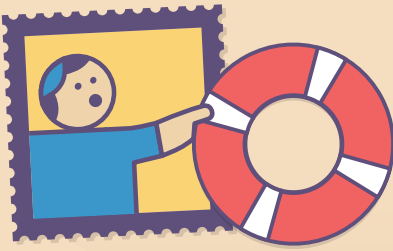


GUARD
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EYES!



BOCHUR to BOCHUR

*A letter of encouragement from one
bochur to another, regarding the great
Kedusha struggles of our times.*

URGENT

BY AN ANONYMOUS BOCHUR YOUR AGE

Reviewed & distributed by GuardYourEyes.com



Letter of Approbation

Without question, the most effective guidance – and the profoundest empathy – that will assist a *bachur* in dealing with some of the issues he faces in these tough times will come from... another *bachur*.

It is therefore no surprise that I found the treatise, "***Bachur to Bachur***" to be extremely impacting – in its scope and its depth – as well as in meeting this very objective of speaking to the young heart. The fact that its author, who chooses to remain anonymous, is himself an adolescent is a source of true amazement, for he has been able to articulate thoughts on sensitive matters in a way that is more than just lucid, and more than *al pi Torah*, but rather in a style that speaks so well to his target audience. The *mekoros* cited in "***Bachur to Bachur***" include intricate passages from foundational *sifrei machshavah*; their selection for inclusion in this work is little short of inspired.

Today's teenaged *bachur* is compelled to navigate through spiritually challenging waters the likes of which his predecessors of a generation or more ago never encountered. A conceptual compass is thus necessary. I believe that the support and advice a *bachur* will acquire from these pages will thus make "***Bachur to Bachur***" a supremely worthwhile read – for the *bachur* on his journey... for his parents... and for his educators.

HASKAMA FROM GUARDYOUREYES.ORG

It is not easy for *Bochurim* to stay holy in today's difficult world. Yet unfortunately, this topic generally is not spoken about much publicly, and *Bochurim* usually end up thinking that they are alone in their struggles and cannot usually garner the courage to speak to anyone about it. This causes them to get depressed and think low of themselves, which often leads to even more falls, in a vicious cycle. It also leads to a *yeridah* in other areas of *Avodas Hashem*.

Although GYE has many eBooks and resources that deal with this topic, we feel that this particular letter is important because it is coming from one bochur to another, as opposed to being written by a *mechanech* or therapist who is coming from a different place.

We have reviewed and even helped in the editing of this letter, and we can vouch for the authenticity of the Torah perspective that is presented here so nicely, and for the pure intentions of the author, whom we know personally.

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He is a special – yet typical - *Yeshiva Bochur* learning in a typical *Yeshiva*. He had the same struggles as everyone else and *Baruch Hashem* has succeeded to grow through them and move on. In this important letter, he wanted to share with other *Bochurim* what he learned from his journey, to encourage them and share that they are not alone! He guides his peers to the right perspective and a few simple tools, encouraging and ensuring them that they too can see tremendous *Siyata Deshmaya* and be able to overcome this difficult struggle.

Yaakov Nadel, Co-Founder

Guardyoureyes.com

HAKDAMAH TO LETTER

If you are a *Yeshiva Bochur* then this is a letter written to you. It is a letter from a fellow *Yeshiva Bochur* about an *Inyan* where the importance and the awareness are worlds apart. It is a letter about arguably the biggest challenge in today's day and age. It is a letter that will teach you that you are not alone. It will teach you how to forgive yourself and how to overcome the biggest struggles and challenges. Try it. Start it. I think that you will enjoy it. I think that you will grow a lot from it. If you read it well, I honestly think that it can seriously impact your life. This letter was written with one purpose, to help you. I wrote this because I know how many people need it. I hope that it will be *mekayim* "דברים היוצאים מן הלב נכנסים ללב," because it is truly from the depths of my heart.

If the Corona pandemic is still rampant, please read the following paragraph. It is safe to say that this is the craziest thing that has happened to the world and to the Jews in many years. It is a change that for practically all of us, is unprecedented. It is a greater sign from *Hashem* than we have ever experienced before. That means that

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we must address our biggest problems. Big signs are for big problems. *Hashem* put us in our homes and locked us there for months. He took us out of our *Shemira* of *Yeshiva* and brought us home. Maybe he wants us to build our own internal *Shemira*. Let us learn how to guard ourselves when it is especially difficult, so it can become a part of us that will last for the rest of our lives.

Suggestions:

- 1.** I suggest that you read the *leshonos* of the *Maareh Mekomos*. Most of them are straightforward and have an easy read. I wrote a translation in the footnotes to help you read it, but it was just meant to be an aid. You cannot possibly compare their beautiful and deep timeless words, to my shallow translation.
- 2.** It might be a good idea to print this out.
- 3.** I suggest you go to a place where you will not be disturbed. If possible, it is best to read this straight through from beginning to end.

Dear You,

Please read the following letter as if I am talking directly to you. The truth is, I *am* talking directly to you. Let us talk about a rather neglected topic. It is a topic that is *shayech* to most of us *Yeshiva Bochurim*. It is a topic that can be the make it or break it for any single striving *Ben Torah*. It is the topic of *Shemiras Einayim* in today's day and age. Let us talk about the internet and the dangers that surround us.

We live in scary times. We live in times that we are always in danger. I don't mean physical danger, I mean worse, spiritual danger. The unfathomable *Aveira* of *Arayos* has now become a part of the everyday *Goyish* culture. The internet makes it easier than ever before for the *Goyim* to show us the horrible things they have to offer. What someone in a *shtetl* in Europe could never have even dreamed of, is now at our fingertips at any moment during the day. Not only is it way easier to access, but it is also way worse once accessed. We can see the most horrible *Tumah* with the press of a couple buttons. This should send a shiver down any striving person's back. Every person in *Klal Yisroel* is in grave danger. Every young

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Yeshiva Bochur is at a constant risk of sinning with one of the most *chamur Issurim*. But this is the reality, so all we can do is fight and fight and never stop fighting. All we can do is raise ourselves above our *tamei* world into a world of *Kedusha* and *Tahara*. R' Chatzkel Levenshtein used to say (in Yiddish) "When there is no good on the earth, we must raise ourselves one level above the earth." All we can do is find a way to completely separate ourselves from this constant struggle and bring ourselves into a world of spiritual bliss. A world where all that matters is *Torah* and *Avodas Hashem*. Let us begin the journey towards that goal. It will not be easy, but that's what life is all about. That is precisely what *Hashem* wants from you. And the reward will be unimaginable.

In order to bring yourself to this incredible "place," we must first discuss how to leave the world you are in now. We must first discuss how you are very capable of doing this, and by no means are you trapped or stuck. You must let go of any past, in order to lead yourself into this incredible future. Let *us* humans, who have sinned and failed before, learn to grow out of, and even *from* our past failures.



LOOKING BACK

Guilt is a powerful tool, and like all powerful tools it is also extremely dangerous. Guilt can be our greatest friend or our worst enemy. It can be the springboard for unbelievable growth or the direct route to horrible falls. Guilt is the emotion we try to feel three times a day when we say *slach lanu* in *shemoneh esrei*. It is the emotion that we are meant to be focused on during times of *Teshuva* and introspection. If one properly gets himself to feel that emotion during these specific times, it can propel him to do incredible *Teshuva* and to grow tremendously. In fact, guilt (aka *charata'*) is one of the main parts of the *Teshuva* process. But that's it. Most of our day we are not meant to focus on the past, rather on the present. Generally, when focusing on the present, guilt will only bring us to bad things. All it will do is bring us to perceive ourselves in a negative way. It will cause us to feel bad about ourselves and think that we are bad people. The negative affect that can have is immeasurable. When someone perceives himself as a bad person, he will start to act like a bad person. He will start to dress, talk, and make decisions with the understanding that he is a bad person.

1. Others translate this as regret

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Everyone does *Aveiros*, but it is important to understand that your sins do not define who you are. It is important to be able to detach yourself from those sins and understand that that is not who you really are. The real you, is deeper than sin². If you don't understand this, rather you believe that the sins you do define who you are, then you will never be able to change or grow. You can't grow out of being yourself. If sin is what you feel defines you, then you are stuck forever. But it does not. Although we are supposed to strive to refrain from sinning as much as we possibly can, it is normal to sin. We all have failures.

The truth is, it is more than that. This specific struggle is different. It has to be separated from the rest of your *Avodas Hashem*. You can not judge your *hatzlacha* in all other areas together with this *Inyan*. It is unfair. This *Yetzer Hara* is so much harder. This *Yetzer Hara* is so much more overpowering. It must be separated. Additionally, this *Yetzer Hara* is different because you can't judge your *hatzlacha* in relation to others. You don't see where others are holding in this *Inyan*. You must realize that everyone has a *Yetzer Hara*.

2. This is from an awesome shiur by Rabbi Daniel Kalish *Shlita* ("Self-Awareness")

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We all sin; even *gedolim* and *Tzadikim*. The *Pasuk*³ says "כי אדם אין צדיק בארץ אשר יעשה טוב ולא יחטא." No one is perfect, so even if you sin over and over again, you can still become a *gadol* and a *Tzadik*. In fact, you actually *become* a *Tzadik* from falling and getting back up again. From pulling the strength and courage from within you, to be able to rise back up again, stronger and braver. That is the meaning of the *Pasuk*⁴ "שבע יפול צדיק וקם." R' Yitzchak Hutner⁵, in an astonishing letter to a struggling *talmud*, explains that the *Tzadik* is not who he is *despite* the falls, rather he is who he is *because* of the seven falls. The essence of his greatness stems from his failures and shortcomings. That is what makes a person great. The constant and consistent battle against his greatest enemy and yet greatest friend⁶; his *Yetzer Hara*. If someone would just live in peace with his *Yetzer Tov*, he would never become a *Tzadik*. True greatness can only be a result of battles and struggles, failures and shortcomings. And remember, you may lose the battle over and over again, but you will win the war. If

3. *Koheles* (7.20) "For there is not one righteous man on earth who only does what is right and doesn't sin."

4. *Mishlei* (24.16) - "The righteous man falls seven times and gets back up"

5. *Pachad Yitzchok* (128)

6. See *Bereishis Rabbah* (91)

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you are courageous and daring, you will win the war of greatness, fulfillment and achievement. This can be why (sometimes) *Tzadikim* are considered greater than *malachim*. The struggle which made the *Tzadik* great, is nonexistent in the greatness of a *malach*.

We see a similar concept when Yaakov *Avinu* fought with the *malach* of Eisav. This fight is supposed to symbolize our eternal struggle with the *Yetzer Hara*. Yaakov got injured temporarily, but the fight made him stronger and greater. After the fight he was renamed "Yisroel," which the *meforshim* explain is the name which symbolizes Yaakov's greater and higher state. Yaakov grew from his struggle.

Let me give an extreme example of this concept. When *Klal Yisroel* were in *Mitzrayim* they fell to the 49th level of *tumah*. They hit rock bottom. Yet we see just three months after they left *Mitzrayim*, they were holding by receiving the *Torah* at *Har Sinai*. Just a few months later they were ready to experience and be part of the greatest showing of *kavod shemayim* ever. How is that possible, if just a few months earlier they had been at the 49th level of *tumah*? The answer is, that is how this world works. Failure and *tumah* are *hechsherim* for growth and *Tahara*. Because they failed so hard they were able to

get to such a high *madreiga*. The truth is, this concept is *pashut* to any person who has ever experienced any growth before. Every failure is a tremendous opportunity for growth. As they say, "What doesn't kill you makes you stronger."

