

hello my friends....

Posted by Gevura Shebyesod - 19 Jul 2011 04:33

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 become 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.

I grew 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 boys 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 attributed 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 realized 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 through 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 literally 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 didn'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 outsider 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 of 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 with 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 acknowledged 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 development 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 first 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 subconsciously 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 struggling 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 ourselves 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't 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 downs, there is more I would like to share but i think i bored you all enough for now 😊

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 gothika - 20 Aug 2011 22:53

Hey Gevura I have so much to say about almost every single post on these 2 pages that it is difficult to actually write it all out. I'll PM you soon with what I mean but I can relate to what you have been saying this whole time on so many levels.

P.s I have been having the same problem with not being able to upload an avatar. I think that it has to do with the boxes under the name. Depending on how many posts that one has contributed to the forum upgrades ones level from newbie (under 50 posts) all the way to hero member (above around 1000). I think that each level has a certain number of boxes from 1 to five and a different color depending on if the user is a moderator with the power to delete/move posts around. I think that perhaps only users of a certain level can upload an avatar. Either that or it's just a temporary bug in the database software. Thats just my guess but it seems to be the only 2 possibilities.

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Re: hello my friends....
Posted by gibbor120 - 22 Aug 2011 02:27

I'm pretty sure that I uploaded an avatar as a newbie.

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Re: hello my friends....
Posted by gothika - 22 Aug 2011 10:46

Oh. Well there goes my whole theory :-). I guess we won't know the emes until the heilige Guard Tells us but I am sure that he is attending to much more pressing matters as we speak, new website etc etc.

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Re: hello my friends....
Posted by ZemirosShabbos - 22 Aug 2011 16:19

www.guardyoureyes.org/forum/index.php?topic=3206.msg109330#msg109330

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Re: hello my friends....

Posted by Gevura Shebyesod - 22 Aug 2011 17:51

Thanks Zemmy, I still want my avatar....

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Re: hello my friends....

Posted by ontheedgeman - 22 Aug 2011 18:15

wow, just getting wind of this wild post now. we say every morning, "sheh lo asani goy". do we really stop to think what that means? To have the strength and faith to evaluate one's homosexual urges, to rationally see them in context, as part of our mission as Yidden, and to yearn for ridding such things, is truly awesome.

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Re: hello my friends....

Posted by gothika - 22 Aug 2011 18:27

I second that Gevura, avatars for all 8).

Thanks for clarifying the mystery ZS!

ontheedgeman: I never thought of this whole sugya as fitting into sheh lo asani goy, now I have another reason not to fly through morning brochas while half asleep.

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Re: hello my friends....

Posted by Gevura Shebyesod - 22 Aug 2011 21:17

I try to have that in mind too, also "Shelo Asani Aved" I don't have to be a slave to my base desires, I have the power to rise above them.

I also try to have extra Kavanah whenever I say "Asher Kidshanu B'Mitzvosav", that I want to bring kedusha into my life to replace the tumah that filled me until now.

To continue along this vein, I was thinking recently about "V'lo Sosuru Acharei Lvavchem..." That it's really incomplete without the following Posuk "Lmaan Tizkiru....V'Hyisem Kedoshim....". Concentrating on "Thou shalt not" by itself doesn't get you anywhere, it just leaves an empty hole that needs to be filled. There needs to be a positive goal to strive for, that of Vhyisem Kedoshim, to do Mitzvos and fill our lives with such closeness to Hashem that we won't feel a need for anything else..

Gevura!

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Re: hello my friends....

Posted by Gevura Shebyesod - 25 Aug 2011 10:39

40 days...

I just had a really bad dream. I dreamt that I fell hard, really hard, farther than I have ever fallen in real life, over and over again. It was one of those vivid dreams where every sensation and pleasure is so real. Sometimes I wonder if there are things in my distant past that I don't remember at all because they were so traumatic....In my dream I then checked a calendar to see how many days I had been clean, it was 13 days.

