

Chaim's Oigen

Posted by chaimoigen - 06 Jun 2024 03:17

It's been over a year, and over 1000 posts since I have been blessed to join this circle of unique and growing friends.

It has been year of incredible growth, with the help of Hashem.

I have written a lot, and I feel that some of ideas in my posts could perhaps have greater value if they were written in such a way that each idea is consolidated, and would take the form of a self-contained, single article.

And, of course, articulating these ideas in a new way will hopefully help me internalize the lessons learned and contemplated, in a deeper way.

So, here goes, and I hope you like **"Chaim's Oigen"**

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Re: Chaim's Oigen

Posted by chaimoigen - 06 Jun 2024 03:43

The Posture of Pornography

By: Chaim Oigen

Shortly after the fateful, magical day that I started posting on GYE (pajamas?), I had a call with HHM, and in that unforgettable conversation, he threw down a challenge. I was to commit to actively avoid looking at anything whatsoever that could cause arousal for 30 days. No online images, obviously, but also no literature, articles, stuff on Amazon, or anything that could pull me in the direction of lust. I had to commit to be super careful on the streets. I had been working on Shemiras Enayim for quite a while but I had never thought about it in precisely those terms.

I picked up the gauntlet. Took the road less traveled by. And that has made all the difference.

As a result of that conversation and our subsequent meeting, I began a transformative first month on GYE, and I was no longer BROWSING the internet. I wasn't looking around randomly for interesting things. I wasn't using the Internet's infinite promise for distraction, for comfort, or for stimulation, even with a good filter. It was a new experience.

And it was a complete game-changer.

And I developed an insight about why browsing around for distraction or as an outlet is so destructive. Besides the obvious, here's why I feel so strongly about not searching or browsing randomly online, especially when feeling bored.

By definition a person who is "feeling bored", is person is feeling unstimulated and is looking for stimulation.

And there are 2 points I would share.

1. Lust provides stimulation better than a lot of other things. So when a person starts looking to be stimulated and there are millions of potential websites or videos to search he will very likely be pulled by his boredom, to the one that has the promise of a little "tickle" of desire, because it's more stimulating. And from there to next one, in which the "tickle" is more pronounced, more stimulating. One foot after another stepping along that slippery slope... I have a good filter, but...

An honest look back at the list of sites in one's search history, seeing at the end of the night how one thing leads to another - can be a very learning (and painful) experience...

But there is a much deeper point, I think.

2. The actual state of "going looking to be stimulated" is negative, I think.

This point is subtle and is about a Madreiga too, I think But I'd like to elaborate, to put the concept out there. The concept can also be applied in many different ways and levels

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If I'm sitting back and saying "I'm dissatisfied because life isn't interesting or satisfying or engaging enough - so show me something to stimulate and interest/entertain me". That's a state of being passive about living, and looking for the world to service me. To stimulate me. I think being that way opens a person up to things that aren't great. Being there is already halfway there to going onward to look at an image that will get my heart rate up.

I'm saying something strong - this state itself puts a man into the "Posture of Pornography".

I can't really imagine a great person such as Rav Moshe Feinstein Zatzal, or any of my Rabbeim, or my father shlit"a, for that matter, saying: "I'm bored. Make me feel good". A purposeful, active posture of living doesn't have room for being stimulated by YouTube.

A person who is comfortable with himself, with his thoughts and essence and feelings, does not shun inaction. He isn't bored or repelled by just being himself. And when there's a lull in the action, if he does not need to rest, he finds something positive and meaningful to think and act upon.

Yes, this Hashkafa is firmly against the entire culture of TV, movies, entertainment, YouTube, news, and sports. Maybe it's a little extreme to put fully into practice, and not relevant for an average guy (like me). But I'm sharing it for the concept, and for the many ways that can be applied, mostly for myself .

After internalizing this and discovering that it was doable, and even pleasurable, I personally, have BH mostly successfully eliminated using the internet for recreational purposes. I don't know if other people can do that. But for me it has been a complete game-changer. I still get bored sometimes and use something of interest as an outlet. I'm not past that. [I would like to get all the way there one day.] For now, I am taking the step mentioned of not getting into the state of "looking for stimulation" by browsing or searching online bl"n. If there's something specific I want or need (including GYE) I will go get it (with a filter, obviously). But I don't wander, looking around randomly for interesting things. I don't use the Internet's infinite promise for distraction, for comfort, or for stimulation. It's just not worth what it does to me, what it takes from me.

And I also realized this: I would much rather be a little bored, rather than full of that horrible feeling of empty self-loathing for how I spent the past hour, even if I didn't "cross the line".