We say in the end of *Shachris* the beautiful words "המה נכרעו ונפלו ואנחנו קמנו ונתעודד." These words are translated to mean⁷, "They fall and stay down, but we rise up and overcome." It is part of the Jewish spirit to be able to rise back up after a fall. It is in our blood. The *Goyim* fall and stay down, but we rise and get back up.

The key to being able to get back up after a hard fall, is to understand that what you did is not who you are. It is to understand deep down, that your downfalls and failures are something which can be separated from you and examined like a doctor examining his patient. Examination is only possible from an outside perspective. The *Gemara*⁸ says that no person ever sins unless an evil spirit (*Ruach Shtus*) goes into him. We see from this *Chazal* that without that evil spirit entering a person, no one would ever want to sin. We see from this that the

7. *Tehillim* (20.9)- Translation by "Psalms that speak to you" by Yitzchok Leib Bell

8. *Sotah* (3a) - ריש לקיש אמר אין אדם עובר עבירה אלא אם כן נכנס בו רוח שטות -

essence of every single *Yid* wants to do what is right and longs to be close to *Hashem*. Your essence is pure. The sins you do are not a part of who you truly are. You must make sure to keep the sin out of your self-perception. The reason for this is, if *chas v'sholom* the sin becomes part of your self-image, it will be impossible to separate yourself from it and it will be bound to you forever.

We say in *Maariv*⁹, "והסר שטן מלפנינו ומאחרינו". The question is asked, what is this "שטן מאחרינו" that we are supposed to be afraid of? What is this other *Satan* which we plea every night to *Hashem* to remove from us? The answer is, this is the *Satan* that tries to get us to focus too much on our past failures and *Aveiros*. We beg *Hashem* to remove this *Satan* which tries to ruin our self-perception. The *Satan* of unhealthy guilt. We must battle this *Yetzer Hara* with all our might, because otherwise, it will definitely cause us to continue to sin and fail.

R' Tzadok¹⁰ says that not every time that a person has a struggle does he have the capability to succeed. Success is not always within your free will. It is possible that

9. In the *Bracha* of השכיבנו - "And remove the *Satan* from before us and from behind us"

10. *Tzidkas Hatzadik* (43) - פעמים יש אדם עומד בניסיון גדול כל כך עד שאי - אפשר לו שלא יחטא ובוזה הוא נחשב אונס גמור דרחמנא פטרי

sometimes the test is just to see whether you will get back up after the fall. Maybe the test is to see whether he will crumble to this *Satan* of guilt or get back up and grow from the fall. Obviously, while someone is in a struggle, he must assume that he has the full capacity to succeed. This is only something which should be thought about after a failure, when struggling to get back up.

Hashem created the *Yetzer Hara*, surely He "understands" it. He understands how hard and seemingly impossible it is. He does not expect perfection, because He knows you are human. Humans fail. He expects you to *want* perfection. He expects you to strive for perfection. He expects you to try with all your might to prevail and succeed in each and every struggle. If you fail, He still loves you. He still loves you much more than any love you can possibly imagine. He loves you endlessly. He just wants you to get back up.

We learn from the *Pasuk*¹¹ "זֶה קָלִי וְאֲנֹהוּ" the concept that we must try to mimic *Hashem's middos*. As the *Gemara*¹² says, "הוּי דוֹמֵה לוֹ מֵה הוּא חֲנֹן וְרַחוּם אִף אֶתֶּה הִיָּה חֲנֹן וְרַחוּם." I would like to suggest another *midda* to mimic *Hashem* in,

11. *Shemos* (15.2) - "This is my G-d and I will cherish him"

12. *Shabbos* (133b) - "Be similar to him, just as He is compassionate and merciful and so to you must be compassionate and merciful"

that the *Gemara* does not mention. Just as *Hashem* loves you unconditionally, so too you should love yourself unconditionally. Just like *Hashem* sees past your sins, so too *you* should see past your sins.

Regarding this *Aveira* the *Torah* uses some seemingly extra words, which I believe may be truly coming to drive home what we have been talking about. The *Issur* of *Shemiras Einayim* is in *Shema*, as it says¹³ "ולא־תתרו אחריו" לבבכם ואחרי עיניכם." But the *Pasuk* does not end there. The *Torah* goes on to say the words "אשר־אתם זונים אחריהם." If you read the entire *pasuk* straight, it reads "Do not stray after your heart and eyes *which you normally stray after*." Why does the *Torah* say these words? They are clearly not part of the *lav* itself, and we know that the *Torah* does not say any extra words. What are they coming to teach us? Maybe you can say that these words are teaching us, that as much as this *Aveira* is one of the worst sins, it is normal. It is natural. It is as if the *Torah* is saying "Do not do it, but if you do, know that it is normal." Everyone struggles with it. The *Torah* is telling us, "Do not be discouraged from your failures in this *inyan*, because *Hashem* created you with a natural *Taaveh* for this *Aveira*." *Hashem* knew how many people would lose hope from their falls and failures in this specific *inyan*, so

13. *Bamidbar* (15.39)

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in the *Issur* itself he whispered; "Do not be discouraged."

Your ability to succeed is solely dependent on your ability to fail. However much good you can do, is also how much bad you can do. That is how *bechira* works. There must always be a balance. Therefore, if you have done a lot of bad, you can be sure that you have the ability to do a lot of good. Do not be discouraged, be encouraged. If you have fallen far, then know that you can rise to great heights.

If you look at the best guys in your *yeshiva*, you can be sure that many of them struggled with the same desires that you do. Many of them sinned repeatedly in this specific *inyan*. But if they are *shteiging* today, you can be sure that they all grew from their sins. That they all were able to fight and fight until they finally broke free. They were all able to overcome this seemingly impossible and endless struggle. That is what made them who they are today. Those incredible *Bochurim* are truly *Gedolim*. They were able to overcome a challenge which is unprecedented in the history of time. You walk amongst *Gedolim*. You must realize that even if you are not holding by that now, one day you will be able to say that too. There is light at the end of the tunnel. Please don't think that you can't become great because you have sinned many times in

the past. Look at those boys who were just like you, and see what they have become. One day that will be you. One day you will look back and you will be amazed by the mountain that you overcame. As the *Gemara*¹⁴ says:

"לעתיד לבא מביאו הקב"ה ליצר הרע ושוחטו בפני הצדיקים ובפני הרשעים צדיקים נדמה להם כהר גבוה ורשעים נדמה להם כחוט השערה הללו בוכין והללו בוכין צדיקים בוכין ואומרים היאך יכולנו לכבוש הר גבוה כזה."

The *Tzadikim* will look back at what they overcame, and they will be amazed. That will be you one day, when you overcome your *Yetzer Hara* and change your life. But you will only be able to do that if you let go of the past. You will only be able to do that if you fight and never stop fighting this *Yetzer Hara* of guilt.

The problem that arises, is how do we fight a *Yetzer Hara* which presents itself as an emotion? How do we overcome a feeling that is in the brain? You cannot try to ignore your emotions because that will only lead to

14. *Sukka* (52a) - "One day in the future *Hashem* will bring the *Yetzer Hara* and *shecht* him before the *Tzadikim* and the *Rashaim*. And it will appear to the *Tzadikim* as a huge mountain, and to the *Rashaim* it will appear as a mere strand of hair. They will both be crying. The *Tzadikim* will be crying and saying "How were we able to overcome such a tall mountain like this"..."

bad things. You must be in touch with your emotions. You must feel your emotions. One of the reasons why, is because if you don't, you will have a very hard time feeling someone else's emotions. Meaning, you will not be able to feel empathy¹⁵ (aka; נושא בעול עם חברו). That would be awfully bad. You cannot run from your emotions. If this is true, then how truly are we supposed to "overcome" this *Satan*? The answer is not so simple. Usually it can help to "Name it to tame it." That means to write down or speak out that you are feeling that particular emotion. If you do this, right away you will feel it starting to ease. You will limit all the confusion and uproar in your head to just one word: "guilt". You can then respond to that by thinking about some of the things we have been discussing in this first section:

You can think about how the sin is not part of who you are, rather it is just a mistake you made in the past.

You can think about how you are supposed to separate this specific struggle from the rest of your *Avodas Hashem*.

You can think about how everyone does *Aveiros*, even *gedolim*.

15. The ability to feel someone else's emotion with them

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You can think about how failure leads to greatness and about how it is in our blood to be able to get back up after a fall.

You can think about the incredible opportunity for growth that failure presents.

You can *daven* to *Hashem* to "הסר שטן מאחריך," or say your own heartfelt *Tefilla* to be able to rise back up (in English).

You can think about how R' Tzadok says that success is not always within your free will, and about how it is possible that sometimes the test is just to see if you will get back up.

You can think about how *Hashem* was the one who created the *Yetzer Hara* and about how He does not expect you to be perfect.

You can think about *Hashem's* endless unconditional love He has for you and about how you are supposed to mimic that by loving *yourself* unconditionally.

You can think about how the *Torah* specifically stresses that *Taaveh* is natural and normal and about how you should not feel discouraged, rather encouraged to be greater.

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After reviewing these pointers, you can write down or speak out all the things that you can do to respond to the emotion of guilt that you feel. Right away it will be clear what is a logical and rational response, and what is not. That will give you a lot of clarity and peace of mind. That will help you move on and not be trapped in your misery. You must first recognize that you are feeling guilt, and then you can realize that it is okay and that you can move on. It should not be focused on too much. You can move on when you learn how to properly deal with emotions. Otherwise you will forever be stuck in the past.

Now that you have learnt how to get over the past, you must now learn how to prepare for the future. You must learn how to rise above the challenge. You must learn how to raise yourself above the *tamei* world. Let us now talk about different ways you can prepare for the future.



MOVING FORWARD

Let us look in the *Torah* so we can truly understand how *chamur* and bad this *Aveira* really is. There are obviously many levels of this *Aveira*, but we will be speaking generally about the *Aveira* of seeing things you are not supposed to see.

As we mentioned before, the *Issur* of *Shemiras Einayim* is found in *Shema*, as it says¹⁶ "ולא־תִתְרוּ אַחֲרַי לְבַבְכֶם וְאַחֲרָיו" ¹⁶ "עֵינֵיכֶם אֲשֶׁר־אַתֶּם זֹנִימִים אַחֲרֵיהֶם." This is the *Issur* to stray after our hearts and eyes, meaning to follow our *Taaveh* and look at things we are not supposed to look at. *Kriyas Shema* is a collection of many of the most fundamental and important facets of *Yiddishkeit*, such as *kabbalas ol malchus shemayim*. There are the only two *Aveiros* that can be found (straight out) in *Shema*. The *Aveira* of *Avoda Zarah*¹⁷ and the *Aveira* of *Shemiras Einayim*. We can see from here how *Chamur* this *Issur* truly is. It is isolated in *Kriyas Shema* with the *Aveira* of *Avoda Zarah*! It also seems that the *Torah* says that the guarding of this *Aveira* is a prerequisite to keeping all the *Mitzvos* and attaining

16. *Bamidbar* (15.39) - "Do not stray after your heart and eyes which you normally stray after."

