

my biggest embarrassment to myself

Posted by coby613 - 26 Aug 2009 02:00

i'm so glad i found this site, especially during this auspicious time of Elul. I never really thought i had a problem before (I'm BT), but once i did tshuvah i realized that i was addicted. i don't think this is a regular story though. not only was i looking at and downloading inappropriate things, i was looking at MEN. this started when i was 14. When I was 15, my best friend decided to "experiment" without mutual consent, and i ended up being molested. I guess that, deep down, i realized where it was going and wanted it. that made me feel horrible. ever since then, i have been addicted to gay pornography. I actually "came out" at one point 2 years ago, and started acting up in dangerous and unhealthy behaviors. I felt so horrible and torn. And i just couldnt stop watching and downloading and specifically seeking out movies and television shows on the subject and the positive image. now, with nearly 2 years gone of me breaking free from that lifestyle, i still find myself downloading the same things. I do use koshernet, but there are ways to get around it, except for sites that really ARE kosher and then it's a big pain. I feel so degraded and i sincerely wish to be broken of this habit. I've been learning "The Light Of Ephraim" by Simcha H Benyosef. It is a beautiful mussar on the subject of shomer habris and i highly reccomend it. I just was curious (cause i feel like im the only one), is there anybody here who has had a similar issue? I would like some support by anyone, but someone who knows the feeling firsthand is always best. Thanks, Coby613

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A Letter by Reb Ahron Feldman to a Gay Baal Teshuva

Posted by MaalinBKodesh - 26 Aug 2009 02:19

A Letter by Reb Ahron Feldman to a Gay Baal Teshuva

Dear _____,

I received your letter a few days ago and was very pained by the anguish you have undergone for so many years because of your homosexuality and which is especially tortuous to you now that you have become a baal teshuvah. You have asked me for a Torah view on your problem. I hasten to answer you with the hope that what I write you will help you in some way.

I believe that the course you have taken is correct: you must refuse to deny your nature as a homosexual while at the same time refuse to deny your Jewishness. There is no contradiction between the two if they are viewed in their proper perspective. Judaism looks negatively at

homosexual activity, but not at the homosexual nature. Whatever the source of this nature, whether it is genetic or acquired (the Torah does not express any view on the matter), is immaterial. This nature in no way diminishes or affects the Jewishness of a homosexual. He is as beloved in God's eyes as any other Jew, and is as responsible as any Jew in all the mitzvos. He is obligated to achieve life's goals by directing his life towards spiritual growth, sanctity and perfection of his character—no less than is any other Jew. He will merit the same share in the world to come which every Jew merits, minimally by being the descendant of Avraham Avinu and maximally by totally devoting his life towards the service of God.

Past homosexual activity has no bearing on one's Jewishness. Although it is a serious sin, all humans by nature have spiritual shortcomings and this is why teshuva was given to them. Teshuva has the capacity to return a person to a state even higher than which he had before the sin. Accordingly, a Jewish homosexual has to make a commitment to embark on a course where he will ultimately rid himself of homosexual activity. It is not necessary that he change his sexual orientation (if this is at all possible), but that he cease this activity. It is obvious that for many people this will be difficult, and will have to be accomplished over a period of time. But it must be done and it can be done.

Family and children are important in Jewish society but one who does not have these need not feel that he is not a full-fledged member of the community. The verse in Isaiah 58, which is read by Jews all over the world on every public fast-day, is addressed to the homosexual: Let not the saris (who is physically unable to have children) say 'I am a dried up tree.' For so saith G-d to the sarisim who keep my Sabbath, who choose what I desire, and who keep my covenant: I shall make them in My house and within My walls a monument, a shrine, superior to sons and daughters. I shall render their (lit., his) name everlasting, one which will never be forgotten.

Can a homosexual be expected to live as a celibate? I believe a Jewish homosexual can accomplish this if he decides that the Jewish people is his "wife and children." It is possible to do this if he throws his every spare moment into devotion to the welfare of his people. There are many areas where he can do this.

