

Chaim's Oigen

Posted by chaimoigen - 06 Jun 2024 03:17

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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"**

**Table of Contents:**

1. [The Posture of Pornography](#)
2. [Feeling Rachmanus For "Him"](#)
3. [Who Are The Heroes](#)
4. ["Losing Out. Or Not?"](#)
5. [What Lasts About Us Here](#)
6. [Why the GYE Forum Could Be Your Key to Lasting Change](#)
7. [Why The Good Sex In Good \(Frum\) Marriages Can Only Be Experienced From Within](#)
8. [The Churban We Created And The Shadows We Cast](#)
9. [How My Father Talked To Me and How I Talk To My Kids](#)
10. [Regret vs. Guilt](#)
11. [A Conversation About Using Lust To Escape vs Living](#)

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Re: Chaim's Oigen

Posted by chosemyshem - 05 Jun 2025 21:46

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Nu, what's the stereotyple? Jews have guilt and Catholics have shame? I woulda made a good catholic. . .

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Re: Chaim's Oigen

Posted by amevakesh - 09 Jun 2025 02:12

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"chaimoigen" post=436317 date=1747970661 catid=1

But please consider this. Frankly, in today's age, I don't think that there is a single place in the world that is immune to exposure. Any child, Chassidish or not, in my opinion deserves to hear about these things, with love and sensitively, **from his Totty**. Not from somewhere or someone else, which is bound to happen at some point, sooner or later, if you don't talk to him. I think that would be a shame.

P.S. I was a drop disappointed by the quick look I took at the "curriculum" that a Mechaneich recently has been advancing about how to speak to one's children. I felt that talking about how important it is to safeguard your eyes and avoid Shazal without giving any kind of background and explanation or perspective about relations between men and women in the context discussed above is an incomplete talk, and may inadvertently give the message that that part of the topic is taboo and too dirty to discuss. I think it should be more comprehensive. But I haven't really spent much time on these curriculums. **Because I had a Mesora from my father shlita on how to give the talk...**

Personally, your Mesorah resonates with me, and in the lack of a personal Mesorah (as I wasn't as fortunate, and suffered from confusion for many years as a result), I adapted this ??? for

one of my sons. It was comprehensive, thorough, and I had to deprogram some of the confusion that had already set in. Though I wouldn't be quick to dismiss the curriculum, because in all likelihood, it too was created with a Mesorah, in consultation with great people. (Just a guess) For my other sons, I revealed a bit less, more similar to the curriculum, as I felt that it was enough for them. Needless to say, the main point is oh so important, whether you tell your sons more or you tell them less, **make sure they leave the discussion with the clear understanding, that if they have any question, they should feel comfortable telling you about it.**

Another point that resonated deeply with me, is that optimally, it should be the **father** that gives his son the talk. In the event that it can't be given over father to son, the father **must** see to it that someone responsible does. **If you don't educate your son, someone else will.** It's up to you who it will be, a Rav or a ????, or one of his teenage (or younger) friends. Choose wisely.

P.S. I hesitated to share a case in point, because it's very personal, but in light of the message I'm trying to convey, I think it has it's place here. The son I mentioned before, is BH doing very well in an out of town Yeshiva. Recently, he shared with me, that there's something from the past that's bothering him, but he's embarrassed to tell me what it is. Bear in mind, I have a very close ??? with my son, and for what ever reason, he still felt embarrassed to share whatever was bothering him. But the point is this. He **was** comfortable enough to let me know that **something** was bothering him, and I was therefore able to direct him to someone that he wasn't embarrassed of. Someone not involved in his day to day life. This person is someone I know well and trust enough to place my sons well being in his hands. Thank you Reb CO for giving my son over a half an hour on a busy Erev Shabbos right before the Zman, when I'm sure you had many other things you could have been doing.

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Re: Chaim's Oigen

Posted by chaimoigen - 16 Jul 2025 16:08

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**A Conversation: Using Lusting for Escape vs Living**

**I had a meaningful exchange with Mggsbms about using lust to escape the uncomfortable parts of life. I shared some things I hadn't shared before, as well as some very practical advice that has worked for me. Thankfully, mggsbms has reported that this stuff has helped him a lot, bH, so I feel it worthwhile to record the conversation here (it was also featured in the GYE weekly email on 6/20/25).**

***@mggsbms wrote:***

About 4 years ago, I was able to quit the hardcore stuff, and thank G-d, P&M are mostly a thing of the past. There were no big fights or moments that brought about the change; it just ceased to be an issue.

However, my struggle with **lust** is still very much an issue. Whereas I don't struggle with the hardcore stuff, lust is still my daily companion. The exact manifestation varies, but it is still my comforting pill, where I go when I'm bored, anxious, or tired. It soothes me and, may I say, gives me some life.