I woke up and I was so close to the edge that i was sorely tempted to just finish it. But I didn't. I tossed and turned and couldn't fall back asleep, so here i am early in the morning. I still miss my tzummy :(

Still working hard on guarding my eyes in the street, it's tough. I still keep getting this feeling "I hate being different than everyone else, why can't i just be able to look around and not be bothered by everything I see". i guess that's better than what I used to do, imagining that i was a predator, scouting around and picking out "targets" (i even had a scoring system wheer I would rate them on a scale 1-5). I feel bad that I still get a thrill when I see something, and I feel good that I feel bad about it. I guess I feel like an onion, layer upon layer, peeling them back one at a

time. I wonder what I will find when I get all the way to the middle, a Pintele Yid or a monster?

I put on a good show here, cracking jokes and giving chizuk, but I'm really just an insecure little kid inside and i'm scared....

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Re: hello my friends....

Posted by alexeliezer - 25 Aug 2011 18:28

Wow GS! Sounds like a rough ride last night. You know in the past when I had a dream like that, I would replay it in my mind and enjoy it all over again, as if it really happened (I was really sick, and any fix would do). Now it at least upsets me, though probably not as much as it should. Fortunately they are few and far between.

The older I get, the more I realize the child never goes away. My father told me this a long time ago. That he still feels like a teenager in his mind.

I've learned to turn my fear into trust in Hashem. This still takes work, because it's natural to fear. But the more I bring Hashem into all aspects of my life, the more natural it becomes to turn quickly to Him.

Have a great day. And night.

Alex

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Re: hello my friends....

Posted by ontheedgeman - 26 Aug 2011 16:08

So what I'm hearing is that you were near the edge but didn't go over! Nice. Join me, on the edge man!

;-)

Actually I've fallen off the edge a few times so what am I.

Have you read Windows of the Soul? I started reading it again, knowing that it probably would not work for me. So I have just been letting my eyes read the words, and hoping to Gcd that maybe something will stick. Would you believe it, for a day or two now, I have been gently bringing my eyes back to my 4 amot when I see something inappropriate? Never thought that would work. Just gently saying to myself, interesting, probably an interesting site, but let's keep on trucking.

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Re: hello my friends....
Posted by gibbor120 - 26 Aug 2011 18:11

I'm replying kinda late to your first long post which i just read. I joined GYE around the same time as you. As time goes on I catching up on some posts so I can get some context about the ppl writing. It's amazing how you really opened up, as many have here. This is a special place. I too am glad that I found it "*by accident*". Thank you for sharing. Each story gives each one of us chizzuk. We can't do it alone, but we can do it with help. You have one special wife my friend. Have a good shabbos!

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Re: hello my friends....
Posted by Yossi.L. - 26 Aug 2011 20:28

Your honesty is powerful. I admire your openness.

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Re: hello my friends....
Posted by Gevura Shebyesod - 26 Aug 2011 21:31

[ontheedgeman wrote on 26 Aug 2011 16:08:](#)

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actually i'd like to stay as far from the edge as possible. 😊

im working on the eyes, some days are better than others. i tell myself, you cant have it anyway, so its not part of your life. i read the book, probably should read it a few more times.

good shabbos

gevura!

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Re: hello my friends....

Posted by Gevura Shebyesod - 30 Aug 2011 13:37

Day 45, halfway to 90!

I realized that I have been having a relatively easy time lately because a lot of my "problems" were away for the summer. That is about to change, and the training wheels are going to come off.

I have been dreading this moment, but there is still a part of me that is telling me that I should be looking forward to it. I hate that part of me....

I have been thinking of how to deal with suddenly seeing all these people that I have not seen in a while. Just keeping my eyes down and forcing myself not to look is going to be extremely difficult and i am afraid it will not last very long. I have come up with something that might work, I tried it a couple of times this morning.

Basically, when I see someone coming that is a big trigger, I will glance at them quickly, and say to myself something like the following "Hey look, it's him, he used to be such a big trigger for me. BUT NOT ANY MORE!!!!" and then I look away and it's over.

This might even work for new sights on the street, which are an even bigger problem for me. "Look over there, I would have really enjoyed staring at him. BUT NOT ANY MORE!!!!"

So instead of sticking my head in the sand and trying to ignore the problem, I will acknowledge it, and then affirmatively push it away.

What do you "sikolodgeeee" experts think?

Gevura!

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