that it's normal, and that many people struggle in this area. You should try to convey a sense of respect for his efforts to fight back, and let him know that you'll help him work on this.

4. *Acknowledge and build up any triumphs*-- Many *bachurim* who are dealing with this struggle have experienced times of tremendous *mesirus nefesh*, when they have pushed through weeks and months with great inner strength. Their stories can be quite amazing-- and humbling. It is important to highlight the times they were *misgaber* on a *nisayon*, and to build up these events in their eyes. They will generally tend to negate it, saying that it was nothing special and that the times they didn't succeed offer the real reflection of who they are. (Doing this obviously leads them further in the wrong direction.) However, you should ignore these claims, since if they see that you are *machshiv* every time they overcome a *nisayon*, then they will ultimately learn to be *machshiv* it themselves.

5. *Don't make the problem seem too simple*-- You must stress to your *talmid* that this battle is not an easy one to overcome. If you make the problem sound simple, then he will feel foolish for not being able to take care of it himself. Furthermore, even if the *bachur* himself makes the problem sound simple, you should be aware that there is undoubtedly more beneath the surface, and he has not yet disclosed the full picture.

The reality is that the struggle is not easy, and it is therefore very important to tell the *bachur*, "I know that it's a difficult issue to deal with. You're going to need to work on it, but it's not impossible. There may be failures, but it's not a reason to give up." You could elaborate and say that this is the purpose why *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* put us here, and that many people come to this world to pass this *nisayon* alone. You have to emphasize that you'll be in this struggle together with him, and he will *b'ezras Hashem* reach his goal.

6. *Respect boundaries*-- It is crucial that you respect the other person's boundaries when speaking about this issue. This means that you should not speak in a very

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open and specific manner, because you'll be intruding too far. Rather, you should show interest in knowing what it will take to help him, without asking too many yentishe questions. For example, you shouldn't ask, "Do you do _____ or _____? How many times did it happen? Where does it go? What do you feel like?" Instead, respect the distance that the *bachur* feels because he's uncomfortable, and give him his space. You should allow him to take the lead in offering information, and try not to show that you're too curious when listening to him.

You will, of course, need to ask some questions in order to identify what he's been struggling with, but always reassure him that if it gets too uncomfortable, then he should just tell you, and you'll stop immediately. For example, you could tell the *bachur*, "If you don't mind, I'm going to ask you a couple of questions, but if there's anything you don't feel comfortable answering, then don't worry about it. Just tell me, and I'll move on. We'll discuss this together at your pace."

A brief discussion of the possible aspects to this struggle

As part of your conversation with the *bachur*, you will need to hear from him about the different areas in which he might be struggling. There can be issues in the areas of inappropriate thoughts, listening to inappropriate audio, or viewing inappropriate images. For example, a *bachur* might be looking at inappropriate material such as that on the Internet or in magazines, as well as gazing at what he shouldn't when walking in the street. Other *bachurim* have a hard time resisting the urge to stimulate themselves, and they suffer because of that. On a related note, there can also be *bachurim* who feel an attachment to another boy (typically of a younger age), which can potentially have a drastic effect on the younger *bachur* and needs to be stopped.

Regardless of the specific challenges with which the *bachur* is struggling, it's crucial to convey to him that all aspects of the struggle must be addressed when working on this issue. One cannot tell a person that he must stop acting out physically yet can still continue doing everything else. Although the challenge is hard and a *bachur* doesn't have to take every step towards recovery right away, he should nonetheless know that the ultimate goal is to break clean at all levels.²

(2) אוזר החיים, ויקרא יח:ב, שכ' וז"ל-- הנה ידוע הוא, כי כל מצוות אשר צוה ה' לעם קדושו, הם מצוות שיכול האדם לעמוד בהם, ויטה עצמו אל הרצון לעשותם, זולת מצוות פרישת העריות הוא דבר שנפשו של אדם מחמדתו ואונסתו עליהם לעשותם, זולת בהתעצמות הרחקת ב' דברים מהאדם, והם מרחק הרגש ראות העין, ומרחק בחינת החושב, ואם ב' אלו לא יעשה אין אדם שליט ברוח זה לכלותה ממנו; עכ"ל.

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This can be explained with the following *masbal*: The flame of a pilot light can easily be controlled, since it's a small flame and not so dangerous. However, if you were to pour gasoline on it, then the flame would quickly get out of control and become extremely hazardous. Similarly, every person has a natural inclination towards this *ta'avah*, but it develops within him at a rate that can usually be controlled.

However, if someone is going to let himself loose on what seems to be a minor level, then he's like an individual who pours gasoline over a pilot light, and before long, he will inevitably come to act out. Practically speaking, acting out in a physical way is almost always preceded by thinking about inappropriate thoughts. These thoughts put the flame out of control, and once kindled, the *yetzer hora* won't be satisfied with 'just' a thought. Therefore, if a *bachur* wants to have any level of success, then he must stop feeding the flame in any way, even "just" in his mind. Otherwise, he will *chas v'shalom* be doomed to go right back to where he started.

A brief check into the background

Before you begin to address this issue, it's important to identify if there is anything in the *bachur's* background or development that might have contributed to this problem. Doing so is crucial to understanding the struggle he is dealing with. If there are any underlying issues involved, it may perhaps be beyond the scope of a Rebbi's capabilities, and the *bachur* may need professional help. This will be discussed briefly here and elaborated upon in further chapters.

1. Ascertain if there is any clinical diagnosis:

You will want to find out if the *bachur* has any clinical diagnosis and check to make sure that it is being dealt with. This is crucial because *talmidim* whose struggles stem from a clinical issue will require a different method to help them deal with this struggle.

- *Anxiety*-- A *bachur* may have an overly anxious nature that is manifesting itself in matters of *frumkeit*. If a person has an anxious nature, he may feel overly worried and try excessively to avoid certain thoughts or behaviors. Such an individual will need different tools and suggestions than those given for the standard struggle, as will be addressed later in Section Three.

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- *OCD*-- At times, a *bachur* will act out due to obsessive-compulsive behaviors; he may feel compelled to do certain actions or feel bombarded by thoughts about this. Such a *bachur* will require techniques very different than those used to combat the standard struggle; these will be discussed further in Section Three. It should be mentioned that at times, a *bachur* may not have a formal clinical diagnosis of OCD, but if you notice that he is feeling tormented by certain thoughts, excessive worries, or fears of *onshim*, then you should suspect compulsive behaviors, and use the techniques outlined later.

- *Depression*-- Depression is usually a vicious cycle. As it pertains to this *inyan*, depression can bring on the *aveirah*, and doing the *aveirah*, in turn, results in depression. It is important to identify what triggered the struggle in the first place. If you notice that the depression appeared only after the behaviors started, then you can very often heal the depression by dealing with this issue. If, however, a *bachur* has an underlying feeling of depression (with or without a formal psychological diagnosis), then the depression must be dealt with before continuing on with suggestions or advice. (See Section Two, chapter 4.)

- *ADHD*-- Controlling the *yetzer hora* when one is faced with a *nisayon* requires one to stop for a few seconds and think straight about what is happening. If a person has attention deficit (-hyperactivity) disorder, he will act more impulsive by nature, and he won't necessarily stop to consider whether or not what he is doing is the correct course of action. His impulsivity must therefore be addressed separately. (See Section Two, chapter 4.)

2. Check into the history of any early exposure:

You will want to briefly explore whether or not there was any exposure to this topic in any form during a *bachur's* earlier years. Exposure to inappropriate behaviors and/or material can wreak havoc on a child's mind. At a young age, the child does not yet have the maturity to deal with it, and it leaves a much greater impression on him. The early 'education' with a still-immature *seichel* implants these concepts in his brain in that kind of way and can turn him almost 'inside-out'. Even after one's *seichel* does develop, the concepts remain in the crooked way in which they were implanted. This is why it is often almost predictable for such a *bachur* to act out at a later time, as if it had been pre-programmed there from that young age. This is not to say that it is impossible to correct such a mindset, but when dealing with such a *bachur* one has to know that he is on a completely different wavelength

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than other *bachurim*.

Premature exposure to these concepts can occur for any of the following reasons:

- If there was a molestation.
- If a young child was exposed to explicit material, such as that found on unfiltered Internet.
- If there were significant breaches in the boundaries of *tzniyus* kept in the home.

For more details, see Section Two, chapter 5, where the topic of addiction is discussed.

3. Note the strength of determination:

You will want to take notice of the level of determination the *bachur* has in his sincerity and commitment to overcoming this issue. As mentioned previously (in chapter two), if a *bachur* has no real interest in meeting the challenges he will face when trying to overcome his struggle, then he is not ready to get help, and you must first deal with the issue of his lack of motivation before moving on.



Quick Recap:

- This topic is very private; however, when discussed with sensitivity, it could provide a *bachur* with the help he truly desires.
- If a *bachur* is ready to open up a discussion about this topic, there are several general pointers to bear in mind when speaking to him.
- As part of your discussion with a *bachur*, you will want to discuss the different areas in which he may be struggling, as well as identify factors in his background that may have led him to this.



SECTION ONE:

**THE
STANDARD
STRUGGLE**

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Introduction to the Ten Steps

This section will discuss ten steps that should be implemented when mentoring a *bachur* who is dealing with the standard, *ta'avah*-based struggle. However, before beginning to delve into the ten steps, it must be emphasized to anyone working with a *talmid* that a large part of your success in being able to impart the tools for conquering this struggle is based on the confidence and belief that you yourself have in what you are saying.

Before trying to explain ideas to someone else, you must be convinced of them yourself and believe them to be 100% true to the extent that you would tell it to yourself or your own child. This will require you to have a clear understanding of each step and quotes from different *sefarim* or *ma'amarei Chazal* at your fingertips; you cannot simply look down at what is written here and say it over to the *talmid*. (See Appendix I, where numerous *mekoros* are brought for the ideas mentioned in this booklet.) The words have to be *devarim ha'yotz'im min haleiv*, because ultimately, the *bachur* will sense whether or not you believe what you are saying, or if you are just giving him a talk.

It is also important that you ensure that each step in this section is understood completely and implemented. In the event that you go through all of the ten steps with a *bachur* but still don't achieve the results that you want, then you should review the steps again with him and try to determine where his weakness lies. There's an expression that says, "A chain is only as strong as its weakest link." As it pertains to this discussion, it means that if a *bachur* has a difficult time understanding or implementing even one of the ten steps, then all the other steps may not be enough to pull him through this *nisayon*.

The ultimate goal of these steps

More important than stopping the acting out entirely is getting the *bachur* to be able to live as a normal person, even if he occasionally does slip. Therefore, while the goal is obviously to diminish improper behavior as much as possible, one must also safeguard the emotional health of the *bachur* by ensuring that he is receiving the support he needs and is not falling apart because of this issue.

Generally speaking, if a *bachur* has fallen into these *nisyonos* to the point that you can't even get him to live as a normal person without emotionally breaking down, then it is usually indicative that there is an underlying issue that needs to be

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dealt with. There is something that's pulling him towards this and not giving him the strength to get himself out of the mess. In such an instance, you will have to deal with the problem on a much more emotional level by exploring the intricacies of what has gone wrong in the past-- in his childhood or perhaps even now. (See Section Two, Chapter 5, where we discuss these concepts in more depth.)



Quick Recap:

- Before trying to explain ideas to someone else, you must be convinced of them yourself.
- It is important that you ensure that each step in this section is understood completely and implemented.
- More important than stopping the acting out is getting the *bachur* to be able to live as a normal person, even if he occasionally does slip.
- If a *bachur* has fallen into these *nisyonos* to the point that you can't get him to live as a normal person, then it is usually indicative that there is an underlying issue.

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Chapter 1:

Step One: Normalize

The first message that should be conveyed to a *bachur* is that this struggle is very normal, and everybody deals with it on some level or another. Having a desire for this doesn't mean that there is anything negative about a person. We say twice daily in *Shema*, **ולא תתורו** - do not explore inappropriate sights, after which you stray. The *passuk* is addressing every person in every generation. Even *chasbuv* people and those who lived centuries ago had to deal with this issue. Likewise, when talking about this desire, *Chazal* tell us (**נפשו מחמדתו** (חגיגה יא:)) - that a person's *nefesh* craves it.

Chazal aren't referring specifically to bad people; they are addressing every single person. When a *bachur* realizes this, he won't condemn himself as being no good when he encounters a *nisayon*. If, however, a *bachur* gets upset at himself, then he won't be able to move forward in the healing process. Instead, he will claim that he is doomed for failure due to what he perceives as an abnormal challenge.

Knowing these ideas takes away the taboo aspect of this topic and allows the *bachur* to let go of the negative impression he has created of himself. He will then be able to say to himself, "Okay; this urge or improper thought that is coming my way is one of my challenges in life. Just as some people are prone to getting stomachaches or headaches, I am faced with this struggle. It's a normal feeling, and I can deal with it."

You should also explain to the *bachur* that from your experience in speaking to many people about this issue, you know beyond a shadow of a doubt that this is true. You can add that which the **רמב"ם** writes, that there is no *kehillah* that can be considered immune to this. Every group of *Yidden* across the entire world deals with this *yetzer hora*.⁵ (If you're working with an older *bachur* or *yungeman*, then you

(5) רמב"ם הל' איסורי ביאה פ' כב, הלכות יח-כ, שכ' וז"ל-- יח- אין לך דבר בכל התורה כולה שהוא קשה לרוב העם לפרוש אלא מן העריות וכו'. יט- ואמרו חכמים, גזל ועריות נפשו של אדם מתאוה להן ומחמדתן. ואין אתה מוצא קהל בכל זמן וזמן שאין בהן פרוצין בעריות וביאות אסורות וכו'. כ- גדולי החכמים היו אומרים לתלמידיהם, הזהרו בי מפני בתי הזהרו בי מפני כלתי. כדי ללמד לתלמידיהם שלא יתביישו מדבר זה ויתרחקו מן הייחוד; עכ"ל.

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can explain to him why it's necessary to have this *ta'avah*, as it is an important part of the *bri'ah*.⁶

In this context, it's important to explain to a *bachur* that he has no control over when a *nisayon* comes his way. An improper thought may fall into his head suddenly, out of the blue. Since this is the case, he has no reason to feel bad that the thought came; it was out of his realm of *bechirah*. (*Bechirah*, however, does lie in whether the person will leave the thought alone and allow it to pass through, or whether he will dwell on it, which causes it to leave a stronger impact on him.)⁷



Quick Recap:

- The first message that should be conveyed is that everybody deals with this challenge on some level or another. Having a desire for this doesn't mean that there is anything negative about a person.
- If a *bachur* gets upset at himself, then he won't be able to move forward in the healing process.
- If you're working with an older *bachur* or *yungeman*, then you can explain to him why it's necessary to have this *ta'avah*, as it is an important part of the *bri'ah*.
- Another concept that should be explained is that an improper thought can fall into a person's head suddenly, and one should not feel bad that the thought came.

(6) יומא סט; דאיתא וז"ל-- אמרו [חכמים], הואיל ועת רצון הוא נבעי רחמי איצרא דעבירה בעו רחמי ואמסר בידיהו, אמר להו חזו דאי קטליתו ליה להווא כליא עלמא, חבשוהו תלתא יומי וכו', כחלינהו לעיניה ושבקוהו ואהני דלא מיגרי ביה לאיניש בקריבתה; עכ"ל.

ועי' עוד ברמב"ם בפירושו המשנה, סנהדרין פ' ז, ד, שכ' וז"ל-- שתכלית התשמיש להעמיד המין לא לתענוג התשמיש בלבד, והתענוג בזה הושם לעורר בעלי החיים על הכוונה הראשונה והוא הזרע, והראיה הברורה על זה שתסור התאוה ויכרית התענוג ביציאת שכבת זרע; עכ"ל.

(7) מאמרי שלמה (מהגה"צ ר' שלמה הרכבי, משגיח בישיבת גרודנה), ח"א מאמר טו, שכ' וז"ל-- הט"ז או"ח כתב שאין האדם בעל בחירה במחשבתו, ולכן אמרו רז"ל (ב"ב קסד): שלשה אין אדם ניצול מהם בכל יום, ואחד מהם הוא הרהורי עבירה, כי הוא אינו בעל בחירה במחשבה ואינו בעלים על המחשבה. ובחירתו מתחלת אחרי שכבר נפלה המחשבה בלבו, שאז יכול להסירה ולהסיעה לדבר אחר, אבל לעצור במחשבתו ולמנוע שלא תפול מחשבה רעה בלבו זה מן הנמנע. אמנם צריך לדעת ולהבין כי יסוד המחשבה תולדה מן הנהגת האדם ומצבו, ובמה שהאדם עוסק, שם מחשבתו על פי רוב. וא"כ, אע"פ שאינו בעל בחירה על מחשבתו, באופן ישיר, מ"מ הוא בעל בחירה עי"ז שימלא לבו במחשבות טהורות, תורה ויראת שמים, ולא יהיה מקום ליצר ומחשבותיו להכנס, כמש"כ הרמב"ם (סוף הל' איסורי ביאה) שאין מחשבת עריות מתגברת אלא בלב פנוי מן החכמה, כי במקום חכמה אין מקום ליצר ומחשבותיו להכנס, ובאופן זה יש דרך לבחירה גם על מחשבתו; עכ"ל.

וכעין זה כתב הגה"צ ר' מתתיהו סלומון שליט"א בפי' מתנת חלקו על שערי תשובה, שער רביעי בהערה קנז.

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Chapter 2:

Step Two: List the Reasons to Stop

One of the hardest but most important questions for a *bachur* to answer is, “Why do you want to stop?”

A *bachur*'s response will typically be “Because it's bad.” Such a response is very shallow. If the *bachur* can't express clearly why he wants to stop, then he won't be able to stand up against the mighty *yetzer hora*, who comes with multiple justifications for why it's okay. His situation would be analogous to when the German air force invaded Poland during WWII and were met with the Poles attacking them on horseback! By giving the *bachur* clear, strong reasons to put up a fight, you are giving him the ammunition to win his battle.

When mentoring a *bachur*, you may want to ask him, rhetorically, “Why do you have to stop? What's the big deal? You do a lot of things that aren't good. Don't you sometimes forget to make a *berachah acharonah*, or daven with *kavannah*? So why are you making such a big deal about this?” Such questions will cause him to take a step back and think into his situation in a more logical way. Together with the *bachur*, you will want to create a list of reasons for why he should stop. There are three qualifications as to which reasons should be included on this list.

1. *They must be reasons not to do it even one time.* This addiction, like smoking or any other, develops by acting out “just one time”. In essence, doing it once is the same thing as doing it a hundred times.

2. *The reasons must be well-understood and accepted by the bachur.* If the *bachur* simply reads off your list of what you think is important, then it won't have the desired effect. The list should therefore preferably be made by the person himself, as certain reasons will ‘talk’ to him more than others. He should sit down and think along these lines: “Why do I want to stop this behavior pattern? What do I have to lose if I don't stop? What's wrong if I do this only once in a while?” You can help the *bachur* create a list, but it should be his list, with sincere and clearly expressed reasons. The *bachur* should then review his list often. That way, when he is faced with a *nisayon*, he will be able to remind himself, “You know what this *nisayon* means?”

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It means _____ and _____ and _____. There is so much dependent on this issue. Is succumbing to the *yetzer hora* really worth it?”

3. *Start off the list with gashmiyus-related reasons for why the bachur should stop, and then get to ruchniyus-related reasons.* The reason for starting the list with *gashmiyus*-related reasons for why this behavior will affect his life in *Olam Hazeh*, follows what the *Gemara* says: when a person is faced with a strong *nisayon*, his *yetzer tov* plays a small role.⁸ Therefore, if a person has a simple, *gashmiyus*-related *chesbon* for how he stands to lose in *Olam Hazeh* by doing it, then it will be more helpful for him than coming up with a *ruchniyus*-related reason for how this behavior will impact his *Olam Haboh*. This is particularly true if a *bachur*'s *yiras shamayim* is not so strong; such a *bachur* may, under certain circumstances, try to excuse himself from any *ruchniyus*-related reason to stop. Therefore, although *ruchniyus* reasons are very important (especially for a *bachur* who's a real *ben Torah*), it is still preferable to start the list with *gashmiyus*-related reasons.

This idea of using *gashmiyus* reasons before *ruchniyus* ones can be seen from the Torah's account of Yosef and the wife of *Potifhar*. When she confronted him, Yosef's first response to her was that doing this *aveirah* would betray her husband's trust in him. Only afterwards did he continue on to say that by doing this *aveirah*, he would be sinning against Hashem.⁹ The list of reasons mentioned below is a sample list that helped one specific *bachur*. It was created together with a *bachur* who was struggling on an out-of-control level. (If, however, someone is dealing with a relatively minor issue, you obviously should not scare him by going into all of these reasons.)

The following is a list of *gashmiyus*-related reasons:

1. *It makes me feel depressed afterwards.*

The pleasure from acting out only lasts for a very short time, and after the act is done, a person is left only with a lingering depression. The *bachur* could remind himself of the way he felt after the last time he did it and then ask himself, “What am I getting in return for those few seconds of pleasure?!”

2. *It will have an adverse effect on my marriage.*

(8) נדרים לב; דאיתא וז"ל-- דבשעת יצר הרע לית דמדכר ליה ליצר טוב; עכ"ל.
(9) בראשית לט:ח-ט, שכ' בזה"ל-- הן אדני לא ידע אתי מה בבית וכל אשר יש לו נתן בידי. איננו גדול בבית הזה ממני ולא חשך ממני מאומה כי אם אותך באשר את אשתו, ואיך אעשה הרעה הגדולה הזאת וחטאתי לאלקים; עכ"ל.

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Every person, even someone who is still young, thinks about how he would like to have a happy relationship with his wife. The *bachur* should know that if he continues to look at all kinds of *shmutz*, it's going to take a very big toll on his marriage and family. He can therefore picture himself together with his wife and children, and tell himself, "I'm not willing to trade my family and children for this stupid little thing!"

3. *I will never be satisfied with just a little bit* ¹⁰.

A person can never fully satisfy this urge. It's like trying to quench thirst by drinking salt water. Similarly, the more a person gives in to his urge, the more he will crave it. The only thing he'll 'gain' is that it will be harder to stop later on.

4. *The more I do it, the less pleasure it gives me.*

The nature of this act is that a person gets used to doing it, and as time goes on, he eventually loses the pleasure he once had from it. Despite the lack of enjoyment, however, the person still feels the urge to continue doing it, and what remains instead is the pain of acting out and living out of control.

5. *As this continues, it can lead to a full-blown addiction.*

If a person continuously gives in to ever urge, then as time goes on, this becomes more and more beyond a person's control.

6. *I feel like a faker.*

The "second life" a person is leading when no one else is looking, makes him feel like a faker. Nobody likes the feeling of being a faker, yet by acting out secretly, he is turning himself into that kind of person. (Many *bachurim* find this reason to be a powerful reason.)

7. *I am afraid I will end up being caught.*

The reality is that fakers typically get caught at some point in time. Who wants to live with that fear looming over his head?

8. *My lack of control in this area can cause me to lose a respectable position in life.*

Some of the most respected and successful people couldn't control their *ta'avos*, which brought them so much shame and caused them to lose their jobs. A *bachur* can learn from this reality that *ta'avah* can spin out of control and cause a person to

(10) סנהדרין קז, דאיתא וז"ל-- אבר קטן יש באדם, משביעו רעב ומרעיבו שבע; עכ"ל.

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do irrational things, bringing him to a point of no return. Furthermore, he shouldn't think that he will be able to limit his indulgence, because if so many people couldn't control themselves, then who is to say that he'll be any different.

9. *My life dream may be shattered.*

When a *bachur* begins acting out, it very commonly diminishes his *cheishek* for learning. A *bachur* could have worked for all of his years in Mesivta to develop into a *talmid chacham*, yet he will end up giving it away for a pleasure that lasts a mere few seconds.

10. *Doing this will pervert my mind and change the way I think.*

After looking at so much *shmutz*, a person begins to view everything else around him through a sick perspective, and he starts to think of the rest of the world in terms of that garbage. Even a *bachur* who does something wrong, doesn't want to have a perverted mind.

11. *Succumbing to this causes me to feel like a weakling, someone with no self-control.*

Controlling oneself gives a person a feeling of strength. It's worthwhile for a *bachur* to remember the good feeling that he had when he was able to control himself. Having self-control makes him into an emotionally strong and healthy person. It enables him to get along with others and to be successful in life. Lack of self-control, on the other hand, will cause a person to be unable to stand up and take charge of matters. Inevitably, he loses his personality and ability to be a '*gavra*'.

12. *This makes me become more introverted.*

Someone who lives a double life very commonly begins to have a difficult time getting along with other people. This happens for two reasons. First of all, hiding something (especially from people whom he's close to) makes the person feel uncomfortable when he is around others. He therefore won't be able to be a true friend, since a true friend can't withhold this kind of secret from his friend. Second of all, the nature of a person is that his perception of how other people view him is based on his own view of himself. In other words, if a person sees himself as a faker, or as someone who does terrible things, then he will naturally feel that other people view him in the same way. Therefore, a *bachur* who is struggling with this may go from being someone who is part of the *chevrah* to being a loner.

13. *My feelings of guilt can make me physically sick.*

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Some people are more prone (depending on their personality) to directing their hidden feelings of guilt and shame internally. Doing this often leads to all kinds of physical aches and pains, including stomach pain, back aches, headaches, difficulty seeing, and lapses in concentration. These pains are real and can become quite serious.