I know that this is not a way to live, and it is wasting lots of my time and sapping much of my energy and creative spirit. It puts me on a constant guilt trip, erodes my self-confidence, and in subtle ways, still affects the sanctity of my relationship with my wife and family.

The problem is the trade-off is not a good one either. In the recent past, the times I have tried to live without it have brought on rigidity, resentment, brain fog, and depression. It's been a week since I stopped using any lust as my pacifier, and the negative feelings are there, as in the past.

I hope to be able to continue on. I am open to hearing ideas and chizzuk.

***@chaimoigen responded:***

Let me share some of my story that I've never really spoken about before.

Before I came on GYE I had spent many lonely years working on my struggles alone. It was hard, but I had made a lot of progress. I had mostly succeeded in stopping to cross "red lines", except for occasional slips.

But what I didn't realize, until I joined this community, is that I was still using lust as a tool on a

regular basis. It was my escape and my distraction, and a way to numb hard and painful feelings and confusion. And here's the thing: I often used this drug - or other stupid numbing distractions- without doing anything very "wrong", so it usually didn't cause me any significant regret afterwards. So I didn't realize what it was doing to me, except at the times that I came too close to the edge, and I'd fall. And then I'd be completely broken and howl internally in rage and self-loathing about what I'd done, making promises etc, yet all without realizing that the root of what had happened was a dependence on using lust and other distractions that was far more pervasive than I had ever wanted to recognize.

Everything changed two years ago, with the help and kindness of Hashem. Following my conversation and subsequent meeting with HHM, I committed to avoid doing anything whatsoever that would evoke arousal or lust. That meant no books, no articles, no web browsing or movies or trailers or songs or anything that had any whiff of the stuff. And I started to realize how I had been avoiding experiencing life by escaping and numbing. And everything started to change...

I embraced this change. It meant finding new ways to deal with difficulties and situations, to face things head on, to face myself. I found meaning in this. It was difficult but it gave me a sense of purpose, an edge. And i began to feel that edge express itself positively in many different aspects of life.

With time, I began to feel as if color has now crept into a life that was previously only being seen and experienced only in greyscale.

With time my marriage has grown far better (though it was very good before), my Davening is immeasurably better, and i have BH made other positive changes in many areas in my life. And I'm not done!

Stopping to numb and distract was the best choice I ever made. (And this is completely separate from the spiritual benefit of avoiding Issurim.) As HHM likes to say: People come to GYE because they want help with a specific problem, and instead they learn how to start living their whole life better ...

I don't have easy answers.

But I think I would present a pathway, from my experience, with the following:

1. **Believe in the hope of finding a new and better way to live.** Motivation can be

worked on. (Reading Vehkam's thread for example, was very helpful to me.)

2. **Look at the aspects of your life that give you Chiyus, pleasure, meaning and value, and focus on increasing those things and aspects without the distraction of escape into the drug of lusting.** You should start seeing added benefits.
3. **Look to see the glimmerings of the positive that is added into your life from having the sense of Tahara in it.** Not just the avoidance of the negative. Offense, not defense. The benefits are there, and they get better with time. At the beginning it may feel ?????? ?????? ??? ??, but there are other worlds and other ways to fill the hole in your center.
4. **Hang on. It takes time.** Don't give up. Taking sips of lusting ?????? ?????? ??????? can ruin the progression and set you back. With time comes big, tangible changes. ??? ?????? ??? ???.

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Re: Chaim's Oigen

Posted by birshusi - 25 Jul 2025 15:55

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[chaimoigen wrote on 16 Jul 2025 16:08:](#)

**Look at the aspects of your life that give you Chiyus, pleasure, meaning and value, and focus on increasing those things and aspects without the distraction of escape into the drug of lusting.** You should start seeing added benefits.

What if there isn't anything that gives me chiyus, pleasure, meaning, and value? Or if there are some things but they are expensive, time consuming, culturally frowned upon, out of my control, or otherwise unavailable?

You made me think about the fact that I'm *constantly* numbing myself, whether with lust, stam web browsing, podcasts and radio, etc., and I can't think of any way to replace that.

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Re: Chaim's Oigen

Posted by kavey - 25 Jul 2025 16:52

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[birshusi wrote on 25 Jul 2025 15:55:](#)

What if there isn't anything that gives me chiyus, pleasure, meaning, and value? Or if there are some things but they are ... **time consuming, culturally frowned upon**, ...?

Why not start here. Think how much time is wasted online and is ruining your life vs the time consuming, culturally frowned upon...break free my friend.

