

Mental Health and MarriagePosted by hashemyeracheim613 - 13 Oct 2020 20:55

Hi. I am 26 years old. I have been struggling with inappropriate content since I was in ninth grade. My well meaning father ironically got me an iPod touch as a reward for learning over the summer. After hearing my friends speak about things they had seen, I ventured into the forbidden territory. I tried stopping so many times. I made promises. I put on codes. I eventually smashed the iPod. But the Scourge always found a way back into my life. This wasn't the only front I was fighting though. I had a very low self image growing up. I felt out of place. My family was also semi-dysfunctional and I had a very difficult OTD brother. Then when I was in twelfth grade I started having obsessive thoughts about the craziest things. My self esteem plunged even lower. I was convinced that I was sick and totally beyond help. It was so frightening. I suffered alone until I got to Israel. I finally told a Rebbi what I was going through, and he referred me to a therapist. It took me about six months to even consider the possibility that I was normal, and another six months to get to a point that I was ready to move on to the next stage. I finally went home to start shidduchim. I was convinced that I would get married right away, put my past behind me, and start a beautiful new chapter in my life. After all I had been through, surely God was not going to let me suffer anymore. But my life started spiraling downward very quickly. Being home in a toxic environment brought me back exactly to where I was before therapy. The stress and anxiety of dating was also overwhelming. I went out with the first girl until she said no to me because of my family. I wasn't sure that I wanted to marry her, but I was heartbroken. My dreams of a happily ever after were broken. Then, at the advice of a relative, I moved out of my house. My parents were hurt, confused, and angry. I was filled with guilt. I felt homeless, and I became even more depressed and anxious. It came to a point that I couldn't bring myself to date anymore. I was bouncing around therapists, hoping that someone would fix me, but not believing that they could. I eventually found a therapist who managed to convey to me that the only way out is by accepting my situation, and taking responsibility for my own life. Slowly, I started getting control of my emotions. I began to realize who I am and what I'm capable of. I even started being happy with my life and not blaming God so much for my circumstances. I started dating again, which was a huge milestone. I still had never confronted my 'habit' head on though. I felt guilty about going out and also using the internet. I read some articles about internet usage, and I realized that my habit was really an addiction. I saw the negative effects it can have on a marriage. Studies also show that it's detrimental to mental health, by causing anxiety and depression. It's time to fix up my act. I want to be clean going into marriage. I want to feel good about myself when going on dates. I want to be the best me.

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Re: Mental Health and Marriage

Posted by lionking - 29 Apr 2021 04:38

[Ish MiGrodno wrote on 29 Apr 2021 01:28:](#)

The Rabbanim have instituted basic gedarim for chasanim & kallos; HY613 is doing a great job seeking the healthy and moderate approach within those parameters.

With all due respect R' CJ21, I think that your approach is a bit extreme...

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IMG

I respectfully disagree.

B"H in the Chassidishe world, the basic Gedorim is for no contact at all or very limited phone calls. I don't know the environment that HY613 is coming from, however I think even according to the guidelines of the Rabbanim you mentioned, they will agree that if there is an issue of negiah (or as it sounded like from his prior posts, they have already touched in the past but trying to stop. Correct me if I'm wrong) then more drastic gedarim need to be enforced.

Best would be if HY613 can speak to a Rabbi or Mentor.

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Re: Mental Health and Marriage

Posted by Hashem Help Me - 29 Apr 2021 11:12

[concernedjew21 wrote on 28 Apr 2021 23:33:](#)

In my unfortunate experience once a boy and girl have disclosed to each other that they find it difficult not to touch, it only makes it more of an option and possibility, and, if you allow yourselves the opportunity, an inevitability.

The only way to stop it is to stop talking about it and to absolutely not allow yourselves to be in a place where it's possible for it to happen, which means going BEYOND what hilchos yichud requires. No shmoozing in the car for long periods, even if you're parked on a street somewhere, etc.

It's tough, but if you're serious about not touching, it's the only way.

But if you keep telling each other how much you want to and how hard it is, and allowing yourselves to be somewhere where its possible, all the logic in the world wont stand up to desire. Ein apitropis laroyos, you can't plan for pure willpower to win out against lust, it's planning to fail.

Brilliant advice. Added advantage for the chosson and kallah is that they will be able to enjoy the dating much more with the yishuv hada'as that they won't end up in a matzav of nisayon. Being at ease during the engagement period is very important.