17. As it says *Bamidbar* (11.16) - פֶּן יִפְתֶּה לְבַבְכֶם וְסִרְתֶּם וְעַבַּדְתֶּם אֱלֹהִים אַחֲרֵים וְהִשְׁתַּחֲוִיתֶם לָהֶם

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any level of *kedusha*. As the very next *Pasuk*¹⁸ says "למען תזכרו ועשיתם את כל מצותי והייתם קדושים לאלקיכם." We must always look at the *Torah* for our priorities, and the *Torah* is pretty clear about this one.

-The *Ibn Ezra*¹⁹ says on this *Pasuk*,

"אשר אתם זונים - כי מי שילך אחרי תאוותו הוא זונה מתחת עבודת אלקיו.".

He is saying that someone who does this *Aveira* is comparable to someone who completely strays from *Avodas Hashem*; the purpose of life. That is frightening because it means that a person can be a great *Eved Hashem*, but if he has *Shemiras Einayim* problems he is considered (to some degree) to be straying from the path of *Hashem*.

-The *Sefer Hachinuch*²⁰ says about this *Issur*:

18. *Bamidbar* (15.40) - "In order that you remember and do all my *Mitzvos* and you will be holy to your G-d."

19. *Ibn Ezra* (15.39) - "*Which cause you to go astray* - Someone who follows his desires is straying from the service of G-d."

20. *Sefer Hachinuch* (387) - "The root of this commandment is revealed, as through it a person is protected from sinning against G-d all his days. This commandment is really a fundamental principle in Judaism, as evil thoughts are the originators of impurities, and the actions are their descendants."

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"שורש מצוה זו נגלה, כי בזה ישמר האדם מחטא להשם יתברך כל" ימיו, והמצוה הזאת באמת יסוד גדול בדת, כי המחשבות הרעות אבות הטמאות, והמעשים ילדיהן."

-The *Gemara* in *Yevamos*²¹ says about this, "כי בתואר אשה" יפה רבים הושחתו."

-The *Gemara* in *Bava Basra*²² says:

"ועוצם עיניו מראות ברע - א"ר חייא בר אבא זה שאין מסתכל בנשים בשעה שעומדות על הכביסה היכי דמי אי דאיכא דרכא אחריתא רשע הוא אי דליכא דרכא אחריתא אנוס הוא לעולם דליכא דרכא אחריתא. ואפ"ה מיבעי ליה למינס נפשיה."

21. *Yevamos* (63b) - "For on account of a beautiful woman many have been destroyed"

22. *Bava Basra* (57b) - "And shuts his eyes from looking upon evil (*Isaiah* 33.15). Rabbi Chiya bar Abba says: This is referring to one who does not gaze at women while they are standing over the laundry. What is the case? If it is referring to a case where there is another way (by which the one walking could reach his destination), then one who walks past the women, (consequently placing himself in a situation where he will be tempted to gaze at them), is a wicked person? If it is referring to a case where there is no other way, then he is a victim of circumstance? Rather, it is actually referring to a case where there is no other way, and even so, he is required to compel himself to avoid gazing at the women."

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-The *Gemara* in *Avoda Zara*²³ says:

"ונשמרת מכל דבר רע - שלא יסתכל אדם באשה נאה."

The *Gemara* is learning this *Issur* from the words that mean "Every evil thing." That can definitely tell you how *chamur* it really is.

-The *Gemara* in *Nidda*²⁴ says:

"אמר רבי אמי כל המביא עצמו לידי הרהור אין מכניסין אותו במחיצתו של הקב"ה."

This *Gemara* is very scary. Seeing things that you are not supposed to see definitely brings someone to have bad thoughts. Therefore, if someone allows himself to see bad things and doesn't put a stop to it, he may be part of this *klal*. This is not a *klal* you want to be part of.

23. *Avodah Zarah* (20a) - "And you shall keep yourself from every evil thing (*Deuteronomy* 23.10); This teaches us that a person should not gaze upon a beautiful woman"

24. *Nidda* (13b) - "Rabbi Ami says: With regard to anyone who brings himself to have bad thoughts, they do not bring him within the boundary of the *Hakadosh Boruch Hu*."

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-The *Kitzur Shulchan Aruch*²⁵ says:

"והמסתכל אפילו באצבע קטנה של אשה ונתכון להנות ממנה, עוונו גדול מאוד."

- The *Gemara*²⁶ says:

"תנו רבנן המרצה מעות לאשה מידו לידה או מידה לידו בשביל שיסתכל בה אפילו דומה למשה רבינו שקיבל תורה מהר סיני לא ינקה מדינה של גיהנם."

This is just straight up scary. No explanation necessary.

- The *Gemara* in *Brachos*²⁷ says "וכל העובר אחורי אשה בנהר" אין לו חלק לעולם הבא."

25. *Kitzur Shulchan Aruch* (152.8) - "He who gazes, even at the small finger of a woman in order to enjoy its sight commits a very grave sin."

26. *Eiruv* (18b) / *Brachos* (61b) / *Mesechtas Kallah* (1) - "The Sages taught if someone counts money for a woman from his hand into her hand or from her hand into his hand, in order to gaze at her, even if he is as great as Moshe our teacher, who received the *Torah* from Mount Sinai, he will not be cleared from the punishment of *Gehehenem*."

27. *Brachos* (61a) - "And anyone who walks behind a woman in a river (in order to see her exposed skin when she lifts her clothing as she passes through the water) has no portion in the World-to-Come."

- The *Gemara* in *Sanhedrin*²⁸ says:

"אמר רב יהודה אמר רב מעשה באדם אחד שנתן עיניו באשה אחת והעלה לבו טינא ובאו ושאלו לרופאים ואמרו אין לו תקנה עד שתבעל אמרו חכמים ימות ואל תבעל לו תעמוד לפניו ערומה ימות ואל תעמוד לפניו ערומה."

This *Gemara* is saying that we would rather someone die than even come **close** to sinning with *arayos*. Even overstepping a fence in this area is *Yeharog Ve'al Yaavor*²⁹. This is because it is considered "אביזרייהו דעריות"³⁰. The *Rambam*³¹ actually *paskens* like this *Gemara*. We can see from this how incredibly *Chamur* this *Issur* is, even

28. *Sanhedrin* (75a) -" Rav Yehuda says that Rav said: There was an incident involving a certain man who set his eyes upon a certain woman and passion rose in his heart, to the point that he became deathly ill. And they came and asked doctors what was to be done with him. And the doctors said: He will have no cure besides for doing *znus* with her. The Sages said: Let him die, and they cannot do the *znus*. The doctors said: She should at least stand naked before him. The Sages said: Let him die, and she may not stand naked before him..."

29. This is a term that refers to specific mitzvos and situations that are so strict that one is *chayiv* to give up his life for them. It literally means *Be killed and do not be Oiver*.

30. Which means it is associated with or maybe even an extension of *Arayos*

31. *Mishneh Torah* (*Yesodei Hatorah* 5.9)

regarding just looking at what we're not allowed.

I hope that these *leshonos* were strong enough that, if you weren't before, you are now 100% committed and determined to succeed in this *inyan*. I hope they scared you just enough that you will read further, so we can discuss how to truly overcome this seemingly impossible *Nisayon*. I hope these *leshonos* can help propel you to do *Teshuva*.

Teshuva can uproot any *Aveira*. The *Rambam*³² says "אין לך דבר שעומד בפני התשובה." *Hashem* put us in a world of *nisyonos*. Sometimes we fall. If we don't do *Teshuva*, we take our *Aveiros* with us to the next world; for eternity. But if we do *Teshuva*, we can uproot all the *Aveiros* we've done and show *Hashem* who we truly are. R' Simcha Bunim of Pshischa said that when we come to the next world, we won't be asked why did we sin, but rather why didn't we do *Teshuva*. If we were to be asked why we sinned, maybe we would be able to say that the *Yetzer Hara* was too strong. However, we will not be able to answer why we did not do *Teshuva*. There is no excuse. We must do *Teshuva* with the strength of a lion. Rav Moshe Kabriner said that *Teshuva* is 99% about the

32. *Mishneh Torah (Hilchos Teshuva 3.14)* - "There is not a thing that stands in the way of repentance"

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future and 1% about the past. Commit yourself to being better. Let us discuss how...

There are many important things you can do to be able to overcome the *Yetzer Hara* and his temptations. Let's first talk about what I believe to be the single most important thing you can do, and then we'll continue to the other necessary things.



GEDARIM

We all have good days and bad days. We all have ups and downs. We all have days where we are feeling inspired and connected and days that we feel uninterested and disconnected. We all have days that we feel close to *Hashem* and days that we feel distant. Specifically this *Yetzer Hara* almost always attacks when you are feeling weak and distant. Everyone knows how hard it is to fight during those times. How can you win a battle that you are uninterested in fighting? How can you overcome a challenge when you don't really care to lose? The truth is, deep down you always care to lose, but you don't always want to fight. So, what truly are you supposed to do? I believe that the answer to this, is the single greatest trick against the *Yetzer Hara*. It is the most important thing

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you can do to grow and strive in your inner battles.

The answer is, you must find ways to eliminate your *Yetzer Hara* when you are feeling connected and inspired. You must crush your *Yetzer Hara* in times of courage and inner strength. You must not let it meet you in your tough times. You must lock it away and throw away the key. You must keep yourself in a place that sin and failure is not an option. You must fight it when you are strong, to protect yourself when you will be weak. The best way to fight the *Yetzer Hara*, is to not meet it. The *Yetzer Hara* is a veteran, but we can choose to keep him away from our lives. *That* he cannot stop. He will be kicking and screaming, but he will be behind a locked door.

What I mean is, you must make *Gedarim*. You must change the things in your life that bring you to this *Nisayon*. Many of those things seem very innocent, but the truth is they are the tools of the *Satan*. *He* makes them seem innocent. Sometimes he even convinces us that they are right. But they are not. They are the direct route to your failures and sins. In a certain sense, they can even be worse than the sin itself. Because at the time you do these things you are still strong and protected, but once you are close to the *Aveira*, the *Yetzer Hara* becomes impossibly overpowering. Once you let yourself into his

trap, you are fighting an uphill battle. You've lost your position as the one in complete control. Now of-course, you still must assume that you have *bechira*, and you must fight with all your might to overcome the challenge at that point. You definitely *can* overcome the challenge at that point, but it is so much harder. It is very possible that the original seemingly "innocent" thing that you did, caused the whole struggle! You must fight that. You must overcome that. You must make proper *Gedarim*.

The *Aruch Hashulchan*³³ stresses this point very strongly. His *lashon* is as follows;

"דכל מקום שאתה מוצא גדר ערוה היא גדר קדושה, וצוה הקב"ה לכל ישראל למגדול ועד קטן לפרוש מאד מאד מן העריות ולגדור בהן גדרים וסייגים, דמפני שעריות נפשו של אדם מחמתן לפיכך צריכה גדרים הרבה, ולפיכך צריך אדם להתרחק מן הנשים מאוד מאוד."

The *Gemara*³⁴ compares the *Yetzer Hara* to a fly. The *Kli*

33. *Aruch Hashulchan (Even Ha'ezer 21.1)* - "In any situation that you make *Geder* (fence) from *Arayos* it is a *Geder Kedusha*; And *Hashem* commanded to all of *Klal Yisroel*, from the great to the small, To separate yourself very very far from *Arayos* and to make *Gedarim* and *Syagim* to protect yourself. Because a person's spirit craves for *Arayos* so therefore you have to make many *Gedarim*, and therefore you must keep yourself very very far away from women."