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Re: Chaim's Oigen

Posted by chosemyshem - 25 Jul 2025 20:06

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[birshusi wrote on 25 Jul 2025 15:55:](#)

[chaimoigen wrote on 16 Jul 2025 16:08:](#)

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Strongly relate to this. Listen to some of Dov's recordings about the 12 steps idea of surrender. Life's too meaningful to be constantly trying to run away. It's possible to learn to accept it instead.

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Re: Chaim's Oigen

Posted by chaimoigen - 27 Jul 2025 04:41

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[birshusi wrote on 25 Jul 2025 15:55:](#)

[chaimoigen wrote on 16 Jul 2025 16:08:](#)

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Oysh, this is painful to see... here's a warm hand...

Nothing that gives you *spiritual* pleasure and satisfaction? I'm not speaking about *frumkeit* . Does giving or making a difference to others help? Are there experiences in which you feel a sense of being alive?

Friend Shem is talking about acceptance and surrender, which is powerful medicine. But, to my thinking, that's about when there is painfulness and rage and pushback against that which is all *wrong*.

I'm talking about finding what is *right*. Are there no moments when there is a feeling of rightness and good in the center of your being ?

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Re: Chaim's Oigen

Posted by birshusi - 27 Jul 2025 17:27

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Fair, but the other conditions remain as impediments.

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Re: Chaim's Oigen

Posted by birshusi - 27 Jul 2025 17:28

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[kavey wrote on 25 Jul 2025 16:52:](#)

[birshusi wrote on 25 Jul 2025 15:55:](#)

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Fair, but the other conditions remain as impediments.

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Re: Chaim's Oigen

Posted by birshusi - 27 Jul 2025 17:36

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[chaimoigen wrote on 27 Jul 2025 04:41:](#)

[birshusi wrote on 25 Jul 2025 15:55:](#)

[chaimoigen wrote on 16 Jul 2025 16:08:](#)

**Look at the aspects of your life that give you Chiyus, pleasure, meaning and value, and focus on increasing those things and aspects without the distraction of escape into the drug of lusting.** You should start seeing added benefits.

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I need to think about your questions to give a fully accurate answer, but off the top of my head:

- Making a difference to others does make me feel good - when it works. I spend my whole day helping, and that does give me tremendous gratification, *chiyus*, and sense of wholeness and fulfillment, but often times it doesn't, and actually does the opposite.

- You're not gonna like this, but the I feel most alive at the beach, in warm weather, at sunrise. I've done that twice in my entire life. (My post that started this discussion should make more sense now...) Exercising feels good, but when? At 5am when I'm getting some much-needed sleep? And where? In the dense concrete jungle in which I live? IT"L yes, that works when it's warm out, but what about in the winter? I could go on...

- That feeling of rightness and good at the center of my being is what I'm always either in pursuit of, or in flight from due to its absence. I am making some progress in certain ways towards understanding why I feel so unsatisfied, but it remains a constant struggle.

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Re: Chaim's Oigen

Posted by chosemyshem - 27 Jul 2025 18:32

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[chaimoigen wrote on 27 Jul 2025 04:41:](#)

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Friend Shem is talking about acceptance and surrender, which is powerful medicine. But, to my thinking, that's about when there is painfulness and rage and pushback against that which is all *wrong*.

I'm talking about finding what is *right*. Are there no moments when there is a feeling of rightness and good in the center of your being ?

Acceptance and surrender is far beyond a way of dealing with things that are wrong. It's relevant anytime *I* want something other than the way it is. Your life, the way it is right now, today, standing here, is the way it is because that is the way HaShem wants it to be. If nothing in that life gives you chiyus, and you find yourself ceaselessly numbing yourself in response to life, 12 steps teaches that you need to work on being mevatel your ratzon to his ratzon. Accept that this is what Hashem wants, and ask yourself what do I need to do.

Obviously not an easy ask, and reaching that point is a lifetime of avodah.

In no way does that exclude taking an honest look at your life and figuring out what about your life makes you feel the need to escape, looking for ways/activities to make yourself happy, or exploring other paths of reaching that acceptance other than the kind of brute force method of 12 steps. But the idea is that if your life makes you unhappy it's a chisaron in you, not in life.

Sorry if this is a bit philosophical. It's a feeling I strongly relate to. Working on lust has involved a surprising amount of work on this feeling and there's miles yet to go. Happy to shmooze about it if you'd like.

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Re: Chaim's Oigen

Posted by kavey - 27 Jul 2025 18:33

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Fair, but the other conditions remain as impediments.

lol. I read your last "or" as going on all the impediments. I definitely hear then.

Per your other post we invested in a treadmill during covid and I started using regularly this past

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winter. Exercising while listening to the Rabbi Orlofsky show...almost as sublime as the beach