The following is a list of *ruchniyus*-related reasons:

After discussing the *gashmiyus*-related reasons for why to stop, it's important to list the *ruchniyus*-related reasons, since they, too, will help a *bachur* realize the severity of what he is doing and help him change. However, imparting this information will require you to use *shikul hada'as* in knowing how to build the *bachur*, and not create more guilt than he can handle and push him down even further.

1. *A general understanding of why this topic is so important in one's avodas Hashem:*

Without a question, the entire Torah-- from the *aseres hadibros* to the slightest *minhag*-- is important. However, there are certain *chalokim* of the Torah that are considered centralic to being a *Yid*, and *kedushas Yisroel* is certainly one of them. There are numerous *pesukim* in the Torah and *ma'amorei Chazal* that support this idea. A *bachur* should become fluent in these *ma'amorei Chazal*, and realize that without *kedushas Yisroel*, there's something lacking in one's *Yiddishkeit*.¹¹ (We are not referring here to those *ma'amorim* that talk about the *halachos* or *onshim* involved.)

2. *Learning the halachos:*

A *bachur* might have been under the mistaken impression that being careful with this *inyan* is a *frumkeit*, or that it's something that's not *mei'ikar hadin*. Clarifying that these *issurim* are explicit *halachos* in *Shulchan Oruch* often helps in terms of recognizing their severity. Many *bachurim* have said that while they knew it was bad and felt guilty about it, they never knew the full extent of the *issur*, and learning

(11) חפץ חיים עה"ת, דברים כג:טו, שכ' ז"ל-- ולא יראה בך ערות דבר ושב מאחריו. הכתוב מדבר בענין הצניעות, ובקדושת המחנה. ונשתבחה בזה מדת הצניעות יותר מכל המדות המשובחות, עד שהקב"ה ענש על המדה הזאת ב"ושב מאחריו", כלומר שישלך חלילה השגחתו מזה שאינו מתנהג במדה זו, ולא אמר כן בשאר המדות, ללמדנו שזאת המדה נעלה מכולן, ודא ב' כולא ב'; עכ"ל. ובמעשי למלך שם כתב ז"ל-- וכן היה מפרש את הפסוק בתהלים קיט, "העבר עיני מראות שוא בדרכיך חייני". דוד המלך התחנן בבקשה להעביר עיניו "מראות" שוא, לא בקש לסייעו שלא לעשות "מעשי" שוא, אלא רק שלא לראות בעיניו את השוא שאחרים עושים, יען ידע, כי אם יתרגל לראות בעיניו שוא, אזי יבוא ממילא לידי עשיית שוא, כי מה הוא האדם? רק מה שרואה בעיניו ושומע באזניו; עכ"ל.

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the *balachos* helped them a lot.¹² *Raw Yisroel Salanter ז"ל* writes that by learning the *balachos* of what is *muttar* or *assur*, as well as the *gedarim* that *Chazal* instituted, a person gains in his *zechirus*¹³.

In addition to gaining an understanding of the scope of these *balachos*, seeing them brought down in the *Shulchan Oruch* also helps a *bachur* see that it's normal, not something far-fetched or uncommon. A *bachur* can often relate to the struggle better after learning about it inside a *sefer*. There is, however, one important point that one should bear in mind when discussing the *balachos* with a *bachur*. There are situations when a person is not ready to abide by the *balachos*, and seeing them will only minimize the *chashivus* of the *Shulchan Oruch* in his eyes. He may tell himself, "What can I do?! I guess I am unable to keep the *Shulchan Oruch*!" You therefore have to make sure that the *bachur* is at a stage where he could control himself, and that learning the *balachos* won't do more damage than good.

3. A discussion of the *onshim*:

Hearing about the punishments in store for someone who falls in this area can be pretty frightening, but this is not a reason to completely eliminate *yir'as ha'onesh* from our *avodas Hashem*. *Chazal* told us the *onshim* because they wanted us to be aware of them. However, when you discuss *onshim* with a *bachur*, you must be extra cautious. If he is still at a point where he hasn't done enough good yet, then it will be too hard for him to hear them. You might *chas v'shalom* bring about *yi'ush* in the *bachur's* heart, or even a hatred towards *Chazal* for depicting such a bleak picture of his situation. Therefore, while it can sometimes be helpful for him to know about certain *onshim*, that applies only after one is doing well and wants to become stronger in his *avodas Hashem*. The *yir'as ha'onesh* can then act as a deterrent when he is faced with a struggle. Overall, though, you will need to use tremendous *shikul bada'as* (and at times ask a *she'eilas chacham*) with regards to how and when to mention these punishments.

4. The effects this has on a person:

(12) רש"י, עבודה זרה כ: ד"ה תורה, שכ' וז"ל-- ע"י שעוסק בה ועוד שרואה ומבין אזהרות שבה ונשמר; עכ"ל.

(13) אגרת המוסר מ' ישראל סלנטר, שכ' וז"ל-- אם האדם נכשל בעבירה ר"ל אשר אין העולם רגילים בה כמו בניאוף וכיוצא כמאמרם ז"ל מיעוטן בעריות, ותקפה עליו יצרו שנעשה לו כהיתר ר"ל עיקר רפואתו [לבד התבוננות היראה והמוסר השייכים מאגדות ומדרשי חז"ל וספרי מוסר השייכים לזה] היא לימוד ההלכות השייכים לזה בעיון ובפרט על מנת לעשות וכו'. זאת תתן פריה לאט לאט לתת עוז בנפש להשמר מה משאול תחתית לכל הפחות מלהכעיס הרבה עד אשר תוכל לתת כחה על ידי עסק רב בהלכות השייכים להעבירות הרגילות לקנות טבע אחרת בל יעלה על לב לעבור עליהם גם אם יכבד הדבר עכ"ל.

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There are many *aveiros* that, if a person does them, he will not turn into a different type of person as a result. However, this *aveirab* is different. If someone is *chas v'shalom* overcome by this struggle, then he develops a *timtum haleiv*, which changes him into a different kind of person. (As with the previous reason, your discussion will have to be tailored to the specific *bachur* you are working with, since you obviously don't want to cause more harm by frightening him.)

5. The rewards for someone who controls himself:

It is important for a *bachur* to know the tremendous rewards a person gets when he is able to withstand this *nisayon*. This knowledge should be at the forefront of his mind, and should act as a reminder for why it's worthwhile to put up the fight against his *yetzer hora*.¹⁴ What the Steipler writes¹⁵ should also be mentioned-- that all the negative descriptions *Chazal* have for someone who is *nichshal* can be turned into a reward when one withstands the *nisayon* and is *misgaber* on his *ta'avah*. He then brings upon himself and the entire world, a level of *kedushah* comparable to that of Yosef *hatzaddik*. Internalizing this can give a *bachur* a positive boost when he is doing well.



Quick Recap:

- One of the hardest but most important questions for a *bachur* to answer is, "Why do you want to stop?"
- Together with the *bachur*, you will want to create a list of reasons for why he should stop.
- Although *ruchmijus* reasons are very important, it is still preferable to start the list with *gashmijus*-related reasons.

(14) על בס' נדחי ישראל, פ' כג.

(15) קריינא דאגרתא, ח"א אגרת יב, שכ' וז"ל-- הספרים הקדושים מתוך כוונה לעצור בעד החוטא כתבו בביאור עצום איך שע"י חטא זה נחטפים ר"ל זכויותיו [היינו כנ"ל לא עצם זכויותיו אלא ההשפעה], וקיצרו לבאר צד השני דהיינו אע"פ שכמה פעמים נכשל ר"ל, מ"מ אם לעומת זה הרבה פעמים מנצח ומתגבר על התאוה, אז באותו פעם שמתגבר על התאוה הבוערת בו באופן נורא הרי הוא ממשיך אור הקדושה על עצמו ועל העולמות באופן קדוש מאד מאד, וחלק גדול מאד מהניצוצות הקדושות [מה שנחטף השפע להס"א] הרי הוא מוציאם ומחזירם לקדושה ואין לשער גודל רוממות קדושת זה האדם הכובש תאוותו בזמן תוקפו, והוא אז בבחינת יוסף הצדיק; עכ"ל.

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Chapter 3:

Step Three: Acquire Heseich Hada'as

This is the most important step towards overcoming this struggle. Usually, if a person is faced with a challenge, the strategy to overcome it is by working hard to get it under control. However, in this area, such a strategy will not work. In fact, the opposite is true: When a person tries to control a thought, he is essentially bringing to mind the very topic that he was trying to rid himself of, which causes his mind to explore it further. For example, if someone tells himself not to think about an elephant, then just mentioning those words will bring the image of an elephant to mind. This idea holds true both with regards to inappropriate thoughts, as well as improper sights. A *bachur* should always remember the Golden Rule: Any time you think about not thinking or seeing it, then “it” is already in your mind.

The following anecdote illustrates this idea:

There was once a man who was extremely careful with shemiras einayim. Whenever he went outside, he would look at the ground, so as not to inadvertently see a woman. Everything went fine and well for this individual, until the inevitable happened. To his dismay, the man inadvertently bumped into a... street pole! He immediately ran to his Rebbe with a worried look on his face and exclaimed, “Rebbe, I’m trying so hard not to look at anything I shouldn’t, and now I’ve just bumped into a woman!” The Rebbe responded, “I don’t understand. For my entire life, I’ve been trying to train myself that if I ever bump into a woman, I should think that it’s a pole. And you’ve turned every pole into a woman?!”

How, then, should one deal with inappropriate thoughts and sights? They should be treated as if they are a bag of garbage, waiting for the garbage collector to come. Just as you wouldn’t open the garbage bag to investigate if there’s something good there, so, too, a person should work on himself to consider these thoughts and sights as if they are nothing and just continue on his way. The focus should be to continue on with ‘business as usual’ without even analyzing what just happened.

At times, a person who is trying to control himself will want to double-check if he truly saw something that he shouldn’t have seen. This stems in part from curiosity and in part from an earnest desire to check whether or not he saw that which he thought he had seen. However, behaviors like these are like cheese in a mouse trap; they look innocent, but end up entrapping a person in a place he wishes

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he had never entered.

Even if the *bachur* senses that he may have thought or seen something wrong, he should not go back to check what it was. The previous Toldos Aharon Rebbe זצ"ל explains this exact idea in a letter to a person who was bothered by improper thoughts. The Rebbe quoted the Satmar Rebbe זצ"ל as saying: "Don't think about what you just thought or saw. Whatever was done is considered a *shogeig*, but going back to check is considered a *meizid*."¹⁶ Instead, a person should give the thoughts and urges as much significance as a speck of dirt, and not be curious about them or let them linger on in his mind.

Along this vein, there are a number of behaviors that at first glance seem virtuous, but will ultimately cause more harm than good because they cause the *bachur* to open up the 'bag of garbage'. If a *bachur* falls into any of the following thinking patterns, then his mind can very easily be dragged into exploring this topic further. (Almost all of these ideas are mentioned by *Rav Shlomo Wolbe* זצ"ל.)

- *Being overly careful*-- A person has to be cautious, but being overly careful will create more of a problem.
- *Worrying that it might happen again*-- Worrying that it might happen again can cause one to further act out. One should therefore distance himself from these worries and thoughts, and treat them with the same severity as he would treat the bad thoughts themselves.
- *Learning what is wrong with it*-- Learning about this topic increases a person's awareness of the issue. At certain times, this may be beneficial, but it typically backfires and causes one to think about the *aveirah* in a detrimental way. Therefore, while studying what is wrong about it may seem like a mitzvah, it is usually just a trap.
- *Thinking about how other people deal with it*-- This may also sound like a valid reason to think about it, but it again is usually just a trap.
- *Being involved in teshuvah right after a person does it*-- Doing *teshuvah* soon after a

(16) האדמו"ר מתולדות אהרן זצ"ל [הובא באסיפת מכתבים מר' דוד אהרן הכהן זצ"ל, עמוד 164 בדפוס תכנת אוצר החכמה], שכ' וז"ל-- מכתבך היקר קבלתי. בענין המחשבות, לא תעשה מזה שום עסק כלל, כמו ששמעתי (בערך בשנת תרצ"ח) מא' ששאל את כ"ק מרן אדמו"ר מסאטמאר זצ"ל עצה להתגברות המחשבות רעות. והשיב לו, מען זאל נישט איבער טראכטן וואס מען האט געטראכט, דהיינו להסיח דעתו תיכף מהמחשבה ולא יחזור לחשוב מה חשבת. וכן שייך זה הענין בשמירת עינים שאם נזדמן ראייה אסורה ח"ו, תיכף כרגע יסגור עיניו, ולא יחזור להסתכל אם ראה - צו ער האט טאקע געזעהן - או היה רק דמיון, כי ראייה הראשונה היה שוגג וראייה השניה הוא מזיד; עכ"ל.

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person was *nichshal* will cause more damage than good. Even *teshuvah* has to have the correct time and place. (See the end of this chapter for the ideal time that *teshuvah* should be performed.)

- *Wishing that the whole problem would end*– This desire is also a problem. The proper attitude should rather be, “I’ll deal with it when it comes, but for now, I’m not going to give it any attention and will just get busy with something else.”

Many *bachurim* will have a difficult time accepting the idea that they must stop trying to control their *yetzer hora*. A *bachur* might say, “What do you mean? How is it going to go away by itself? There’s an entire list of *gashmiyus*- and *ruchniyus*-related reasons for why I must stop. If I don’t try to control it, it will happen more frequently, and I’ll be in an even bigger mess! Are you trying to tell me that I should never do anything about this? Never learn any mussar about it? Never do *teshuvah*?!”

The response to this argument is that a person certainly has to do his utmost to make sure that nothing improper happens, and, of course, *teshuvah* is important. However, a *bachur* must know that he cannot follow his own method in dealing with this problem. It should be stressed to him that as *frume Yidden*, everything in our *avodas Hashem* must be done with a *mesorah*. A *bachur* may think that he has the answer to his problems or the right path for doing *teshuvah*, yet he could be making very big mistakes. It is therefore important to do everything together with an older, more experienced person, who has a clear *seichel* and *mesorah* from a Rebbi. If not, a person could cause himself even more damage.

The proper method for doing teshuvah

If the *bachur* wants to deal with this issue, then he should schedule a set time for *chesbbon hanefesh*. For example, he should write on the calendar that next Tuesday at 10 pm, he will dedicate some time for this issue, by learning something pertaining to this *nisayon* or speaking to his Rebbi. He should allocate a fifteen minute slot, and then afterwards tell himself, “I did what I had to do, and now I’m done.” If a person does *teshuvah* at an appointed time, then it won’t drag him down into the mess. This is because when a person consciously sets a time for a *chesbbon hanefesh*, his *seichel* is in charge, and when his *seichel* is working clearly, he won’t slip up. However, spontaneous thoughts of *teshuvah*, which surface right after a *bachur* did something wrong, are typically emotionally bound, and they can easily cause more harm than good. This is because when someone falls, he is in a negative mode, one in which

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he is upset and “beats himself up”, and when someone is in this kind of mood, he can’t think straight. It follows therefore that all of the strategies mentioned, including reviewing the list of reasons to stop (see Step 2) or thinking in any way about this issue, should never be done as a reaction to something that happened, but rather by appointment only. At the time that something happens, there is only one goal: to be *meisi’ach da’as*, keep moving, and get busy with something positive.

In the event that a *bachur* comes over to you and says, “Rebbi, I feel horrible. Last night I messed up and did _____,” then you should tell him, “I hear. Try a little better today; continue on with your regular routine. Let’s make up a time, and we’ll meet next week to discuss it.” You’ll notice two changes in the *bachur*’s attitude: a) The following week when the *bachur* comes to you, his *seichel* will be much clearer, and b) he’ll usually end up having an easier time in the interim. If, on the other hand, the *bachur* tries to deal with the issue right after it happens, then he will end up acting out much more.



Quick Recap:

- *Heseich Hada’as* is the most important step towards overcoming this struggle.
- Any time you think about not thinking or seeing it, then “it” is already in your mind.
- A *bachur* must know that he should not try to follow his own *derech* for *teshuvah*; rather, it is important that he do everything together with an older, more experienced person.
- At the time that a *bachur* is *nichshal*, there is only one goal: to be *meisi’ach da’as*, keep moving, and get busy with something positive. In order to deal with this issue, a *bachur* should instead schedule a separate, set time for *cheshbon hanefesh*.

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Chapter 4:

Step Four: Create an Action Plan

All of the strategies mentioned in previous chapters may sound simple at a time that the *bachur* is not being faced with a challenge. However, when a *nisayon* comes, the *yetzer hora* presents all kinds of rationalizations to justify why the action is okay. Researchers have even interviewed serial killers who, when murdering someone, rationalized that what they were doing was okay. After having committed the crime, they might say that they knew it was wrong, but nonetheless, at the time of doing it, they rationalized their actions. Furthermore, even if a person is aware that he is using a rationalization to excuse his actions, he nonetheless chooses to believe it for the time being, in order to make life comfortable for the moment.

A *bachur* should therefore be ready to respond swiftly to a challenging situation without having to fumble for even a second, because if he is caught by surprise, he may not be able to respond correctly to the situation at hand. One should reflect on what his challenges and rationalizations are and create a clear, succinct response to combat them. When applicable, the response should include a physical reaction on the part of the *bachur*, such as moving to a different location.

A list of sample rationalizations and responses that consist an action plan

Each person should write down his own set of responses to address his specific rationalizations; this list is brought merely for illustrative purposes.

1. excuse: I'm dealing with too many problems, and I have so much stress in my life. I need an outlet. Hashem can't have *ta'anos* on me!

response: Be honest with yourself! You're doing this because you want to, not because you feel you're entitled to do it or because of stress. You are responsible for your own actions.

2. excuse: I've done this so many times; one more time can't make such a big difference! or I am not addicted, and I am planning to stop, but not yet. After this time I'll stop.

response: This line of reasoning will always be present. If you give in to this excuse now, then your behavior will never stop, because there's always "just one

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more time”. You’ll keep on saying, “One more time; one more time!” And besides, how many times have you said this in the past, yet you still did not stop! If you plan on stopping anyway, then let it be now.

3. excuse: This habit is just too deeply ingrained; I’ll never be able to completely quit. And when I eventually do slip up, then all my efforts will be worthless, so why should I even bother putting up a fight?

response: Your goal is not to conquer a life-long *yetzer hora* in one day! Simply putting up a fight is a tremendous accomplishment, and skipping this time, or even delaying it a little bit, is still worthwhile. Even if you ultimately do it, there is still value and tremendous *sechar* for every second you are able to be *omeid b’nisayon*. This response can be explained with the following *mashal*:

*There was once a king who placed his daughter at the summit of a large mountain and proposed the following challenge to the inhabitants of his land: I will offer my daughter’s hand in marriage to whomever is able to climb the mountain and reach the top.” Many professional hikers attempted the climb, but they were all unsuccessful. Then along came an old man who could barely see, but decided nonetheless to try. He slowly made his way up, and after many weeks of arduous travel, he eventually made it to the summit, where he received the grand prize-- the princess! When the old man was asked how he was able to reach the summit after so many other hikers had failed, he answered simply, “What do you mean? It wasn’t such a tall mountain! All I saw was a few feet in front of me, so I walked those few feet-- and then another few feet, until I reached the top.” The *nimshal* is obvious: Take one day at a time! Your goal right now is not to stop for life; it’s to push it off as much as you can.*

4. excuse: I’ll just look or think a little bit, but I won’t allow things to get too out of hand.

response: Don’t you remember how many times in the past you told yourself that, and it didn’t work? It’s not worth taking the chance again! It is written in many *sefarim* that the main *bechirah* is not to put oneself in a situation of a *nisayon*.¹⁷ After one experiences the temptation, the situation begins to spiral out of control and becomes virtually impossible to stop.

(17) מסילת ישרים, פ' יג, שכ' וז"ל-- ותראה כי זאת היא תחבולה גדולה לאדם למען הנצל מיצרו, כי כיון שבהיותו בעסק העבירה, קשה עליו לנצחו ולכבוש אותו, על כן צריך שבעודנו רחוק ממנה, ישאיר עצמו רחוק, כי אז יהיה קשה ליצר לקרבו אליה; עכ"ל.
וכדברי הרמח"ל כתב מרן בעל ה'קהילות יעקב', בספרו 'חיי עולם' (ח"ב, פ' ט); עיי"ש.

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5. excuse: I haven't done it for a week or more, so if I do it now, I'm not so bad.

response: Why are you rewarding yourself with something that will undo what you've accomplished?! Bear in mind that the longer you're able to stay clean, the easier it will get. But if you take a step back after being good for a while, then you will have to start all over again. So find another reward for yourself, one that will build you and help you become better.

6. excuse: What I am doing is not so bad. I know others who do this or even worse, and I myself have done much worse in the past.

response: Doing something small leads to worse things. Anyone who has fallen into major problems began with something small, thinking that he would be able to control it and not go past a certain point. If you were to ask him, "How far from that point are you now?", the person will invariably respond, "Things have changed a lot since I started to slip up. Now I am in a place where I never thought I would be."



Quick Recap:

- When a *nisayon* comes, the *yetzer hora* presents all kinds of rationalizations to justify why the action is okay.
- A *bachur* should be ready to respond swiftly to a challenging situation without having to fumble for even a second.
- Each person should write down his own set of responses to address his specific rationalizations.

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Chapter 5:

Step Five: Establish Gedarim

Every *bachur* should identify the times and situations that drive him to act out, so he can create a strategy to distance himself from them and not lower his guard or become overconfident. For example, if a person wants to stop drinking alcohol, it wouldn't be recommended for him to start working in a bar.

However, not always can one control the situation he must find himself in. Therefore, if a *bachur* knows that he must be in a place where he would be more prone to be *nichshal*, then he should take action to prepare himself in advance by making the improper behavior as difficult and uncomfortable as possible.¹⁸ Obviously, nothing is foolproof, but setting up *gedarim* will make it easier for a person to be *omeid b'nisayon*.

Even though a person knows he can undo the *gedarim* he has set for himself, he should still institute them, as doing so has a powerful effect. When one makes a *geder*, it's as if he is saying, "I am committed to breaking this cycle, and my proof is that I'm going to make things difficult for myself." For example, if a *bachur* knows that by bringing his car to yeshivah he will have a bigger *nisayon* to go to certain places during *bein basedarim*, then he could establish a *geder* by walking to yeshivah instead. While he can still slip, the *geder* he instituted nonetheless shows a level of commitment that he is motivated to deal with his problem. Ultimately, if a person has done as much as he could, the result is that he will have more *siyata dishmaya* and *berachah* from Hashem.

The primary area in which establishing *gedarim* is important is *shmiras einayim*. This is because *shmiras einayim* is usually the beginning of the problem, and it's an area where setting up preventative measures is very possible. A person can be careful about what streets he takes, what he watches, or what technological devices he uses. Most of the *gedarim* should therefore be directed towards the area of not seeing improper things.¹⁹

(18) רש"י, עבודה זרה כ: ד"ה תורה, שכ' זו"ל-- כשהעבירה בא לידו, זהיר להשמר שלא ישל, והכי אמרינן בכל הבשר בשחיטת חולין (חולין דף קז:), מאי לאו דזהיר ולא נגע, לא דרזין קדים, ומשי ידיה מעיקרא; עכ"ל. 9.
(19) בבא בתרא נז:, דאיתא זו"ל-- ועוצם עיניו מראות ברע, א"ר חייא בר אבא, זה שאין מסתכל בנשים בשעה שעומדות על הכביסה היכי דמי אי דאיכא דרכא אחרייתא רשע הוא אי דליכא דרכא אחרייתא אנוס הוא, לעולם דליכא דרכא אחרייתא ואפ"ה מיבעי ליה למינס נפשיה; עכ"ל.

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Establishing *gedarim* with regards to thoughts is nearly impossible, as thoughts are harder to control. Additionally, a person can think anything without undergoing any shame. A *geder* for dealing with thoughts would include having the *bachur* program his mind that when certain thoughts come to him, he would do specific actions to distance himself from those thoughts.

Gedarim should ideally be set up by the *bachur* himself, as they may otherwise be difficult for him to accept. Obviously, what works for one person might not work for another. A *bachur* should therefore be guided to choose those *gedarim* that are right for him and the struggle he is dealing with.

A sample list of some *gedarim*

The following is a list of several *gedarim* to aid a person in controlling himself:

1. *Impose a k'nas*-- The idea of imposing a *k'nas* is brought down in certain *sefarim* and can be useful at times. However, setting a *k'nas* for oneself is usually more applicable when things haven't gone too far out of control. If they have, then a *k'nas* will usually be a very weak prevention, as the *bachur* won't be able to keep to it.

There are a few points to bear in mind if this method will be used:

- The *k'nas* must be something that's not too hard to keep, as it won't be productive if it's too severe to be implemented. The following true example illustrates this point: A *bachur* was *mekabel* to learn ten *blatt* of *Gemara* if he does a certain *aveirab*. However, his behavior spiraled out of control until the point where he made a *chesbbon* that even if he were to live the amount of years that *Mesushelach* lived, he would not be able to fulfill his quota! Scenarios similar to this are not uncommon. Therefore, one must ensure that a *k'nas* is practical and sustainable enough for a *bachur* to keep. Examples of such *k'nasos* would include getting up fifteen minutes before *shacharis* to learn, *davening* in one place without walking around, or something similar. The idea is that it should be something small, just enough to make one a little bit uncomfortable so he won't want to do it. At times, one could make a *k'nas* for the first time, but not for every time, and in that case, the *k'nas* could be a little bit more severe. However, here, too, one must be realistic and use this suggestion wisely.