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Re: Mental Health and Marriage
Posted by Hakolhevel - 29 Apr 2021 13:10

"One should take a similar course with each of the other traits. A person who swayed in the direction of one of the extremes should move in the direction of the opposite extreme, and accustom himself to that for a long time, until he has returned to the proper path, which is the midpoint for each and every temperament."

?Rambam Deos chapter 2

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Re: Mental Health and Marriage
Posted by concernedjew21 - 29 Apr 2021 13:36

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IMG

The approach that the Rabbonim have instituted is meant to make sure that engaged couples never get to the precipice that HY613 is holding at in the first place. It assumes a clean slate, ie the chassan and kallah haven't discussed openly with each other that they have an immense urge to touch and are struggling with it.

That discussion in of itself obviously constitutes a major violation of the gedarim, and it is a game changer for the relationship.

There isn't a chasan in the yeshiva world who'd have the guts to touch his kallah, without the support and "ok" from her that she's dying to touch as well and in fact struggling not to.

Another reason it's such a dangerous situation, is that once its been discussed and out in the open and they've sat together an inch apart a few times and flirted with temptation, it's usually the GIRL that makes the first move, because they're dataan kaalos or whatever. And tell me which guy is resisting temptation when his kallah makes the first move and takes his hand.

I haven't been following this whole thread, but if this is an old relationship and they've touched before, then you can take everything I've said and rewrite it in bold times ten.

I'm by no means an expert but I do have firsthand knowledge of about a handful of these situations that all played out in the exact same pattern, with the exact same progression and the exact same mistakes.

Respectfully

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Re: Mental Health and Marriage
Posted by Oved - 29 Apr 2021 15:32

Either way, this would make for an unbelievable conversation over bourbon and cholent...

Lookin' forward to meetin' by Kidush @ the great shul of Grodno ~ IMG

Vodka and herring is my preference...if that answers your question

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Re: Mental Health and Marriage
Posted by Ish MiGrodno - 29 Apr 2021 16:39

[concernedjew21 wrote on 29 Apr 2021 13:36:](#)

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I have been thoroughly outvoted, and **I humbly retract my position**. I believe that it is important for me to do so publicly, so that I am not the "machshir" for what is perceived as a lax approach.

2 points:

1) I tell chasanim that the greatest prep for "niddah weeks" is the exercise in discipline that is accomplished during engagement. While this does not mean to "pretend you are married but resist anyhow," it does create a sense of positive purpose for interactions during engagement that are unavoidable (albeit excruciating)

2) Although I retract my position, I would caution that this case is unique (as all cases are) - so it is critical that any advice is not generalized in an overly simplistic manner. This obviously holds true for all situations, but I am extremely close to HY613 so I am a bit protective that he receives the best advice :)

?Hopefully I was ???? ??? ?? ??????...

IMG

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Re: Mental Health and Marriage

Posted by hashemyeracheim613 - 30 Apr 2021 00:31

Thank you to everyone for the outpouring of advice. I think that there were many valid points made as well as some confusion in regards to the exact challenges that we are facing, so I would like to clarify.

We have not touched. This started when one night I sat in the car with her for an extended period. At this point touching was not on the radar. We would just sit in the car and enjoy each other's company. Then I went for Shabbos to her house, and we sat the whole Friday night looking at each other's eyes, which was very new. Then, on Motzai Shabbos, she admitted to me that she has the urge to kiss, which I agreed to. We said that we weren't going to though. We did sit together very closely, and the conversation also took a turn to intimacy, which was

my fault. Once she brought up kissing, it was very hard not to talk about the next step. Then on Tuesday after going out, we literally went to a random street, went to the back of the car, and got really close. It was getting intense, so I said that we have to go to her house to avoid touching. Even there we sat closely, because everyone was sleeping. Then we decided to make some more stringent Gedarim. We have to sit at least my arm's length apart. No sitting in the car. And we are going to limit how long I can stay for. I hope that these are enough. If we feel things are getting heated, we are going to go through the reasons mentioned above of why to not touch.

In general I really relate to CJ21's analysis. Talking about how much we want to touch has made it harder. I think more stringent Gedarim are needed. We both know that staying clean is the best way to go, but it's so hard. I don't think that she is more susceptible to falling as much even though nashim daatan kaalos, because her Taavah is much less, while mine is raging like crazy. She is usually the voice of reason, and she said that she will be upset if I try to kiss her (even though she brought it up and got us into this mess).

Any advice would be appreciated.

I am on Day 4 by the way. Taavah is growing though, so I'm going to need to be extra careful.

