hello my friends....
Posted by Gevura Shebyesod - 19 Jul 2011 04:33

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I've been lurking here for a couple of months, and now it's time to introduce myself and share my story. I first would like to express my Hakoras Hatov to Hashem for giving me a second chance, and for leading me to GYE when I needed it most. Also my thanks to all of you here, who through your stories and struggles have inspired me to hang on when times are tough, and to strive to bcome the person that Hashem really wants me to be.

i apologize if this is a bit long-winded but I am not such a good writer and I have a lot to get off my chest. I also apologize to the mods if i get too graphic and you have to edit. So here goes....

I am in my 40's, what you would call a "working yeshivishe ben torah", grew up in a small frum community, went to the "best" yeshivas, and I am B"H married with a bunch of kids K"AH. That's what everyone sees and thinks..... they don't know about my dark, secret life.

I have been struggling with SSA since my teens. Actually "struggling" is the wrong word, because until recently I was just wallowing in it. B"H I never went as far as doing it with another person, though not from lack of wanting. My natural shyness saved me many times from following through when situations presented themselves. But the looking, the fantasies, the WANTING, and the acting out with myself totally consumed my life and made me miserable even as i was enjoying the momentary pleasures.

Igrew up in a small town with very few other boys my age. I am a loner type and very shy and I really didn't have friends. At Bar Mitzva age I was sent out of town to Yeshiva as there was no Yeshiva high school where I lived. I found myself even more isolated there, as most of the other boys had come in groups from larger schools and had their own circles of friends.

I had always "played with myself" even at a very young age. I had no idea what it meant or that it was wrong, just that it felt good. I guess i began using it to soothe myself more and more. At the same time, as my body matured, I found myself fascinated more and more with looking at the other boysn how they were developing. I had barely any idea what sex was at that point, and surely did not even know that there was such a thing as homosexuality. I atrributed my fascination to "scientific curiosity".

At some point around the age of 15, I did MZ"L for the first time, also out of "curiosity". I cannot even begin to describe the way it was immediately addicting, probably like a first hit of cocaine (I have never done drugs). I am sure all of us here know what I am talking about. before i knew it I was doing it every chance I got, even 2-3 times a day. As I got older I ealized that I was fantasizing about the other boys while I did it, and I began to realize that i had a "problem". But I couldn't stop, and there was nobody i felt close enough to talk to. So I went throug life walking the walk and talking the talk, while in secret i wallowed in my sick fantasies. I learned, davened and did mitzvos, and most of the time I even believed in it, even as I knew deep inside that it was all a show and I couldn't tell anyone about what was eating me up. I would cry on Yom Kippur, promising to be good, while knowing full well that the Yetzer Hora was waiting right outside the Bais Medrash door and i probably wouldn't make it 12 hours before i did it again.

There were times when I got into situations with friends who i think had similar desires. We would be together alone and we each knew the other one wanted it. Once a friend was telling me about his bodybuilding and wanted me to feel how hard his stomach muscles were. I knew what he really wanted, and he knew that I wanted it too. My hand was literally inches from that first contact with another boy's skin. But I couldn't bring myself to make that final move. I don't know what held me back but i knew that if I took that step there was no going back. I remember literaly shaking from the tension and the desire, but I pulled my hand back and said no. For years later I would fantasize about what might have been, what could have happened. Now I look back and am comforted that even at my lowest moments i still had some self control (maybe it was just shyness but it saved me from going all the way over the edge).

I got older and began to date, but my heart wasn't in it and it really did't go anywhere. I am attracted to women also so that was not a problem. I just couldn't "connect" with anyone.

Then I met my wife. From our first phone call it just "clicked". We got married and have a great relationship and a bunch of kids. I hoped that when i got married my 'problem' would go away. I actually stayed "clean' for almost a whole year, but then i fell right back in. My mistake was that I only stopped doing MZ"L, but would still gaze at every boy I saw, fantasize, and mast***** but without MZ"L. I quickly discovered that there's no halfway, but I could not stop and fell back in. This went on for years, I would stop MZ"L for a few weeks or even a couple of months, and then flop right back into the mud.

Then I discovered the internet! first it was just some pictures, but more recently I found all the "goodies' that are available. Now I had even more material to satisfy my fantasies and cravings. I began to secretly look at g** po** more and more. as time went on i got bolder, even looking at it while my wife was in the next room. (I work in IT so I know how to cover my tracks). She still had no idea.