34. *Brachos (61a)* - אמר רב: יצר הרע דומה לזבוב -

*Yakar*³⁵ explains this beautifully. He says that a fly has no power to make a hole in a person's skin. However, if someone has a small hole in their skin, the fly will be able to enter and expand the opening. He says this is also true about the *Yetzer Hara*. He can not enter a person who doesn't allow him in. If someone is isolated, he will not be able to incite him to do any bad. However, as soon as someone makes a small opening for the *Yetzer Hara*, he will be able to enter and make him do much worse things. If someone makes a small entrance way for the *Yetzer Hara*, he will then incite him to do things he never wanted to do. The *Kli Yakar*³⁶ compares this to a *Gemara* in *Yoma*³⁷ which says "אדם מטמא עצמו מעט מטמאין" "אותו הרבה". As soon as a person allows himself to do a

35. *Bereishis* (4.7) / *Shemos* (17.8) - וטעמו של דבר כי כל זבוב כח פיו שלו - חלוש ואין בו כח לעשות נקב בבשר שלם, אך במקום שהזבוב מוצא פתח פתוח בבשר החי שם ירבוץ ויש כחו בפיו להרחיב הפרצה. כך היצה"ר כחו חלוש לעשות פרצה בבשר חי רב פעלים כי הצדיק בכל דרכיו אשר לא פתח ליצרו פתח כלל אי"א לו לפרוץ גדרו ולכנס בו להחטיאו. אמנם בזמן שהוא מוצא אנשים בני גילו הפורצים אפילו פרצה קטנה ופותחין לו פתח לחטאת ולנדה אז יש בידו להרחיב הפרצה ולהוסיף פשע על חטאתו כאמרו רז"ל הבא לטמא פותחין לו ויש גורסין פתחים לו ר"ל פותח פתח אל היצה"ר שימצא מקום ליכנס דרך אותה פרצה ולהרחיבה עד עלות מכתו לאין מרפא. המשל בזה המוצא פתח סגור מכל וכל קשה לו לפותחה והמוצא הפתח קצת פתוחה נקל לו להרחיב הפתיחה עד אשר יעשה כמו שער בנפשו שהכל נכנסין בו בנקל וזה משל צודק על היצה"ר

36. He says this in *Shemos* (17.8)

37. *Yoma* (39a) - "If a person impurifies himself a little bit, they impurify him even more so."

little bit, he is then in the *Yetzer Hara's* control. The *Yetzer Hara* then has the power to come in and do whatever he wants. Therefore, we must make proper *Gedarim* to make sure that the *Yetzer Hara* has no room to enter.

The *Orchos Tzadikim*³⁸ says:

"כללו של דבר: יבדוק אדם עצמו איזו עבירה הוא רגיל בה, וימהר לעשות גדרים להיזהר ולהישמר מפניה."

*The Pella Yoetz*³⁹ says:

"לפי חומר שבנו, ראוי לאדם לעשות גדר לגדר ומשמרת למשמרת כדי

38. *Orchos Tzadikim* (15.9) - "The general rule in this matter is that a man should examine himself and ask himself which sin he does customarily, and he should hurry to set up fences in order to be careful and guarded from it."

39. *Pella Yoetz* (217.4/5/13) - "According to how *Chamur* an *Aveira* is, it is fit for a person to make a fence for a fence and a guard. The biggest possible *Geder* is to is to *close your eyes from seeing bad* (*Yeshaya* 33.15), which *Chazal* explained to mean that you should not gaze at *Arayos* (*Bava Basra* 57a) since the eyes and the heart are the two causes of *Aveira*, the eyes see and the heart thinks to do this sin... And this is a major rule (tool) to save yourself from any sin; to run away from 100 gates which in truth are really permitted, in order to keep away from entering one gate of *Issue*... A person has the capabilities to be strong and keep up what the *Chachamim* said and add a fence, protection, and a guard to a guard for himself according to each person, and anyone who increases to uphold the guard is praiseworthy."

לעמוד על המשמר שלא לבוא לידי מחשבות והרהורים רעים, והגדר הגדול להיות עוצם עיניו מראות ברע שפרשו רבותינו ז"ל דהינו שלא יסתכל בעריות שעניא ולבא תרי סרסורי דעבירה, עין רואה ולב חושב מחשבות און... וזה כלל גדול לנצל מכל חטא לברח מאה שערים של היתר שלא לכנס באחד של אסור... ולכן לו בכח יגבר איש לקיים דברי חכמים ויוסיף גדר וסיג ומשמרת למשמרת לעצמו לפי מה שהוא אדם, וכל המרבה לעמוד על המשמר, הרי זה משבח."

*Rabbeinu Yonah*⁴⁰ says:

"צריך שידע הדברים שחטא עליהם כדי לעשות בהם גדרים. ולהשמר מאד לנפשו בהן ממארב היצר כי נפשו עלולה בהם. אחרי אשר נקלו בעיניו ושלט יצרו בהם. והנה נפשו חולה מהמעשים ההם והחולה כאשר יחל להבריא צריך להיזהר מהרבה עניינים שלא יחזירוהו לחליו."

The *Gemara* in *Sotah*⁴¹ says "גמירי דאין יצר הרע שולט אלא" This means that a person's *Yetzer Hara* can only be as strong as what he sees. There is no *yesh*

40. *Shaarei Teshuva* (1.36) – "He must know the things about which he sinned in order to make fences for them and to greatly safeguard his spirit from them; from the ambush of the impulse, since his spirit is prone to them, as they have become light in his eyes and his impulse has taken control over them. And behold that his soul is sick from his actions. And when a sick person begins healing, he needs to be careful about many matters, so that he will not return to his sickness."

41. *Sotah* (8a) - "It is learned as a tradition that the evil inclination controls only that which a person's eyes see."

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me'ayin (something from nothing) when it comes to the *Yetzer Hara*. Therefore, if you make proper *Gedarim*, the *Yetzer Hara* won't even come at all (for those things). If you see nothing, it will not be able to fight.

The *Pasuk* in *Tehillim*⁴² says "כל גוים סבבוני בשם ה' כי אמילם." For me, this *Pasuk* always hits home. I imagine the internet and all the *Shtussim* closing in on us. I imagine how close and dangerous they are. But "בשם ה' כי אמילם." I imagine cutting all that down. I imagine fighting back. That's what making *Gedarim* is. It is isolating ourselves from the disgusting things the *Goyim* try to get us to see. It is doing what you know is right, for the sake of *Hashem*. The *Taavos* are tempting, but we are *Yidden*. We live for *Hashem*, not for lust and cravings. We live for eternity. We can overcome our base desires. We can chop them down, even though they surround us everywhere. We can raise ourselves above.

Either take the time now or commit to a *specific* time later to make *Gedarim*. This must be done. Everyone has *Gedarim* that they can make. You need to make *Gedarim* that will help *you*. It can be anything. Let's just list a couple of examples just to give you an idea. Here are

42. *Tehillim* (118.10) - "All the nations surround me, but I cut them down in the name of *Hashem*."

some *Gedarim* that some people might want to make; not to go on Amazon, not to shop online (maybe only without someone else there), not to watch Jewish music videos on YouTube (or anything), not to walk or drive in certain places... The list is endless. You must come up with your own *Gedarim*. Think about the things that bring you to see the things you wish you've never seen. Think about what you are doing or where you are, when you see the things you are not supposed to see. Be honest with yourself. Whatever that is, you must make some *Geder* to be *marchik* yourself from that. It is absolutely necessary.

Gedarim must be precise. You should speak it out or write it down. That will make it real. Otherwise, "רבות⁴³ מחשבות בלב־איש." It is also a good idea to tell someone about the *Geder* you make, and maybe even give them updates on your success from time to time. That will make it much easier to stick to your *Geder*. That will keep it strong even in times that you aren't feeling it.

43. *Mishlei* (19.21) - "Many thoughts are in the heart of a person." This *pasuk* teaches us the concept that just planning in the head to do something is not enough, because everyone has many depths and levels to their minds. They won't necessarily follow that plan unless they make it real by speaking it out or writing it down. (This is not necessarily the *Pashtus* in the *pasuk*.)

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If you have parents who truly understand the severity of the internet and have made proper *Gedarim* and *Syagim* for you, you should really thank them for that more than anything else. They have made it so much easier for you. They are fighting *with* you, not against you. However, if you still have capabilities of accessing inappropriate things from your own home, please listen to what I am about to say. This is extremely important.

If you own a device that you have used before to do something wrong, get rid of it. It will be hard, but it will be a turning point in your life. Yesterday you were at risk, today you overcame. Today you stood up for what was right. Today you locked the *Satan* out. You tapped into greatness that was way higher than what you ever could have reached. Do it now. Be courageous. Change is frightening, but "Courage is not the absence of fear, it is the ability to act *despite* your fears."

If you can't do this for some reason, then you must speak to someone to filter it *completely*. You *must* do this! This is your ticket to greatness. If you make this decision, it will show *Hashem* that all you want to do is serve him. It will prove to *you* that you really are great, and that you can lift yourself above this *tamei* world. It will show you that you only sin because of the *Yetzer*

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Hara, but you really strive to be better. This decision will change your life forever. It will make you a happier person. It will make you a calmer person. It will give you an endless amount of *menuchas hanefesh*. Yes, you can become a different person from just one decision!

You must speak to someone. It can be a parent, Rebbe, brother, cousin, friend, or really anyone that you feel close to. Ask them to help you make the proper *Gedarim*. Don't be embarrassed. Almost always, that person also once struggled with similar struggles. You are just telling them that you are normal, and that you strive to be great. You are just telling them that you are someone who truly understands their purpose on this world, and that you are ready to fulfill it. You are showing them your inner strength and courage. Do not be embarrassed of your humanity. The day you admit your humanity, will be the day you rise above your humanity.

If you watch movies or TV shows, make that *Geder*. It's not going to be easy, but to really make progress you will need to stop watching them. Many of them are literally sins themselves! They are full of *pritzus* and garbage. Many of them actually seem innocent, but in reality they undeniably bring to sin. They will lead you to do the things that are so clearly wrong. They are the hand of the

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Satan, and they are a strong hand. But you are stronger. You can overcome this. You are not stuck. You can make this decision and change your life. The *Yetzer Hara* will try to tell you that it is just not who you are, but you can overcome that. *Hashem* tells us in the *Torah* that we are His children. You are the son of the king! *Hashem* believes in you. You just have to believe in yourself. R' Tzadok⁴⁴ says that just as every person is *chayiv* to believe in *Hashem*, so to every person is *chayiv* to believe in himself. You can do this. Take *Hashem's* hand. It will not be easy, but it will feel incredible. You might miss it for some time later, but eventually that desire will just go away. After a while, you will barely even want to sit down and waste your time with movies and TV. You will be a free man. The reward will be unimaginable. Commit to being greater and you already are. Commit to stop, and you've already grown to great heights. Do it. Now. Do it for yourself. Do it for *Hashem*.

Do not convince yourself that you are not going to change. Change is hard, but it is possible and necessary. If you are still unsure about any of these last couple *Gedarim* that I just spoke about, please read on. It is extremely important that you read this and take the inspiration.

44. *Tzidkas Hatzadik* (154) - כשם שצריך אדם להאמין בהשם יתברך כך צריך - אחר כך להאמין בעצמו.

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Allow yourself to be inspired. Allow yourself to change.

