

Guard-Your-Eyes Founders Visiting London



Guard Your Eyes is an organization with which many of us in the United Kingdom are already familiar. Launched back in 2007 by a few G-d fearing Jews in Eretz Yisrael who understood the great tests facing the Jewish people with technology, it flourished worldwide under the guidance of Rabbi Dr. Abraham J. Twerski and with the strong backing and direction of Harav Aharon Feldman, *shlita, Rosh Yeshivah* of Yeshivas Ner Yisrael in Baltimore.

Today, this efficient and effective organization serves over 10,000 members of the Jewish community per year, who reach out to them for help in their struggles and addictions to inappropriate materials on the internet, as well as related behaviors. Over the course of several years, Guard Your Eyes has developed innovative and effective tools that are freely and anonymously available to Jews across the world, in English, Hebrew, Yiddish, French and Spanish. These tools have literally saved people's personal lives and marriages, enabling them to overcome debilitating and addictive behavior patterns. Guard Your Eyes is also heavily involved in the area of prevention, reaching hundreds of thousands of Jews worldwide to help mitigate the risks that the accessibility and anonymity of technology have created in our communities.

A few months ago, in December of 2014, the founders of the Guard Your Eyes organization were invited by Rabbi Shimon Winegarten from the Bridge Lane Beth Hamedrash and Dayan Shmuel Simons of the London Beth Din to meet with Rabbanim, *mechanchim* and therapists in London. The goal was to train and raise awareness about one of the most burning issues facing *Klal Yisrael* today, and to present the solutions that they have successfully created. These sessions were very well received, and provided our local community leaders with access to an important resource in the ongoing battle to preserve *kedushas Yisrael*.

Following the success of their previous trip, Guard Your Eyes was invited to back to London by Dayan Chanoch Ehrentreu to continue raising awareness and garnering support for the continuation of their holy work. They will be visiting our city next week, *be'zras Hashem*,

Parashas Behaalos'cha.

Rabbi Shimon Winegarten praised the organization, saying, "I am personally aware of numerous local people and families that were saved by Guard Your Eyes. I am proud to stand behind this remarkable organization. ... Whilst they may base themselves in Eretz Yisrael, the London community directly benefits from their work. ... To the best of my knowledge, there is no other organization catering to the Jewish community that provides sophisticated programs and solutions for those who are struggling in this area."

It is common knowledge that the complete freedom, anonymity and breadth of access offered by the internet presents a major temptation and requires constant vigilance. However, most people do not realize the extent of the problem or the number of individuals who are living double lives, feeling tormented and wracked by guilt and shame because of their online activities. Most people think there is a small percentage of deeply troubled individuals who are drawn into various immoral and improper behavior. They do not think that their neighbor, their child's *rebbe*, their spouse or any other normal-looking, upstanding and apparently healthy individual could be plumbing the depths of a netherworld filled with perverse imagery or engaging in inappropriate online relationships. Unfortunately though, for a growing number of victims, this is simply not true. Many people — from all age groups, all walks of life, men and women — are being drawn deeper and deeper into the terrible world of internet addiction.

At a meeting chaired by Agudath Israel's Rabbi Chaim Dovid Zwiebel, Rabbi Dr. Abraham Twerski, one of America's foremost addiction experts, stated flatly that no addiction can be cured without a support group. And until now, the one support group impossible to assemble was for Orthodox Jews addicted to the internet and internet-related behaviors.

Religious support groups exist for overeaters, alcoholics and gamblers. These are weaknesses, and most of us have some weakness. But internet addiction is different. It seemingly marks one as a total hypocrite, living one life in public and another that's subterranean,

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Part of Rabbanim and Rebbeim at the guard-your-eyes meeting.