Because he does not have a family, a homosexual can make serious contributions to Judaism which others cannot. For example, bringing Judaism to smaller communities where there are no facilities for raising a Jewish family. I know of a case where a rabbi successfully inspired the Jews of an entire city for over forty years because, for various reasons, he never married. Since there were no religious schools in town, the rabbis who had held his pulpit before him all moved away when their children had to start going to school. But this rabbi, because he had no family, stayed on and had a major impact on the entire city.

Activities involving much travel, such as fundraising, a vital aspect of Jewish survival, is best accomplished by someone who is not tied down to a family. I know of a homosexual who helped establish several important institutions through his fundraising and is grateful for the sexual orientation which freed him to make this contribution.

Even within one's community devotion to public causes can be more easily done by someone who has no family obligations. Several individuals whom I know became respected, active members of their communities during their lifetimes even though it was well known that they had no interest in marriage.

It is no accident that homosexuals are generally more sensitive to the needs of others and to matters of the spirit (viz., the high percentage in the arts) than the rest of the population. This is because their function in society is meant to be one where their family is the Jewish people. Their sensitivity is an emotional tool which they were granted for devoting themselves to, and empathizing with, others.

Devotion of one's life to others is generally not considered an option in our modern world since fulfillment of one's own desires and appetites is considered the major goal of life. This has caused the homosexual community to publicly flaunt their homosexual activity, as if to say to the rest of the world, "See, we can have just as much fun as you!" This is an understandable response to a culture which believes that without sexual satisfaction life is a failure. But this belief is both a total falsehood as well as a perversion of the nature of humanity.

The fact is that neither homosexual or heterosexual activity has the capacity to grant happiness to humans, as even a cursory glance at our unhappy world will demonstrate. The only activity which can give us happiness is striving towards reaching the true goals of life. Life is not meant to be an arena for material satisfaction. It is to be used to carry out G-d's will by coming closer to Him and serving Him by keeping His commandments.

Sexual activity, by which the family unit can be built, is only one of the activities with which a man can serve God. But someone who does not have this capacity still has a whole life and unlimited opportunities to serve God.

I have written at the outset that it is important for you to come to terms with your homosexuality. But to do so it is vital to change your orientation away from the manner in which Western culture

views life and and instead see sexuality in its proper perspective.

How does Judaism look at the reason for someone having been born or turned into a homosexual? Life is meant to be a set of challenges by which we continuously grow spiritually. Any physical defect curtails the enjoyment of life, but, on the other hand, meeting the challenge inherent in such a defect can be the greatest source of joy and accomplishment. Challenges are what life is all about, and homosexuality is one of these challenges.

It is difficult for us to understand why certain people were given certain shortcomings as their challenge in life and other were not. We cannot fathom God's ways but we can be sure that there is a beneficence behind these handicaps. When these shortcomings are met they will grant us a greater satisfaction from our lives and a deeper devotion to G-d than if we were not given them.

A homosexual has an admitted defect, namely that he cannot have a family, but one which need not hamper his development into the human which G-d would want him to be. When the challenge of the shortcoming is met, the reward will be that much greater.

I will add that I do not think that it is necessary for you to give up on the hope of someday having a family. The ways of Providence are manifold. For example, I was personally involved in a case of a woman who knowingly married a homosexual man in order to help him overcome his condition. They subsequently had a large family. It was only because they were both deeply religious Jews that they were successful. There is reason to hope that with your acceptance of living a life in the service of G-d, your problem as well will be overcome. Nothing is impossible if we merit Divine assistance; "Can the hand of G-d ever be inadequate?"

I hope that the ideas I have expressed here will be of help to you. In your struggle towards reaching the goals of your life, remember that you are not unique: all of humanity is engaged in the same struggle. You were just given a different set of circumstances within which to operate.

With my heartfelt blessings for your welfare and for your true success, I remain

Very truly yours,

Aharon Feldman

Someone once posted about this letter on the forum:

"I once spoke to R' Aharon Felhman about that letter during a Torah U'Mesorah event. He said he wrote it to a specific individual "who now is building klal yisrael across the globe. Whenever I hear his name, I chuckle from happiness".