Everyone has changing points in their lives. Let this be yours. The *Mishna* in *Avos*⁴⁵ says "ואם לא עכשיו אימתיו" You are the oldest, wisest and strongest you have ever been. You can overcome this. You can do the things you need to do. You can make the changes in your life that need to be made.

Yolo. You only live once. You've got one shot to be the best person you can be. One day you will die. Life is not so long. Think about that day. What will you want then? You will have to answer to the *beis din shel maaleh*. What will you think when you are watching the "movie" of your life? What will happen when you reach that moment? Will you be proud about the decision you made, despite the raging *Yetzer Hara*, or will you be embarrassed to see yourself miss the inspiration and fail. You can choose. That is the reality. So choose to do what is right.

If you make the right decision, *Hashem* will repay you with an unbelievable amount of *schar*. Since this challenge in many ways is greater than ever before, the *schar* will also be greater than ever before. The *Mishna*

45. *Avos* (1.14) - "If not now, when?"

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in *Avos*⁴⁶ says "לפום צערא אנרא." There is definitely plenty of *tzar* in letting go of certain things that we know are wrong but are so "enjoyable." For all that pain you will get *schar* in *Olam Haba*. We cannot fathom what *Olam Haba* is like, but we can try. Listen to one of the most inspiring *ma'amarei Chazal* I have ever heard. The *Mishna* in *Avos*⁴⁷ says "יפה שעה אחת של קורת רוח בעולם הבא מכל" ח"י העולם הזה." There are those that explain⁴⁸ that this means that if you were to take *every single* moment of intense joy, pleasure, happiness, victory... of *every single* person *since the beginning of time*, and somehow squash all that into one moment, it still wouldn't be as *geshmak* as one moment of bliss in *Olam Haba*. Think about that. Read it twice if you have to. It is the truth. Think about that when you are deciding what to do. You will get much more than a moment of *Olam Haba* for overcoming such an incredible challenge. You will get so much more pleasure in *Olam Haba* than you could ever possibly get on this world from any *Taaveh*. *Olam Haba* is eternal. Additionally, you will not just get *schar* in the next world, you will also get incredible *schar* on

46. *Avos* (5.26) - "According to the pain is the reward."

47. *Avos* (4.22) - "And more precious is one hour of bliss in the World to Come, than all of life on this world."

48. I heard it quoted from R' Dessler in the name of R' Yisroel Salanter, and from The Alter from Chelm.

this world. The *Mishna*⁴⁹ says:

"גזל ועריות שנפשו של אדם מתאוה להן ומחמדתן, הפורש מהן על"
"אחת כמה וכמה שיזכה לו ולדורותיו ולדורות דורותיו עד סוף כל הדורות."

Think about that for a minute. Think about your kid or grandkid who will be in desperate need of a *refuah* or a *yeshuah* (*chas v'sholom*) and they will be saved because of the *zechus* of your decision today.

It says in *Mesechtas Kallah*⁵⁰ something absolutely incredible:

"וכל המפנה עצמו מעבירה ולא עשאה אפילו הוא ישראל ראוי הוא לעלות עולה ככהן גדול על גבי המזבח שנאמר... וכל מי שעושה את עצמו עצל מן העבירה ולא עשאה ניזון מזיו שכינה כמלאכי השרת שנאמר..."

49. *Makkos* (23b) - "Robbery and *Arayos*, which a person's soul desires and craves, one who overcomes his inclination and refrains from doing them, all the more so that he and his descendants and the descendants of his descendants until the end of all generations will merit reward."

50. *Mesechtas Kallah* (4.1) - "Anyone who stays clear from an *Aveira* and doesn't do it, even if he is a *Yisroel* he is fit to bring up an *Olah* on the *Mizbeach* like the *Kohen Gadol* as it says...And anyone who makes himself lazy to refrain from an *Aveira* and doesn't do it will draw pleasure from *Hashem's* radiance like the *Malachei Hashareis* as it says..."

Bochur To Bochur

The *Mishna* in *Avos*⁵¹ famously says "מצוה גוררת מצוה." Life decisions are like arrows, all you need to do is point yourself slightly in the right direction, and after some time you will find yourself deep into that direction. Internalize this. The *Chinuch*⁵² says about this *Mishna* "ודע בני ותהי" מרגלא בפומך." If you make this decision, it will affect your entire life. You will be constantly growing, and you will achieve things you could never have imagined. This will put you on the track to greatness. This will make your learning clearer and your *davening* purer. You will have an easier time feeling *Hashem's* love and reciprocating it.

These years as a *bochur* are extremely important. They are the years that you build the foundation for the rest of your life. All foundations must be pure. For example, if there is a problem in the foundation of a building, it's chances of survival are close to none. However, if there is a problem in the 15th floor, its chances are pretty high. Your foundation must be pure⁵³. One decision now can cause 100 years of a better-quality *Torah* life. This is really incredible if you think about it.

51. *Avos* (4.2) - "One *Mitzva* causes (opportunity for) another *Mitzva*"

52. *Sefer Hachinuch* (387) - "Understand my son, and let it be a jewel in your mouth... (that which *Chazal* say *Mitzva Goreres Mitzva*)"

53. Especially in this area, which itself is called "*Yesod*" meaning "Foundation" in *Kabbalah*

Bochur To Bochur

It is said that your biggest struggle on this world, is your purpose on this world. Whatever you struggle with the most, is also your *tachlis* and *tafkid*. If you feel that this struggle is extremely hard for you, then you must realize that your purpose on this world might be to overcome this challenge. Obviously we can't possibly fully grasp the purpose of life, but this can definitely be one of your main purposes on this world. Think about how it is possible that you were a *Tzadik gamor* who would've earned the highest *madreigos* in *Olam Haba*, but you just had to first come back to this world to be *mesaken* the problems you once had with *Shemiras Einayim*.

Please don't think that you can't make a certain *Geder* (no smartphone, no movies/TV shows, no internet, no online shopping...) because that's just not the type of family you grew up in. Please do not think that "Everyone has/does this" so you can't be different. It is not true. You *can* rise above that. I know many people who did. You can be different. You can be greater. It will also have an incredible effect on the rest of your family, and even more so on the future family you hope one day to build. You *will* be able to live without it.

Do not break the *Gedarim* that you choose to make. That is crucial. You must fight with all your might to keep to

Bochur To Bochur

the *Geder*. The *Pasuk* in *Koheles*⁵⁴ says "ופורץ גדר ישכנו נחש". In the beginning it might be hard, as the *Midrash*⁵⁵ says "כל התחלות קשות". But eventually it will just become who you are. The *Yetzer Hara* won't even fight for it.

If you make a *Geder*, you will succeed. There *will* be an incredible amount of *Siyata Dishmaya*. This is *Chazal's* guarantee. *Chazal*⁵⁶ say "בא לטהר מסייעין אותו". They also say:⁵⁷

"אמר הקדוש ברוך הוא לישראל, בני, פתחו לי פתח אחד של תשובה כחודה של מחט, ואני פותח לכם פתחים שיהיו עגלות וקרוניות נכנסות בו."

Hashem will help you.

Although proper *Gedarim* will help you with most of the *nisyonos*, unfortunately we live in a world where that

54. *Koheles* (10.8) - "He who breaches a fence will be bitten by a snake."

55. *Midrash Lekach Tov Shemos* (19.5) - "All beginnings are hard."

56. *Yoma* (38b) - "One who comes to be better, they (*Hashem*) help him."

57. *Shir Hashirim Rabbah* (5.2) - "*Hakodesh Boruch Hu* said to *Yisroel*, my children, open for me one opening of repentance the size of the hole of a needle, and I will open for you openings that calves and carriages will enter through it."

alone is not enough. You must prepare yourself for more. You can't possibly predict what you will see even on the most kosher websites or on a billboard on a highway. You can't predict what you will see while just walking in the street. How can you know when you will see a person on the street who is not dressed to the par of a *Ben Torah's* eyes? That par is remarkably high, despite our *Yetzer Hara* who tries to convince us that certain things are okay, just because they are so common. You must protect yourself as much as you can. Your *Yetzer Hara* may try to get you to make a *Kal vechomer*⁵⁸ about what is okay for you to see. He might say that you've seen much worse, so surely this is not so bad. Those *Kal Vechomers* are purely from the *Yetzer Hara*. In the real world of right and wrong, there is no such thing. What you did yesterday, does not change what is right or wrong today. Yesterday's failure does not affect today's standard. Today's standard is only defined by *Ratzon Hashem*. *Gedarim* will protect you from the worst things, but the *Yetzer Hara* doesn't stop there. There will still be inevitable *nisyonos*.

58. For example; If I saw A yesterday, for sure I can see B today.



THE INEVITABLE STRUGGLES

Struggles never end. That is the nature of life. We were born to struggle and overcome, to fight and succeed. The *Gemara*⁵⁹ says "יצרו של אדם מתגבר עליו בכל יום." The *Sefer Chassidim*⁶⁰ says:

"ואם עמדת בנסיון גדול אל תאמן בעצמך עד יום מותך לומר הואיל ולא חטאתי בזה הגדול לא אחטא יותר לפי שאין יצר הרע של היום שוה לשל אתמול לפיכך אפילו באותו דבר שמא למחר לא תוכל לסבול."

The *Orchos Tzadikim*⁶¹ says:

59. *Sukka* (52b) - "The *Yetzer (Hara)* of a person incites him every single day."

60. *Sefer Chassidim* (161) - "If you overcame a big *nisayon*, don't believe on yourself (to let your guard down) until the day you die, to say "Since I didn't sin this great sin, therefore I will never any sin again," because the *Yetzer Hara* of today is unparallel to the *Yetzer Hara* of yesterday, therefore it is possible that tomorrow you won't even be able to overcome that same *nisayon*."

61. *Orchos Tzadikim* (1.27) - "Every other enemy when you conquer him one, two or three times, he will give up and leave you alone, but the *Yetzer Hara* will not leave you even if he is conquered a hundred times, as *Chazal* say "And do not believe in yourself until the day you die" (*Avos* 2.4), for all your days he will ambush you, hoping that perhaps you will turn your attention away from him. And if he defeats you in the smallest matter, he will in the end defeat you in the most serious matters."

"כל אויב שיש לך, שתנצח אותו פעם אחת או שתיים או שלוש – אז יניח אותך. אבל היצר אינו פוסק ממך אף אם יהיה ניצוח מאה פעמים, כמו שאמרו רבותינו ואל תאמן בעצמך עד יום מותך. כי כל ימיך יארוב לך אולי תעלים עיניך ממנו, ואם ינצחך בקל שבקלות – סוף ינצחך בחמור שבחמורות."

The *Sefer Hachinuch*⁶², in explaining why there is no *malkus* for this *lav*, says "אי אפשר לו שלא יראה בעיניו לפעמים יותר ממה" שראוי." That is from the *Chinuch*, who lived hundreds of years ago. Imagine what he would say nowadays!

When it comes to these inevitable *nisyonos*, the *Aveira* is generally not the original seeing, being that that was usually an *ones*. Rather the *Aveira* would be to continue to look or to look back. That is the test. Generally the feeling of guilt from that original seeing will usually be the work of the *Yetzer Hara*. However, to a certain degree you *are* supposed to be upset if you see something that you are not supposed to see, even if it was a complete *ones* and you are *patur*. You can be upset about the *tumah* that you unwillingly saw, just as you would be upset if you (*chas v'sholom*) killed someone unwillingly. Additionally, that feeling may help you make sure to avoid that situation in the future.