As I sank deeper into my "alternate reality" I would begin to think and question where I really belong. I felt like I was living a lie (I WAS living a lie, i just wan't sure which one). There were times when I would feel like an ousider waching myself acting in a play, davening, learning, raising my kids to be good Yidden, all the while knowing that i couldn't REALLY believe in it if i was acting the way i was. i began to identify myself in my mind as g*y, wondering if I really belonged in the community where i lived. I wondered if Hashem really knew and cared, if He was really there and didn't want me to be like this why did He play such a nasty trick on me and make me this way....(vlo sosuru....zu haminus). I couldn't take the conflict in my head and wanted out. There were times when i contemplated running away and joining "them", and even considered ending it all....

But Hashem sends the refuah not before the Makkah, but IN the makkah itself. I eventually was compelled to break free...

This past winter I discovered what to me was the most destructive form of porn. Stories. I found a site with literally thousands of stories of boys having relationships. Not just s*x, but friendship and romance. A video is just fun while you see it, and you can only watch it so many times before it gets boring. A story makes you think, and you get emotionally involved with the characters. The stories are serials, with a new chapter added evey few days. I would be checking 10 times a day to see what was new. I found myself getting so caught up in them emotionally that it started to affect my daily life.

I also started to realize that as I was getting older, my fantasies were becoming less likely to be fulfilled, what teenager was going to do anything with a guy old enough to be their father? This just increased my sense of emotional desperation. I realized that I was yearning for the friendships i had never had in my youth, and sexualizing them because I had no proper frame of reference due to my stunted social development. I was turning into an emotional train wreck, and that just made me act out even more.

Then hashem started sending me messages, things that would open up my feelings in ways I had never experienced. For a year or 2 now i have started occasionally davening in another shul, wher they daven with intensity and feeling. I thin my own davening started to improve then, and hashem hears it when it comes from the heart even when we don't deserve it....

There are 2 boys in the shul that I daven in that are extremely close friends for years. One in particular was a big "trigger" for me and i fantasized about him all the time. I always imagined

that the 2 of them had "something going" (i hope it's not true, I'd hate for them to suffer like this). This past year they went out of town to separate yeshivas and did not see each other for six months. i was in Shul the shabbos before Pesach when they greeted each other after their long separation. They hugged like brothers, and I burst into tears. I never had a FRIEND like that, that I could hug in public. I never felt more alone then in that moment.

Then over Pesach I had a terrible dream. i dreamt that I had a close friend that I had not seen in many years. he was on his way to meet me , and was killed in a car crash. I woke up sobbing, and could barely make it through davening that morning. I couldn't figure out at the time why i affected me that badly, but it was all the accumulated emotional junk starting to bleed out ofg me. Then by Birchas Kohanim, where we daven for Hashem to heal our dreamd, i totally broke down. i cried, i'm not even sure what i cried FOR. I just cried in pain. I knew i was a hopeless mess and at that moment, i knew that only Hashem could fix me.

At that moment I felt a calmness and resolve rest upon me. i knew that I must do whatever it takes to bring the two halves of my life together. I realized that i have to do something so shocking to me, that i would be forced to completely change my life. i resolved to "come out" to my wife and tell her everything, and take the consequences as they came. At that point I wasn't even thinking about doing teshuva, just to stop living in secret and to take whichever path presented itself. i was prepared for the ultimate rejection. I don't know where i would have gone or what i would have done if that happened, but i couldnt survive anymore with what had been bottled up inside me for so long.

So that firs Motzoei Shabbos after Pesach, i sat down with my wonderful wife and said "I have something to tell you about myself that i have been hiding from you all these years.....I'm gay.....". Her reaction stunned me; "That's not so bad, we will work on fixing it together". In that instant i knew it would be OK. I shared everything with her, all the desperation, all the filth, all the loneliness, all the hopeless yearning for things that cannot and will not be.

We resolved together to work on making it right. The very first thing we did was to install K9 on every computer in the house. From that moment on I have not MZ"L, I have not mast**** (except one slip recently), and I have not looked at porn (with one exception). I promised that any slips i would tell her immediately, and that I would see a therapist. I began from then on to daven with kavana and with tears, begging Hashem to give me the strength to hold on and continue, and to fight the Yetzer Hora for me because I cannot do it alone.

The first weeks were sheer hell. Just like starting was like a drug, stopping was like a physical withdrawal. i walked around in a daze, shaking from tension. i committed to making an effort not

to look and not to fantasize, but it's not that easy. My triggers are EVERYWHERE, in the street, in the store, in shul, at work (don't even mention the mikva). i don't even have a mechitza to hide behind. I constantly have to force myself to look away. i was literally whimpering whith the desire for another look, another trigger to release that good feeling in my head. It's a little easier now, but still a constant struggle.