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Re: my biggest embarrassment to myself
Posted by coby613 - 26 Aug 2009 02:43

thank you. my problem is now, i have a beautiful girlfriend, baruch Hashem. she really loves me and I her. I just cannot stop looking at the filth and am embarrassed to think that i once craved the activity. I do not believe i am a true homosexual, nor do the people who know what has been going on. i lived the life for a year, but snapped back to reality after some close calls. I realize my mistake and really want to do tshuva, but i am overcome by the lust and the gay porn is the only thing that seems to really interest me. I feel disgusted by seeking it, by viewing it, and the subsequent actions that follow. I don't believe that they need to be spelled out. every Yom Kippur for the past few years (since 16, I'm 25) I literally punch myself during slichos. I just feel that this is the time to decide that enough is enough, get my act together and have a real, a holy and meaningful life.

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Re: my biggest embarrassment to myself
Posted by kutan - 26 Aug 2009 03:58

Coby613,

first, pleased and honored to meet you. I'm kutan, who continues to be amazed by the honest

and valiant struggles of the people on the site. Your post has kept this feeling going.

I am by no means an expert, but it seems common sense from what you write that you are not a complete and bonafide homosexual. You write this yourself. So you can and will have a beautiful and lasting relationship with your true zivug, with Hashem's help.

What you find troublesome is the fact that your lust takes you down a different road than most.

Please consider these two options :

1) forget about it. Lust is off limits anyway, and what difference does it make if your poison is different than my poison? True, its an interesting question as to why, but its not 'lemasah', since we are not going to consume poison, in any fashion. And if we 'fall' and do, we are both going to get up from the poison, be mechazik ourselves even more than before, and do teshuva b'hava. The poison disappears.

2) if that idea does not go down well, then please, please, please, seek out a counselor / therapist / Rabbi who has experience with molestation victims. I have been in contact with experts in this field, and they have explained to me how molestation torments the victim, how they feel guilt in perceived pleasure from an act they did not initiate or really want and in fact abhor while at the same time feeling pleasure. It drives them crazy, literally.

You wrote that you had interest in men before the molestation. That means **nothing**. Young teenagers will frequently experiment, as they begin to come of age. it passes. Just as the terrible twos pass, etc.

I know personally of normal people who are abhorred today by the idea of a man with a man, yet considered men interesting when they were around 14.

The reason you need to deal with this is because if you are not able to simply make peace with the fact that your YH is for a different poison, and with the help of Hashem and the chevra here at GYE you will avoid that poison like the plague, then it means that the molestation left too strong an imprint on you. Not a problem, you can and will overcome it, but you should and must get trained assistance in doing so.

Thank you Coby for sharing your so very personal story. Again, you have brought my appreciation for the site and it chevra to even a higher level than before.

With respect and love,

kutan

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Re: my biggest embarrassment to myself
Posted by Tomim2B - 26 Aug 2009 18:36

Coby613, welcome to the forum and thank you for sharing your story with us.

Kutan, in these few lines, writes some very valuable and insightful points. Kutan - "small" in quantity, yet great in quality.

Please keep a record of your progress for all to see. We want to participate in your journey.

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Re: my biggest embarrassment to myself
Posted by coby613 - 26 Aug 2009 20:04

thank you both. I do not believe it was an accident that i stumbled upon this beautiful site. I was cleaning out my computer and destroying my backup cds when an article about shomer habris showed up in my email. I had been learning the light of ephraim by myself when i had the chance, so i decided to investigate the matter further. I think, and hope, that B'ezras Hashem I will be able to fight it properly instead of floundering about finding my own way.

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Re: my biggest embarrassment to myself
Posted by the.guard - 27 Aug 2009 12:53

Hi Coby!

Welcome to our community! I'm the admin of the site. Please see [this page](#) of our FAQ: It was made for YOU.

Ok, so as you've probably figured out by now, once you've arrived here there's no turning back. Everyone here will just grab a hold of you and pull you up and up and UP!

Scientific studies have shown that it takes 90 days to change a neural thought pattern that was ingrained in the brain through addictive behaviors. Did you join the [90 day chart](#) on-line? Sign up [over here](#)...