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- The *k'nas* should not include any *sigufim*. Those types of kabalos do more harm than good. For example, some *bachurim* try to fast as a *k'nas*; however, fasting is probably the worst type of *k'nas* they could self-impose. This is because a person is reminded of the *aveirah* every time he feels hungry, which brings his attention to the very topic from which he's trying to be *meisi'ach da'as*. Additionally, it is written in many *sefarim* that this is not a method for today's generation ²⁰.

- The *k'nas* (monetary or otherwise) must be payable immediately. If one is not committed to paying a *knas* immediately, he won't feel the difficulty involved and will instead just keep putting things "on the bill". Another obvious point to bear in mind is that a *k'nas* is only good as a deterrent if someone does not want to have to pay the *k'nas*. If one gets accustomed to breaking the *k'nas*, then it no longer has any value.

- One should never make a *neder*, as that can create serious *sheilos*.

2. *Reward oneself if everything went well for a certain amount of time--* Doing this attaches a positive feeling and sense of accomplishment to a goal often associated with negative feelings. This in turn makes it much easier for the person to put in the effort needed to battle his *yetzer hora*. The reward need not be something large; it can even be a small item such as a pen, book, or certain food. Although this suggestion may sound a little simple, it could be very helpful.

3. *Confide in someone after stumbling--* Having someone to confide in after one is *nichshal* is a good idea, but must be used with caution. The *bachur* must be motivated by a sincere desire to get help, and not just be thinking, "I want a *shaychus* with my Rebbi, and I know that I'll get attention if I speak to him about such a serious issue."

4. *Call someone when feeling threatened--* This suggestion is very beneficial, even if a *bachur* doesn't actually get through to his mentor, or the mentor doesn't tell him anything he didn't already know. The fact that the *bachur* stopped for a second to think about how to help himself already cools off the *yetzer hora*, and it has therefore accomplished something good. (This suggestion is probably more useful when someone is in a more severe situation, but can still be helpful in other situations as well.)

(20) קריינא דאגרתא, ח"א אגרת קסת, שכ' וז"ל-- חלילה להתענות מי שראה קרי ח"ו, כי באמת לאונסו אין זה חטא כלל, ואפילו כשאינו לאונסו לא זו הדרך לתקן ע"י תעניתים המחלישים את הגוף, ועיקר התיקון הוא ע"י עסק התורה כמבואר בזוהר; עכ"ל. ועי' עוד שם באגרת זו.

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5. *Replace the behavior*-- A *bachur* is quite often *nichshal* because he feels uncomfortable/ angry/ bored, etc. He should try to find a healthy, alternative way of expressing these emotions, without having to resort to improper behavior. (This is a very important suggestion and should be explained in detail when speaking to the *bachur*.)

6. *Move elsenhere*-- If appropriate, one should get out of the situation that makes it easy to slip up. For example, if a *bachur* knows that he has a problem when he's in the dorm room at night, then he should try to prepare himself and walk out of the room when he feels this urge. Simply changing the location will help to slow things down and cool off the *ta'avah*, as stopping for a moment gives a *bachur* time to compose his thoughts.

7. *Distract oneself*-- Distracting oneself with something else, even if it's just for a short time, is sometimes enough to weaken the *yetzer hora* and enable a person to grasp the gravity of the situation.

Maintain vigilance

Once a *bachur* has acquired strategies to deal with the *yetzer hora*, he usually expects things to go well for a while and assumes that it will continue that way. However, this attitude is extremely dangerous, since it generally leads one to become overconfident and let down his guard, which is precisely the moment when the *yetzer hora* returns with another attack. *Chazal*²¹ explain this idea with the following *meshal*:

There was once a dog who smelled the delicious aroma of freshly-baked bread coming from a bakery. The dog very much wanted to grab a loaf for himself, but every time the baker noticed the dog, he chased it away. This dog, however, was not willing to give up on getting some bread, so it pretended to go to sleep right outside the bakery. Every so often the dog's eyelids fluttered open, but the baker thought nothing of it; as far as he was concerned, the dog was fast asleep. Feeling confident, the baker temporarily walked away from the scene. The dog, however, had been waiting for just that moment, and as soon as the baker was out of sight, it immediately sprung into action and grabbed a loaf of bread.

The *yetzer hora* comes to a person in the very same way. He causes a person to

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feel confident, saying, “You’re doing great! It’s been a month and a half already, and you’ve been fine. The problem is a thing of the past!” In fact, sometimes a person could have such a long period of time when everything goes well, that he forgets all of the strategies that he had previously toiled so hard to acquire and lowers his guard. Then, lo and behold, he is suddenly faced with another *nisayon* that catches him by surprise, and he is unable to withstand the test.

A person has to therefore tell himself that he is in recovery forever. Practically speaking, this means that every person has to deal with this *nisayon* all life long, and if someone feels that he is becoming overconfident, then it’s time for him to strengthen himself even more.

Do what you could to stay positive

A person who, in general, has a positive nature will have a much easier time dealing with this *nisayon*. In contrast, someone who is more prone to feeling down will be especially vulnerable to the tricks of the *yetzer hora*. This is because there’s nothing that weakens a person like feelings of depression and hopelessness²², and as long as a *bachur* is going to feel negative towards himself, there’s no way he will be able to survive this challenge.

The same *nisayon* that a *bachur* would have been able to deal with under normal circumstances, is beyond his capabilities if it comes at a time when he is feeling emotionally drained. One need not be a psychologist in order to recognize this; every person knows that when he is in a good mood, he can accomplish more and meet life’s situations better.

It therefore follows that whenever a *bachur* feels himself slipping into a mode of depression, and senses that he is susceptible to losing the battle against this *yetzer hora*, then he should view his situation as if he’s sitting on the train tracks with a train speeding in his direction. He should quickly try to find a way to change his mood. He can go buy ice cream, take a walk, have a conversation with a friend, etc.- whatever it takes to get himself into a happy frame of mind.



(22) קריינא דאגרתא, ח"א אגרת יא, שכ' זל-- ואחז"ל הבא לטהר מסייעין אותו, ולא תהיה עצב, רק שמח במה שהצלחת לעבוד את הבורא ברוך הוא, כי העצבות גורם לחטאים ח"ו; עכ"ל.

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Quick Recap:

- Every *bachur* should identify the situations that drive him to act out, so he can create a strategy to distance himself from them.
- Even though a person knows he can undo the *gedarim* he has set for himself, he should still institute them, as doing so has a powerful effect.
- The primary area in which establishing *gedarim* is important is *shmiras einayim*.
- Once a *bachur* has acquired *gedarim*, he will usually assume that it will continue that way. However, this can lead him to become overconfident, which is precisely the moment when the *yetzer hora* returns with another attack.
- A person who, in general, has a positive nature will have a much easier time dealing with this *nisayon*.

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Chapter 6:

Step Six: Practical Tips

This chapter will provide a few suggestions for ways to ease a *bachur's* struggle in *inyonei kedushah* without forcing him to fight the battle head-on.

Aim to fill your life with a sense of accomplishment

When a person is acting out, it is generally an indication that he is lacking a certain *sipuk* in life, as the *yetzer hora* most often comes to a person when he is feeling empty. It is well-known that the Rambam writes that thoughts of *arayos* only come to a person whose heart is *panui meichochmas haTorah*, devoid of Torah wisdom, and that one should direct his mind to *divrei Torah* if he wants to overcome this *nisayon*²³. Therefore, if a *bachur* is able to improve in learning, then he will be much better equipped to deal with his *nisyonos*. If a *bachur* is weak in learning, then appropriate goals should be set for him on his level, as it will give him a sense of satisfaction when he meets his goals.

Even if a *bachur* finds satisfaction in an accomplishment unrelated to Torah, it will automatically lead to less of a void that needs to be filled by the empty *sipuk* of *ta'avah*. By way of illustration, a *bachur* will not have a *yetzer hora* to act out when he is busy dancing at a friend's *chasunah* because the sense of purpose and fulfillment is so overriding, that it's almost as if he doesn't have a *yetzer hora*. This doesn't mean that a *bachur* will not act out on a day where he feels fulfilled. Rather, the point being made here is that if one finds a *sipuk* in life in general, it will improve a person's overall mood and give him a certain sense of accomplishment and satisfaction, which will imbue him with real pleasure so he feels less of a need to act out.

However, there are times when even *bachurim* who are learning well can be lacking a sense of satisfaction. Quite often the reason for this is because they don't feel that

(23) רמב"ם, הל' איסורי ביאה פכ"ב הל' כא, שכ' וז"ל-- גדולה מכל זאת אמרו יפנה עצמו ומחשבתו לדברי תורה וירחיב דעתו בחכמה, שאין מחשבת עריות מתגברת אלא בלב פנוי מן החכמה. ובחכמה הוא אומר (משלי ה:יט), אילת אהבים ויעלת חן דדיה ירווך בכל עת באהבתה תשגה תמיד; עכ"ל.
[ועי' עוד בקריינא דאגרתא אגרת טו (נוסח ב), שכ' וז"ל-- העצה הטבעית להנצל מזאת התאוה הוא היסח הדעת שלא להרהר מענינים אלו כלל, אלא שא"א בשום אופן להסיח דעת ממה שטבעו משתוקק להרהר כ"א כשיהא מחשבתו שקוע מאוד בענינים אחרים בהתעניינות רבה, ולזאת כשישים ד"ת על לבו ויתעניין מאוד בהתעמקות התורה בש"ס ופוסקים ראשונים ואחרונים באופן שכל דעתו ישוטט בדברי תורה ממילא ינצל מהרהורים אחרים, והוא סגולה טבעית וגם רוחנית כי אור קדושת התורה משמרתו כמשאחז"ל בסוטה; עכ"ל.]

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their learning is an integral part of who they are as a *Yid*, and they are lacking the realization that they're building a future for themselves. In such a scenario, one of the goals will obviously be for the *bachur* to increase his overall appreciation of the *chasdivus baTorah* and recognize how precious his learning is to the *Ribono Shel Olam*.

Work on general self-control

Another area that can positively impact this struggle is developing one's overall self-control, without specifically targeting this issue. The reason for this is because when a *bachur* acts out, his fundamental problem is that he is lacking in his ability to withstand an urge; therefore, when he is faced with a difficult *nisayon*, he falls apart.

By giving in to every *ta'avah* he has, a *bachur* allows the the *yetzer hora* to gain a hold over him. The *bachur* must therefore back-track and work on becoming a more disciplined person in general, someone who doesn't always have to give in to every *ta'avah* that he has. Even if the *nisayon* of *kedushah* is too hard for him to withstand at this point, nonetheless, by working on his general self-control, he will be developing his ability to say "No", and eventually, *kedushah*-related *nisyonos* will also become easier to resist.

There are many areas in which a person can train himself to be more disciplined. Here are just a few suggestions:

- *Eating*: Don't eat quickly. Don't eat too much. Say "No" to a tempting food.
- *Davening*: Look inside the *siddur* for a certain amount of time. Don't walk around during *davening*.
- *Learning*: Delay or refuse the urge to get a cup of coffee during *seder*.

A *bachur* may want to keep track of how many times a day he can say "No" to an urge. Doing this is a way of showing himself who's the boss over his own body.

Build up *yiras shamayim* in general

Working on improving one's general *yiras shamayim*, unrelated to this topic, will also help a *bachur* tackle this issue without having to fight head-on.

The reason is simple: When a person develops his *yiras shamayim*, he becomes more elevated, and lowly *aveiros* become more *mi'us* to him. For example, no *frume Yid* has a *nisayon* to go to MacDonald's and order a cheeseburger. Eating *treif* is so low and foreign to us that the thought of it doesn't even enter our minds. Likewise,

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if a person can strengthen his *yiras shamayim*, it will indirectly help him in this area as well and create a more heightened awareness that such lowly behavior is alien to a *frume Yid*.

Practical tips to avoid problems while asleep

There are some *bachurim* who frequently become *tamei* while asleep, and are nervous as a result of that. The following are some practical tips that could be used to help avoid this occurrence from happening:

1. *limit drinking or overeating too close to bedtime.*²⁴
2. *use the restroom before going to sleep.*
3. *sleep on your side.*²⁵
4. *say kriyas Shema with kavannah.*
5. *learn Torah before going to sleep.*²⁶
6. *go to sleep on time--* Many of the problems come when *bachurim* are hanging around at night, feeling bored. After a whole day, they have no strength to put up a fight, and with nothing to do, there's a vacuum that ends up being filled. Therefore, just setting an early bedtime could be very useful.
7. *be careful about your thoughts during the day.*
8. *don't worry that an occurrence might happen--* If a *bachur* worries about such problems right before he goes to sleep, then they're much more likely to happen. The reason is because thinking about not doing it brings the topic to the forefront of one's mind and causes it to resurface in a dream, leading one to become *tamei* at night.²⁷



Quick Recap:

- Acting out is generally an indication of lacking a certain *sipuk* in life.
- An area that can positively impact this struggle is developing one's overall self-control and discipline..
- Improving one's *yiras shamayim*, unrelated to this topic, will indirectly help by raising a person and distancing him from such behaviors..

(24) קיצור שו"ע, סי' קנא סעי' ד.

(25) קיצור שו"ע, סי' קנא סעי' ב.

(26) של"ה הק', מס' חולין, פרק דרך חיים תוכחת מוסר, אות קסו, שכ' זו"ל-- תורה היא שמירה גדולה שלא יטמא האדם בקרי בליה, ואם ילמד אדם תורה קודם שכיבה, התורה משמרתו שלא יבוא לידי כז; עכ"ל.

(27) אגרות ומכתבים מ' ישראל סלנטר זצ"ל, אגרת כה, הובא לקמן (Section Three, Step Two).

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Chapter 7

Step Seven: Understanding the Words of *Chazal*

Most of those who have been *nichshal* have already seen the dark picture that is painted in many *sefarim* for someone who slipped in this area. This creates a tremendous amount of guilt and hopelessness. Quite often these feelings do more harm than good. The person gets upset by what he sees written in *sefarim* and then continues to act out and becomes more upset. It is therefore imperative for any person struggling with this *nisayon* to gain a proper understanding into the words of *Chazal* on this topic.²⁸

The main idea that must be conveyed is that not everything written in *sefarim* was intended for every person at every time. A person needs to have a Rebbi who tells him what *Chazal* meant and who they were addressing. If a *bachur* has a hard time accepting this, it can be pointed out to him that even within the words of *Chazal*, there seem to be various contradictions. There are some *ma'amarei Chazal* that give hope and *chizuk*, while others discuss the negativity and punishments.

Obviously there are no real contradictions in *Chazal*, and all of their words are true. However, the point being made here is that just as one needs a Rebbi to teach him how to understand a *sugya* in *Shas*, so, too, must one have a Rebbi to understand this *sugya* in *hashkafah*. Additionally, it's important to emphasize that anything written in *sefarim* pertaining to this topic was done with one intention in mind: to get a person to stop his bad behaviors. If a *bachur* sees that he's acting out more after learning from a specific *sefer*, or he is falling into a deeper depression, then he is obviously coming away with a message contrary to the purpose for which the *sefer* was written. If he then asks you what the correct understanding is, you can offer to sit down and figure out the *pshat* together. However, you should stress to him that whatever the *pshat* might be, it's not the one that he had in mind, the proof being that his understanding is leading him in the wrong direction.



Quick Recap:

- It is imperative to gain proper understanding into the words of *Chazal* on this struggle.
- A person must understand that anything written about this topic was done with the intention to get a person to stop bad behaviors.

(28) עי' בקריינא אגרתא, ח"א אגרת יב, שביאר מש"כ בספרים אודות הנכשל בחטא זה; ועי' עוד בפ' מתנת חלקו מהגה"צ ר' מתתיהו סלומון שליט"א על שערי תשובה, שער שלישי אות קז.

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Chapter 8

Step Eight: Identify True *Charatab*

Guilt is meant to be used for a constructive purpose. It's an emotion that comes from a *neshamah* that feels distanced and awkward, and is sending a message that it's time to change. However, many times the feelings of guilt end up being used against a person. In that case, the guilt becomes destructive. Destructive guilt does exactly what its name implies: It destroys a person. This form of guilt manifests itself when a *bachur* continues to act out in order to cover up and find relief from the guilty feelings he has as a result of the previous times he was *nichshal*.

True *charatab*, on the other hand, is when a person feels bad for what he did and has a strong urge to change or repair what was damaged. To illustrate, let's say you were walking, carrying a cup of coffee, when you accidentally bump into someone and spill the coffee on his shirt. There are two ways to react: A sense of true *charatab* will lead you to want to do something for the person into whom you collided. You might run and get some paper towels, or bring him another shirt. However, a sense of destructive guilt will tell you, "This is terrible! I am so upset; I may as well just take the rest of the coffee and spill it on his shirt."

In regards to *charatab* for an *aveirah* that one committed, the same two possible reactions exist. A *bachur* can either feel destructive guilt over what he has done and lose his *cheishek* and energy, or to the contrary, he can feel true remorse and gain in his determination to overcome the challenge.

When a person has true remorse, his desire to want to repair what he's done wrong should give him a good feeling. It is true that when the *aveirah* is done, the person at first feels solemn and down from it. Nonetheless, afterwards he feels strengthened by a sense of resolve to conquer and fix his mistake. Destructive guilt, on the other hand, makes a person feel as if he'll never be able to fix what he's done, and he gives up hope. Guilt drains a person's strength and shuts down his determination. The person feels, "I messed up already, so I may as well do it again." That attitude creates a vicious cycle of more acting out, which leads to further guilt, hopelessness, and depression, and results in the *bachur* having an even lower self-image.

SECTION ONE: THE STANDARD STRUGGLE

Destructive guilt usually comes automatically, against a person's will. The person will often use these feelings as a proof that he really is "a piece of garbage". He'll tell himself, "You're messed up", rather than, "You messed something up." A person who is plagued by destructive guilt feels that he is worthless, while someone who has productive remorse looks at himself as being someone so special that "*es pas nish!*" for him to have done this. One must distance himself from negative, guilty feelings, and because of their destructive effect, they should be treated with the same severity as *hirburei aveirah*. A *bachur* should view feelings of guilt and depression like a train that is speeding in his direction, and he needs to escape as fast as he can. (See Step 5.)



Quick Recap:

- Guilt is meant to be used for a constructive purpose, destructive guilt destroys a person.
- When a person has true remorse, his desire to want to repair what he's done wrong should give him a good feeling.
- One must distance himself from guilty feelings; they should be treated with the same severity as *hirburei aveirah*.

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Chapter 9

Step Nine: Anticipate a Relapse

As much as one would like for all of his problems to go away in an instant, the reality is that life doesn't work that way. No one ever conquered a *nisayon* overnight; it's a process of falling and rising multiple times. Therefore, instead of being caught off-guard when a relapse occurs, a *bachur* should know to expect it, and when it happens, he should take it in stride and simply tell himself, "I'm happy this didn't come until now, but I knew it would happen again."²⁹

When the *yetzer hora* rears its ugly head yet another time, the most important thing to bear in mind is that the *nisayon* should be used as a learning experience. A *bachur* should use a relapse as a way of developing his own set of *gedarim*. (See Step 5.) For example, if, after being careful for quite some time, a *bachur* lowers his guard and walks down a certain block where he glances at magazines at a newsstand that cause him to slip, then he can learn from his experience and not walk down that block any more. Another example would be if a *bachur* stayed up late one night and acted inappropriately while everyone else was asleep; then he should learn from this reoccurrence and go to sleep early from then on. By creating new *gedarim* for himself, the *bachur* will gain from the relapse and avoid getting dragged down into the mess again.

Part of anticipating a relapse is for a *bachur* to be prepared to speak yet another time to someone whom he trusts. People are very often reluctant to return and ask for help once more, either because they are embarrassed or because they claim that the advice they were given didn't work. To counter this, a *bachur* should prepare himself initially by saying, "I know that it's going to happen again, and when it does, I am ready to go back to someone and accept his help."



Quick Recap:

- No one ever conquered a *nisayon* overnight; it's a process of falling and rising.
- A *bachur* should know to expect further *nisyonos* and use them as a learning experience.
- By creating new *gedarim* for himself, the *bachur* will gain from the relapse.

(Appendix I) פחד יצחק, אגרות וכתבים, אגרת קכה, הובא לקמן (Appendix I)

SECTION ONE: THE STANDARD STRUGGLE

Chapter 10

Step Ten: Aim for Complete Teshuvah

As explained in Step 8, genuine *charatab* invigorates a person and creates a desire to fix the mistake. This is in contrast to destructive guilt, which robs a person from the strength he needs to start fresh. Therefore, in order to do a proper *teshuvah*, a *bachur* cannot get bogged down by all of his *aveiros*. As the *Rabbeinu Yonah* write in *Yesod HaTeshuvah*: **ביום ההוא ישליך כל פשעיו אשר עשה** when doing *teshuvah*, a person should put aside all of the *aveiros* that he did until now, and view himself **ו-ואין בידו לא זכות ולא חובה** -- as if he was just born that day, **כאילו היום נולד** with no *mitzvos* or *aveiros* yet. He's like a brand new person, with a fresh, clean slate. This attitude, concludes the *Rabbeinu Yonah*, will bring a person to do a *teshuvah sheleimah*, a complete *teshuvah*.³⁰

In line with the words of the *Rabbeinu Yonah*, a few general rules will be presented regarding the process of guiding a *bachur* to do a complete *teshuvah*:

1. *Teshuvah* should be only in the form of positive actions, such as including more learning and *davening*. The measures taken should be oriented towards building a positive future, as opposed to focusing on the negative past. The *bachur* should tell himself, "There were some bad behaviors in my past, so now I have to learn more and strengthen my *avodas Hashem*." He should be choosing normal, good actions (nothing extreme) and should be doing them in a positive way, rather than to punish himself.

(30) יסוד התשובה לרבינו יונה, הובא לקמן (Appendix I).

(31) ס' כתר ראש סי' קלג, שכ' וז"ל-- תשובה הנכשל בעוון קרי כמעט בפשע רח"ל, הוא כשעוסק בתורה א"צ לדאוג (כלל), וכזה שאל מרבו הגר"א ז"ל, והראה לו מאמר בתיקונים ובספרי מוסר המחמירים מאד בענין זה שצריך לסבול ויסורים קשים ומרודים כמות, ואין תקנה כי אם במיתה ממש ע"ש, שנאמר ועפר אחר יקח. אבל בסוף המאמר בת"ז נמצא דבר טוב למבין שכתב בתיקון כ"א וכ"ב אבל אורייתא אורח ימים מימינה וכו', פי' שמצלת מן המיתה, ובשמאלה עושר וכבוד, שמצלת מן היסורים קשים כמיתה, והספרי מוסר לא הביאו זאת וכו'; עכ"ל.

וראה השל"ה (שער האותיות אות הקו"ף - קדושת הזווג), וז"ל, מתחילה אבוא להציל ממיתה נצחיית את הקורא המאמר הזה, שאין תשובה למי שחטא חטא זה, ואז החוטא יתיימש ויאמר כאשר אבדתי אבדתי, ויעשה משאלות לבו ויאמר נואש. אלא באתי לעורר החוטא שיקום בזריזות לעורר תשובה, ואל יתמהמה רגע אחד, כי על כרחך אין דברי המאמר הזה כפשוטו, שלא יועיל תשובה, כי אין דבר בעולם שלא יתוקן בתשובה. עכ"ל. וב"מדרש תלפיות" (לבעל השבט מוסר) אות ז' ענף זרע לבטלה ציין לדברי השל"ה והוסיף, ד"אלו החסידים המחמירים לומר אין תיקון לזרע לבטלה כאשר שמעתי מפייהם הם המרבים פושעים בישראל ומרחקים לבני אדם מתחת כנפי השכינה שכל מי שיש בו עון זה ושומע מפייהם שאין לו תקנה הולך ועושה מה שלבו חפץ באומרם וכאשר אבדתי אבדתי ואלו הגורמים כך אינן חסידים כי אם חסרים וענשם כבד משלהם שהדחו נפשות מהקדושה ונתנום מנחה לצד התמורות".