I had finally acknknowledged that I am "gay" and i felt totally disconnected from reality. I would play with my kids in the yard and think to myself "What is this gay guy doing here, i don't belong here". My wife quickly set me straight (pun intended) on that one "You are not gay, you are a yid with a strange and powerful yetzer hora and you are finally fighting it!". I eventually realized that rejecting the label was one of the most important steps in recovery.

I also met with a frum therapist who deals with these issues. He helped me to understand how certain issues from my childhood cause the stunted social developement that leads to this problem, and gave me some tips how to control and redirect my thoughts away from the dangerous fantasies.

Sometime during that fist desperate week, ~~i discovered~~ Hashem led me to GYE. I had seen the ads before, and I always thought it was for a filtering service like JNet or Yeshivanet, which i was subconciously resisting because i didn't want to lose access to my precious secret world... But then i was on another website, one that often mocks practices of the frum community. They had a post making fun of the GYE handbook (specifically the "rubberband snapping" thing). The post actually had a link back to the GYE handbook, and i was curious so i clicked it. It was like being transported to a new planet. Suddenly i was not alone anymore, there were so many others who were sruggling with similar issues AND SUCCEEDING. I spent hours reading the handbook and browsing the forums, and got tremendous chizuk from it. I even discovered that i was not the only SSA addict out there, and that it can be successfully suppressed.

The entire secular culture is obsessed right now with being "Born This Way" and that it can't be changed and you should just "be yourself" and "it gets better" etc. as much as we strive to separate ourself from the Goyish attitudes it seeps in like a poison and in moments of self-doubt the Yetzer Hora tries to convince us that they are really right. My weapon is to turn the slogans against them and use it to my own advantage. Yes i was "Born This Way", a member of Hashem's Chosen People, tasked with the mission of spreading His light in a world bent on ignoring Him. we each have our own mission and our own fight, and I have been tasked with a special job. I have a special and unique Yetzer Hora to fight, and although I was held captive by the enemy for 30 years, i have now escaped and i am fighting back! With sweat and tears (lots of tears) I try every day to resist the temptations placed in front of my eyes and the fantasies that linger in my mind. Eventually "It Gets Better", when the desires will fade away with time and it will be easier to resist. i know that just like I will have to pay and burn for each time I don't look away fast enough, so too i will receive infinite reward for each time I resist the urge for a second look, and each time i suppress the fantasies that constantly try to creep into my head.

I mentioned before that there was one exception to stopping to look at porn, and that was the stories (i found a way around the filter for those). I just couldn't. I needed that fix of knowing what happens next. For few weeks I unsuccessfully tried to quit, I would manage a day or 2 then I fell in again. I wasn'r even interested in the s*x parts, just the storyline and the emotional buildup. But i knew it had to stop. Then one day i told myself "Enough! if you are serious about this there are no halfways anymore!" i went to Maariv that night and it was the 37th day of the Omer. The sefira of Gevura ShebYesod. I realized "that's what we are all about, Gevura, Kovesh es Yitzro, in the midda of Yesod, of self-control". I resolved that that day would be my personal Yom Kippur of sorts. I davened like never before, and promised that I would never go there again. B"H so far I have been successful. Hence my screen name.

I stayed clean until last friday. Then in the shower i suddenly found myself mast*** I stopped before anything worse happened, but i feell like i was teetering on the edge of a cliff. Then on shabbos i had fantasy dreams which i had not had in a long time. When i have these dreams they are so real that i experience every sensation. many times I would wake up wet, this time B"H I did not. but I need to strengthen myself over again. The events of the past week have affected me terribly and have left me emotionally drained, and maybe that's what made me vulnerable and in need of "soothing".

So here I am, trying to stay clean and to clear the bad thoughts from my head. It has its ups and

Once again I would like to thank all of you here on GYE who have shared your stories and your struggles, especially those of you who share my particular "flavor" of addiction. The chizuk i get from seeing how everyone encourages each other to get up and start again really inspired me in my darkest moments. Thank You.

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Re: hello my friends....
Posted by Gevura Shebyesod - 20 May 2014 04:09

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I once heard (i think maybe in the name of the Shela"h?) why the Shiur of a Mikva of 40 se'ah is described as "Mayim Shekol Gufo Oleh Bahem". That the meaning of "Oleh" is Bittul, like "Trumah oleh b'echad uMeah". Because a person's body takes up 20 se'ah so we are mevatel it in twice as much water.

So when we Toivel in a Mikva we are actually physically being mevatel our bodies!

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Re: hello my friends....
Posted by Machshovo Tova - 20 May 2014 18:39

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The holy sforim also say that when we crouch down under the water, we are folded in three, just like an unborn infant in the womb of its mother. When we emerge from the water it's as if we are born again.