We get cries for help every day, by e-mail and on the forum. *Tzuras Rabim Chatzi Nechama*
And that is why we created the GYE handbooks (links below). If you read them well, from beginning to end, slowly, and try to implement what you read, you will find the answers within them to enable you to completely turn your life around. **You're worth it.**

Also, join the [daily Chizuk e-mail lists](#) to get fresh chizuk every day, and post away on this forum. You will get tons of daily Chizuk and support. This disease can't be beat alone. It works best when you get out of isolation!

GuardYourEyes also offers various free anonymous phone conferences, where you can join a group of other frum Yidden, along with an experienced sponsor. See [this page](#) for four different options. Our conferences are taking place daily, throughout the week... This would be a tremendous step in the right direction for you and help you learn freedom from this addiction. Not only will you learn the secret of the 12-Steps - which is known to be the world's most powerful program for beating addiction having helped millions world wide, but joining the group will be another way of GETTING OUT OF ISOLATION and connecting with others who are going through what you are.

Let me tell you a little about the two GuardYourEyes handbooks. They lay down the cornerstone and foundation of our work, and they make our network much more effective and helpful for people.

You see, until now, people would often get "lost" when coming to our website, not knowing what tips and techniques to try. For example, a beginner wouldn't jump straight into therapy or 12-Step groups, while on the other hand, someone whose addiction was more advanced wouldn't be helped by the standard tips of "making fences" putting in "filters" etc... So it was essential to develop a handbook which details all the techniques and tools to dealing with this addiction in progressive order. Now with these handbooks, anyone can read through and see what steps they've tried already, and if those steps haven't worked, they can continue on through the handbook where the steps become progressively more powerful and "addiction-oriented".

And the second handbook, called the "Attitude" handbook, can also help anyone, no matter what level of addiction they may have. Often people write in to us saying that had they only known the proper outlook & attitude that we try and share on the GuardYourEyes network when they were younger, they would have never fallen into an addiction in the first place! So we hope that through this handbook, many addictions will be prevented.

The handbooks are PDF files, set up as eBooks, and they have bookmarks and hyper-links in the Index, to make them easy to navigate.

Make sure to read them, they contain a wealth of information on beating this addiction! And I'd love to hear your feedback on them...

Note: You might want to print them out to read away from the computer. Keep in mind though, that if you do this, you won't be able to click on the many web links in the articles. But you can always come back to them later. The truth is, it's anyway good to go through the whole handbook once without clicking on links, just to get an overview of all the tools available. Once you did that, you can start again from tool #1 and read each tool through more carefully, click the links and study each technique and assess whether you have tried it fully yet or not...

Right click on the links below and select "Save Link/Target As" to download the handbooks to your computer.

1) [The GuardYourEyes Handbook](#)

This Handbook details 18 suggested tools and techniques, in progressive order, beginning with the most basic and fundamental approaches to dealing with this addiction, and continuing down through increasingly earnest and powerful methods. For the first time, we can gauge our level of addiction and find the appropriate tools for our particular situation. And no matter what level our addiction may have advanced to, we will be able to find the right tools to break free in this handbook!

2) [The GuardYourEyes Attitude](#)

The Attitude Handbook details 30 basic principles to help us maintain the proper attitude and perspective on this struggle. Here are some examples: Understanding what we are up against, what it is that Hashem wants from us, how we can use this struggle for tremendous growth, how we can deal with bad thoughts, discovering how to redirect the power of our souls, understanding that every little bit counts, learning how to bounce back up after a fall, and so on and so forth...

May Hashem be with you!

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Re: my biggest embarrassment to myself
Posted by coby613 - 28 Aug 2009 21:50

thank you.

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Re: my biggest embarrassment to myself
Posted by Eye.nonymous - 29 Aug 2009 18:43

A thought comes to mind that might be helpful, from the Vilna Goan on Mishley (1:22,23)

Putting it in my own words: He explains that, once we do an action, we create a spiritual force which drives us to do it again. We crave it, simply because we have done it, but not because there is necessarily any real value or any real enjoyment. However, the greater the aveira, and the greater the mitzvah, the greater is the enjoyment, and the greater is the craving to continue.

So, according to this, your interest in these images doesn't necessarily mean anything about your identity. It could just be that you've built up a lot of momentum, which may just take time to die down.

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