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2. The person has to believe that he can do *teshuvah*. Any rationalization that *teshuvah* won't help for him is incorrect. (See Step 7) ³¹

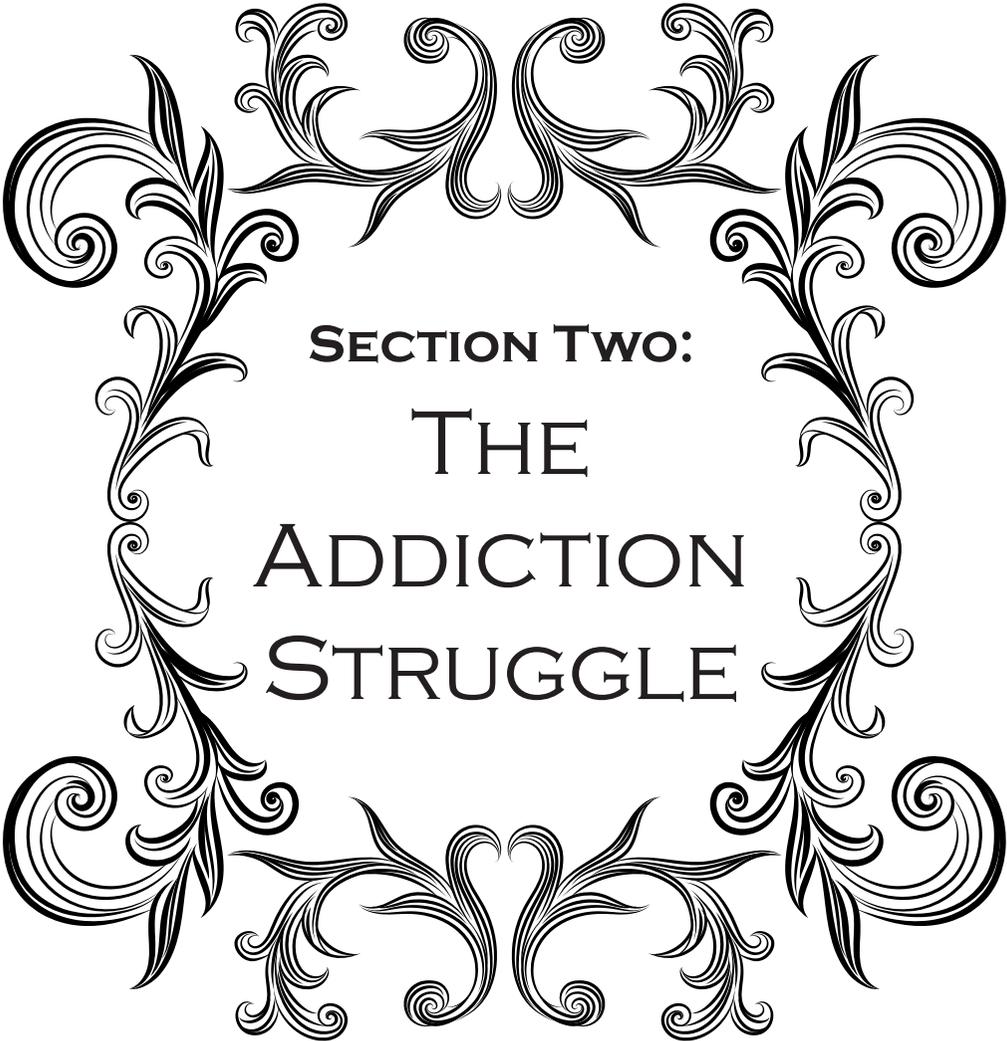
3. *Teshuvah* has to be done in the right frame of mind. It should therefore be done at a later time, by appointment only, at a time when the *seichel* is working clearly. It should not be done as a spontaneous emotional reaction, right after the *bachur* did something wrong. (See Step 3.)

4. One must be careful not to try to control the thoughts and urges, and not to be overly worried about acting out. Doing so will get in the way of having complete *beseich bada'as*, which is the real antidote to these kinds of problems. (See Step 3.)



Quick Recap:

- Genuine *charatah* invigorates a person and creates a desire to fix the mistake.
- A person must always believe he can do *teshuvah*.
- A Rebbi should guide a *bachur* to do a proper *teshuvah*, with only positive actions, at only an appointed time.



SECTION TWO:

**THE
ADDICTION
STRUGGLE**

אוזר בגבורה

Chapter 1:

Overview to Dealing with an Addiction

The ten steps brought in Section One generally work for most people who are struggling with this issue, and if the material is prepared and taught well, then even someone who is not a professional could successfully use them to mentor a *bachur*.

However, there are unfortunately times when even after all of the strategies have been tried, the situation continues to spiral downwards until it reaches the point where the person has lost control of himself in this area. In these instances, the person wishes he could stop but is unable to do so, and it seems to both him and the one helping him that the problem is greater than he is capable of handling.

There are some people who can develop very bad habits and get themselves stuck in certain areas, to the point where they feel they are addicted. However, in such a case, there are almost always underlying factors that could be detected from when a person was younger, which subsequently led him to go astray. It could be that when the *bachur* was still a boy or even an adolescent, he was faced with a difficult *nisayon* in *inyonei kedushah* and lacked the abilities to overcome it. As a result, his growth as a healthy human being veered from the straight path. The *bachur* then continued to develop on that warped angle until his thoughts and behavior patterns became entrenched in that way, and it became very hard to set himself back on track.

How to identify a struggle that is out of control

Hashem created every person with their individual nature, and one's *ta'avos* are part of this nature. Every person was also given the tools to be able to overcome these natural drives when faced with a *nisayon*. Most boys therefore grow up normally, without anybody helping them in this area. However, there are times that a person feels that this struggle is beyond his ability to overcome. Several signs of the problem being out of control include the following:

- The person feels that the problem is beyond his capacity, to the point where he almost doesn't put up a fight.
- The person may have tried stopping several times when the struggle was

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within the normal range, but he wasn't successful.

- The problem is taking over one's quality of life; for example, the person can't get up in the morning, can't concentrate well, or is losing his interest in learning.
- The person is doing it more frequently than what typically occurs with the standard struggle (i.e., more than once a day).
- The person is acting out in a manner that is abnormal. This may include going to extremes to get his hands on forbidden materials or being manipulative.

All of the above are red flags that should lead you to assume that the problem has gone a bit further than the norm.

Why an addiction is such a severe problem

Before beginning to help a *bachur* who is suffering from an addiction, it's important to understand that this is not a simple problem, and it therefore does not necessarily have simple solutions. You have to recognize the severity of the issue and be committed to giving the attention that it takes to help the person break free.

Simply put, the effects of this problem are enormous. It impacts a person in a major way, both from a *ruchniyus* and *gashmiyus* point of view. A person who is acting out in an extreme, out of control way, has come to the point that it is ruining his day, and he can't continue to function normally. If the problem is not going to be taken care of, it will usually get worse. This is not one of the difficulties that a person could live with or that he will outgrow. Some have the mistaken notion that this problem will go away with marriage, but it's simply not true; the addiction remains and continues to manifest itself in worse ways.

With the advent of the Internet, there is no limit to how low and how quick a person could *chas v'shalom* fall. There are people who have even been led to committing *issurei keares* and *chiyuvei misah* because of this addiction. Some have even gone so far as to give up their entire family life.

How long does it take to see results when helping a *bachur* with an addiction

While a person can quickly descend to a very low level, this is still not something that happens overnight. It takes time for the problem to build up to a severe level, as well as time until the person dealing with it finally decides to come forward for

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help. It is therefore not something that will go away in just a moment. The problems usually fester pretty deeply, and the solutions are far from simple.

You therefore have to view helping someone with an addiction as a long-term project. Progress should not be measured on a day-to-day basis, as things can go well for weeks or even months, but then crop up again. You will have to be ready at the onset to be with the person for the long haul, helping him work through his difficult moments. Many times you may see only minimal *nachas* in the beginning, with real improvement coming only a considerable time later. You should bear in mind, though, that as hard as the work is for you, it's even harder for the person himself.

At times, you may even need to make peace with the fact that you won't be able to fully cure the person from his addiction. However, that's not a reason to stop trying to help him. Sometimes a person is not fully ready to work in the beginning, yet if you hang in there with him and try to steer him properly, then when he matures a bit more, he will be more ready to listen. With *siyata dishmaya*, there will come a point where he'll be able to pull himself out of the mess.

How to maintain the proper balance when helping a *bachur* with this addiction

Dealing with someone who has an addiction in this area must be done with a lot of *shikul hada'as*, as will be evident from the following pointers. Many of the ideas brought below were mentioned in chapter 4 of the Introduction to this booklet, but will be repeated here due to slight nuances relating to those who are dealing with a more severe problem.

- *You will have to maintain a balance when you respond to what the bachur says he is doing.* An *ehrliche* person looks at someone who engages in such depraved behaviors as disgusting. If you make that feeling obvious, then you will be invalidating his sense of self. After all, the *bachur* just built up the courage to discuss something so private with someone else; the last thing you want to do is repel him by showing that you're uncomfortable and would rather remove yourself from this topic.

On the other hand, if you respond in a way that shows that his actions are not too bad, then you risk giving him the impression that it's okay. The balance therefore is very fine; on one hand, you can't show that you're disgusted or looking down at him, yet on the other hand, you can't show him that this is something acceptable.

- *You will have to balance how deeply involved you become with his situation.* You will need

SECTION TWO: THE ADDICTION STRUGGLE

to understand a certain amount of details to know what you're dealing with, which is not always easy because people tend to speak in *remaẓim* when it comes to this topic. If you don't entirely understand the situation, then you're not going to be able to direct him in the right way. At times you can be led to think he means one thing when he really means something totally different.

Having said that, one needs to be careful not to get dragged into the gory details, which are very uncomfortable and can be detrimental to the person who is hearing them as well. A person will need to ask a *sheilah* in order to know how deeply he should delve into something like this.

When I began getting involved in helping *bachurim* with *inyonei kedushah*, Rav Moshe Wolfson *sblit"ta* told me that the first rule one learns in lifeguarding is how to get a drowning person out of the water without getting dragged in oneself. As it pertains to our topic, Rav Wolfson advised me: Don't get caught too deeply in the *bachur's* garbage, because then you, too, will end up needing help, *chas v'shalom*.

- *You will have to balance the amount of attention you give a bachur.* A *bachur* could sometimes be using this as a way of getting attention and creating a bond with you. You therefore have to be careful if you see that he enjoys talking about it too much or if you see him discussing it with less shame. When he seems eager to report to you, then you have to slow things down a bit by giving him a slightly colder response.

- *You will need the proper balance of halachah regarding each bachur's specific situation.* There can be a tendency to be lenient and allow certain things when the situation is out of control. This comes from a feeling that the person is considered an *oneis* for that *aveirah*. We are obviously unable to *pasken* about how to guide a *bachur* in what is allowed and what is not. For that, there are *morei hora'ah* who may be *meikil* in specific circumstances, but it is a big *achrayus* to *pasken* in these matters. Therefore, you will need to have the guidance from a *Rav* in order to properly guide the person with whom you're working.

- *You will have to maintain a balance in terms of involving professionals.* When a *bachur's* problem has reached the level of an addiction, he should be encouraged to go for professional help. However, you may be somewhat wary of doing so because of the concern that the *bachur* will come back with certain *hashkafos* that are not consistent with or are even opposed to our *hashkafos*. Having said that, there are some professionals who are *bnei Torah* and who do wonderful work. You will therefore need to monitor the situation and be on top of things so as to ensure that the guidance given is in line with the proper *chinuch* you want the *bachur* to receive.

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Quick Recap:

- There are times when even after all of the strategies have been tried, the situation continues to spiral downwards until it reaches the point where the person has lost control of himself.
- There are almost always underlying factors that could be detected from when a person was younger, which subsequently led him to go astray.
- When the person gets married, the addiction remains and continues to manifest itself in worse ways.
- A Rebbi should view helping someone with an addiction as a long-term project.
- One must be careful not to get dragged into the gory details, which can be detrimental to the person who is hearing them.

SECTION TWO: THE ADDICTION STRUGGLE

Chapter 2:

How to Judge the Severity of an Addiction

It's important to know how the problem is manifesting itself, as it will indicate to some degree the severity of the problem. Since you will want to formulate a program that is tailor-made for the *bachur*, you therefore need to know the specific areas to target. However, as was previously mentioned in chapter 1, it is not advisable to go into too much detail beyond what is necessary.

The following are several key points to help you determine the severity of the addiction:

1. *How long has the problem been going on?* If a *bachur* got into these behaviors at a young age, then they are usually ingrained deeper into his mind and will require much more effort to correct. There is also a chance that someone messed around with him early on which led him to have an addiction, or it's possible that he got his hands on improperly filtered Internet. That in itself could turn the child inside out and cause him to act like someone who was terribly abused. In such instances, the acting out manifests later on in life as if it was pre-programmed. While it is possible to correct this, one should be aware that the person is dealing with quite a difficult struggle.

2. *How did the problem initially begin?* Did it start naturally, or through the intervention of others? A person may have discovered these kinds of behaviors on his own, or he could have been exposed to them by a perpetrator or even some bad friends who dragged him into it. Knowing which direction the problem came from could make a big difference when evaluating the problem.

3. *Does it involve others?* If it does, then it is indicative that the problem has reached a more severe level, one where the person has gone past his boundaries of natural shame and fear of being discovered. If he is able to break through those barriers, then it means that the force of his *ta'avah* is very strong. If it does involve others, there are a number of variables to keep in mind:

- *Did one persuade the other to join willingly, or was it done through coercion?* There is a significant difference whether a person spoke to his friend and got him to agree,

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as opposed to if he forced the other person to do it or involved him at a time he was sleeping. If a person is ready to use force, then it means that the power that is driving him has almost reached an abusive level, and something is obviously wrong with him. Using deceit or manipulation is also considered force. For example, if an older *bachur* conned a younger *bachur* to get involved, then it is usually indicative of abuse and would require professional intervention, whereas if the two *bachurim* are of the same age, it would be more of a natural tendency.

- *Were the two people mutually involved, or was one active and one passive?*
- *Did one go around to several different people, or just to one other person?* A person going around from one *bachur* to the next is indicative of a much more serious situation.
- *Did one act out with the same or opposite gender?*
- *Has one been involved with another person for a longer period of time?* Furthermore, how frequently has it been happening within that time frame?

4. *How is one being stimulated? Is it through the Internet? Is it through explicit magazines or other printed materials? Is it through hearing music or radio shows? Is it people in the street that are the cause of the problems?* Even if the person is just doing it by himself, in his own quarters, you will want to know what he is using to self-stimulate.

5. *Is the person having fantasies?* This is a little bit hard to talk about with a *bachur*, especially in the initial stages of working with him, but you should be aware that such things exist. A person's imagination can run wild with all kinds of crazy thoughts, and he might be acting out in an abnormal way. This usually indicates a more severe problem.

6. *Has the person gone out of his immediate vicinity to get materials or look out for people?* You can tell that the person has gone beyond the normal range if the situation has reached a point where he is going farther away to indulge his *ta'avos*. For example, the person could *chas v'shalom* be travelling to a club, bar, chat room, or Internet cafe. These are areas that are beyond where a person would usually slip, and they indicate that the problem is of a more severe nature. By doing any of these, the person is showing that he has invested more of himself into it, as indicated by his willingness to spend money and travel farther out.

7. *How much time is being spent on these activities?* Obviously, the challenge is much more severe if it's occurring frequently.

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8. *How much is it disturbing his quality of life?*

9. *How wrong does the person perceive it to be?* The answer to this question is very telling in how successful you will be. In general, people have a tendency to justify their behavior, especially when it involves something they enjoy. However, if a person convinces himself that his actions are not really that bad, then he won't be able to put in the effort necessary to overcome the difficult obstacles he will face when trying to stop. Therefore, if you see that the *bachur* does not understand the severity of the issue, then you will have to take a step back in your attempts to help him and say, "We're not going to be able to start doing anything until we get past this point."

10. *How motivated is the person to work on recovery?* Unfortunately, when a person has strayed considerably in the wrong direction, it takes time to build up the motivation to want to come back. Many times, one has to first hit rock-bottom before he is willing to work on to overcome this *nisayon*.

11. *Have efforts already been made to stop, and if so, with what success?* If a *bachur* has already gone for help yet it didn't help, then it indicates that the problem is much more severe. When multiple components are present, you will very often need someone with more training to be involved. You will therefore have to weigh the scenario each time and be honest with your capabilities in order to help the *bachur* in the best possible way. However, having a basic understanding of what to look for when a problem comes up will help you recognize when the *bachur* you are helping needs more experienced intervention, in which case you will want to combine your guidance with the work of a therapist.



Quick Recap:

- It's important to know how the problem is manifesting itself in order to identify how severe it is.
- There are several key points to help you determine the severity of the addiction.

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Chapter 3:

Why an Addiction is Pursued and How it is Treated

It's important to identify the reason for why the *bachur* is continuing to pursue this issue and act out.

The following is a list of several reasons:

1. *A person may be acting out simply because of the basic, physical pleasure.* In this case, the *bachur's* pursuit is on a more simple level; he does it because it's fun and enjoyable. The key to help him withstand his challenge would be to guide him to implement the ten steps mentioned in Section One in order to enable him to overcome his impulses.

2. *A person may be acting out because he is driven by a need for warmth and recognition.* This is especially true if his behaviors involve another person, such as when a *bachur* is drawn to girls. It may very often look like it's *ta'avah*-related, but in reality the *bachur* is looking for a good friend who will accept and adore him. This is very different than someone who is doing it just for physical pleasure. The key to helping this person will be to build his self-esteem and give him the feeling that he's accepted, together with helping him control the impulse. In my experience, helping someone who is primarily driven by a need for emotional acceptance is much harder than helping someone driven by lust. A *bachur* with emotional needs becomes attached to the other person in a much deeper way. His problem relates to him as an entire person, not the actions that he did in one area.

3. *Acting out is commonly used as a form of rebellion.* Sometimes rebellious children feel that they were deprived in some way or another, either because they felt that the system or their parents were too tough on them or that their independence was stifled. These children are looking for a way to feel in control, and many times that will be in an area that is unclean, simply because they know that our frum society views these behaviors as the worst possible thing that someone could do. A rebellious boy will therefore feel, "If I am able to do this and nobody can stop me, then it means that I am the one who's really in control." The key to helping this *bachur* will require understanding why he views the authority figure as so bad and why he feels he was rejected.

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4. *At times a person acts out to calm his anxiety.* This is especially the case when people stimulate themselves, without resorting to external stimuli. When a person is nervous or tense, there is an urge to release tension and the feeling of pleasure from this action can be used to satisfy that. For example, there are some people who feel nervous before they go to sleep and use this to help them relax. The key to helping a person with this type of situation is to first deal with the underlying anxiety. You will need to give him strategies for how to be calm, happy, and content. (If the *bachur* is experiencing symptoms of OCD or anxiety, then he will need a different method to help him gain control over his problem. See Section Three where this is discussed in detail.)

It is important to note that more than one reason can contribute to a *bachur* acting out. It is possible for a person to be driven by a need for warmth and recognition, yet enjoy the physical pleasure as well. Alternatively, he could be feeling anxious and using this behavior to calm himself, and then after a while, his nature led him to act out to gain warmth and recognition as well. However, the idea is that when you are helping someone, you should recognize and address all of the different components that led him to do this. In trying to identify the nature of the force that has led a *bachur* to reach the point of an addiction, you will need to explore several components in the history of his life that could have contributed to the formation of this addiction: his inborn, biological nature (see Chapter 4); and the experiences he has gone through in his life (see Chapter 5). Each of these could impact a *bachur* in such an extreme way and pre-dispose him to developing an addiction in *inyonei kedushah*.

After understanding the cause that triggered the addiction, you will want to guide the *bachur* through the ten steps used for the normal struggle. (See Section One.) However, your understanding of the *bachur's* background must direct your intervention. You will need to first help him work through his personal challenges and any negative emotional baggage that has come along with it, and then use this information in order to adapt the strategies discussed in the ten steps for the *bachur's* own personal situation.



Quick Recap:

- It's important to identify the reasons for why a *bachur* is acting out.
- You need to explore several factors in the history of a *bachur's* life that could have contributed to the formation of the addiction.

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Chapter 4:

Treating an Addiction By Understanding one's Biological Nature

Hashem created each person with a different nature, and some people have an inborn tendency which may lead them in this direction. When you notice any of these characteristics, you will want to use that knowledge in order to help the *bachur* understand why it's so hard for him. You will then create a personalized treatment plan, with strategies that will address his specific issues.

For example, if someone is impulsive by nature, you will explain to him what impulsivity is and that he should know that it is harder for him because of it. You should then tell him that there will be certain things he could do to slow himself down, as well as certain harchakos that he will need put into place so he shouldn't fall into an *aveirah* so easily. Understanding the person's nature will therefore guide your intervention.

A list of several inborn characteristics that can incline a person to this

1. *Born with a tendency to lust*-- Just as some people have a larger appetite or are more emotional, there are some people who, biologically, have a greater pull towards lust; in the *sefarim* this is referred to as being *mechumam b'tiv'am*. Such a person may be more warm and loving, with a drive towards this from a very young age. You will want to let the *bachur* know that Hashem created him with this nature, and that he came to this world with a special mission: to overcome this *nisayon*.

2. *Impulsive*-- Regardless of whether or not a *bachur* has a formal diagnosis of ADHD, if he has an impulsive nature, he may be more prone to developing this addiction. This can be due to any of the following reasons:

- Someone with an impulsive nature is more likely to act before considering whether his actions are worthwhile or not. Because of this, a *bachur* may find himself following after his curiosity before he can think things through, which will lead him into bad habits at a quicker pace. This could then develop into a full-blown addiction.

- A person who is impulsive has less of an ability to hold himself back from following an impulse, even when he knows that he wants to stop.

- Someone with an impulsive nature frequently lacks the ability to focus well. It

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therefore becomes very hard for him to train himself to follow logical explanations and discern the effects for his behaviors. He won't be organized enough mentally to be able to tell himself, "I know I've got to stay away from here, since if I go down this road, it will lead me to the wrong place." Such a *bachur* will need alternative methods and assistance in working on his impulsive behavior in order to start working on this area.

- The mind of someone with ADHD is wired to have a higher threshold for pleasure; what is considered special and exciting for him is at a higher level than the typical. He will very often be one of those *bachurim* who complain that life is so boring, and he will therefore seek out activities that are very exciting. Because activities in this area are highly stimulating, they therefore appeal to a person who is unfocused because they help him focus on something in a very sensational way. It is therefore difficult for someone who has symptoms of ADHD to deal with this challenge.

3. *Nervous and tense*-- If a *bachur* is generally anxious and often feels stressed out, then it will affect him significantly in this area. Many times, doing these types of behaviors gives this person the ability to release the tension that he feels, since acting out in this way gives a sense of relief as he lets go after holding himself back. Therefore, if you notice a *bachur* dealing with a lot of underlying stress and anxiety, you will have to work on getting the person to be more calm and help him understand that there is a biological component to his challenge. (If a *bachur* is experiencing significant symptoms of anxiety, he will need a different method to help him gain control over his problem. See Section Three where this is discussed in detail.)

4. *Depressed*-- Someone who is depressed feels hopeless and empty. (This is regardless of whether or not he has a formal psychological diagnosis of depression.) He ends up having the attitude that there is nothing for him to lose by acting out. Such a person will quite often give up his efforts to stop, and it then becomes very difficult for him to gather enough strength to be motivated to deal with this *nisayon*. If the depression is serious, then the *bachur* may even need medication to treat it.

Depression creates a vicious cycle; acting out can bring a person to depression, and depression can lead a person to act out. (If, however, you notice that the depression appeared only after the behaviors started, then you can very often heal the depression by dealing with this issue.)

Depression in general craves misery. Quite often, a person who is depressed is

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not looking to get out of his depression. He feels complacent with his situation and has the attitude, “If acting out can give me a little relief now, then I’ll be willing to do it.” By acting out further, the person reinforces the negative self-image that he has of himself and begins to view himself as junk. He starts telling himself, “Why should I invest my strength in improving myself?! I am worthless anyway!” When this happens, it becomes very difficult to help him. You will therefore need to address the depression before you can address this issue.

5. Other characteristics:

- *Low reactor*-- A *bachur* who doesn’t get excited easily and is used to feeling that every day is boring and bland, may have a stronger inclination towards these behaviors. This is because acting out is something that is very exciting and comes along with intense emotions.

- *Low tolerance for discomfort*-- A person who is a *mefunak* will have a difficult time telling himself no. He lacks the inner strength to overcome anything difficult, and when he is faced with this challenge, he won’t have the might to fight back. You will therefore have to help him find different strategies which provide him with alternative means of ammunition.

- *Lacking in his innate feeling towards right and wrong*-- There are some people who are inclined to do what is right even without explanations. A person who does not have this nature will have more of a challenge when it comes to these types of behaviors. He might try to excuse himself by saying, “Who says this is so bad? Everybody does it!”



Quick Recap:

- Understanding the person’s nature should guide your intervention.
- There are several inborn characteristics that can incline a person to this, such as having a tendency to lust, or having an impulsive, anxious, or depressed nature.

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Chapter 5:

Treating an Addiction By Understanding one's Life Experiences

When speaking with a *bachur*, your goal is to “get into his shoes” by feeling his emotions together with him and understanding the specific occurrences that led to his addiction. The following are several occurrences that could affect a person in this manner and lead him to act out in an extreme way. In order to help such a *bachur*, you will want to guide him to understand the experience in the proper way and rid himself of any negative emotional ‘baggage’ he may have.

- 1. Exposure to *ta'avah* ideas at a very young age**
- 2. Exposure to highly stimulating material at any age**
- 3. Molestation**

Each one of these will now be explained in greater detail.

1. Exposure to *ta'avah* ideas at a very young age:

Exposure to *ta'avah* ideas at a very young age can cause a *bachur* to develop unhealthy attractions and habits. In order to understand why early exposure to concepts of *ta'avah* is so damaging, the following fundamental idea must be understood. A person's mind develops gradually over the course of childhood. Hashem causes the *ta'avah* to begin developing just as one's mind matures, at around the age of bar mitzvah. Since both *seichel* and *ta'avah* develop simultaneously, a person is typically able to deal with his *ta'avah* in a healthy way.