Has this change been difficult to make? In some ways, it was and is very difficult. Because I have insatiable curiosity about everything. Broad interests. And I loved reading and looking up random things and fascinating articles. I have a surprising range of knowledge in many areas based on that. It's dry not to be able to go looking for something random and interesting. I miss out on adding interesting and fascinating and impressive stuff to my encyclopedia. And I no longer have this outlet to burrow into and bury my mind at the end of an exhausting day or after a soul-crushing meeting.

But there are so many benefits. And it's worth it. It really is.

No more eye-glazing empty-blahness compulsive scrolling half-stimulated dreariness. No more resultant fumbling around at the edge of the shadows half-hoping, half-dreading to fall in. No more feeling diminished because I have just killed hours on mind-numbing, pathetic emptiness.

Having given up The Posture Of Pornography, I stand taller than before.

Because I feel that I am finally developing the ability to live actively as a mature adult. And becoming a Mentch.

Becoming a Mentch has a lot of benefits. The biggest one is becoming a Mentch.

Chaim Oigen

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Re: Chaim's Oigen

Posted by chosemyshem - 06 Jun 2024 14:28

[chaimoigen wrote on 06 Jun 2024 03:43:](#)

An honest look back at the list of sites in one's search history, seeing at the end of the night how one thing leads to another - can be a very learning (and painful) experience...

Beautiful article. Both in the writing and in the content. Someone here must have the contacts somewhere to get this published.

Just a counterpoint to the quoted part above. Sometimes it's a learning experience to see that entertainment is a slippery slope as you described. But. Sometimes it's a learning experience to realize what you were truly aiming for *the whole time*.

(This has been on my mind and I was just was ruminating on this in [a post yesterday.](#))

Could be it depends what level of the struggle a person is on. It sounds like you were working on the higher madreigos of shmiras einayim. Getting out of an entertainment mindset may be very helpful for that.

For someone a little sicker with lust, their problem is lust. Not bad entertainment. [N.B. They may also have a problem with entertainment. You can have two problems at once. But avoiding entertainment or entertainment attitudes won't solve their lust problem.]

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Re: Chaim's Oigen

Posted by Twisted - 06 Jun 2024 14:38

[chaimoigen wrote on 06 Jun 2024 03:43:](#)

I picked up the gauntlet. Took the road less traveled by. And that has made all the difference.

Where did you find a gauntlet? I've been searching for quite a while; all I found were some cheap ones on eBay or those shaped like mittens.

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Re: Chaim's Oigen
Posted by chosemyschem - 06 Jun 2024 14:47

[Twisted wrote on 06 Jun 2024 14:38:](#)

[chaimoigen wrote on 06 Jun 2024 03:43:](#)

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Where did you find a gauntlet? I've been searching for quite a while; all I found were some cheap ones on eBay or those shaped like mittens.

www.amazon.com/Avengers-Legends-Gauntlet-Articulated-Electronic/dp/B07P7WZF11

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Re: Chaim's Oigen
Posted by amevakesh - 06 Jun 2024 16:27

Game Changing advice for the non addict. Thank you Reb Chaim for elucidating it so beautifully. This piece of advice was one of the main paradigm shifts that has helped me in my own journey.

If I can add some of my own observations ?????? ???? ?????. As choosmyshem just articulated, this approach can seem daunting to many. Someone that's mired in lust, may be tempted to write it off as a lofty ideal for people that are active pursuing their ??????' in a serious way. I think that the point of the essay is relevant to a far broader audience then that exclusive group of people that are climbing the ladder of ???????? rung by rung.

Just like everything else in ????????, things are not black and white. Granted, the best antidote to the YH is Torah, Avodah etc. and when one makes these his lifelong goals, constantly striving for higher levels in ??????', he will automatically, find that he's "posturing" less, and living with a goal and purpose, more. But the point of the essay can be and should be adapted for the masses as well.

The point of the article is that when someone is living with a specific goal in mind, he's busy actively pursuing it, and doesn't need to be entertained as much. The satisfaction that's derived from living a meaningful life even if not spiritual in nature, can replace the need to be stimulated when bored.

I once read a book where a reporter once asked MLB players what goes through their mind when they're standing in the outfield. Most of them answered something along the lines of girls, sex, and money. Notice, that it didn't don on the reporter to ask what they're thinking about when they're up to bat. He knew that when the player is in the batting box, there's nothing on his mind other then keeping his eye on the ball, trying to figure out what type of pitch the pitcher is gonna throw next.

When your in the outfield, yes your playing the game, but your not actively experiencing it at every moment, so there's time to let your mind wander and tune in from time to time when a fly ball comes your way.

There are people that live there lives like outfielders and people that are in the batters box all the time. Live your life passionately, not passively, find real goals, something that appeals to you and drives you. Lust is a condition that thrives in a vacuum. When your life is goal oriented, the vacuum gets smaller. Hopefully this will serve to mitigate the aching void of boredom that needs to be filled.