62. *Sefer Hachinuch* (387) - "It is impossible for a person's eyes not to sometimes see more than what is fitting."

You must prep yourself for these inevitable *nisyonos*. Let us talk about some of the things you can do. We will look in the *Torah* to find guidance and direction. Let us begin.



TEFILLA

The first thing you should do (as always) is *daven*. *Daven* that the *Gedarim* should work and that you should not break them. *Daven* that you should not see anything bad, even *be'ones*. *Daven* that you should not have *nisyonos* that are difficult to overcome. *Daven* that you should succeed in any *Nisayon* that may come your way.

You need *Hashem's* help. The *Gemara*⁶³ in *Sukka* says:

"יצרו של אדם מתגבר עליו בכל יום ומבקש להמיתו שנאמר ... ואלמלא
"הקב"ה שעוזר לו אינו יכול לו שנאמר...."

Hashem wants your *Tefillos*. So much so that it is even possible that *Hashem* only put you in the *Nisayon* in order

63. *Sukka* (52b) - " A person's *Yeter Hara* incites him every day and seeks to kill him, as it says... And without *Hashem's* help he wouldn't be able to overcome it, as it says..."

that you *daven*. He loves your *Tefillos*. The *Gemara*⁶⁴ says, "כל הגדול מחבירו יצרו גדול הימנו." That means if your *Yetzer Hara* is great then you obviously are great in the eyes of *Hashem*. Therefore, *Hashem* obviously seeks your *Tefillos*, as the *Gemara*⁶⁵ says "הקב"ה מתאוה לתפילתן של צדיקים." Since you are great, you can also be sure that your *Tefillos* will be *neskabel*, as the *Gemara*⁶⁶ also says:

"למה נמשלה תפילתן של צדיקים כעטר מה עתר זה מהפך התבואה ממקום למקום כך תפילתן של צדיקים מהפכת מדותיו של הקב"ה ממדת רגזנות למדת רחמנות."

Even if you can't convince yourself of this truth, you can be sure that your *Tefilla* will be *neskabel*, because the

64. *Sukka* (53a) - "Anyone who is greater than another, his evil inclination is greater than his."

65. *Yevamos* (64a) - " *Hakodesh Boruch Hu* desires the prayers of the righteous"

66. *Yevamos* (64a) / *Sukka* (14a) - "Why are the prayers of the righteous compared to a pitchfork? Because just as a pitchfork turns over produce from one place to another, so too the prayer of the righteous can turn over the attributes of *Hakodesh Boruch Hu* from the attribute of rage to the attribute of mercy."

Bochur To Bochur

*Sefer Chassidim*⁶⁷ says:

"אם ישאל אדם דבר שהוא שבח לבוראו כגון על לימוד תורה או דבר אחד מחפצי שמים ושוֹפֵךְ את נפשו עליו הקב"ה שומע תפלתו אע"פ שאין בידו מעשים טובים."

If you pour out your heart to *Hashem*, he will save you. He will help you.

Sometimes you will get a feeling of helplessness. You will feel that the *Yetzer Hara* is just too strong. The scary part is, those things can possibly be true. It is possible that without *Tefilla* you will almost inevitably fail. But that is not an excuse, because you are *chayev* to *daven*. It will work. You might not see results right away, but they will come eventually. You have no clue of the true power of your *Tefillos*. You just have to *daven* and *daven* and never stop *davening*.

Pour your heart out to *Hashem*. Cry a tearless cry (or even better; a tearful cry). Plead to *Hashem* in your own words (in English). *Daven* with a broken heart for *Hashem*

67. *Sefer Chassidim* (131) - "If someone *davens* for something that would be a praise to his creator, for example about *Limud HaTorah* or anything that *Hashem* wants, and he pours out his soul for it, *Hakodesh Boruch Hu* will heed his prayers, even though he does not have good deeds."

Bochur To Bochur

to forgive you for your past *Aveiros* (in *slach lanu*) and to save you from any future *Aveiros* (in *shema koleinu* or *elokai netzor*). Maybe start to say the last *bracha* of the *brachos* in the morning with a little extra *kavana*. It is truly a beautiful *bracha*. Take a pen and write yourself a reminder (in your siddur) to slow down and concentrate by any specific *Tefilla* that means something to you. You have to *daven* for your success. The essence of *Tefilla* is a helpless plea to *Hashem*. You may feel helpless, but *Hashem* can help you from absolutely any situation.

The truth is, *Tefilla* is not meant to only be done three times a day. It is meant to be for whenever you need something. You can always cry out to *Hashem*! You can talk to Him at any moment of the day. He is always there, waiting for you to speak to Him. This being true, if you start to feel a *Taaveh* or *Yetzer Hara* then you should *daven*. You should beg *Hashem* to let you overcome and succeed. Plead to *Hashem* for help. He will answer. He will make it easier. There are so many *pesukim* in *Tehillim* that are perfect for moments like these. Take a nice English translation⁶⁸ of the *Tehillim* and find something that you can connect to. Find a *perek* or *pasuk* that expresses emotions and feelings that you feel. You can say that when you are in a struggle. It will help you a lot.

68. For example, "Psalms that speak to you" by Yitzchok Leib Bell



TORAH

There is another extremely powerful tool that you can use to fight the *Yetzer Hara*. This tool is *Talmud Torah*. There are many *Gemaros* and *Chazals* which express this idea. Probably the most famous is the *Gemara* in *Kedushin*⁶⁹ which says:

"הקב"ה אמר להם לישראל בני בראתי יצר הרע ובראתי לו תורה תבלין, ואם אתם עוסקים בתורה אין אתם נמסרים בידו שנאמר... ואם אין אתם עוסקין בתורה אתם נמסרים בידו שנאמר...."

The *Gemara* in *Sotah*⁷⁰ says that the *Torah* protects "בין בעידנא דעסיק בה ובין בעידנא דלא עסיק בה." Think about this. The Torah protects you. The Torah changes you. It will affect you much more if you are aware that it affects you. It is real.

This is not just a magic trick. This is not some esoteric idea that we cannot understand. This is a *metzius*.

69. *Kedushin* (30b) - "*Hakodesh Boruch Hu* said to *Yisroel*, my children, I created an evil inclination, but I created the Torah as its cure. If you are engaged in Torah study you will not be given over into the hand of the evil inclination, as it is stated... And if you do not engage in Torah study, you are given over to its power, as it is stated..."

70. *Sotah* (21a) - "Both at the time when one is engaged in it and at the time when one is not engaged in it." (There is a *machlokes* in the *Gemara* about the exact *geder* of this)

Bochur To Bochur

Every person is born in the middle of a road. On one side of the road is *Olam Hazei*, *gashmiyus*, the *Yetzer Hara* and *Taaveh*. On the other side of the road is *Olam Haba*, *ruchniyus*, the *Yetzer tov*, *Torah* and *Mitzvos*. When a person gets drawn to one side of the road, they are physically farther from the other side. Being distanced from one is being drawn to the other. Focus on one, automatically takes away focus on the other⁷¹. It is a *metzius*. A reality that is clear to those that look. The *Chovos Halvovos*⁷² says:

"כאשר לא יתחברו בכלי אחד המים והאש, כן לא תתחבר בלב המאמין אהבת עולם הזה ואהבת עולם הבא."

There is another aspect to this. The *Mishna* in *Avos*⁷³ says:

"יפה תלמוד תורה עם דרך ארץ שיגיעת שניהם משכחת עון."

The *Mishna* is teaching us that we are supposed to

71. R' Tzadok says a very similar (if not the same) concept in *Tzidkas Hatzadik* (152)

72. *Chovos Halvovos (Shar Cheshbon Hanefesh 3.25)* - "Just as fire and water cannot coexist in one vessel, so too the love of this world and the love and the next world cannot coexist in the heart of a believer."

73. *Avos (2.2)* - "Excellent is the study of the *Torah* with a worldly occupation, for toil in each of them cause you to forget sin."

keep ourselves busy, in order that we "forget sin." You can distract yourself from sinning. If you embrace life, then you will forget to sin. If you *shteig* in *Torah*, sin will become irrelevant. You must be too busy to sin. This doesn't only mean being busy with *Torah*, it means being busy with healthy outlets and breaks. You must occupy yourself. Be busy.

The *Yetzer Hara* will try to cloud your thoughts, especially in times of *Torah* and *Tefilla*. The *Rambam*⁷⁴ explains what he considers to be the greatest tool to fight this. He says:

"גדולה מכל זאת אמרו יפנה עצמו ומחשבתו לדברי תורה וירחיק דעתו
בחכמה שאין מחשבות עריות מתגברת אלה בלב פנוי מן החכמה."

The *Rambam* is explaining a *metzius* about the brain. If you do not want to think about elephants, you can't just think not to think about elephants. That will only cause the opposite effect. Rather, the brain is like a straw. If you have something stuck in a straw, you must blow in air to get it out. Similarly, the only way to get something out of the brain, is to put something else in.

74. *Mishneh Torah (Sefer Kedusha. Hilchos Issurei Biah 22.21)* - "Greater than all this, they said a person should focus himself and his thoughts to words of *Torah* and he should fill his mind with wisdom, because thoughts of *Arayos* only come to a mind which is clear from wisdom."

Bochur To Bochur

The *Gemara* in *Brachos*⁷⁵ talks about learning *Torah* at the time of a *Nisayon*. It says:

"אמר רבי לוי בר חמא אמר ריש לקיש לעולם ירגיז אדם יצר טוב על יצר הרע שנאמר...אם נצחו מוטב ואם לאו יעסוק בתורה שנאמר...."

If you feel yourself starting to have a *Taaveh* and you open a *Sefer* to learn, that will give *Hashem* more "*nachas ruach*" than anything else in the world. Not only are you overcoming such a difficult *Yetzer Hara*, you are learning his holy *Torah* while you are under this unbearable pressure. The power of that *Talmud Torah* is so much greater than your regular learning. It says in *Avos Dr'Noson*⁷⁶:

"טוב לו לאדם אחד בצער ממאה בריוח."

That means if you learn one line of *Gemara*, it is as if you learnt 100 lines. If you learn 1 blatt, that's 100 blatt! Those numbers are unfathomable. They are such a *chizuk*. Try to remember this the next time you start to

75. *Brachos* (5b) - "Reb Levi bar Chama said that Reish Lakish said, one should always incite his *Yetzer Tov* on his *Yetzer Hara* as it says... If he succeeds- good, if not then he should be *Oisek* in *Torah* as it says..."

76. *Avos Dr'Noson* (3.6) - "Better is one in times of crisis, than a hundred in the midst of abundance"

feel the *Yetzer Hara*.

When someone sins, the *Yetzer Hara* will often tell him that he is unworthy to do certain *mitzvos*. The *Yetzer Hara* will try to make him feel that *Hashem* does not want his *mitzvos*. It's no coincidence that *Torah* and *Tefilla* are the two main *mitzvos* that the *Yetzer Hara* attacks. The *Yetzer Hara* knows that the only way he can continue to get you to follow him, is if he stops you from learning and *davening*. He knows his greatest enemies. For some reason he does not generally focus on trying to convince people that they are unworthy to do *chesed*, give *tzedaka*, or virtually any other *Mitzva*. So if *he* knows what can overpower him, you must also. He will tell you that *Hashem* is upset with you and that you are a sinner who is not worthy to learn the holy *Torah* or speak with Him. This is not true. You must fight this. The way to fight this is to understand that this is only the *Yetzer Hara* talking, and that *Hashem* really longs for your learning and your *davening*, especially when you are in that situation. He knows how hard it is. He gave the *Torah* to *us* humans who fail and sin. He gave it to *us* humans who have inappropriate thoughts and see things we are not supposed to see. Every *Tefilla* and every word of *Torah* is precious in *Shemayim*. Every word is eternity! Your *Yetzer Hara* might try to convince you that it is fake,

but you must know that there is nothing more real. Real is defined by *Ratzon Hashem*. When a *yid* gets up from his *nefilla*, and turns to *Hashem*, there is nothing more beloved to *Hashem*.