However, if a younger child, who does not have a mature *seichel*, is exposed to such ideas, then his natural response will be an abnormal one; he will be unable to properly process these concepts in his brain. He will usually pursue these behaviors and enjoy them, and since it is such a powerful experience, he will not be able to control the strong pull with his immature mind.

However, since the child interpreted the pleasure and lustful concepts in an immature and faulty manner, he is prone to developing unhealthy attractions and habits. (Even if these don't show up until later in life, this has already been

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programmed in his mind as a pleasurable activity, and the mistakes are there as if they were inborn.) Furthermore, since his *seichel* lacks the tools to control the *ta'avah*, it will more easily develop into a much deeper problem.

Early exposure also affects a child's feelings and changes his self-image. With his mistaken interpretation of these behaviors, a child will have difficulties making sense of his surroundings, and he will find himself in a state of confusion. His inner intuition will usually tell him that this shouldn't be happening, yet that won't be enough to stop the highly stimulating behavior. His brain will then begin sending him mixed messages: "This is something that feels good, but I know it is bad." When he then continues to act out, that inner voice once again rings in his ears, saying, "This is bad!" yet he will be unable to stop himself. The result of this back-and-forth thinking pattern is that the child is left feeling terribly confused, and he begins to question his ability to interpret the world around him.

Because the child perceives his actions as negative, he tends to label himself as bad, which translates into self-blame and guilt. He will view himself not just as doing something bad, but as a bad person. The negative interpretation that he has of himself eventually becomes his belief and remains with him even as an older *bachur*, which becomes very difficult to repair.

When you mentor such a *bachur*, you will have to convey the idea that he is interpreting the world around him using the immature understanding that his mind had when he was first introduced to these concepts. He will have to work on giving up the shame that he feels and come to realize that it wasn't his fault; he was merely a child and didn't have the abilities to stand up against such a strong temptation. Ridding himself of this shame will be the biggest challenge for the *bachur*, but is of utmost importance. This is because when a person is embarrassed of himself, he is unable to accept that he has value and therefore continues to act out.

Additionally, he feels so low that he needs something to relieve himself of those negative feelings, and these behaviors provide an escape. Only after the *bachur* has rid himself of this shame will you be able to help him understand those early experiences in the proper way and train him to view himself in a positive light.

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2. Exposure to highly stimulating material at any age:

Exposure to highly stimulating material at any age has severe effects on a person's mind. (See Appendix II for an elaboration of this issue.) This is unfortunately very prevalent, and is a difficult problem to solve for several reasons:

- *It plants ideas of temptation that would never have come naturally and opens up the door for new types of needs that were never before imagined.* The materials available are actually worse than what would be available live. This ultimately puts a person in a position where he is not equipped to deal with such extreme forms of *ta'avah* and comes to feel that he is faced with something beyond his control.

- *The nature of this exposure is that it loses its effect quickly.* As such, the person feels a need to constantly find more explicit forms of lust to offer the same pleasure that he previously had from the simpler form.

- *It creates fantasies that are so abnormal that it makes it difficult for a person to have *pas b'salo* and enjoy the regular, normal forms of pleasure.* The images that are seen create an imprint on the brain, which then becomes his regular way of getting stimulated. Anything normal feels empty and leaves him feeling dissatisfied and unfulfilled. The abnormal behaviors undermine the natural way that Hashem made the world, with the ability for a person to be happy and feel content.

- *Easy access to this material makes creating *gedarim* very difficult.* Unfortunately, falling into these extreme types of material is very easy nowadays; access is literally at one's fingertips. Furthermore, the natural barriers that held a person back at one point in time, are now no longer present. A person doesn't have to discreetly go somewhere distant to find it. It's free of charge and can be done in privacy, without others knowing about it.

- *The glamour that the media ascribes to "shmutz" makes one believe there is much more to it than really exists.* This leads the person to constantly try to attain a bliss that is only imaginary and beyond a person's reach. Part of what makes the solution to this problem so complex is that it is very difficult for a person to believe that it's all imaginary and that he should just give it up. Also, the *bachur* frequently doesn't feel that he's done something so terribly bad; he thinks, "It's not live. It's just a picture; what's so bad?"

- *The abnormal images that the person sees create a craving for crazy types of *ta'avos*.* If a person is introduced to these types of pleasure, especially at a young age, the imprint on the brain can program the person to crave only abnormal stimulations. This craving can become extremely intense and can cause weird attractions. The person may suffer from tormenting drives to the point that he can't withstand them,

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which causes him to view himself as weird. The person's crazy thoughts turn him into a different kind of person, one who thinks along crooked ways.

There are several more noteworthy points to make in terms of exposure to extreme types of materials.

- *Books*-- Reading books that have in-depth explanations and fantasies can be as bad, if not worse, than looking at pictures. The reason for this is because the mind imagines and lives through the specifics of the scenes in a deeper way than when just looking at a picture. Reading such books can therefore develop a certain style of thinking, which directs the fantasies in a manner that is quite strong. There are even some books that *bachurim* read which are officially considered 'kosher' books (by non-Jewish standards), yet have chapters that can lead to much harm.

- *Lack of respect for boundaries during one's upbringing*-- If boundaries of privacy are breached when a child is growing up (e.g., seeing nudity amongst family members), then it leads to a lack of understanding that these areas are to be kept private and respected, which ultimately reduces the natural inhibition to these kinds of behaviors.

3. Molestation:

Molestation is unfortunately much more common than we wish to believe, and it has a major effect on this specific area, as well as on the overall psyche of a person. Someone who has been molested usually keeps it a secret, but deep down has been traumatized. In fact, it has been noted that a significant number of children who have gone far off the *derech* have been victims of this trauma.

Reasons why molestation has such a devastating effect

When an older person showed a younger child affection and then did something to him that was extremely intrusive, the child's sense of self was violated. The act of molestation teaches the child the idea of *ta'avah* at a young age and in a very confusing way, the effects of which were discussed earlier in this chapter. The child then translates the confusion and strong emotions into fear, guilt, and anger. In his childish way of dealing with it, he will usually blame himself for what happened by saying something like, "I shouldn't have let him," or "I should've run away." The child will then feel guilty and end up labelling himself as bad.

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Molestation is a trauma for the child, and it introduces traumatic and chaotic associations with these behaviors. The child then begins to associate getting close to somebody with this traumatic experience. As he gets older, it becomes frightening for him, and he feels afraid to place his trust in anybody. This is especially true because sadly, molestation is most commonly perpetrated by someone whom a child trusts, such as a family member or someone who is close to him. The child quite often starts to feel that everyone is out to get him and is afraid to get close to anybody. This trauma is like any other in that it can cause Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, which means that after a person experiences a trauma, he repeatedly relives the misery in his mind. He can get flashbacks, sudden impulses of fear, or feelings of detachment, all stemming from his anxiety level being so high.

A person who was a victim of a molestation will typically develop *ta'avah* in a very abnormal way. He develops almost a compulsion to do these behaviors himself, and will very often become a perpetrator himself.

Factors that indicate the severity of the molestation

There are a number of factors that indicate the severity of the molestation and the trauma involved.

- Was force the method used to gain the consent of the child?
- Did the child feel convinced, cheated, and taken advantage of?
- How much older was the perpetrator than the child? (The greater the age difference, the more damaging it is.)
- Was the child lacking healthy attachments prior to this, and the perpetrator satisfied this need?
 - Was it someone whom the child felt safe relying on?
 - How often did it occur?
 - Was it dreaded or enjoyed at the time of the crime?
 - Did the child reach out for help and not get it?

As can be seen, there are many factors that have to be taken into account. Every child and experience is clearly different; however, what remains the same with any child who was molested are the confusing, fearful emotions, combined with the self-blame and shame that comes along with this occurrence. All of these feelings can confuse a child so deeply, to the point that he himself doesn't know why he is so messed up. At times the child's problem simmers for years and manifests itself only

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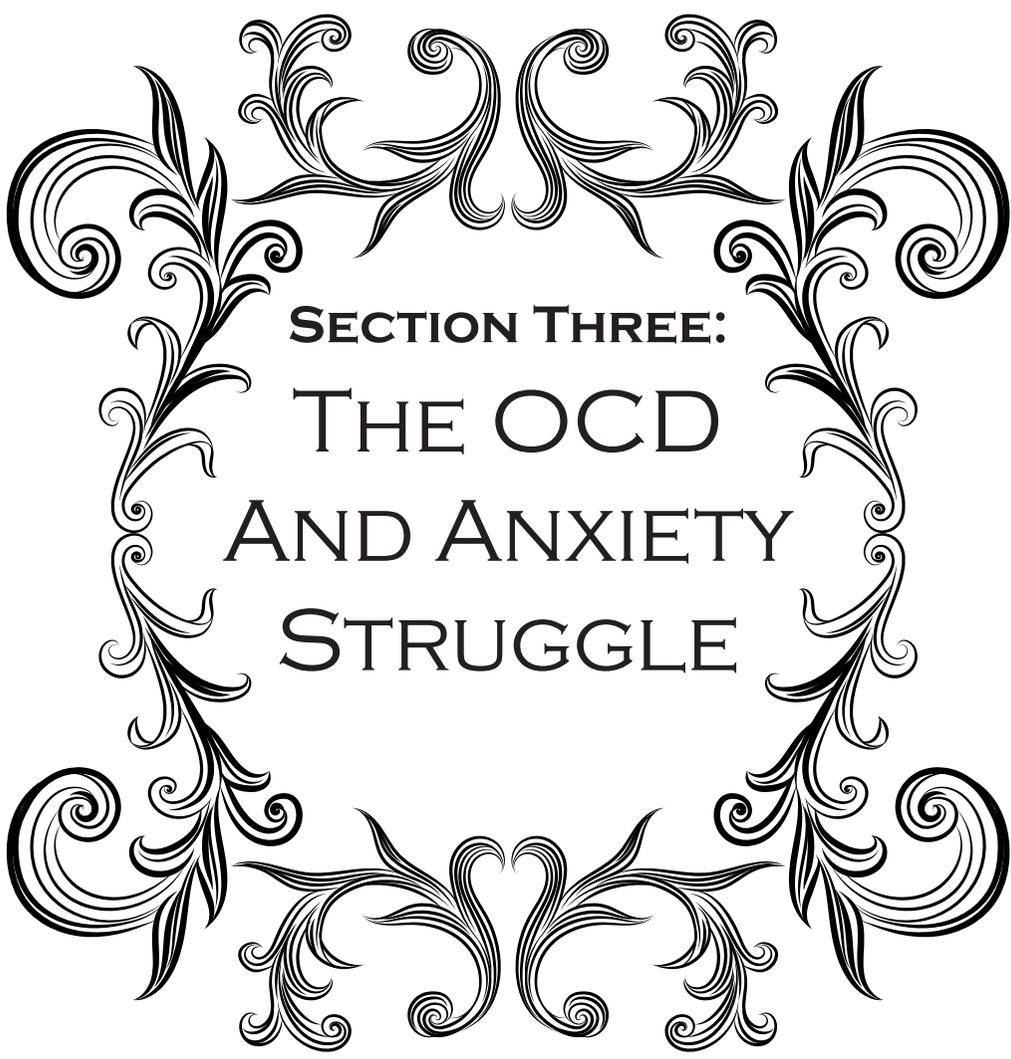
later on, when he commits crazy things that hurt himself and the people around him. At first there may seem to be no reason for such behavior, and the person himself may not recognize molestation as being the cause, but someone who is experienced will be able to notice a pattern and detect the underlying issue.

In summation: Molestation is a very complex subject and usually requires professional help to undo the damage. Trauma is different than the regular mentoring and *chizuk* you may give. Many times the damage is so deep that one will need the proper type of therapy to help him work through his feelings until he can believe in himself and begin to trust others.



Quick Recap:

- When guiding a *bachur* to work through any experiences that led him to addiction, you will want to help him understand them in the proper perspective.
- Your goal is to “get into his shoes” by feeling his emotions with him.
- Early exposure to concepts of *ta'avah* is very damaging.
- Exposure to highly stimulating material at any age has severe effects on the mind.
- Molestation is unfortunately much more common than we wish to believe.
- A person who was a victim of a molestation will typically develop *ta'avah* in a very abnormal way.
- Molestation is a very complex subject and usually requires professional help.

A decorative border composed of intricate, symmetrical floral and scrollwork patterns. The design features large, stylized leaves and swirling acanthus-like motifs that frame the central text. The lines are clean and black, set against a white background.

SECTION THREE:
**THE OCD
AND ANXIETY
STRUGGLE**

אוזר בגבורה

Introduction to Helping a Bachur with OCD or Anxiety

A *bachur* dealing with this struggle is typically upset about it and wants to stop. However, when the person is constantly thinking of ideas to stop or be careful, then it takes on a pattern of obsessive-compulsive or anxious behaviors. A person who is displaying any of the symptoms of OCD or anxiety mentioned below is unlike the regular person who is struggling with temptation. For him, it's not a *nisayon* of *ta'avah*; it's a mental problem, and by acting out, he's finding a way to calm himself and avoid thinking about it. Someone with OCD or anxiety requires an entirely different treatment plan. Therefore, when helping a *bachur*, it is crucial to determine which type of struggle he is facing.

Several distinctions between an obsessive or anxious struggle and the standard one

1. With a normal struggle, the thoughts and urges that a person has preceding the act are pleasurable, and he feels himself attracted towards it. However, when the struggle is coming from OCD or anxiety, then the thoughts about doing the act are not pleasurable; they frighten him. The person has a strong urge to avoid exploring the topic, and he doesn't want to act out. However, he feels compelled to do so because that will temporarily relieve those thoughts that constantly bombard the person, saying, "Watch out for this. Think of ideas to make sure it doesn't happen." It's as if he has an ever-present enemy. A *bachur* with OCD or anxiety becomes more afraid of the thought of doing the *aveirah* than the *aveirah* itself.

Some examples of these obsessive or anxious thoughts include the following:

Did I feel something come out? Do I have to go to the *mikvah*? Do I have to change my clothing? Did I experience some stimulation? Do people around me notice that I'm aroused? Am I sitting in a position that is too tight, which may be bringing out certain unwanted feelings? Are my garments pulling too tightly, in a way that will cause me a problem? Am I touching myself too close to where I shouldn't? Did I think anything wrong? Did I think about anything that would cause things to come out? Did I see a woman dressed in a non-*tzniyusdig* manner? Was that a bad picture I saw in the street? When I saw it, did I continue looking at it purposely, or not? Will something happen while I'm asleep or on *Yom Kippur* night? A *bachur* with OCD/anxiety may be plagued by any of the above thoughts, and

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throughout the day, he constantly tries to be careful about them.

Sometimes a *bachur* with OCD/anxiety is afraid to go to a *mikvah* or pool, as he feels he will find himself looking at people and will later be plagued with thoughts of “Did I do anything wrong? Was I looking where I shouldn’t?”

A *bachur* with OCD/anxiety might feel that he has done something wrong in the past in this area, and is plagued by fears that irreversible damage was done. He could worry, “Did I mess up beyond repair? Did I physically hurt myself? Am I hopeless? Is my *neshamah* doomed?”

All of the above are examples of obsessive or anxious thoughts that I’ve seen when working with *bachurim*. These thoughts typically re-occur and bombard a *bachur* constantly.

2. With a normal struggle, a person has enjoyment during the actual act; in contrast, one who has OCD or anxiety gets no such *geshmak*. He is acting out only because he feels compelled to do so by his obsessive thoughts.

3. With a normal struggle, the person feels worst after the act is over, when the *yetzer hora* withdraws. However, for the person who has OCD or anxiety, the everlasting bombardment and worries are so uncomfortable and draining that he acts out simply to get some rest from those thoughts. Then, his initial reaction after the act is a sense of calm relief. He isn’t bothered by the outcome for the time being.

4. With a normal struggle, a person is not obsessed with thoughts about the *onshim*. Although he feels a fear of punishment after the act, it does not generally take over his mind. On the other hand, the thoughts of the *bachur* who has OCD or anxiety is usually connected to a fear of *onshim* which preoccupy his mind.

5. With a normal struggle, the person’s worries are not usually correlated with a specific way of acting out. He can be tempted by many different means of pleasure. However, someone who is struggling with OCD or anxiety will typically focus on a specific way of acting out. Such a person does not have a general overdose of *ta’avah*, but is usually very *ehrblich* with what he is doing. However, often as a result of what he’s seen in *sefarim* about an extreme *zebirus* in *kedushah* that certain *gedolim* had, he begins to worry and obsess about a specific area.

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6. A *bachur* who struggles with OCD or anxiety is typically focused on avoidance. He is not as much busy with the actual *aveiros*, but is instead busy finding different *siyagim* or *segulos* to make sure it doesn't happen. Anything that will trigger him to think about it (or even to think about thinking about it) is something he tries to avoid.

7. A *bachur* who struggles with OCD or anxiety usually seeks reassurance that he'll be okay. The need for reassurance is not so much because of the actual *aveiros* that happened; it is rather to be able to control it and make sure it doesn't happen again in the future.

8. A *bachur* who is struggling with OCD or anxiety usually has a more anxious or nervous nature. He may be a general worrier, or might be overly *fafrumt* when it comes to certain *halachos*. Alternatively, such a *bachur* may seem to be very literal, taking everything according to the exact letter of the law. In such a case, his worries and nervousness are being projected to this area.

9. There is one more sign that I personally think is true, but I'm not entirely positive. If a person finds himself being *nichshal* more than once a day, my opinion is that it's not a normal manifestation of the standard struggle. This is because the nature of *ta'avah* is that it usually loses its effect after a while. Therefore, if it's happening too often, then it's more likely to be a compulsive type of behavior rather than simply due to pleasure or enjoyment, and the acting out is done simply to rid the person of the nerves and worries bombarding him.

Treatment goals for a *bachur* with OCD/anxiety

A *bachur* who is exhibiting these types of behaviors requires very different techniques than a person dealing with the standard struggle. Many of the strategies discussed in Section One are not appropriate for such a *bachur*, as they will do more damage than good. (This *bachur* should be working on only the following steps from Section One: Step One, Normalize; Step Three, Heseich Hada'as; Step Seven, Understanding Chazal; and Step Nine, Anticipating a Relapse.)

The treatment for this *bachur* is primarily oriented around giving him the tools to develop a calmer approach towards this issue. To that end, it requires the following *shikul bada'as*: On one hand, giving him explanations is not necessarily good, as when

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you provide him with too many reasons, he will want to discuss every nitty-gritty detail, which will only deepen his problem. On the other hand, some *bachurim* are lacking a proper understanding of the *halachos*, and they convince themselves that other behaviors are included in what *Chazal* said was *assur*. Therefore, it's important, at least initially, to clarify on a one-time basis the exact boundaries of the *halachos* in order to ensure that only that which is truly *assur* in *halachah* is avoided.

After the parameters of what is *assur* have been made clear, you can then provide the *bachur* with the strategies needed for him to deal with this struggle: correcting any mistakes in the way he thinks (see chapter 1), achieving *Heseich Hada'as* (see chapter 2), establishing responses for the thoughts that bombard him (see chapter 2), and taking steps to continue with normal life (see chapters 3-4).



Quick Recap:

- A person who is displaying symptoms of OCD or anxiety is unlike the regular person who is struggling with temptation.
- When the struggle is coming from OCD or anxiety, then the thoughts about doing the act are not pleasurable.
- Many of the strategies discussed in Section One are not appropriate for such a *bachur*, as they will do more damage than good.
- Before beginning to discuss techniques, it's important, at least initially, to clarify on a one-time basis the exact boundaries of the *halachos*.

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Chapter 1: Step One

Correct Cognitive Distortions

Cognitive distortions refer to a crooked way of thinking. Anyone who is obsessing and developing anxiety over this area, is most probably thinking about this topic in the wrong manner. The *bachur* must therefore be guided to recognize that he is making a mistake. He should be taught that when an obsessive thought comes, he should check his thinking patterns to identify which distortion his mind is following, and then try to correct it.

A list of the most common cognitive distortions

1. *The bachur has a black-and-white mindset; he thinks it's either "all or nothing".* He may think, "If I never do it, then I'm okay; I'm a *tzaddik*. But if I ever do this again, I'm a *rasha*, and all of my work was for nothing." Such a *bachur* is carrying on his shoulders a pressure that is too enormous for a person to handle. Having this kind of attitude prevents him from being able to accept any of the strategies you may want to teach him.³²

2. *The bachur bases his understanding on his emotions as opposed to logic.* He interprets things as good or bad because of the way he feels, failing to realize that feelings are not universal and don't necessarily reflect the truth. The *bachur* may think, "I feel like a nobody because of my problem, and if I don't feel good, then it must mean that I am no good." Alternatively, he may think, "I feel like I'm the only one who does this." However, when such a *bachur* is asked to explain what makes him think this, he cannot provide any logical answer. Instead, he simply says, "Because it can't be that anybody else does it."

3. *The bachur frequently jumps to conclusions and makes decisions based on very minimal information.* If he ever does something wrong, he will tell himself that everything in his life is bad, and the situation is beyond his capability to control.

(32) ברכת פּרץ, פרשת במדבר, שכ' וז"ל-- באמת עצם ההשתדלות עצמו היא עבודה קדושה וחשובה לפני המקום ב"ה, שהרי הוא עוסק בעבודתו ית' שמו, ואפילו אילו יהא מצבו כך כל ימי חייו, זהו תכליתו בעולמו, וכש"כ שבאמת לא לעולם יהא מצבו ככה, כי סוף סוף זוכה לסייעתא דשמיא ויהא לבו ער לעבודתו ית' ש בלא דחיפות תכופות שע"י נפילות, ונמצא שהנפילות הללו וירידה זו צורך עלייה הוא [אכן יש בזה סכנה גדולה, כי רבים נפלו ונשאר שבורים וצריך לבקש רחמים רבים להנצל מזה], ומיד כשחוזר ומתחזק לעלות תמיד במעלות הקודש, יש תועלת רב בהנפילות הללו; עכ"ל.

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4. *The bachur takes everything very personally and will label himself as negative based on any negative events that happen to him.* In other words, he sees everything that goes wrong as a reflection of himself. This person has to be taught to look at himself and think, “I am a good person, but I did something wrong.” He has to recognize that he remains a good person even if he slipped up.



Quick Recap:

- Anyone who is obsessing and developing anxiety over this area, is most probably thinking about this topic in the wrong manner.
- There are a number of common cognitive distortions that you will want to work through and correct.

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Chapter 2: Step Two

Acquire Heseich Hada'as

Acquiring *heseich hada'as* is the main goal in overcoming this struggle. This holds true for both the *bachur* who is struggling with the typical struggle, as well as the *bachur* with OCD/ anxiety. However, a *bachur* dealing with the standard struggle requires a different approach to achieving *heseich hada'as*. He must work on overcoming his temptations, yet at the same time try not to overly control his thoughts and urges. This is in contrast to a *bachur* who has OCD or anxiety and is dealing with a struggle in *inyonei kedushah*. Such a *bachur* is plagued by worries about how to combat this challenge, and he must therefore go to the other extreme and learn how to completely relinquish his attempts to control the issue. (He should not be taught all of the ten steps brought in Section One; rather, the steps that pertain to him include Steps One, Three, Seven, and Nine.)

However, telling a *bachur* with OCD or anxiety to be *meisi'ach da'as* completely is much easier said than done. A few general concepts will therefore be provided to help a *bachur* achieve this goal. These concepts have to be agreed upon by the *bachur*, for if not, you will not be able to move further in helping him. They are the basis for *heseich hada'as*, which is the strongest offense against this *yetzer hora* and is the only way to fight the obsessive thoughts.

Several basic concepts to understand in order to achieve *heseich hada'as*

Many of the ideas brought below were mentioned previously for those dealing with the standard struggle (see Section One, Step 3), but will be repeated here due to slight nuances relating to those who have OCD or anxiety.

- *A person must realize that he has no bechirah to choose whether or not a thought should pop into his head.* The fact that a thought came into his mind against his will, doesn't show anything about him. (See Section One, Step 1.) By attaching fear or worry to a thought, the thought is strengthened in one's mind and leaves a far greater imprint than if it is allowed to simply pass through.

- *Just as a person cannot control when an improper thought comes, he also cannot force it out of*

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his head. (See Section One, Step 3.) In fact, these thoughts act like a spring; the more a person tries to push them out, the stronger they come back at him.³³ Additionally, trying to control a thought that comes into one's mind increases the anxiety the person feels. When he sees that he is unable to control the thought, he feels even more nervous about it, which in turn fuels more thoughts and anxiety. However, the cycle can be reversed: If a person ignores the thought and is able to distract his mind with something else, then it will usually just come and go. The goal is therefore to let the thoughts flow straight through one's brain and into the garbage.

- *When a person tells himself not to think about a certain thought or topic, his mind will explore the exact area that he doesn't want to think about.* (See Section One, Step 3.) Telling oneself not to think about something is actually in- and of- itself thinking about that thought, and in our context, the very arousal that a person is trying to avoid will now almost certainly come.

- *A person cannot control what happens to him while he is asleep.* While one may try to avoid it before, it is ultimately out of one's control. The attitude must therefore be that whatever happens, happens, and one must simply go on with life.

A *bachur* should create a knee-jerk reaction whenever he starts feeling something, whether it's a physical feeling or one of his obsessive thoughts, to automatically disregard it and treat it as nonsense. He should say, "Okay, it's that same thing again. That's nothing; it's just a nudge." When a thought comes to a *bachur*, he can instead distract himself with something around him. For example, if a thought comes to a person during *sefer*, he should continue learning as if nothing ever happened. If he's walking in the street when a thought comes to him, then he can focus on the style of houses on the block. This idea is true for both before the person slips and afterwards; the goal is to get busy with anything around him and just continue on.