Obviously even this won't really help someone that's addicted, however for the non addicts, the advice Reb CO gave is priceless. Just my 2 cents, feel free to disagree.

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Re: Chaim's Oigen
Posted by redfaced - 06 Jun 2024 16:31

[amevakesh wrote on 06 Jun 2024 16:27:](#)

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Obviously even this won't really help someone that's addicted, however for the non addicts, the advice Reb CO gave is priceless. Just my 2 cents, feel free to disagree.

Good enough to open your own thread ; Just dont know what you should name it...

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Re: Chaim's Oigen

Posted by chosemyshem - 06 Jun 2024 17:08

[amevakesh wrote on 06 Jun 2024 16:27:](#)

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Obviously even this won't really help someone that's addicted, however for the non addicts, the advice Reb CO gave is priceless. Just my 2 cents, feel free to disagree.

Great piece. That outfielder metaphor is excellent. Fantastic life advice.

Just to clarify the bolded part above. My point was not in any way that someone mired in lust might think getting rid of all entertainment is daunting. My point was that it won't help.*

As we all see on this site, very frum people who are very careful about not engaging in entertainment, can be very mired in lust. [I do have a growing theory that people less involved with entertainment, culture, whatever you call it, are minorly less likely to have an issue with porn specifically. Whether because of lack of access, a different drawing of red lines, or some other reason, my hunch is that they are somewhat more likely to turn to other forms of lust (fantasies, phone sex, people sex, chatting, extreme street staring, masturbation without any visual stimulation etc.) Very speculative theory.]

And on the other hand, people very involved in entertainment often have no lust problem (though at the end of the day, most video entertainment these days has some level of lo sasuru violation.)

Whether living life passionately and in an involved way can help addiction to is a question miles above my pay grade. There's a famous study that showed that among the extremely high amount of American soldiers in Vietnam who heavily abused heroin, only a very small percentage (1%) continued using on their return. (See [here](#), [here](#), and [here](#).) One explanation is the radical change in lifestyle - going from the boredom of base back to jobs and families - curtailed the addiction.

Whether entertainment can be reconciled with serious growth in avodas Hashem is also a question above my pay grade. If you want to see someone try to grapple with reconciling them in an almost sad way, see [this article](#) on Lehrhaus. Plopping on GYE is basically my current sole form of entertainment as I desperately try to stay busy enough to avoid porn use. Do with that what you will.

*There's a connotation in the way you wrote this, that I'm sure was unintentional, that someone struggling with lust is not pursuing growing in avodas Hashem. This is of course not true.

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Re: Chaim's Oigen
Posted by amevakesh - 06 Jun 2024 18:23

*There's a connotation in the way you wrote this, that I'm sure was unintentional, that someone struggling with lust is not pursuing growing in avodas Hashem. This is of course not true.

Of course it's not true. I wasn't clear. I'm sorry. Will clarify soon.

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Re: Chaim's Oigen
Posted by Birshusi - 06 Jun 2024 18:40

[chaimoigen wrote on 06 Jun 2024 03:43:](#)

No more eye-glazing empty-blahness compulsive scrolling half-stimulated dreariness. No more feeling diminished because I have just killed hours on mind-numbing, pathetic emptiness.

How ironic that this is exactly the state I was(am) in when I read your beautiful post. **Please**, save me from myself and explain what you do instead of "compulsive scrolling half-stimulated dreariness."

I have so many goals I want to reach, interests I want to pursue, books I want to read, things I have to do, but instead I waste so much time searching for some virtual happiness.

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Re: Chaim's Oigen
Posted by gye365s - 06 Jun 2024 18:54

[Birshusi wrote on 06 Jun 2024 18:40:](#)

[chaimoigen wrote on 06 Jun 2024 03:43:](#)

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I have so many goals I want to reach, interests I want to pursue, books I want to read, things I have to do, but instead I waste so much time searching for some virtual happiness.

It's ironic that sometimes it's when we have too much to do that we fall to doing none of those things. Pick one and make it a priority. Think about how and when you do it, and what your backup will be once in a while when you are not in the mood. Track your progress. Make your goal out of smaller steps and work of accomplish them one at a time. Share your success and celebrate it. Friends can be a tremendous support. Hatzlacha.

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Re: Chaim's Oigen
Posted by jonthen123 - 06 Jun 2024 21:23

hi rabbani its a amazing point and since i heard it a read it it didn't leave my mind yet ,but one thing which i will dare ask what could a person do he is overworked or over stressed from work family or he is holding after a long long day or week yeshiva his mind is racing he needs to come down relax get his mind off to think aboutNOTHING or just relax how do you do that i know searching even good things on the net is not the best idea but what's better for your relaxing

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Re: Chaim's Oigen

Posted by chaimoigen - 06 Jun 2024 22:21

[chosemyshem wrote on 06 Jun 2024 14:28:](#)

[chaimoigen wrote on 06 Jun 2024 03:43:](#)

An honest look back at the list of sites in one's search history, seeing at the end of the night how one thing leads to another - can be a very learning (and painful) experience...