HABIT

Another tool that will give you control over your *Yetzer Hara* is habit. Habit in general is an extremely powerful tool. Habit can make the most incredible feats and complex tasks into second nature. Habit can transform something which should really take an unbelievable amount of inner strength and courage, into something done almost effortlessly. However, habit can also (*chas v'sholom*) make the most unthinkable *Aveiros* into things that are done without any thought. When a habit for something wrong is created, that thing becomes so much harder to refrain from. The struggle bears so much more weight, to the point that he won't even realize it is a struggle!

You must be careful not to create a habit of seeing things that you are not supposed to see. If you have already developed this habit, then you need to do something about it immediately. You can break it. Do the things we have been talking about. Make *Gedarim*. *Daven*. Learn.

Habits can be broken. The *Orchos Tzadikim*⁷⁷ says:

"צריך שידע להתחזק מאוד, ולסבול סבל גדול להימנע מן הרע אשר הורגל בו. כי זה דבר פשוט מאוד: עבירה שהורגל בה כל ימיו, שהיא דומה לו להיתר וקשה לו מאוד לפרש ממנה. ועל כן צריך אדם חיזוק גדול וגדרים גדולים לפרש ממה שהורגל, וצריך הסכמה גדולה בכל לבו ובכל נפשו להימנע ויסיר ההרגל מלבו כאילו לא הורגל."

You must try to develop a habit of *Shemiras Einayim*. The first step to making *Shemiras Einayim* habitual, is making *Gedarim* (which we spoke about at length). Then there will be situations that come up consistently that you can easily get into the habit of overcoming and avoiding the struggle. For example, if you take a van once a week and you drive through the city or really any highway, you can get into the habit of avoiding the inevitable temptations that will come your way. If you have glasses, you can get

77. *Orchos Tzadikim* (26.24) - "A person needs to know how to strengthen himself a lot and to bear the great burden of restraining himself from that evil which he is accustomed to do. For this is obvious that a sin that he has been accustomed to do all his life he will regard as permissible (*Yoma* 86b), and it is extremely difficult for him to keep himself away from it. Therefore, a man needs great will power and high fences to give up what he has been accustomed to. And it requires a great commitment in all his heart and soul to hold himself back from committing that sin, and he must remove this habit from his heart as though he had not been accustomed to do this."

into the habit of taking them off. That will make it so much easier. If you don't, you can get into the habit of going to sleep. You can come up with your own examples and your own solutions. These types of situations are common. A simple habit can save you from so much. The third type of habit might be surprising to you. You can actually get into the habit of overcoming the *Yetzer Hara*. You can get into the habit of being a *gibor* during the *Nisayon*, and being able to overcome and succeed. As we spoke about earlier, as much as you can limit the struggles and temptations with *Gedarim*, *Tefilla* and *Torah*, the *Yetzer Hara* will always be there. He will always be fighting for something⁷⁸. You can't grow out of your *Yetzer Hara*, but you can teach yourself to overcome it. This is an incredibly deep and valuable truth. The way to make this habit, is to overcome the *Yetzer Hara* just once. It is to use all your courage and inner strength to overcome the *Yetzer Hara* once, and then it will get incredibly easier from there. In order to overcome, you must be quick and decisive. Do not wait. Do not make compromises. Those compromises will be compromised. He will try to get you to draw a compromise, because once you do that, you are in his hands. Compromises

78. As you overcome it, it will have to try to fight for less *chamor* things. This is based on R' Dessler's concept of *Nekudas Habechira* (point of choice).

do not work. You must fight him off completely. If you overcome him once, it will get incredibly easier. The *Sefer Hachinuch*⁷⁹ says this clearly. He says:

"ואם תזכה להיות גבור בארץ לכבש יצרך ולעצום עיניך מראות ברע
פעם אחת יקל בעיניך לעשות כן כמה פעמים."

The *Gemara* in *Yoma*⁸⁰ says something similar. It says:

"דבי ר' שילא אמרי כיון שבאה לידו דבר עבירה פעם ראשונה ושניה
ואינו חוטא שוב אינו חוטא שנאמר רגלי חסידיו ישמור."

After that first true success, you must fight and fight to overcome each *Yetzer Hara* that comes your way. Fight will all your strength. Use whatever tools that will work. You will see that it will get easier and easier. You can literally rule over your *Yetzer Hara*. You will be a free man, who will be able to serve *Hashem* and fulfill his true purpose in this world.

79. *Sefer Hachinuch* (387) - "And if you merit to be 'mighty in the land' to overcome your evil inclination and close your eyes from seeing evil one time, it will become easier for you to do it many times."

80. *Yoma* (38b) - "In the school of Rabbi Sheila they said: If the opportunity to perform a sinful act presents itself to a person a first time and a second, and he does not sin, he will never sin, as it is stated: "He will keep the feet of His pious ones" (*Samuel I* 2.9)."

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The *Pasuk* in which the *Torah* introduces the internal *Yetzer Hara* says this straight out. The *Pasuk*⁸¹ says "ואליך" ואתה תמשל בו. "תשוקתו ואתה תמשל בו. You can rule over it. You can rise above it. The *Pele Yoetz*⁸² says:

"ולו בכח...להעביר רוח הטמאה, מעט מעט יגרשנו מעליו ויקנה שפע קדשה על ידי שישמר מכל דבר רע ויעשה טוב כל אשר בכוחו, מדי יום יום הלוך וגדל הלוך ושוב עד אשר יטהר ורוח נכון יתחדש בקרבו, כאיש אחר וכבריה חדשה כי הבא לטהר מסיעין אותו."

The truth is, you are *Chayiv* to do this. The *Sefer Hachinuch*⁸³ says:

"כל אדם חייב לגער ביצרו ולכבש תאותו עד שיגביר נפש המשכלת על נפש המתאוה עד שתהיה לה לאמה, והיא גברת לעולם ועד."

81. *Bereishis* (4.7) - "Its (*Yetzer Hara*) urge is toward you, but you can be its master."

82. *Pele Yoetz* (325) - "A person has the the strength and ... to get rid of the *Tamei Ruach*, a little by a little it will leave him, and he will acquire a holy spirit through the guarding of all bad things and he will do all the good that he is capable of. Day by day he will go and constantly grow until he becomes *Tahor* and a straight *Ruach* awakens in him, and he will be like a different person and a new being because when someone come to be *Metahor*, they help him."

83. *Sefer Hachinuch* (529) - "Every person is obligated to fight his impulse and to conquer his desire to the point that he makes the intellectual soul dominate over the desiring soul, until it becomes its maidservant and [the intellect will] dominate it forever and ever."

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It is really much easier than it appears to be. It appears to every person like such a strong and powerful force, but the *Midrash* tells us the truth. The *Midrash*⁸⁴ says:

"אמר רבי אבא היצר הזה דומה ללסטים שפוף שהיה יושב בפרשת דרכים, כל מאן דעבר הוה אמר הב מה דעלך, עבר פקח אחד וראה שאין בו תוחלת לגזול לו כלום, התחיל מכתתו."

The *Yetzer Hara* looks much stronger than it really is. It is really a harmless robber.

When you go through a struggle and succeed, you come out a much stronger and greater person. It is like someone that works out a muscle, the more you work it, the stronger it gets. The more you succeed against the *Yetzer Hara*, the stronger you get.

84. *Bereishis Rabbah* (22.6) - "Rabbi Aba said this *Yetzer (Hara)* is similar to a bent over robber(s) who was sitting at a crossroad. He would say to everyone who passed 'give me what you have!' A wise man passed by and saw that there was nothing he could do to rob him, (so) began to hit him." (The *Midrash* goes on to compare this to the generations until Avraham)



HAPPINESS VS PLEASURE

If you look deep within, you will see that you really just want to be happy. The *Yetzer Hara* tries to convince you that you will be happy if you experience the pleasure that he is trying to entice you to do. He tries to confuse us between pleasure and happiness. The ironic thing is, it is precisely the opposite. When you have a struggle, you are actually choosing between pleasure and happiness. In other words, if you give in to the *Yetzer Hara* and experience the pleasure, you will not come out happier. However, if you overcome the *Yetzer Hara* and you refrain from experiencing that pleasure, you will definitely come out with a deep sense of true happiness.

Pleasure is short-lasting, shallow and very often leaves us with a horrible after taste. That after taste can consist of things like guilt, shame and emptiness. As opposed to happiness which is long lasting, deep and fills us with energy. It is incredible that we can get confused between these two things, which in essence are so different.

Happiness is extremely important in *Yiddishkeit*. It can propel you to succeed in almost all areas of *ruchniyus* and *Avodas Hashem*. It can help your *bein adam lechaveiro*, your *bein adam lemakam* and for sure your *bein adam leatzmo*. In truth, a person's happiness is not dependent

on just one thing. It is reliant on many things. But one thing is for sure; guilt, shame and emptiness are a *stirah* to happiness. The things that really make us happy are meaning, purpose, clarity, hard work and being *misgaber* on our *Taavos*.

The *Midrash*⁸⁵ says "רבי אבין אמר זה יצר הרע שתחלתו מתוק וסופו מר." The *Sefer Hachinuch*⁸⁶ says "ובהמנעו מהם ישמח בחלקו" "תמיד כל היום". We see from these two *maareh mekomos* the concept that every battle with the *Yetzer Hara* is in fact a choice between pleasure and happiness. If you give in you will get pleasure, but it will not last. If you overcome it, then you will feel happy.

You don't need *maareh mekomos* to prove this. If you have ever struggled and failed before, you will know that you did not feel happy afterwards. Experience will have taught you how pleasure does not bring happiness, rather it pushes it away. I am sure that you have experienced this. You must drill this into your head. Think about the times that you felt guilt and shame. Did that feel good? When you answer that question and think about the

85. *Vayikra Rabbah* (16.8) - "Rav Avin said this is the *Yetzer Hara* that its beginning is sweet (pleasure), but its end is bitter (the aftertaste is bitter)"

86. *Sefer Hachinuch* (387) - "And with his refraining from them (the *Yetzer Hara*) he will constantly be happy with his portion"

answer, it will help you stay away from it in the future and fight the *Yetzer Hara*. Use this understanding as a tool for success.



THE *PAS NISHT* MENTALITY

There is another tool that I would like to tell you about. I call it the *Pas nisht* mentality. That is to think and feel that an *Aveira* simply *Pas nisht*⁸⁷ for you. It is to recognize and focus on the fact that you are a *ben melech* and that you are part of *Hashems* "וממלכת כהנים וגוי קדוש"⁸⁸. In order to come to this true and deep understanding, you must recognize two things. You must recognize how truly great and special you are. You also must recognize how truly disgusting and low *Aveiros* are. If you think about those two things for some time, you will be able to acquire this *Pas nisht* mentality.