(33) אגרות ומכתבים מר' ישראל סלנטר זצ"ל, אגרת כה, שכ' ז"ל-- דבר הקרי מקרה לילה הוא המסובב ויסוד העבירה הוא ההרהור ביום, ואם ההרהור בא מאונס, יש להקל לבלי חושבה לעון ואין להעמיק, ולא בהשתדלות מרובה לדחות ההרהורים כי זאת טיבעת נפש האדם, כל שמעמיק לדחות איזה רעיון, איזה צער וכיוצא, עוד תתגבר ההתנגדות בנפש האדם להלהיב המזור לאדם, לזאת מריבוי ההשתדלות לדחות ההרהורים יכול להיות שתולד לפעמים סיבה גדולה לחזק ההרהורים. כן זה גם בתפילה, העמל הרב לדחות מחשבות זרות מולידים לפעמים סיבה למחשבות זרות, מסיבת טיבעת נפש האדם להתנגדות, והנסיין ברעיון גופני יוכיח הדבר למדי; עכ"ל.

ועי' עוד בשפתי חיים, מועדים 52, שכ' ז"ל-- וידוע דברו של מו"ר הגרא"א דסלר שכל שלוחצים יותר על הקפיץ כן גובר הלחץ הנגדי, וכאשר מחליטים לא להסתכל מתגבר עי"ז כח ההתנגדות הפנימי וכו'. [אלא צריך] לקיים את המצוה מתוך החיוביות, לשמוח בזכות של שמירת העין, וממילא סרה ההתנגדות הפנימית; עכ"ל.

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It is important to explain to the *bachur*, however, that he may not use distracting himself as a way of running away from the issue entirely, but rather to use it as a way of minimizing the issue so he does not feel compelled by it. The thoughts and urges are such nonsense that he's willing to think about anything else instead of thinking about this.

Distraction is also not a means of escaping fear. If a *bachur* hasn't rid himself of his fears, then he will feel as if he's constantly being chased by them, and he will become preoccupied by the distractions every minute of the day. Distracting himself will then become the new compulsion! Therefore, the *bachur* must use distractions wisely, as a way of conveying that this issue doesn't deserve his attention. (For further elaboration on the topic of *heseich hada'as*, see Section One, Step 3.)



Quick Recap:

- Acquiring *heseich hada'as* is the main goal in overcoming this struggle.
- A person has no *bechirah* to choose whether or not a thought should pop into his head.
- When a thought comes to a *bachur*, he can distract himself with something around him.

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Chapter 3: Step Three

Stop Any Avoidances

In all probability, a *bachur* with OCD or anxiety has established ways in which he tries to avoid this issue. However, as was mentioned in the previous chapter, with those very efforts, he is causing it to happen even more. Therefore, in order to achieve complete *beseich bada'as*, a *bachur* must rid himself of any avoidances or reassurances that he set up.

One of the primary methods used to stop obsessive thoughts is to purposely expose the person to places or ideas that he fears. For example, gradually exposing a child who is scared of the dark to dark places can help him overcome his fear. In this area, however, if the *bachur* worries about seeing improper sights, you obviously cannot expose him to them. What you can do instead is give him exposure in the areas he previously avoided, by having him stop the avoidances he had set up.

Each situation in which one uses exposure as a way to remove previous avoidances must be examined on an individual basis. In many cases, stopping the avoidances will serve the same purpose as giving the person exposure, as he is technically putting himself in a situation that makes him anxious, yet not giving in to the urge of being overly careful.

The following are several true examples of this principle:

- A *bachur* was worried that he might touch women every time he passed near them in the street. He therefore undertook to walk very quickly and stay at the edge of the sidewalk, right near the cars. He was so obsessed with his *chumra* that he constantly walked in the street and thought about everything he saw as he passed it. For him, the 'exposure' would be having him walk slowly, in the middle of the sidewalk; this would undo the *chumra* that he adopted to calm himself down.
- A *bachur* constantly felt uncomfortable by the thought that the chairs in *beis medrash* were too warm and could cause him problems. He therefore decided to stand at his *shtender* while he learned, instead of sitting. His 'exposure' would be to sit down, as everyone else in the *beis medrash* was doing, without being busy moving himself around or trying to be careful with the way he sits.
- Sometimes a *bachur* who struggles with OCD can have intrusive thoughts.

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These thoughts are mental obsessions that invade a person's mind and usually take the form of making the person believe that he has done a terrible *aveirah*. They are non-pleasurable, abnormal thoughts, and the person himself knows that. For example, he may think that as a child, he did something to his sister-- simply because he remembers that he was once in a room with her. For this person, the exposure would be not to mind when the thought comes. At times it may be worthwhile for the *bachur* to write down what he's worried about and then review it.



Quick Recap:

- In order to achieve complete *beseich bada'as*, a *bachur* must rid himself of any avoidances or reassurances that he set up.
- The most common technique to remove previous avoidances is to expose a person to situations he previously avoided; however, each situation in which one uses exposure must be reviewed on an individual basis.
- At times it may be worthwhile for the *bachur* to write down what he's worried about and then review it.

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Chapter 4: Step Four

Give Up Unhealthy Gedarim

A *bachur* with OCD/anxiety needs to give up his desire for the security that it will never happen again. The *bachur* has to be ready to accept the fact that it may happen again, and that it may even be his fault. As bad as it is, though, he must realize that he can only help himself to a certain extent; the rest he has to rely on Hashem, and move ahead as if nothing even happened. The person must be ready to accept the fact that although he'll feel guilty and horrible about it, he will still be able to move on in life.

The obvious dilemma with this is that everyone wants to be sure that they'll be okay, especially when it comes to a matter that touches on one of the *yesodos* of *Yiddishkeit*. This is especially difficult for someone with OCD or anxiety, where the need for security is part of his personality. However, this step is very necessary, because it enables a person to function as a normal human being. Once he doesn't have to carry the weight of someone who must get things to the level of being 100% perfect, then he can be much calmer, and when he's calmer, he can actually deal with the *nisayon* better.

At times the person considers his obsessions and compulsions to be part of his *yir'as shamayim*. He may tell you, "If I take an easier approach to this *nisayon*, then I'm going to end up becoming the biggest *avaryon* in the world." The person feels that when you are telling him to relinquish his need for security, what you are in essence telling him is to be a *beheimah*, and he can't accept that. You will therefore have to explain to him that there are certain types of *gedarim* that are healthy and other ones that are not healthy. (The gauge of what is a healthy *geder* differs based on the community and circle of *Yidden* to which the *bachur* belongs.) In order to relax and properly deal with the issue, the *bachur* will need to give up the unhealthy, obsessive *gedarim* that he imposed on himself, and in their place establish healthy *gedarim*.

Guidelines for how to identify healthy *gedarim*

1. The *gedarim* that a *bachur* is implementing must become a natural part of him and should be done in a matter-of-fact way.

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2. The *hanbagos* that a *bachur* sets up should not require his constant attention.
3. A *bachur* should always discuss his ideas with someone else beforehand.
4. The *hanbagos* should be done in a manner that does not attract attention from others. They should be done *b'tzniyus* as something that's just between him and the *Ribono Shel Olam*. Nobody else should notice that he's doing anything different.
5. A *bachur* should not choose *gedarim* that are too hard for him to fulfill. He may then get upset when he is unable to fully carry them through.
6. The *hanbagos* that are chosen should not be focused specifically on whether or not he'll be successful in refraining from acting out, because then if he doesn't reach his goal, he'll consider everything else that he accomplished in this area to be worthless. Rather, the *hanbagos* should be part of an overall project of helping him in a certain area.

Avoid checking to see how it's going

The most difficult part of this step is that even if a *bachur* has been doing well for some time, he should still not go back to re-evaluate how he is doing. He should not be checking if the problem is entirely away or seeing how he does in a situation that previously gave him a challenge. Doing so is essentially another form of giving it attention, and it unravels all of the work the person has done towards achieving *heseich hada'as*. Although it is important to have a plan for what to do about the situation, the *gedarim* and strategies that are set in place should not be something that is dealt with on a regular basis.



Quick Recap:

- A person must be ready to accept the fact that although he'll feel guilty and horrible about it, he will still be able to move on in life.
- You will have to explain to him that there are certain types of *gedarim* that are healthy and other ones that are not healthy.
- A *bachur* must be guided not to go back and reevaluate how he is doing, even if he has been doing well for some time.

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Chapter 5:

Yom Kippur night

Worrying about what will happen on *Yom Kippur* night is common and will therefore be discussed here in a separate chapter.

The *Gemara* says that if a person notices that he became *tamei* on *Yom Kippur* night, it's a bad sign, and he has reason to worry the entire year. However, the Steipler זצ"ל quotes the *Sheilos u'Teshuvos Tzemach Tzedek*, who writes that this *Gemara* is definitely not discussing a *bachur*, because it is natural for him to have such an occurrence due to his thoughts during the day. Even thoughts from a few weeks prior to *Yom Kippur* can cause one to become *tamei* on *Yom Kippur* night. Rather, the *Gemara* is discussing those who are married, over the age of forty, and are steeped in Torah and *yir'as shamayim*, for whom such an occurrence would be highly unusual.³⁴

The *Tzemach Tzedek* further writes that if a person is worried about such an occurrence on erev *Yom Kippur*, then the fear itself will bring the problem, and if it then happens, it is not a *siman ra*.³⁵

The words of the Steipler have practical applications beyond just *Yom Kippur* night. The following insights can be gleaned from his words and applied all year long.

1. These occurrences are normal and can happen naturally, especially to a young person. This can be attested to by the fact that they were even discussed in *sefarim* over a hundred years ago.
2. Trying to be overly careful and control what will happen in the present won't

(34) קריינא דאגרתא, ח"א אגרת קסה, שכ' זו"ל-- מכתבו קבלתי והנה לא ידאג כלל וכלל, כי דברי חז"ל (יומא פח.) אמורים למי שאירע לו ר"ל שלא מחמת טבעו כלל, וכגון נשוי ובן ארבעים ויותר עמוס בתורה ויראת שמים אשר המקרה נשלח לו מן השמים בגזירה מיוחדת, אבל אנשים צעירים וכש"כ כשאינו נשוי, הדבר פשוט וברור שאירע הדבר מחמת טבעו שהרהר לפני זמן מה או שהיה בקישוי כי אפילו הרהור מלפני איזו שבועות גורם סוף סוף לזה, וכן מבואר הדבר בתשובת צמח צדק מליבוביץ ז"ל, חלק חו"מ בסופו נדפס בשער המילואים ושם סי' סד בשם הגה"ק בעל התניא ז"ל, שהיה שוחק מאנשים שנצטערו על זה כי דברי חז"ל הם דווקא לאנשים גדולים מאוד, שאין להם מצד הרהור כלל, ע"ש היטב. והדבר ברור שאין כאן לא ידאג כל השנה ולא מובטח לו לאחר השנה, וכבר נשאלתי בזה שנה שנה מאנשים שנצטערו מאוד, וברירתי שאין כאן בית מיחוש כלל, וכש"כ בבחור שאינו נשוי; עכ"ל.

(35) שו"ת צמח צדק סי' סב, שכ' זו"ל-- הרהור מזה גופא שמתירא ומפחד לנפשו שלא יארע לו קרי בליל יוה"כ [זה שכיח טובא בעיוה"כ] והרהור ופחד זה יוכל לפעול בטבע הקרי כמו הרהורי עבירה וא"כ סוף סוף מצד הרהור בא לו השביעה ולא מן השמים השביעוהו; עכ"ל.

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entirely help, because what happens now might be a result of sights a person saw months earlier.

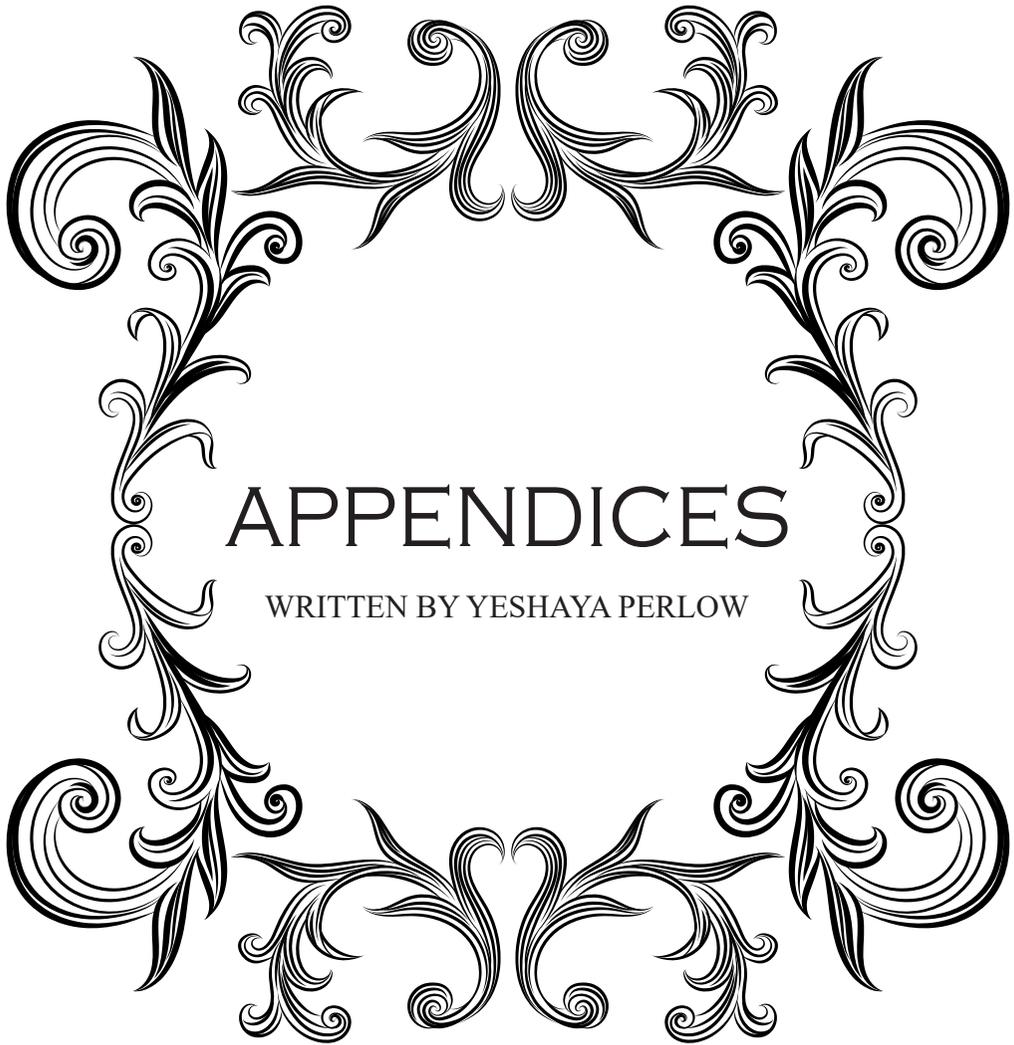
3. A ma'amar *Chazal* cannot always be taken at 'face value', but rather needs a *mesorah* as to how to learn it. One cannot learn what is written in the *Gemara* or other *sefarim* and apply them to his situation, without having guidance from someone who has a *mesorah* in these *inyanim*.

4. Worrying about 'it' is what causes 'it'! If this fear is on a person's mind, then the chances that it will happen are much higher.



Quick Recap:

- Worrying about what will happen on *Yom Kippur* night is common.
- Even thoughts from a few weeks prior to *Yom Kippur* can cause one to become *tamei* on *Yom Kippur* night.



APPENDICES

WRITTEN BY YESHAYA PERLOW

אוזר בגבורה

Appendix I

General *Chizuk* and *Hashkafah* for a *Bachur* Struggling in *Inyanei Kedushah*

This section includes many of the ideas that were mentioned previously in this booklet. They are brought here in the form of *divrei his'orerus* from the *sifrei mussar*.

Q: *Why does Hashem give a person difficult nisyonos?*

A: The *Gemara* says that there are three *aveiros* that are a constant struggle for a person: *davening* with *kavannah*, *avak lashon hora*, and *hirburei aveirah* (thoughts of *pritzus*).³⁶ Hashem purposely created us with these lifelong *nisyonos* for us to battle them and prove our loyalty to Him. With the proper practice and training, the battle eventually gets easier, and the reward and happiness for overcoming the challenge will be even greater.³⁷

Rav Sholom Schwadron used to compare the *milchamah* with the *yetzer hora* to a soccer game. Anyone who has ever played soccer knows that the most exciting part of the game is to kick the ball past the opposing team's goalie into the net, and whichever team does so the most times will win. But why, asked *Rav* Sholom rhetorically, does a team work so hard, trying to get the ball in the net? Why not try an easier solution-- get rid of the goalie altogether! The answer is obvious. When there's no goalie trying to stop the opposing team, then there's no challenge, and the whole point of the game is to score precisely when the goalie is putting forth effort. As the expression goes, "No pain, no gain."

Q: Did *Gedolim* also struggle in *inyanei kedushah*?

A: *Chazal* tell us, כּל הגדול מחברו יצרו גדול הימנו; whoever is on a greater *madreiga* than his friend has a greater *yetzer hora*. *Rav* Chaim Shmuelewitz explains why this is so. The *yetzer hora* is a good business man. He knows that the essence of a *talmid chacham* is someone who creates *gedarim*, barriers, so that he should not

(36) במס' בבא בתרא קסד: איתא שיש שלשה דברים שאין אדם ניצול מהם בכל יום, הרהור עבירה, עיון תפילה (שאין שום אדם יכול לכוון בתפילתו היטב-- תוס' שם), ואבק לשון הרע.

(37) מסילת ישרים פ' א, ש"ו וז"ל-- ואם יהיה לבן חיל וינצל המלחמה מכל הצדדין, הוא יהיה האדם השלם אשר יזכה לדבק בבוראו ויצא מן הפרוזדור הזה ויכנס בטרקלין לאור באור החיים, וכפי השיעור אשר כבש את יצרו ותאוותיו ונתרחק מן המרחיקים אותו מהטוב ונשתדל לדבק בו-- כן ישיגהו וישמח בו; עכ"ל..

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come close to doing an *aveirah*, and it is precisely because of these *gedarim* that the *talmid chacham* is on a higher *madreiga*. The *yetzer hora*'s goal, when attacking the *talmid chacham*, is to break down his *gedarim*, which then leaves him completely vulnerable to doing *aveiros* over and over again. By doing this, the *yetzer hora* transforms the very essence of the *talmid chacham* into that of a different kind of human being, and he has gained another man 'on his team'. In contrast, all the *yetzer hora* has to gain by working against someone who is not a *talmid chacham* is just one more *aveirah*, and for one more *aveirah*, the *yetzer hora* is not going to make a big fuss.³⁸

To illustrate this very important idea, *Chazal* tell us in numerous places about the tremendous force that the *yetzer hora* came with, to the greatest of our leaders. The following is just a small sample:

- בראשית רבה צ:ג, שכ' וז"ל-- "ויאמר פרעה אל יוסף ויסר פרעה וגו'", אמר ר' שמעון בן גמליאל, יוסף משלו נתנו לו, פיו שלא נשק בעבירה "ועל פיה ישיק כל עמי", גופו שלא נגע בעבירה "וילבש אותו בגדי שש", צוארו שלא הרכין לעבירה "וישם רביד הזהב על צוארו", ידיו שלא משמשו בעבירה "ויסר פרעה את טבעתו מעל ידו ויתן אותה על יד יוסף", רגליו שלא פסעו בעבירה "יתון וירכבו על קרוכין "וירכב אותו במרכבת המשנה אשר לו", מחשבה שלא חשבה בעבירה תבוא ותקרא חכמה "ויקראו לפניו אברך" אב בחכמה ורך בשנים; עכ"ל.

- נדחי ישראל פ' כג, שכ' וז"ל-- מצינו בבוועז, שאמרו חז"ל, שלפי שהיה יצרו מפתהו ואמר לו: אתה פנוי והיא פנויה, נתגבר על יצרו ונשבע "חי ה', שכבי עד הבוקר". מה היה לבסוף? זכה שיצאו ממנו מלכי בית דוד; עכ"ל.

- קידושין לט:, דאיתא וז"ל-- ישב ולא עבר עבירה נותנים לו שכר כעושה מצוה וכו', כגון שבא דבר עבירה לידו [ופירש"י, וכפה יצרו ולא עבר] וניצול הימנה כי הא דרבי חנינא בר פפי תבעתיה [ופירש"י, לזנות] ההיא מטרוניתא אמר מלתא [פי', אמר רב חנינא בר פפי לחש] ומלי נפשיה שיחנא וכיבא [פי', ועל ידי אותו לחש התמלא גופו בשחין ובפצעים המפרישים ליחה, כדי להתגנות בעיני המטרוניתא ושוב לא תרצה בו, אך] עבדה היא מילתא [פי', עשתה גם המטרוניתא דבר בכשפיה] ואיתסי [פי', והתרפא רבי חנינא מהשחין והפצעים]. כשראה רבי חנינא כך, ערק טשא בההוא בי בני [פי', ברח והתחבא בבית מרחץ שהיו שכיחים בו מזיקים, עד כדי] דכי הוו עיילין בתרין אפילו ביממא הוו מיתזקי [ופירש"י, שמצויין בו מזיקין] למחר אמרו ליה רבנן מאן נטרך אמר להו שני נושאי קיסר

(38) שיחות מוסר מר' חיים שמואלביץ, מאמר צא, שכ' וז"ל-- ונראה, שהטעם שהיצה"ר מתגרה בתלמידי חכמים ביותר הוא, כי אם יצליח להכשיל את הת"ח ואף בדבר פעוט, יצא היצר נשכר מזה לאין שיעור, כי מהותו של תלמיד חכם שגדור הוא, ואם אך עלה בידי היצר לפרוץ את הגדר, אזי שינה בזה את כל מהותו של הת"ח, כי שוב אינו גדור, ויהיה בכחו להכשילו שוב ושוב בנקל, כי נפרצה הגדר המונעת בעדו לעשות כל שיחפוץ. ואילו אם הצליח היצר להכשיל אדם פשוט שבלאו הכי אינו גדור, כי אז לא עלה בידו אלא כשלוך זה בלבד, ולכן משתדל הוא עם הת"ח ביותר; עכ"ל.

אוזר בגבורה

שמרוני כל הלילה [פי', נושאי כלי קיסר שמרוני כל הלילה מפני המזיקים] אמרו ליה שמא דבר ערוה בא לידך וניצלת הימנו דתנינא כל הבא דבר ערוה לידו וניצל הימנו עושין לו נס; עכ"ל.

• קידושין מ., דאיתא וז"ל-- גבורי כח עושי דברו לשמוע בקול דברו כגון רבי צדוק [ופירש"י, שלבש כח לכוף יצרו להתגבר בחפצי קונן] וחביריו. ר' צדוק תבעתיה ההיא מטרוניתא [ופירש"י, אשה גדולה היתה שלא יכול ליפטר ממנה ומסור בידה להורגו] אמר לה חלש לי ליבאי ולא מצינא [פי', נחלש לבי, ואיני יכול לעשות כעת עבירה, ושאל אותה] איכא מידי למיכל [פי', האם יש משהו לאכול כדי לחזק את הלב] אמרה ליה איכא דבר טמא אמר לה מאי נפקא מינה [ופירש"י, דהא מילתא דלא נזדמן לי אלא מאכל טמא יש לי ללמוד מכאן דעביד האי הבעול ארמית ראוי למאכל טמא] דעביד הא אכול הא שגרת תנורא [ופירש"י, אותה ארמית הסיקה את התנור לצלות דבר הטמא שם] קא מנחא ליה [ופירש"י, לאותו צלי בתוכו] סליק ויתיב בגויה אמרה ליה מאי האי? אמר לה, דעביד הא נפיל בהא [ופירש"י, באור של גיהנם] אמרה ליה אי ידעי [ופירש"י, אילו ידעתי שחמור עליכם הדבר כל כך] כולי האי לא צערתיך; עכ"ל.

• קידושין מ., דאיתא וז"ל-- רב כהנא הוה קמזבין דיקולי [ופירש"י, סלים שנשים נותנות שם פלכיהן] תבעתיה ההיא מטרוניתא אמר לה איזיל איקשיט נפשאי [פי', אלך ואקשט עצמי לפני העבירה] סליק וקנפיל מאיגרא לארעא אתא אליהו קבליה אמר ליה אטרחתן [ופירש"י, שהייתי במקום אחר רחוק ד' מאות פרסי] ארבע מאה פרסי א"ל מי גרם לי לאו עניותא [ופירש"י, בתמיה אם לא העניות לא הוצרכתי להיות עסקי במלאכת נשים] יהב ליה שיפא [ופירש"י, שם כלי] דדינרי [ופירש"י, זהובים]; עכ"ל.