Beautiful article. Both in the writing and in the content. Someone here must have the contacts somewhere to get this published.

Just a counterpoint to the quoted part above. Sometimes it's a learning experience to see that entertainment is a slippery slope as you described. But. **Sometimes it's a learning experience to realize what you were truly aiming for *the whole time*.**

(This has been on my mind and I was just was ruminating on this in [a post yesterday.](#))

Could be it depends what level of the struggle a person is on. It sounds like you were working on the higher madreigos of shmiras einayim. Getting out of an entertainment mindset may be very helpful for that.

For someone a little sicker with lust, their problem is lust. Not bad entertainment. [N.B. They

may also have a problem with entertainment. You can have two problems at once. But avoiding entertainment or entertainment attitudes won't solve their lust problem.]

Your point is well taken, and true.

But I don't think it's really a counterpoint to my post.

I think it's an expansion.

Though it wasn't the primary thrust of my post, I fully appreciate that the power of painfully reviewing the search history at the end of the night is not only to see where one made mistakes, but often it is rather a tool for a guy to face up to the harsh reality and **admit that he was really looking to fall from the very outset**.... I've written about that elsewhere. (In fact, I plan on writing a different article on it soon.).

My previous post is meant to be addressed to that guy, too.

Because even after facing up to that brutal truth, one of the ways to deal with the problem, I think, in addition to other work, is to develop the attitude in wanting to avoid living with assuming the "posture of pornography". I think even guys with a significant lust issue can benefit from this Avoda.

A lot of guys who have a significant lust problem still can't or won't bring themselves to sit down at the screen, fire up the browser and dive straight into the porn. They have the urge and the "itch" so they start looking at seemingly mostly-harmless entertainment, knowing deep in their hearts that one thing will likely lead to an other.

Stopping the attitude that **enables** the desperate desirous dance on the edge of the precipice can keep a guy from falling off into the shadow. Not only because if he doesn't take the first step he'll therefore avoid the fall of a thousand miles.

But, it's also because a guy who is growing and no longer feels comfortable assuming the posture we are discussing, might find himself changing.

When you are engaged in an active posture of living, when you're not laying back and waiting

to be stimulated and distracted, your relationship with lust will change.

Thats part of what happened to me.

G-d bless GYE.

Chaim Oigen

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Re: Chaim's Oigen
Posted by gye365s - 06 Jun 2024 22:53

[jonthen123 wrote on 06 Jun 2024 21:23:](#)

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You have to figure out what kosher activities you find relaxing and recharge your battery.Reading, listening, meditation, walking, sleeping, writing, learn to play an instrument

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Re: Chaim's Oigen
Posted by amevakesh - 07 Jun 2024 00:27

[chosemyschem wrote on 06 Jun 2024 17:08:](#)

Your point is well taken. Spot on. I should have chosen different words. Allow to clarify my point. What I meant when I wrote "**Someone that's mired in lust, may be tempted to write it off**"

as a lofty ideal for people that are active pursuing their ????? ?' in a serious way." was the following.

There are endless types of strugglers. I don't want to be guilty of over generalizing, but perhaps we can group them in to 3. We have the addict, which has many shades and versions. Then there's someone who's not quite addicted, but he's "mired in lust". The lust stems from within, he feels almost compelled to act out. And finally we have the guys who's primary struggle is a result of a certain emptiness in his life. He's lacking a sense of purpose, which leaves him with a blah feeling and therefore he's looking to fill that void with stimulation. (Obviously, if he repeats it to many times, the lust will take on a life of its own and not just stem from the blah feeling.) True, someone already mired in lust may not be able to break free with the above advice, he needs more than that, I stand corrected. And I would never say or think that such a person doesn't take his Avodas Hashem seriously. He can work very very hard and be passionate about his Avodah, and still have a difficult time breaking free. The comment I made (but failed to clarify) was directed at the 3rd group.

My point was predicated on R' CO's point. The RY was using examples of people that were driven by their Avodas Hashem that wouldn't allow for posture of pornography. I was trying to point out, that even for people (in this third category where the lust stem from curiosity, boredom, and an empty void) that don't have that drive in their Avodas Hashem, they don't have the love for Ruchnius that can fill them with a sense of "not needing to be stimulated and entertained", they can still fill their void with other pursuits that they're passionate about in order to avoid posturing. Hope this clarified. Sorry for any misunderstanding.

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