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Re: hello my friends....
Posted by TehillimZugger - 20 May 2014 19:06

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kilochalu wrote**:**

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Kilo? What's UP with you and kollel gimatrios anyway?

Which reminds me, gotta send you an email about my gimatria...

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Re: hello my friends....

Posted by shivisi - 21 May 2014 10:52

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TehillimZugger wrote**:**

kilochalu wrote**:**

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Kilo? What's UP with you and **kollel gimatrios** anyway?

I have learned from a very great Talmid Chochom, and mekubal, that contrary to popular misconception, the idea of "kolel" in a gematria does not just simply mean that a gematria can work even if you don't manage to get the sum exactly right, and that there's an "error allowance" margin of one (or sometimes more - [letters-words- etc] in the calculation of gematrias, which may be the reason why many people may look at such "kollel gimatrios" with a certain amount of disdain,

This concept, which has it's source in very early seforim, has very deep meaning to it, which would take me quite some time to explain, so let it just suffice for me to say that "there's alot more in it than many people know about.

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Re: hello my friends....
Posted by Machshovo Tova - 22 May 2014 00:00

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IMHO, Kabbalistic topics should not be discussed on public forums. The Chid"a writes that divulging hidden secrets of the Torah is one of the causes which lead to sexual sins.

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Re: hello my friends....
Posted by Gevura Shebyesod - 22 May 2014 05:41

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Hayom Shiva Ushloshim Yom....

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Re: hello my friends....
Posted by shivisi - 22 May 2014 09:37
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Machshovo Tova wrote**:**

IMHO, Kabbalistic topics should not be discussed on public forums. The Chid"a writes that divulging hidden secrets of the Torah is one of the causes which lead to sexual sins.

Can you please give me the source details of where i can find that in the writings of the Chida.

tyvm

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Re: hello my friends....
Posted by Machshovo Tova - 22 May 2014 18:51
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shivisi wrote**:**

Machshovo Tova wrote**:**

IMHO, Kabbalistic topics should not be discussed on public forums. The Chid"a writes that divulging hidden secrets of the Torah is one of the causes which lead to sexual sins.

Can you please give me the source details of where i can find that in the writings of the Chida.

tyvm

Sorry I do not have my sforim at work (and I don't have GYE access otherwise). But I believe it is in his sefer Avodas Hakodesh. He has a whole chapter dedicated to tips (do's and dont's) for shmiras habris.

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Re: hello my friends....
Posted by Machshovo Tova - 22 May 2014 18:55

Gevura Shebyesod wrote**:**

Hayom Shiva Ushloshim Yom....

HAPPY GEVURA SHEBYESOD!

Today is your day - we look forward to hear a few words from you on this momentous occasion.

Hatzlacha

MT

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Re: hello my friends....
Posted by gibbor120 - 22 May 2014 20:04

Yes MT (mazal tov) mr GS!

Keep on MT (monstah truckin) with us!

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Re: hello my friends....
Posted by cordnoy - 22 May 2014 20:15

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Gevura Shebyesod wrote**:**

Hayom Shiva Ushloshim Yom....

mazal tov youngster...I didn't chap at first.

Many more iy"H....sober days.

b'hatzlachah

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Re: hello my friends....
Posted by Gevura Shebyesod - 23 May 2014 00:08

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The truth is I don't really have much to say. Today is a day just like any other. The same triggers, the same Nisyonos, the same opportunities to choose. One minute, one sight or fantasy at a time.

But I do want to once again thank all of you for helping me along the way the past 3 years. Without the support and companionship I found here I would have been totally lost. And thank

you for all the Mazeltov wishes.

Oh yeah...

Warning: Spoiler!

And...

Warning: Spoiler!

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Re: hello my friends....
Posted by chaimyakov - 23 May 2014 05:50

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Mazal Tov for today! That is all any of us can hope for. Not the rest of our lives, not this year or this month or this week or even until Shabbos, just today(One Day at a Time - it has a nice ring to it, no?) The sooner i learned that the sooner i was able to start living and Gevura it is nice to know that you know it to.

KUTGW and all that.

Hatzlacha in all things GOOD!

chaimyakov

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Re: hello my friends....
Posted by ZemirosShabbos - 23 May 2014 18:20

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Happy Sefira Day!

thank you for being such a special member of the forum, helping and supporting whenever you

yedidcha,

Jerry

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Re: hello my friends....
Posted by cordnoy - 03 Jun 2014 09:07

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???? = 364

Today, you have overpowered him!

Hatzlachah onward!

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