• רש"י, סנהדרין לא: ד"ה לדזיו ליה כבר בתיה, שכ' וז"ל-- כמשה שהוא בן בתיה, למי שמקרין עור פניו כמשה רבינו שגידלתו בתיה בת פרעה וכו'. ומצאתי בספר הגדה שהיה מר עוקבא בעל תשובה שנתן עיניו באשה אחת והעלה לבו טינא ונפל בחולי [פי', שנימוק מרוב אהבה ונטמטם לבו והעלה חולי] ואשת איש היתה, לימים נצרכה ללוות ממנו ומתוך דוחקה נתרצית לו [פי', ומחמת זאת נתרצתה לעבור עמו עבירה] וכבש יצרו ופטררה לשלום ונתרפא וכשהיה יוצא לשוק היה נר דולק בראשו מן השמים ועל שם כך קרי ליה ר' נתן צוציתא במסכת שבת (דף נו:): הכא נמי להכי כתבו ליה הכי על שם האור שהיה זורח עליו; עכ"ל.

• קידושין פא., דאיתא וז"ל-- הנך שבויתא דאתאי לנהרדעא אסקינהו [ופירש"י, שצווה עליהם לפדותם ונתנום בעלייתו] לבי רב עמרם חסידא אשקולו דרגא מקמייהו [פי', נטלו את הסולם שעולים בו מהבית לעליה בכדי שלא יעלה אדם להתייחד עמהן] בהדי דקא חלפה חדא מינייהו [ופירש"י, שהיתה עוברת אצל פי ארובה שמן העלייה לבית] נפל נהורא באיפומא [ופירש"י, נפל אור בבית דרך פי העליה שהיו פניה מאירות] שקליה רב עמרם לדרגא דלא הוו יכלין בי עשרה למדלייא דלייא לחודיה סליק [פי', שלא היו יכולים אפילו עשרה בני אדם להרימו מרוב כובדו, והרימו לבדו, שמרוב חשקת התאווה אזר כח רב לישא את הסולם] ואזיל [פי', והלך ועלה בסולם כדי לתבוע את אותה השבויה לעבירה] כי מטא לפלגא דרגא איפשח [ופירש"י, הרחיב ופיסק רגליו לעמוד במקומו בחזקה להתגבר על יצרן] רמא קלא נורא בי עמרם [ופירש"י, הזעיק בני השכונה ליאסף ולבוא לכבות

APPENDICES

הדליקה כדי שיחדל מיצרו שיתבייש מהן] אתו רבנן [ופירש"י, שהיו סבורים שהיה שם דליקה] אמרו ליה כסיפתינן [פי', ביישת אותנו, שיאמרו שתלמידי חכמים מתאווים לעבירה] אמר להו מוטב תיכספו בי עמרם בעלמא הדין ולא תיכספו מיניה לעלמא דאתי אשבעיה דינפק מיניה [ופירש"י, רב עמרם ליצר הרע שיצא ממנו] נפק מיניה כי עמודא דנורא [פי', יצא ממנו היצר הרע והיה נראה כמו עמוד של אש] אמר ליה חזי דאת נורא ואנא בישראל ואנא עדיפנא מינך; עכ"ל.

• קידושין פא., דאיתא וז"ל-- רבי מאיר הוה מתלוצץ בעוברי עבירה [ופירש"י, אומר שנקל הוא להתגבר על יצרו אם היו רוצים] יומא חד אידמי ליה שטן [ופירש"י, דהוא יצר הרע] כאיתתא בהך גיסא דנהרא [ופירש"י, לצד השני שמעבר המים] לא הוה מברא [ופירש"י, ספינות המעברות] נקט מצרא [ופירש"י, חבל מתוח משפת הנהר אל שפתו ואוחזין בו לבוא על דף קצר המוטל ברוחב הנהר] וקא עבר כי מטא פלגא מצרא שבקיה [ופירש"י, היצר לרבי מאיר] אמר אי לאו דקא מכרזי ברקיעא הזהרו בר' מאיר ותורתו שויתיה לדמך תרתי מעי [פי', אם לא שהיו מכרזים ברקיע "הזהר ברבי מאיר ותורתו", לא הייתי עוזב אותך, והייתי גורם שתהיה שווה כסכום קטן של שתי מעות כסף, כלומר שהייתי מצליח להכשל אותך בעבירה, וממילא לא היית שווה כמעלתך היום]; עכ"ל.

• קידושין פא., דאיתא וז"ל-- ר' עקיבא הוה מתלוצץ בעוברי עבירה יומא חד אידמי ליה שטן כאיתתא בריש דיקלא נקטיה לדיקלא [פי', אחז רבי עקיבא בדקל] וקסליק ואזיל כי מטא לפלגיה דדיקלא שבקיה [פי', עזבו היצר, וכבר לא התאווה לעבירה] אמר אי לאו דמכרזי ברקיעא הזהרו ברבי עקיבא ותורתו שויתיה לדמך תרתי מעי; עכ"ל.

• קידושין פא.; דאיתא וז"ל-- רבי חייא בר אשי הוה רגיל כל עידן דהוה נפל לאפיה [פי', בכל פעם כשהיה נופל על פניו באמירת תחנון] הוה אמר הרחמן יצילנו מיצר הרע יומא חד שמעתינהו דביתהו [פי', שמעה אשתו שאמר כן] אמרה מכדי הא כמה שני דפריש ליה מינאי [ופירש"י, מחמת זקנה ומה ירא מיצר הרע] מאי טעמא קאמר הכי יומא חדא הוה קא גריס בגינתיה קשטה נפשה [ופירש"י, בתכשיטיה קישוטי בשמים ואפרסמון] חלפה ותנייה קמיה [ופירש"י, עברה לפניו ושנתה פעם שניה] אמר לה מאן את אמרה אנא חרותא [ופירש"י, שם זונה ניכרת בעיר] דהדרי מיומא [ופירש"י, שחזרתי היום הלום] תבעה אמרה ליה אייתי ניהליה להך רומנא דריש צוציתא [פי', הבא לי את הפרי שבענף שבראש הדקל] שוור [ופירש"י, קפץ] אזל אתייה ניהלה [פי', הלך והביא לה את הפרי מראש הדקל] כי אתא לביתה הוה קא שגרא דביתהו תנורא [פי', היתה אשתו מסיקה את התנור] סליק וקא יתיב בגויה [ופירש"י, להמית את עצמו] אמרה ליה מאי האי אמר לה הכי והכי הוה מעשה אמרה ליה אנא הואי [פי', לא היתה זו חרותא, אלא אני הייתי אשה זו, ולא היה זה חטא] לא אשגח בה עד דהיבה ליה סימני אמר לה אנא מיהא לאיסורה איכווני [פי', אף שזו את היית, מכל מקום אני התכוונתי במעשי לאיסור, שהרי לא ידעתי שזו את, ולכן אף שלא עלתה בידי כפי מחשבתי, אני צריך כפרה על מה שרציתי לעבור איסור] כל ימיו של אותו צדיק היה מתענה עד שמת באותה מיתה [פי', מתוך עינוי]; עכ"ל.

• כתובות סה., דאיתא וז"ל-- חומא [ופירש"י, זה שמה] דביתהו דאביי אתאי לקמיה דרבא, אמרה ליה פסוק לי מזוני [פי', מנכסי בעלי] פסק לה, פסוק לי [פי', בנוסף לכך גם] חמרא, א"ל ידענא ביה

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בנחמני דלא הוה שתי חמרא [פי], יודע אני באביי שלא היה שותה יין לפי שהיה עני, ומכיון שכן אינך רגילה בשתיית יין ואינך זכאית לפסיקת יין], אמרה ליה חיי דמר דהוי משקי ליה בשופרזי כי האי [פי], שהיו משקים אותו יין בגביעים ארוכים כשיעור זה, והראתה לו את אמתה וזרועה] בהדי דקא מחויה ליה איגלי דרעא נפל נהורא בבי דינא קם רבא על לביתיה תבעה לבת רב חסדא [ופירש"י, תבע את אשתו לתשמיש] אמרה ליה בת רב חסדא מאן הוי האינדא בבי דינא, אמר לה חומא דביתיה דאביי נפקא אבתרה מחתא לה בקולפי דשידא [ופירש"י, במנעול של ארגז] עד דאפקה לה מכולי מחוזא; עכ"ל.

• סוכה נב., דאיתא וז"ל-- ת"ר "ואת הצפוני ארחיק מעליכם" זה יצה"ר שצפון ועומד בלבו של אדם וכו'. אמר אביי, ובתלמידי חכמים יותר מכולם, כי הא דאביי שמעיה להווא גברא דקאמר לההיא אתתא נקדים וניזיל באורחא [ופירש"י, נשכים בהשכמה קודם היום] אמר איזיל אפרשינהו מאיסורא אזל בתרייהו תלתא פרסי באגמא כי הוו פרשי מהדדי [ופירש"י, שהיו משתי עיירות, והגיעו לפרשת דרכים, פירש זה לכאן וזו לכאן] שמעינהו דקא אמרי אורחין רחיקא [ופירש"י, דרך רחוקה היא בין שתי מקומותינו, ואי אפשרנו עוד לילך יחד] וצוותין בסימא [ופירש"י, אילו היינו יכולים לילך בדרך אחד היה נעים צוות שלנו] אמר אביי אי מאן דסני לי [ופירש"י, אם היה שונאי מתייחד עם האשה לא הוה מצי אוקומי אנפשיה מלחטוא, ועל עצמו הוא אומר] הוה לא הוה מצי לאוקומיה נפשיה אזל תלא נפשיה [ופירש"י, נשען על בריח הדלת כאדם שמחשב ומצטער] בעיבורא דדשא ומצטער אתא ההוא סבא תנא ליה, כל הגדול מחבירו יצרו גדול הימנו; עכ"ל.

• בספר נדחי ישראל פ' כג, כ' וז"ל-- ונמצא בספרים על הגאון בעל ה"לבוש", שלכך זכה מן השמים לעשות החיבורים הנחמדים שלו, והם ספרי ה"לבושים", שפעם אחת בימי בחרותו היה לו נסיון גדול, שבא אצל דכסית אחת לסחור סחורה, ופתתה אותו לעבירה, ולא היה לו שום מקום להמלט ממנה, שהיה חצרה סגור, אם לא תחת מקום בית הכסא, וביזה את עצמו ונמלט דרך אותו המקום הבזוי הנ"ל, והיה לבוש אז בכמה מיני בגדים, וימאס וילכלך את כולו, ולכך זכה אחר כך מן השמים לחבור ה"לבושים"; עכ"ל.

Q: How does someone who did many *aveiros* begin to do *teshuvah*?

A: *Rabbeinu Yonah* wrote a small essay called *Yesod Hateshuvah*. The *Yesod Hateshuvah* was written to address the situation in which we all find ourselves, and its practical advice should be applied in our *avodas hateshuvah*. So many of us feel like we've done way too many *aveiros* and don't even know where to begin doing *teshuvah*. We feel like giving up before we even start.⁵²

Rabbeinu Yonah tells us the following:

1. Get on the path to *teshuvah*: When a person does an *aveirah*, he typically feels

(52) פי' מתנת חלקו מהגה"צ ר' מתתיהו סלומון שליט"א, על יסוד התשובה, דף תסג.

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bad about it. Those feelings of guilt can be good; they are a message from the *neshamah* that it's time to change. However, they have to be used constructively, at the right time and in the right amount. If a person lets his *aveiros* drag him down with destructive guilt feelings, then he will never achieve a proper *teshuvah*, because when a person is ridden with destructive guilt, his emotions overtake his logic, and he cannot think straight. Instead, he must first detach himself from everything wrong that he did in the past. A person should make believe he was just born and that he now has a clean slate. In order to achieve this, a person should simply move on and continue with his regular routine.⁵³

2. Work on controlling *ta'avos*: A person should get used to living a life where he's in control of his *ta'avos*, and not the reverse. One should practice what is known as the *ta'anis baRa'avad*. The Ra'avad says that every day, a person should stop before he is full and leave over a little bit of a delicious food that he's eating. This type of fast is worth more than fasting an entire day every week. By not giving in to his *ta'avos*, a person is training himself to live a controlled lifestyle.⁵⁴ Although this *ta'anis* is done with food and drinks, it will help build one's overall self-control in other areas as well.

3. Do *mitzvos* even when they're hard: A person should increase the amount he

(53) יסוד התשובה לרבינו יונה, שכ' ז"ל-- שלח לנו הקב"ה ביד עבדיו הנביאים וביד יחזקאל הנביא: נאם אדני אלהים, שובו והשיבו מכל פשעיכם ולא יהיה לכם למכשול עון. השליכו מעליכם את כל פשעיכם אשר פשעתם בם, ועשו לכם לב חדש ורוח חדשה, ולמה תמותו (יח-ל-לא). אדם אשר פשע וחטא ובא לחסות תחת כנפי השכינה ולהכנס בדרכי התשובה, אשכילך ואורך בדרך זו תלך. ביום ההוא ישליך כל פשעיו אשר עשה ויעשה עצמו כאילו כי היום נולד, ואין בידו לא זכות ולא חובה. וזה היום תחילת מעשיו. היום יפסל אורחותיו שלא יטו מעגלותיו מדרך הטוב. ודרך זו תביאנו לשוב בתשובה שלמה, כי הוא יעשה עצמו כמשליך מעליו כובד העוונות ועוצם החטאים אשר עשה. ולא יבהילוהו רעיוניו אשר לא יניחוהו לשוב כי יבוש מחטאיו. כי יחשוב "איך אוכל להעיז פני ולשוב, ואני חטאתי עויתי ופשעתי. כזאת וכזאת עשיתי, עברתי ושניתי ושלשתי עד אין ספורות. ואיך אבוא עוד לפניו כבושת גנב כי ימצא, כי בושתי לעמוד לפניו. ואף איך ארמוס חצרי, ואיך אשמור חקיו." אל יחשוב כן, כי המסית יושב כזבוב במפתחי הלב. מתחדש עליו בכל יום. צופה ומביט להכשילו ומשים לבו לעצה הרעה הזאת; עכ"ל.

חידושי הרי"ם עה"ת, בקטע ראשון על יוה"כ, שכ' ז"ל-- אם אדם קלקל ח"ו לדבר חמור ועוסק בסור מרע לראשונה כמו שכתוב, הריהו חושב על הקלקול, ומקום שהמחשבה נמצאת שם האדם, עם כל נפשו, אז הוא בתוך הרע והוא בטח לא ישוב בתשובה כי מוחו יתגשם ויגרום לטמטום הלב ועלול ליפול לתוך עצבות חלילה, ואפילו לא עבר דבר חמור ומוחו לא יתגשם ולבו לא יטמטם אבל כשיחשוב על סור מרע ועל הבוץ, הפוך בבוץ והוא ישאר בוץ. כן חטא לא חטא מה יש להקב"ה מזה, ובזמן שהוא חושב על זה הריהו יכול להיות נוקב מרגליות, ושיהיה משהו מזה למלכות שמים, לכן סור מרע, הפנה עצמך מרע, אל תהרהר ברע, עשה טוב, עשית חבילות עבירות עשה מצוות כנגדן, היום, לפני יום כפורים צריכים להרגיש את עזיבת החטא, עם ישוב הדעת, מעומקא דליבא, לא ע"י התפעלות, רק קבלה בלב על העתיד ולהיות בשמחה, לומר "על חטא" במהירות ולא לשקוע בהם, רק ב"ותמלוך אתה ה' לבדך"; עכ"ל.

(54) יסוד התשובה לרבינו יונה, שכ' ז"ל-- ואל ימלא כל תאוותיו, לא במאכל ולא במשתה. וכן אמר הראב"ד שהיה אחד מחסידי עולם: הגדר הגדול המעולה המופלא, מניעת המאכלות. וכן פרש דבריו: אל יעזוב לגמרי מלאכול בשר ולשתות יין, כי דיך מה שאסרה תורה. אך בעת מאכלו ועודנו תאב לאכול, יניח ממנו לכבוד הבורא מתאוותיו ואל יאכל כפי תאוותו. ודרך זו תמנענו מחטוא ותזכירנו אהבת הבורא יותר מתענית אחד בשבוע, כי זה בכל יום תמיד, מדי אכלו ומדי שתותו, יניח מתאוותו לכבוד הבורא; עכ"ל.

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learns and be careful with the way he performs *mitzvos*. If it's hard for him to do a certain mitzvah, but he does it anyways, then all the difficulties he had to endure in order to do the mitzvah, are called *yisurim shel ahavah*, suffering that shows his love to Hashem, and Hashem accepts that kind of *yisurim* as a form of *teshuvah*.⁵⁵

4. Get the proper *hadrachah*: There is one more point that bears mention here. Rav Mattisyahu Salomon *shlit"u* said⁵⁶ that there could be many times that a person is not careful with certain *aveiros* or develops bad habits because no one gave him the proper *chinuch* in that area. Even if he knew that something was an *aveirah*, his understanding of the *aveirah* was very childish and incorrect. In such instances, the person is considered to be like a **תינוק שנשבה לבין הגויים**, and he is not held responsible for what he did wrong. (Of course, a person can't use this as an excuse, saying, "It's not my fault that I am not careful with a certain mitzvah. I didn't know any better!" To the contrary-- a person is responsible to learn what is right and wrong so that he can be more careful.) Therefore, before a person does *teshuvah* for that *aveirah*, he must first learn from his *Rabbeim* what is written in the *sefarim* about that topic and how he is to apply it to his specific circumstances. Only then can the person say that he truly knows what he did wrong and is responsible for his wrongdoing.

Q: What should one's general attitude be after he was *nichshal* in an *aveirah*?

A: A *bachur* who is struggling in *inyanei kedusha*, can feel so guilty and down about what he did, that he loses his sense of self-value. This attitude is fraught with danger. *Rabbeinu Yonah* writes that the prerequisite to *avodas Hashem* is for a person to be aware of his own *chashivus*. Otherwise, if a person views himself as a piece of garbage, then there would be nothing holding him back from indulging in his *ta'avos*; why should he put forth effort to fix himself if he feels he's not worth anything?⁵⁷

The following is a letter written by Rav Shimshon Pincus *zatz"l* in response to a

(55) יסוד התשובה לרבינו יונה, שכ' וז"ל-- וישים לבו בתורה. אם היה רגיל ללמוד דף אחד, ילמוד שני דפים-- כי גדול תלמוד תורה שמביא לידי מעשה. ויהיה מיסר עצמו בכפית יצרו לתורה ולמצוות-- והן הן יסורין של אהבה. ואל ילך אדם במצוות הבורא כאדם העושה במקרה, פעמים עושה פעמים מניח, אלא כולן יעשה בלב שלם תמיד. ואל יניח משום ענין, לא מפני עצלות ולא מפני בושה, וכו'. ואפילו אם יהיו העולם מתלוצצים עליו, מכל מקום יש לו להיות כפתי בעיניהם ולא יעבור על מצוה קטנה ממצוות הבורא. שעל זה נאמר: באהבתה תשגה תמיד (משלי ה:ט), כלומר, באהבתה של מצוה, תהיה שוגה ופתי להניח כל עסקיך ולדון בה; עכ"ל.

(56) שמעתי מפיו [בוועד על יסוד התשובה לרבינו יונה].

(57) שערי העבודה אות א, שכ' וז"ל-- הפתח הראשון הוא שידע האיש העובד ערך עצמו, ויכיר מעלתו ומעלת אבותיו, וגדולתם וחשיבותם וחתם אצל הבורא יתברך. וישתדל ויתחזק תמיד להעמיד עצמו במעלה ההיא וכו'. וישיב לנפשו ויאמר, אדם גדול וחשוב כמוני היום שיש בי כמה מעלות טובות רמות ונשאות, ושאני בן גדולים בן מלכי קדם, איך אעשה הרעה הגדולה הזאת וחטאתי לאלקים ולאבותי כל הימים. ואם חלילה וחס לא יכיר מעלתו ומעלת אבותיו, נקל יהיה בעיניו ללכת בדרכיו הפריצים, להגלות נגלות כאחד הנבלים למלאות תאותו בחיקו. כאשר אמר המשל, כל מי שאינו מתבייש מנפשו אין לנפשו ערך בעיניו; עכ"ל.

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yungeman who had serious struggles with *nisyonos* in *inyanei kedushah*. Rav Shimshon זצ"ל answered him with the following words:

“You wrote in your letter that the way you’re behaving leads you to think that you’re not a *ben Torah*, nor a *frume Yid*. Then, a sentence later, you write that you feel so bad about the fact that you were *nichshal* despite trying so hard not to, and that you are *davening* for help. Don’t you realize that you are contradicting yourself?! If you had written that you are a *chotei*, I would tell you that you’re correct, and that you have to work on overcoming your *nisyonos*. But the fact that you’re bothered by what you’re doing makes me wonder-- Does someone who is not frum or not a *ben Torah* feel the way you feel, after they do an *aveirah*? Let’s play devil’s advocate. Why are you putting up with this struggle? Just throw off your yarmulke and indulge in all that the big world has to offer! Do you know what’s preventing you from doing that? It’s your *neshamah*, which is connected to Hashem and recognizes the emes. And every time you hold yourself back from doing an *aveirah*, you are bringing a *ruchniyusdige* light into the world that is many times greater than the damage caused by your *aveiros*. Let’s now get back to what’s bothering you. You feel that your whole *avodas Hashem* is just one big show. Now if you would be putting on a show in order to take advantage of people, then I would tell you that you’re doing a terrible thing. But your situation is different. You’re ‘putting on a show’ because deep down that’s who you want to be! So while your outward behavior might not reflect your *pnimiyus*, your inner self, it does reflect your *pnimey pnimiyus*, your innermost self-- your desire from deep within to do what’s right!”⁵⁸

As much as one would like for all of his problems to go away in an instant, the

(58) נפש שמשון אגרות ומאמרים, מכתבי חיזוק דף מח, שכ' וז"ל-- כבוד ידידי ר'... שליט"א, קראתי מכתבך ואשתדל לענות בקיצור. כתבת הרבה דברים ומכל מה שכתבת לא מצאתי רק מילה אחת נכונה: "בער ולא מבין, סכל ולא יודע"-- זה אמת בהחלט, ואני מוסיף-- שוטה וטיפש!!! ואסביר אחד לאחד: אתה כותב "אני לא בן תורה, לא דתי, לא אדם", ותוך כדי דיבור אתה מספר איך שאתה מצטער על מצבך, איך שעד שבועות עמדת בנסיון, איך שאתה מתפלל, האם אינך רואה הסתירה?! אם תאמר שאתה חוטא-- זה נכון, צריך לעמוד בנסיונות, אבל "לא דתי"?! האם זה מכתב של לא דתי?! האם זה מכתב בהרגשים של "לא בן תורה"?! האם זה הרגשים של "לא בן אדם"?! כמה דוממים או צומחים או בעלי חיים מרגישים את מה שאתה מרגיש? אתה כותב שמיתך טובה לך, וכו'. בא נדבר ברורות: למה אתה סובל? תוריד את הכיפה ותצא לעולם הגדול. מי מעכב? רק המצפון העמוק וידיעת האמת ודביקות הנשמה להקב"ה, וכל רגע של התעקבות מחטא מוסיף אור לעולם פי כמה מההרס שעושה חטא. ובעיקר אתה אומר שאתה "מציג". דע אחי שזו סוגיה עמוקה, אדם שמציג מעשיו החיצוניים אינם מתאימים לפנימיות שלו, אלא לפנימי פנימיות, בסוד "נעוץ סופו בתחילתו" ובסוד "סוף מעשה במחשבה תחילה". אדם ש"מציג" כדי שיוכל ללכוד אנשים להרע להם, זה נורא, אבל אין זה מצבך, אתה מציג מפני שזה מה שאתה רוצה עמוק עמוק, באמת אתה בעל עבירה ומציג כאילו אתה אברך נחמד-- למה אתה עושה כן? מפני שבאמת ובפנימיות אתה רוצה וחושק להיות אברך נחמד, וכי וזי הצגה של רע?! בקיצור, אתה שוטה, ובעיקר השטות שאתה לא רואה האור שהוא כבר קרוב אליך מאוד והישועה שהיום היא בהישג ידך-- אבל אני כן רואה, ואין אני מתפלל על מותך, אני מתפלל שיבקע האור על אפך וחמתך-- להכעיס!!! אוהבך שמשון; עכ"ל.

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reality is that life doesn't work that way. No one ever conquered a *nisayon* overnight; it's a process of falling and rising multiple times. In a famous letter, Rav Hutner writes to a *bachur* who was struggling with difficult *nisyonos*, that we are under the mistaken impression that *Gedolim* were born great. Quite the contrary-- what made them great was their *nisyonos*. The *passuk* in Mishlei says, **שבע יפול צדיק וקם**; the *tzaddik* falls seven times and then rises. Rav Hutner explains this *passuk* to mean that because a person falls seven times and then gets up again, he becomes a stronger person and develops into a *tzaddik*. A person should tell himself, "I fell now and will fall again, but that doesn't make me into a loser." As the expression goes, "Lose a battle and win the war." Our *Gedolim* lost many battles with the *yetzer hora* before they ultimately won the war of *kevishas hayetzer*.

The *Gemara* says that a person should not say that he deserves to be punished for his many *aveiros*, as that is considered 'asking for trouble' and is **פותח פה לשטן**, opening the mouth of the Satan to be *mekatreig* on him in *shamayim*.⁵⁹ However, Rav Hutner writes that saying that one will surely fall again is okay to say. Not only that, but it is important for a person to recognize that he will have *nefillos*, yet he can get up again afterwards and will become greater as a result.⁶⁰

Here is just one example from the life of one of the greatest *Gedolim* in recent history, who, after a long period of suffering, managed to move on in his *avodas*

(59) ברכות יט.