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Re: Mental Health and Marriage

Posted by hashemyeracheim613 - 30 Apr 2021 00:35

As far as the Kiddush is concerned, I agree to the Holy Ish about the bourbon. Vodka is not for me. A good tequila is also welcome. In regards to herring, pepper-crusted and jalapeno is the way to go. Leave the Cholent for the meal.

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Re: Mental Health and Marriage

Posted by hashemyeracheim613 - 30 Apr 2021 00:38

Also my Kallah asked me straight up if I've watched pornography. I told her that I had, and she was very understanding. She asked me if I still do, AND BARUCH HASHEM I WAS ABLE TO

TELL HER NO!!! Thank you GYE!!

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Re: Mental Health and Marriage
Posted by HappyYid - 30 Apr 2021 00:44

Wow it's great how in 'touch' you are with this whole thing, and how you made gedarim as needed. Impressive!

I remember when I used to go out with my kallah (now wife), we never had the issue of almost touching, but the conversations sometimes led in the wrong direction (and I'll admit that I got pretty aroused sometimes at the moment, and I think I even acted out later). It was also usually in the car when we would talk for a number of hours at night.

Maybe there should be a new takanah that chosson and kallahs shouldn't talk in the car at night for more than a certain amount of time.

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Re: Mental Health and Marriage
Posted by lionking - 30 Apr 2021 03:38

Hy613,

I apologize for the assumption that there has been an issue of negiah previously, and for causing some of the confusion. I am amazed at how much you were able withstand such a nisoion and how you are trying to institute gedarim to prevent issues in the future.

Keep up the great work.

There is a nice book and audio called The Magic Touch which discusses this subject.
www.simpletoremember.com/media/a/Gila_Manolson-The-Magic-Touch/

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Re: Mental Health and Marriage
Posted by hashemyeracheim613 - 30 Apr 2021 19:04

[Ish MiGrodno wrote on 28 Apr 2021 21:01:](#)

OK, so here goes the most super-annoying-response of all time:

?May I nitpick and change the order to:

HALACHA GOES FIRST

1. Touching and getting really close is Assur. Even though we are engaged we aren't Halachically any different.

HASHKAFA / MENTAL HEALTH REASON

2. We want to exercise our self-control muscles for off-weeks and learn how to be close without touching.

RUCHNIYUS FRINGE BENEFIT

3. We want Hashem to be in our relationship. When done properly, it's holy and hopefully Hashem will bestow us with his Bracha. If we engage in touching when we are not allowed to it's animalistic and selfish.

RELATIONSHIP & GASHMIYUS FRINGE BENEFIT

4. We want it to be new and exciting by the wedding.

You can call me tonight to blast me for this most annoying post :)

Bein' arrogant in Grodno ~ IMG

Thank you to the Holy ~~Pest~~ Ish MiGrodno for your invaluable feedback. You may be right that in a perfect world this is the correct list, but for fighting the Yetzer the order is determined by what

works the most. For many of us, the actual Issur isn't enough to scare us off, but a twenty dollar K'nas will keep our hands away easily.

For me, the pull to get close physically is a lot more than actual Taavah. I have a hard time connecting to my emotions and people in general. I also have OCD, and I have been obsessing a lot about my relationship with my Kallah (I am addressing this in therapy). As a result, the feelings of closeness and connectedness that I receive when we are inches away do a lot more for me than just satisfy my urges . The response back to this therefore is that any progress that we seemingly make in our relationship when we do this is false. It is without Hashem's blessing, and without Him, our relationship has nothing to be predicated on. We need the Shechinah to be with us, so for me reminding myself of this idea is the most powerful method to stop us from touching.

Then I want to fight Taavah with Taavah. I want to enjoy the first time that we touch in a permitted manner. Therefore I don't want to do it now.

Then the next two reasons don't motivate me as much but they definitely help.

I am still clean. I am at 5 days.

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Re: Mental Health and Marriage

Posted by BHYY - 30 Apr 2021 19:17

I'm no expert here so I won't give advice, I'm just a single guy trying to find his bashert (when)

I'm just going to say you're amazing! I'm so happy you found your bashert. It really sounds like you two are on the same wavelength, the gedarim you both set are amazing.

You both should be zocheh to build a bayis nee'eman b'yisroel filled with simcha and kedusha!

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Re: Mental Health and Marriage

Posted by hashemyeracheim613 - 02 May 2021 02:52

I had a hard time over Shabbos. I was working in a group home so I was pretty lonely. The Taavah hit strong, and there was some inappropriate reading material over there which I read, but Baruch Hashem I'm still clean! Didn't even touch.

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