Let me give you a *mashul*. Imagine someone would go over to a respected king of a prestigious country and offer him the best tasting and most delicious looking *dog food* in the world. He tells the king that it tastes

87. This is a yiddish term which means "Below your dignity"

88. *Shemos* (19.6) - " Kingdom of priests and a holy nation"

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incredible and he suggests that the king should taste it. However good that dog food smells or looks, that king will not even *think* about eating it. He is better than that. It would *Pas nisht* for such a respectable person to lower himself to eat dog food. He perceives himself as someone who is above and beyond that. Period. There is no need for a struggle. Now let's talk about you. You are a true prince and the *Aveira* is dog food. It may be tempting, but it's just not for you. You are greater than that. Let yourself feel above the *Aveira*. You are a part of the holiest and greatest people in the world. You are *Hashem's* child⁸⁹, "בְּנֵי אֱלֹהֵיכֶם!" Not only that, you are a *ben Torah*, which makes you the elite of the elite. That is an incredible *zechus*, yet it is also a huge *achrayos*. You must hold yourself to that standard. It will get way easier if you really feel this.

89. *Devarim* (14.1) - "You are the sons of *Hashem* your G-d"

The *Ibn Ezra*⁹⁰ says something similar in regard to the *Issur of Lo Sachmod*⁹¹. He says:

"אנשים רבים יתמהו על זאת המצוה. איך יהיה אדם שלא יחמוד דבר יפה בלבו כל מה שהוא נחמד למראה עיניו. ועתה אתן לך משל. דע כי איש כפרי שיש לו דעת נכונה והוא ראה בת מלך שהיא יפה לא יחמוד אותה בלבו שישכב עמה. כי ידע כי זה לא יתכן. ואל תחשוב זה הכפרי שהוא כאחד מן המשוגעים שיתאוה שיהיו לו כנפים לעוף השמים. ולא יתכן להיות כאשר אין אדם מתאוה לשכב עם אמו אע"פ שהיא יפה. כי הרגילוהו מנעוריו לדעת שהיא אסורה לו. ככה כל משכיל צריך שידע כי אשה יפה או ממון לא ימצאנו אדם בעבור חכמתו ודעתו. רק כאשר חלק לו השם... ובעבור זה המשכיל לא יתאוה ולא יחמוד."

90. *Ibn Ezra (Shemos 20.14)* - "Many people have wondered about this commandment. How is it possible for a man not to covet in his heart that which is beautiful and pleasant in his eyes? I will give you a parable [to explain this]. You should know that a villager who has a straight mind and sees that the king's daughter is beautiful, will not covet her in his heart, because he knows that this is impossible. And this villager will not think like one of the lunatics that desires that he should have wings to fly in the sky, when it is not possible. This is like that which a man does not desire his mother, even though she is beautiful, as they have accustomed him from his youth to know that it is forbidden to him. So must every thinking person know that a beautiful woman or money is not attained by a person because of his wisdom or knowledge; rather it is from that which God apportioned to him... And because of this, the thinking one will not desire and not covet."

91. The *Issur* to desire another man's wife.

The *Ibn Ezra* is describing this *Pas nisht* mentality. The mentality that something wrong is not *shayich* to me. That the desire for an *Aveira* is like a person's desire to fly in the sky like a bird; they are both unrealistic. The lesson that he is teaching is that you should perceive *Aveiros* as unrealistic and foreign to you. You must realize that they are irrelevant for someone as great as you.

We mentioned earlier a beautiful *Gemara*. I would like to explain the *Gemara* differently based on this concept. The *Gemara*⁹² says:

"גמירי דאין יצר הרע שולט אלא במה שעינו רואות."

I think that this *Gemara* is teaching us this extremely important and deep lesson. It is saying that the *Yetzer Hara* only incites someone to do things that they perceive to be realistic and practical. The symbolism for practicality is what we see. The *Yetzer Hara* will not come to a regular person and try to get him to kill someone or to eat a cheeseburger, because in the person's eyes that is completely off the radar of practical. The *Yetzer Hara* is limited to our perception of things. It can only fight for what we think to be within the range of possibility. You

92. *Sotah* (8a) - "It is learned as a tradition that the evil inclination incites only that which a person's eyes see."

must use this to limit your *Yetzer Hara*. You must shrink your view of what is "possible." Try to perceive this *Aveira* as *Pas nisht* and therefore unrealistic. Tell yourself that this *Aveira* is impractical. Try to think of it as way below who you really are. It will be hard, being that it seems so realistic at times, but you can do it. You must do it.



ONE BATTLE AT A TIME

I just want to stress one final point. This point is crucial to your success. You must understand that *Yiddishkeit* is not about streaks. If someone goes for a certain amount of time (day, week, month, half a year, year...) without doing a certain *Aveira* that he struggles with, that is incredible. That is not affected if he then has a struggle and fails. R' Chatzkel Levenshtein said a great *mashul* to depict this idea. Imagine you see a man build a magnificent tower. As soon as he is finished building the tower he falls to the floor from absolute exhaustion. You then hear him cry "Oh no! My tower fell! All my hard work is done!" You would respond to him and say, "Your tower didn't fall, you fell! Your tower is still standing there in all its glory." That is how it is in life. When you build a tower and then fall, the tower is still standing there unaffected.

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The tower is there forever. It is eternal. Nothing can ever uproot it. You just have to get back up. Life is not about having a 120-year streak of *Avodas Hashem* and success. Life is battle by battle. Life is overcoming one struggle at a time. Each success is eternal and nothing can ever take it away from you. I really hope that you got a lot of *chizuk* from this letter. I hope you act on it and truly grow and change because of it. But you will fall. You will experience failures. No inspiration in the world will change you from being human. Don't let your failures get to you. Failure does not affect past success.

We sing by the *seder* night the words⁹³:

"וְהִיא שְׁעֵמֶדָה לְאַבוֹתֵינוּ וְלָנוּ שֶׁלֹּא אֶחָד בְּלִבָּד עִמָּד עָלֵינוּ לְכַלּוֹתֵנוּ,
אֵלָא שְׁבַכְל דּוֹר וְדוֹר עוֹמְדִים עָלֵינוּ לְכַלּוֹתֵנוּ."

Baruch Hashem, we live in a time of peace with the *Goyim*, where we generally do not have to fear for our lives. However, there is something in our generation that is *עוֹמֵד עָלֵינוּ לְכַלּוֹתֵנוּ*. That is the internet and the rest of the

93. "And it is this that has stood for our ancestors and for us; since it is not only one that has stood against us to destroy us, but rather in each generation, they stand against us to destroy us, but *Hakadosh Boruch Hu* rescues us from their hand."

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Goyish culture. It is really doing a good job. So many *Bochurim* have lost hope and belief in themselves. But we can rise above it. We are greater than that. If we do our part, then hopefully *Hashem* will do his part and be "מצילנו מידים." We must do this. We must stand up for what is right. We must be the *chashmonaim* of our generation. The thing is, inspiration alone can not possibly affect you. You must make it internal. *You must internalize it, to eternalize it.* You must take this *chizuk* and use it to grow. Don't waste it. If you don't act on your inspiration, then all of this will have been a waste. Make it real. Take the things we have spoken about, and make them practical. Remember them. Feel them. Let them become a part of you that will never leave. Implement as much as you can from what we've discussed in this second part:

- Think about how incredibly *Chamur* the *issur* really is.
- Make *Gedarim*.
- *Daven* for yourself.
- Learn for the sake of overcoming the *Yetzer Hara*.
- Embrace life and forget sin.
- Make *Shemiras Einayim* a habit.
- Make success in struggles a habit.
- Understand that pleasure will not make you happy, but overcoming your desire will.
- Understand that these *Aveiros* are *pas nisht* for a *Ben*

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Torah and *Ben Melech* like you.

- Think of *Aveiros* as completely not *shayich* for you.
- Understand that life is about overcoming one struggle at a time.

Do all these things. If you can't do all of them, do one or two of them. If you need to, read this again and again. It is well-worth your time. Think about the incredible *schar* that all this will bring. You are now ready to begin. So start your journey of lifting yourself above the *tamei* and disgusting world we are surrounded by. Start to run. Don't look back. Run and run, and never stop running. You may trip, but you will get back up. You may fall, but you will rise up stronger. *Hashem* believes in you, and now I hope you believe in *yourself*.

You are now ready.

From the heart of a brother,

Anonymous

FINAL NOTES

Thank you for reading this. I hope you enjoyed it and will grow from it. I hope that you feel that it was a good use of your time. I just wanted to thank my parents and my Rebbe for all their incredible support and encouragement. They are all huge *Ovdei Hashem*, and I could not have asked for better guides in the maze of life. I am eternally grateful.

I now have a few favors to ask from you. First of all, please forward this around. You can help others. There are so many others that can really use this. It is *זה נהנה וזה לא חסר*. It will take you only a minute. It is really our *achrayos* to help others, as we know *כל ישראל ערבים זה לזה*. If everyone who reads this, sends it to at least two other *Bochurim* that they know, this can really spread and help many people.

I also ask that you please send an email to FromTheHeartOfaBrother@gmail.com (doesn't need capitalization). Please send a thank you or a nice comment. I would really appreciate it. I am human too, and I worked extremely hard on this. I did it for you and

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it was worth every second. You can also send *Ha'aros*, questions, comments and stuff like that.

I also request that if somehow you know who wrote this, please do not tell anyone. I would like to remain anonymous for various reasons.

Finally, on the next two pages I summarized this entire letter. I suggest that you print that out. It is a great way to really remember all that you have learnt. It will help you hold on to the *chizuk* and be able to grow from it. I suggest that you print it out and keep it somewhere where you will be able to access it easily (For example; in your draws, in your jacket pocket, in your wallet...).

Thank you

FINAL SUMMARY

Tools for success

- Make *Gedarim*.
- *Daven* for yourself.
- Learn for the sake of overcoming the *Yetzer Hara*.
- Embrace life and forget sin.
- Make *Shemiras Einayim* a habit.
- Make success in struggles a habit.
- Think about how incredibly *chamur* the *issur* really is.
- Understand that pleasure will not make you happy, but overcoming your desire will.
- Understand that these *Aveiros* are *pas nisht* for a *Ben Torah* and *Ben Melech* like you.
- Think of *Aveiros* as completely not *shayich* for you.
- Understand that life is about overcoming one struggle at a time.

What to think about after a failure

- You can think about how the sin is not part of who you are, rather it is just a mistake you made in the past.
- You can think about how you are supposed to separate this specific struggle from the rest of your *Avodas Hashem*.
- You can think about how everyone does *Aveiros*, even *gedolim*.
- You can think about how failure leads to greatness and about how it is in our blood to be able to get back up after a fall.
- You can think about the incredible opportunity for growth that failure presents.
- You can daven to *Hashem* to "הסר שטן מאחריך," or say your own heartfelt *Tefilla* to be able to rise back up (in English).
- You can think about how R' Tzadok says that success is not always within your free will, and about how it is possible that sometimes the test is just to see if you will get back up.
- You can think about how *Hashem* was the one who created the *Yetzer Hara* and about how He does not expect you to be perfect.
- You can think about *Hashem's* endless unconditional love He has for you and about how you are supposed to mimic that by loving *yourself* unconditionally.
- You can think about how the *Torah* specifically stresses that *Taaveh* is natural and normal and about how you should not feel discouraged, rather encouraged to be greater.

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