(60) פחד יצחק, אגרות וכתבים, אגרת קכה, שכ' וז"ל-- רעה חולה היא אצלנו שכאשר מתעסקים אנו בצדדי השלימות של גדולינו, הננו מטפלים בסיכום האחרון של מעלתם. מספרים אנו על דרכי השלימות שלהם, בשעה שאנחנו מדלגים על המאבק הפנימי שהתחולל בנפשם. הרושם של שיחתנו על הגדולים מתקבל כאילו יצאו מתחת יד היוצר בקומתם ובצביונם. הכל משוחחים, מתפעלים ומרימים על נס את טהרת הלשון של בעל החפץ-חיים זצ"ל, אבל מי יודע מן כל המלחמות, המאבקים, המכשולים, הנפילות, והנסיונות לאחור שמצא החפץ-חיים בדרך המלחמה שלו עם יצרו הרע, משל אחד מני אלה. ודי לנבון שכמותך לדון מן הפרט אל הכלל. התוצאה מזה היא כשנער בעל רוח, בעל שאיפה, בעל תסיסה מוצא בעצמו מכשולים, נפילות, ירידות הרי הוא דומה בעיניו כבלתי "שתול בבית השם". שלפי דמיונות של נער זה להיות שתול בבית השם, פירושו הוא לשבת בשלות הנפש על נאות דשא של מי מנוחות וליהנות מיצרו הטוב כדרך שצדיקים נהנים מזיו השכינה שעטרותיהם בראשיהם במסיבת גן עדן. ולאידך גיסא, לא להיות מורגז מסערת היצר על דרך הכתוב של "במתים חפשי" (תהלים פח:ו). אבל דע לך, חביבי, ששורש נשמתך הוא לא השלוחה של היצר טוב, אלא דוקא מלחמתו של היצר טוב. ומכתבך היקר הנלבב מעיד כמה עדים כי אכן לוחם נאמן אתה בצבאותיו של היצר טוב. באנגלית אומרים "Lose a battle and win the war". בודאי שהנך נכשל ועומד להיות נכשל, (אין בזה משום פתיחת פה לשטן) ובכמה מערכות תפול שדוד. אבל אני מבטיח לך שלאחר הפסד כל המערכות תצא מן המלחמה כשזר הנצחון על ראשך, והטרף החד מפרפר בין שיניך. Lose battles, but win wars. החכם מכל אדם אמר "שבע יפול צדיק וקם" (משלי כד:טז). והטפשים חושבים כי כוונתו בדרך רבותא. אע"פ ששבע יפול צדיק מ"מ הוא קם. אבל החכמים יודעים היטב שהכוונה היא שמהות הקימה של הצדיק היא דרך ה"שבע נפילות" שלו. וירא את כל אשר עשה והנה טוב מאד. טוב זה יצר טוב. מאד זה יצר הרע; עכ"ל.

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Hashem. The Chofetz Chaim's son writes that his father told him that when he was around twenty years old, he was what we would call "clinically depressed". He couldn't concentrate on anything and wasn't able to daven properly. He couldn't even function like a normal human being and wasn't sleeping properly. Because of what he was going through, the Chofetz Chaim travelled to the city of Vilna to consult with many doctors, but to his dismay, none of them were able to cure him. Things got so bad that young Yisroel Meir began to think that he was a hopeless case. It wasn't until a full year of suffering passed that he came back to himself. For the rest of his life, the Chofetz Chaim never forgot this difficult period and considered it a tremendous *chessed* from Hashem that he was able to accomplish so much during the remaining seventy years of his life, despite what he had gone through.⁶¹

Q: Why do the same *nisyonos* appear even after one does everything possible to avoid them?

A: A person very often tries to do everything he can in order to avoid a certain *nisayon*, yet the *nisayon* eventually comes back no matter how hard he tries. One might then *chas v'shalom* think to himself, "Look-- Hashem didn't accept my *teshuvah*. He must not love me; otherwise, this would not be happening to me now. Forget about it! I might as well just do the *aveirah* again." This way of thinking is rooted in a misunderstanding of what a *nisayon* is. Hashem wants to give a person the opportunity to come even closer to Him, so He sends the *nisayon* again to see how he'll do this time. The reappearance of the *yetzer hora* is actually part of the *teshuvah* process. If one is *omeid b'nisayon* after having experienced the 'pleasure' of an *aveirah*, then his *teshuvah* is considered to be on the highest level. He then reaches a *madreigah* that even *tzaddikim gemurim*, who never did *aveiros*, are not able to achieve.⁶²

Q: What is the point of doing *teshuvah* if a person knows that he will very likely

(61) קיצור תולדות חייו (של הח"ח), שכ' ו"ל-- סיפר לי מר אבי כי בהיותו כבן כ' נחלה בעצבי מוחו, עד כי לא יכול לעיין בשום דבר עיון, ודבר הצריך מחשבה, ולבסוף גם בתפילתו, היה קשה עליו להתבונן ולחשוב, וגם שנתו נהיתה עליו, והיה רק נים ולא נים, ושמע בשנתו כל מה שמדברים, מובן, כי בא לו זה מרוב עיון בהלכה, ופעמים רבות סיפר לנו מצערו הגדול אז שחשב כי אבדה תקותו ללמוד תורה, ועסק בכמה רפואות אצל הרופאים בוויילנא וללא הועיל, וכה עבר עליו שנה תמימה בצער, עד שריחם ה' עליו ושב לאיתנו ותמיד היה מספר חסדי ה' עליו באמרו מי מלל לי. כי במחי החלש כזה, אוכל לעסוק אח"כ כשבעים שנה, בעיון הלכה, נפלאים מעשי ה' אמנם בכל ימי חייו היה נזהר, וכאשר עסק עמנו בעומק ובעיון הלכה, אחרי ג' או ד' שעות, היה מפסיק, באמרו איני רשאי להכביד על מוחי יתר מיד, בבת אחת; עכ"ל

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not be able to withstand the *nisayon* when it comes back?

A: If a person sincerely did not want to repeat his *cheit* at the time the *teshuvah* was done, then Hashem considers the *teshuvah* to have erased past *aveiros*, despite whatever ends up happening at a later time.⁶³ The person must, of course, be honest with himself and not claim that he put forth the proper effort when he really didn't. However, if he did sincere *teshuvah*, then he need not worry even if he was ultimately *nichshal* at a later time. He should just get up and start all over again.

Doing this is easier said than done, though. It is often extremely difficult for a person to start over when he has already lost quite a few battles with the *yetzer hora*. The *passuk* says **שבע יפול צדיק וקם**, a *tzaddik* falls seven times and then gets up. But it's far from easy to be a *tzaddik*! Most of us are *beinonim*, middle of the road *Yidden*, and we have a constant struggle in our *ruchniyus*. It's hard for us to keep getting up when we continuously fall. So how are we to view our situation?

The *Sefer Hatanya* writes that a *beinoni* should not feel frustrated with all of the *nisyonos* he is facing. He should recognize that this is his *tafkid* in life: to keep on fighting. That is his way of giving *nachas* to Hashem, and it may very well be the reason why he was created.⁶⁶ Besides for the rewards Hashem gives such a person in *Olam Haboh*, the benefits in this world are tremendous! A person who

(62) פ' מתנת חלקו מהגה צ"ר 'מתתיהו סלומון שליט"א על שערי תשובה, שער ראשון אות מט, שכ' ז"ל-- כ' הרמב"ם (הל' תשובה פ"ב הל' א) ז"ל, אי זו היא תשובה גמורה, זה שבא לידו דבר שעבר בו ואפשר בידו לעשותו ופירש ולא עשה מפני התשובה לא מיראה ולא מכשולון כח, כיצד הרי שבא על אשה בעבירה ולאחר זמן נתייחד עמה והוא עומד באהבתו בה ובכח גופו ובמדינה שעבר בה ופירש ולא עבר, זהו בעל תשובה גמורה. הוא ששלמה אומר, וזכור את בוראיך בימי בחורותיך עכ"ל.

ובאמת כשנתבונן בזה נראה שהיא סייעתא דשמיא נפלאה ורואים מזה את גודל השגחת יד ה'. ולמשל כשנצייר לעצמנו את ציורו של הרמב"ם: אחד הלך בזמן החופש למקום פריצות, שם פגע באשה, תקפו יצרו ועבר עבירה. אח"כ התחרט על מעשיו ורצה לעשות תשובה והחליט שאף פעם לא ישוב למקום פריצות זה. אחר איזה זמן רצה לעשות עוד יותר תשובה ועלה על דעתו ללכת לארץ ישראל-- מקום קדושה, אשר שם יקבל 'ברכות' מגדולים וצדיקים, ויתפלל אצל ה'כותל' ויתקרב יותר אל ה'. הכל מוכן לנסיעה-- עולה לאוירון, ובמצע הדרך שני ערביים שודדים את האוירון, ואינם נוסעים לארץ ישראל אלא מכריחים את הטייס לטוס דווקא אל מקום הפריצות אשר אליו הלך אותו האדם! הכירו באיש זה שהוא היהודי היחידי באוירון ואמרו לו לרדת שם והם יסעו למקום אחר. נשאר איש זה לבדו במקום פריצות זה, ומיד פגש באותה אשה שעשה עבירה עמה! חשב האיש לעצמו: הלא אין הקב"ה אוהבני ואינו מקבל תשובתי-- דאל"כ לא היה מחזירני למקום זה, ומתייאש לגמרי על תשובתו ושוב עובר עבירה. אבל בעצם זה היה נסיונו! צריך היה לדעת שהקב"ה מזמן לו את אותו מצב רק כדי שיתגבר הפעם על יצרו, ויחשב לבעל תשובה גמור.

עכ"פ סבר הרמב"ם שרק באופן זה נחשב לבעל תשובה גמורה וכלשונו (הל' תשובה פ"ז הל' ד) ז"ל, ואל ידמה אדם בעל תשובה שהוא מרוחק ממעלת הצדיקים מפני העוונות וחטאות שעשה, אין הדבר כן אלא אהוב ונחמד הוא לפני הבורא וכאילו לא חטא מעולם, ולא עוד אלא ששכרו הרבה שהרי טעם טעם החטא ופירש ממנו וכשב יצרו, אמרו חכמים מקום שבעלי תשובה עומדין אין צדיקים גמורין יכולין לעמוד בו, כלומר מעלתן גדולה ממעלת אלו שלא חטאו, מפני שהן כובשין יצרים יותר מהם עכ"ל, וכן סבר המבי"ט; עכ"ל. [אכן רבינו יונה בשער א אות מט מחדש שאף אם לא יזדמן אותו מצב, עדיין יכול להיות במדרגה זו של תשובה גמורה. והיינו שעל ידי הוספת יראת שמים בכל יום יכול לבוא למצב שאם היה מזדמן נסיון זה היה מתגבר על יצרו והקב"ה יודע, ובוזה יכול להיות במדרגה עליונה זו.]

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overcomes a *nisayon* has the good feeling of living a life where he is in control. He is able to think better and is in a more positive mood. By being *misgabeir* over one's *ta'avos*, the *ta'avah* decreases, and the person gains a feeling of purity in its place. If a person tries his hardest, Hashem will ultimately help him in his battle, and it will slowly become easier to deal with.

(63) רמב"ם, הל' תשובה פ"ב הל' ב, שכ' זו"ל-- ומה היא התשובה. הוא שיעזוב החוטא חטאו ויסירונו ממחשבתו ויגמור בלבו שלא יעשהו עוד, שנאמר "יעזוב רשע דרכו ואיש און מחשבותיו. וכן יתנחם על שעבר, שנ' "כי אחרי שובי נחמתי ואחרי הודעי ספקתי על ירך". ויעיד עליו יודע תעלומות שלא ישוב לזה החטא לעולם; עכ"ל. אולם עיי"ש במקורות וציונים על הגליון במהדורת שבתי פרנקל, שכ' זו"ל-- ואף אם שוב חטא מחמת יצרו, אין תשובתו נפסדת (עי' אמו"ד שם ומאירי בחיבור התשובה מאמר א' פ"ט ומבי"ט בבית אלקים ש' התשובה פ"ו); עכ"ל. ויש לציין ג"כ מש"כ בלחם משנה שם ובספר חסידים אות כ.

(66) ליקוטי אמרים פ' כז, שכ' זו"ל-- אל יפול לב אדם עליו ולא ירע לבבו מאד גם אם יהיה כן כל ימיו במלחמה זו, כי אולי לכך נברא וזאת עבודתו לאכפיה לס"א תמיד, וכו'. ושני מיני נחת רוח לפניו ית' למעלה. א' מביטול הס"א לגמרי ואתהפכא ממרירו למתקא ומחשוכא לנהורא ע"י הצדיקים. והשנית כד אתכפיה הס"א בעודה בתקפה וגבורתה ומגביה עצמה כנשר ומשם מורידה ה' באתערותא דלתתא ע"י הבינונים; עכ"ל.

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Appendix II Severe Struggles in Shemiras Einayim

This chapter addresses severe struggles in *shemiras einayim*, a topic discussed in Section Two, Chapter Five. Mechanchim who deal with this issue have said that unfortunately too many *bachurim* in every yeshiva have been exposed to this level of *pritzus* and are struggling.

The following is a quote from Rabbi Yisroel Reisman shlit”a:

“You would not believe how many times in the past few years I have had to deal with couples, frum b’nei Torah, where a wife discovers that her husband is looking at inappropriate material at home. Employers call me when they catch their frum employees falling prey to this type of influence. I hear it again and again. People tell me, “I heard the Gedolei Yisroel talking about the Internet. I thought that they don’t know what they’re talking about, that they’re from Mars!” And then they find out that the Gedolim were right... Nobody comes to a rav and says, “I have a problem with the Internet.” It’s the employers, or the parents, or the wives. There’s someone who will read this who has a problem, and he will undoubtedly wait until he is discovered and put to shame. And what about the children? Do you think you can hold back your child? You can’t stop a child; a child who has a \$10 bill can buy a prepaid phone and have the Internet available to him. Do you think it’s possible to stop him? Understand the aveilus of the breakdown of kedushas Yisroel. We need fortification; we need protection from the influence that corrupts and destroys.”

What Rabbi Reisman is saying can be substantiated by Rabbanim across the globe. There is no *kehillah* in the world that is immune to this *yetzer hora*.⁶⁴

Hashem *bentched* all children with a curious nature, and it is this curiosity that gives them a desire to learn and to gain knowledge. However, as it pertains to *shemiras einayim*, curiosity is like the cheese in a mouse trap. It can ensnare a *bachur* at a time when he’s least expecting it and bring his mind to a place where no *Yid* should ever go. Although many parents are careful to safeguard their *bachur* from being exposed to any kind of *shmutz*, the reality remains that they can not be completely in control. Furthermore, as technology continues to evolve, it becomes increasingly difficult to stay a step ahead of the game. It is therefore vital to be cognizant of the issue and be prepared to react in the right way.

(64) רמב"ם הל' איסורי ביאה פ' כב, הלכות יח-יט, הובא לעיל (Section One, Step One).

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How could a good bachur fall so low?

Picture the following scenario:

Fourteen-year-old Yossi was shmoozing with his close friend, Naftali, during recess, when Naftali (wanting to sound like a little mechanech), said, “You know, iPhones are a terrible michshol. The other day, my mother was showing me a clip of the Simchas Beis Hashoeva in Mir Yerushalayim that was posted on a frum news site. After my mother went to sleep, I continued to look at some of the other videos, and one thing led to the next... Before I knew it, a terrible video popped up on the screen.”

“Really?!” Yossi said. “Oy, vey! What did you see?”

Naftali said, “You’re not going to believe it! I’d rather not say-- you know, ...”

“That’s horrible!” Yossi said. “I can’t believe the world has fallen so low in our times.”

“Yeah,” Naftali remarked. “It’s mamesh terrible. You know, anyone can buy an unfiltered phone in Walmart, or even purchase a magazine in a convenience store like the one downtown, and they’ll be able to see all this kind of stuff. We have to be mechazek ourselves.”

A month later, Yossi was walking home from yeshiva when he happened to pass a 24-hour convenience store. He was in the mood for a Snapple, so he decided to go inside and buy one. The store was quiet, and the cashier seemed to be busy with his own things. Yossi caught a glance at one of the magazines and put two and two together. “That’s what Naftali was talking about!” he thought. He was curious to see just how bad it really was, and he decided to take a quick glance. Whatever Naftali told him could not have prepared him for what he actually saw. It was absolutely horrendous! Quickly he walked out of the store, completely forgetting about his drink.

At the time, Yossi didn’t realize what was happening to him, but with that one look, the nisayon left the realm of theory and became a reality for him.⁶⁵ He was disgusted with himself and resolved never to repeat it. But the yetzer hora was even more resolute than he was. Five months later, Yossi was at his grandparents’ home for Chol Hamoed. The men were in shul, learning, and the women and girls had gone off to watch a performance, while he preferred to remain home and read. The minutes ticked by, and Yossi began to feel hungry. He made his way to the kitchen, when he suddenly noticed that his grandmother had left her unfiltered iPhone on the kitchen counter.

Yossi knew than an iPhone could be dangerous, but he was bored and all alone, so he decided to just take a peek. He googled three letters that changed his life dramatically.

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He felt disgusted and sick to his stomach, but there seemed to be some kind of magnetic pull that was sucking him into this garbage.⁶⁶ Yossi knew that everyone would be coming home soon, so after half an hour, he quickly erased the memory and put the phone away exactly where it had been before.

The weeks passed, but the incident kept replaying in Yossi's mind. To Yossi, even worse than the ruchniyusdig effects of seeing such shmutz, was the emotional confusion he was experiencing. He was in a quandary. He was too embarrassed to ask anyone to help him, but his mind kept replaying the obscene images he had seen not too long ago. He was left alone to deal with a ta'avah coming with more force than a regular human is capable of dealing with.⁶⁷

In order to rid himself of the emotional turmoil and satisfy his strong physical drive, Yossi decided to declare defeat. It was too much to bear. Very secretly he went out to buy himself his very own "treat", and of course made sure to hide it well...

You may be wondering what ended up happening to Yossi. Did he go off the derech? Not at all! While he was never the brightest boy in yeshiva, he was definitely one of the "frumest". Some considered Yossi to be the most yeshivishe boy in his class. So going off the derech wasn't #1 on his list. But unofficially, Yossi was way off the derech of where he wanted to be in life.

Symptoms of the struggle Yossi was facing began to appear, but most of them went unnoticed. During shiur, Yossi started having a dazed look on his face, which his Rebbeim thought was just a sign of daydreaming. At times he would become subdued and solemn

(65) חידושי מרן הגרי"ז הלוי החדשות על תנ"ך, הובא בסוף ס' בית הלוי עה"ת, שכ' וז"ל-- נצבים כט:טז, "ותראו את שיקוציהם ואת גלוליהם וגו' פן יש בכם איש וגו', אשר לבבו פונה היום מעם ה' אלקינו ללכת לעבוד את אלהי הגוים ההם, פן יש בכם שורש פורה ראש ולענה". פרש"י ותראו את שקוציהם, על שהם מאוסים כשקצים, גלוליהם שמוסרחים ומאוסין כגלל, וכו' פן יש בכם, לפיכך אני צריך השביעכם, עכ"ל. לכאורה אם הם ראו אותן מאוסים כשקצים ומוסרחין ומאוסין כגלל, הלא אדרבה מי יפנה להם, ואשר לכן למה צריך להשביעם משום זה. חזינן מזה שאם גם רואים את הע"ג כשקצים וגלולים, אבל מכיון שראו אותה הרי צריך כבר להשביעם אם לבבם פונה מעם ה'. גם לראותה מאוסין ומוסרחין לא צריך, שאם רק רואין ואפילו בצורה הזאת חיישינן שמא יש בהם שורש פורה ראש ולענה; עכ"ל

(66) נדרים לב; דאיתא וז"ל-- דבשעת יצר הרע לית דמדכר ליה ליצר טוב; עכ"ל.

(67) עי' באור יחזקאל, מכתבים עמ' מט, שכ' וז"ל-- ידוע היסוד של הגר"א ז"ל (פי' משלי יח:יא) שכתב כי יש שני מיני יצר הרע, יצר הרע שבפנים ויצה"ר שבחוץ, ויותר קשה היצר שבחוץ, כמעט אין עצה נגדו אם לא לברוח ממנו, כי חזק הוא מאד, אם לא פועל הוא לגמרי-- אבל אי אפשר שלא יפעול מה, וכו'. אבל כמדומני כי היותר קשה הוא בעת אשר יש לו עוד עזר התאוות והרצונות הגשמיות אשר נפשו של אדם מחמתו ומתאוה להם; עכ"ל.

APPENDICES

instead of acting like his regular happy self, but his parents thought nothing of it; after all, which teenager doesn't have mood swings? Yossi would often spend extra time in the bathroom, but who doesn't, thought his parents. He would occasionally disappear for lengths of time, which went completely unaccounted for because everyone knows you can't breathe down a teenager's back. He disregarded any positive comments about himself, but people attributed that to his 'anivus'.

As the years went on, Yossi's ta'avah grew-- until it got so out of hand that he contemplated going to some secret place in Manhattan and letting loose. The only reason why he did not do so was because of the concern of chillul Hashem. (It didn't dawn on him to put on a t-shirt and jeans, because a ben Torah like him would never do such a thing!)

Yossi tried so hard to stay in line, and baruch Hashem, there were multiple times of success (like a large part of the year he spent in Eretz Yisroel). But the yetzer hora kept reappearing. Yossi instinctively knew how terribly wrong his behavior was, and was sure that he was going to burn in Gehinnom for it. He made nedarim that he would stop, but couldn't keep to them (which only added to his guilt).

He was mekabeil to fast if he was nichshal, but that, too, did nothing to stop his behavior. What ultimately kept Yossi afloat was his strong inner sense of right and wrong. Amazingly, he was able to quit for the two years preceding his chasunah. With tremendous rachamei shamayim, he finally managed to limp his way to the chuppah at the age of 21.

Yossi was now convinced that his problems were over. But he was in for a big surprise. His addictive behaviors made it very difficult for him to be satisfied with the regular 'pas bs'alo', both quantitatively and qualitatively. His brain had been pre-programmed to relate to this inyan in a distorted manner, and while he didn't go back to his original cheit in shemiras einayim (aside from one unfortunate slip), he was still having a hard time with shemiras habris.

(68) [ירושלמי שבת א:ג, דאיתא וז"ל-- אל תאמן בעצמך עד יום מותך. מעשה בחסיד אחד שהיה יושב ושונה אל תאמן בעצמך עד יום זקנותך. כגון אני. (פי' קרבן העדה, לפי שהיה בטוח בעצמו שלא ישלוט בו יצה"ר, אמר שאין לשנות עד יום מותך אלא עד יום זקנתך, מאחר שהזקין יש להאמין בעצמו שלא יחטא) אתת חדא רוחא (פי' קרבן העדה, באה רוח אחת ונגעה כאשה יפה ועברה לפניו) ונסייתה (פי' קרבן העדה, להתחיל לתבעה). ושרי תהי ביה (פי' קרבן העדה, כלומר התחיל להתחרט לחזור בו מחטאתו) אמרה ליה לא תצוק רוח אנא (פי' קרבן העדה, לא תצער שרוח היא ולא נכשלת באשה) אזול ואישתוי לחברך (פי' קרבן העדה, לך והשוה עצמך לחבירך ולא תתגאה יותר מאחרים שאתה שווה לאחרים ואמור עד יום מותך); עכ"ל.]

אוזר בגבורה

Baruch Hashem, after many years of determination and hard work, this nisayon has slowed down somewhat. Yossi has learned to view himself as someone who is “in recovery forever”. The words of the Mishnah,⁶⁸ אל תאמן בעצמך עד יום מותך, are a reality to him. He knows that the smallest thing can trigger his yetzer hora, and makes sure to set the proper gedarim to protect himself. When buying a home, his first priority was to find an area that would not put his kedushah in jeopardy. When searching for a job, he made sure that the environment was conducive for a ben Torah. And most importantly, the Internet in his office has the highest level filter.

Yossi is now happily married. But sadly, the images he saw will never be erased, and they often come back to haunt him at the worst possible times. His unfortunate exposure left an indelible mark on him. The effects were deep and will never completely go away.

Any *mechanech* with experience helping *bachurim* in *inyanei kedushah* will testify that Yossi’s story is by no means an isolated one, particularly among *bachurim* who are not finding a *sippuk* in their learning. (Not every story ends as positively as this one, though...) Those dealing with these issues say that there are, without exaggeration, many thousands(!) in our world who are already reaching out anonymously for help in these areas, and it’s safe to assume that there are many more who are suffering as well, yet are not getting the help they need. One must know that if a *bachur* has easy access to unfiltered (or poorly filtered) Internet, then it is practically guaranteed that he has been exposed. (Don’t believe him when he tells you that he’s just watching sports!)

As *mechanchim* raising a generation described by *Chazal* as “מה יעשה הבן שלא” *מה יחטא*” we must ask ourselves-- “מה יעשו המחנכים שהבן לא יחטא”. Of course one cannot stand over a *bachur* all day, nor is it advisable to confront him directly about this. Instead, we should be aware of the symptoms mentioned in Chapter Three of the Introduction. We should then speak to the *bachur* in a very general way about the *nisayon* of *shemiras einayim*; see Chapter Four of the Introduction for pointers how to open up a discussion about this topic.



**GUARD
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