

Levtahor's story: Father and son breaking free

Posted by LevTahor13 - 02 Sep 2016 16:14

Hey everyone, I've been on GYE for about two years. Unfortunately, (due to a lack of motivation and honesty on my part) I have not been largely successful. There are still many things that I've been meaning to try but still haven't gotten around to fully committing to (phone conferences, sponsor program) but that's not why I'm talking to you today.

I would like like to tell the holy members of GYE something that I've kept secret for about a year and a half now. In February of 2015 I discovered the horrifying truth that my father had been hiring female escorts and having affairs unbeknownst to my mother or the resort of our family.

Let me give you some background first. When I was twelve years old (about 9 years ago) my father quit his job. As you may remember, in 2007 unemployment rates were sky high and my father was willing to take any job offer he could get. On top of that, my parents were going through substantial marital problems. Screaming and shouting matches were occurring daily at home. He was offered a position that required him to spend most of his time in a far away place. From then on I would see him, at most, once a month.

To to this day he's lived in that very same place. A year and a half ago I was in yeshiva in EY and my father flew in to visit me. It was late one night during his visit that I regretfully decided to take his unfiltered phone and "browse" the Internet. I had always suspected him in he past as I'd seen his browser history littered with pornographic websites and female escort pages. I had confronted him before but he responded saying that he'd never cheat on my mother and the escort pages he'd visited were just to "add to the fantasy". Not wanting what I had seen to be true, I believed him.

That night was different. That night I would find out the truth. I searched through his phone, finding multiple text conversations that included him seeking out and paying for services from female escorts, some dating back 3-4 years in the past (around the same time I had originally confronted him). Tears streamed down my face as my worst nightmares had been confirmed. Depression and terror consumed me as I spent the remainder of the night weeping on the floor, not knowing what to do. At first I was filled with hatred, disgust, and resentment. I continued to feel those feeling for a long time as I kept my terrifying discovery to myself. I couldn't look my father in the eye, much less speak to him. Our relationship suffered severely as I lost all the respect I once had for my dad.

A year and a half later, I sit here and tear up as I type this letter to all of you. Recently, I've had a realization. My father and I are in the same position. No matter what I try, I haven't been able to curb my own destructive behavior. With each failure, my hopes of coming clean and enjoying a life free of hiding, lying to, and betraying my family seem farther and farther away. My own personal struggles have helped me to more understand my father. The feelings of disgust and resentment have been replaced by empathy and understanding. I want to tell him that I know and that I want to help. At the same time, I want to step out of the dark and tell him about my own struggles and suggest that we work on ourselves together.

This is where you guys come in. Do you think this is a good idea? If so how would suggest going about it? I can't express how much I appreciate your help. Thanks so much for listening!

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Re: Levtahor's story: Father and son breaking free
Posted by Markz - 02 Sep 2016 16:18

Brother - I think you're taking the right step joining us, but you must realize one thing

No-one will change if they don't want to. Change can effect your life positively substantially if you're ready to take the next small step

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Re: Levtahor's story: Father and son breaking free
Posted by gibbor120 - 02 Sep 2016 19:20

Have you ever spoken to anyone about your "discovery"? Do you have a rebbi/rav/mentor that you can talk to?

I don't think working on it together is a good idea, but I'm also not qualified to say that, so take it for what it's worth.

I think you do need to get help for yourself. Having more respect for your father, I think is

good. But, trying to help/save him seems risky to me.

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Re: Levtahor's story: Father and son breaking free

Posted by Shlomo24 - 02 Sep 2016 19:32

In my experience, I cannot be for others unless I'm in a healthy place myself. It doesn't look like you are. Also, I come from a normal home, but there definitely was issues, my father was verbally abusive. I have found that the better I became, the more they were inspired to change. I am not promising anything to you, but you may find through working on yourself that life will become more pleasant. And to repeat what Mark said, nobody will change unless they want to, and some people want to and still don't change. But trying to change others is a risky business.

Hatzlacha Rabah.

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