

New here

Posted by hagaon - 06 Sep 2011 15:53

I am new here. Just want to say hello.

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Re: New here

Posted by alexeliezer - 19 Sep 2011 15:22

Finally! Balanced reporting here on GYE!

First, lets hear from the Yetzer Tov:

[hagaon wrote on 12 Sep 2011 21:20:](#)

Within the first few weeks, I quickly deteriorated, and was viewing material that was extraordinarily spiritually damaging. I knew that this would have terrible repercussions on my soul, my marriage, and my career success.....I felt that the addiction had very strongly taken over and could not achieve any control. I knew not what to do, and came back here....One thing I must disclose. I have a slight feeling of guilt on the 90 days journey. Let me explain. My shmirat aynayim is still very poor, and feels under the uncontrollable rubric....

And now, some words from the Yetzer Hora:

[hagaon wrote on 12 Sep 2011 21:20:](#)

On the other hand, the alternative is the path I was going down before I signed up here, which was viewing much more explicit, damaging material which was actively sought out and

extremely time consuming.

I felt I needed to address that immediately, and Baruch Hashem, I have. I think I'm a ways away on the Shmirat Aynayim front, but B'ezrat Hashem, I would like to conquer the more serious challenge first.

....I don't mean to give a heter to falls in shmirat aynayim, but my past experience and current success are all based on one step at a time. Trying to do it all at once has always rebounded terribly for me, and had no success.

Hagaon,

Whatever works for you. As long as it works.

Here's why being on the 90-day chart doesn't feel quite right to you. It's for people who are in recovery. What you want to do is like a guy who goes through a 5th of bourbon a day, decides to quit, and shows up to his 1st AA meeting with a beer. "Hey, it's not bourbon." Granted, for him it *is* progress, he's weaning down. But he's not in recovery.

A requirement for recovery is abstinence, not a lower-alcohol drink.

But this approach led to disaster in the past!?

That's a different story.

To truly beat this thing once and for all, we need to give up our favorite secret shiksa girlfriend -- Lust. Until we can truly rip this comfort, this cherished part of us, from our hearts and say "I don't want to lust any more," and ask Hashem to take our lust, constantly -- until then, we are doomed to repeat. Maybe we'll be clean for a long stretch, but we're just a dry alcoholic. You can put him on an island without booze for 5 years. What's the first thing he's going to reach for when he gets home and goes to a party or hears some bad news? Of course! Because he never gave it up. He just deprived himself of it.

To be clear: Until you commit to giving up lust, you're not in recovery. Until you commit to shmiras aynayim, you're still imbibing the lust drug.

You don't want to take things too fast because everyone knows that's not healthy. I understand. But these are the basics, it's not taking on too much. There are many other more advanced steps, more subtle forms of lusting (like with one's wife) that can wait for later.

I'm glad you're here. Thanks for sharing your story and your struggles. Stick around and share what works. Post on your own thread and give others much-needed chizuk. Wishing you much success.

Alex

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Re: New here

Posted by hagaon - 19 Sep 2011 21:12

Thank you for your words alexeliezer.

I appreciate them.

And I understand them.

I came by now b/c I felt myself on the verge of cracking. Razorclosetwassopainful.

Baruch Hashem I think the last few minutes, I have crawled away from that, and survived.

I no longer feel the guilt about the chart. I understand what I am doing is an imperfect level, but I know if I took myself off the charts, it would destroy me and I would feel less compunction just hopping on the explicit web and letting loose.

Staying on the chart keeps me from doing that, as much as my eyes have little control in the streets.

And I think being on the charts saved me from that razorclose fall I was so close to a few minutes ago. I saw an inappropriate photo, but quickly caught myself and got away. I don't think I would have been able to do that w/o the chart.

How I can move to the next level, I don't know, and I don't think I am ready for that, or capable of doing that yet.

I kindly request no one give me advice at this time for how to move to a level of general eye control, and not just control of viewing inappropriate materials which is what I am working on now. I don't think I am ready for that. B'ezh, one day, but when that day comes, and it might be a while away, I will let it be known.

And truth is, there was a time a few years ago, ironically when I was still single, that I did not look at inappropriate material for a full year, did not fall, and lived an essentially proper life. I might have occasionally noticed something on the street, but I wasn't pursuing it, it was a result of the nature of the street today and the challenge of never seeing anything on the street while being an active part of the world.

Sadly, an extraordinarily stressful and challenging time period brought me back down after that clean period, and I have never fully got back up again, though generally clean, with slip up every few months or so, followed by dry spells. But as I mentioned earlier, I was heading in an extremely terrible direction until I joined the chart.

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Re: New here

Posted by blackbigday - 19 Sep 2011 21:46

Alex-

maybe I've asked this question in a different way already, so clobber me if you must. Is it possible for a man to not lust? Isn't it our goal to make a commitment to admit our fault and stay clean? Can I ever get to the point where I don't even want it?

Note: I am not weighing in on this way heavy discussion about the lesser of two evils.

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Re: New here

Posted by hagaon - 20 Sep 2011 01:23

Black bigday's question is also something I have wondered for years.

Whereas I can imagine a recovering alcoholic having to go dry for the rest of his life, that would not work here, as a man must still fulfill his family obligations.

The famous gemara on Hashem removing the yetzer for lust for 3 days also seems to indicate that it can not (indeed, should not) be removed totally.

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Re: New here

Posted by alexeliezer - 20 Sep 2011 18:57

It's no wonder we lust addicts have difficulty with this one. We equate sex with lust. After all, it's the same physical pleasure, the same physical end result. So isn't sex with my wife lust? Won't it perpetuate the addiction?

We addicts don't really know what mitzvas onah ("making love?") is supposed to be like or about. I'm no different, so I really can't help. But I do know, at least intellectually, that it has to do with the setting, the emotional content, and the purpose.

The setting: Am I with my life partner or am I alone, or with someone else? I think we can all

see a difference here.

The emotional content: Am I feeling love for my wife and using this encounter to further that feeling, to get even closer? Or am I focused on just having a good time getting and giving physical pleasure (fooling around).

The purpose: Am I just looking for relief because I've been lusty all day and if I don't do it with her you know what will happen? or, Purpose? What purpose? I just want it! Can't I just have what I want? What I neeed? I'll even give her what she needs! Relief of a basic animal urge, as opposed to doing it because it's a mitzva, to have children, to give my wife what I am obligated to.

If the kavanos are correct, and arousal time is limited to the encounter itself, that's not lust!

Can't relate? No prob. Try this:

Happiness and various pleasures trigger the release of the neurotransmitter dopamine in certain areas of the brain, and when this chemical binds to its target receptors, we experience pleasure -- a sense of elation and well-being. We can take opiates (heroin, morphine, oxycontin) or other drugs that will bind to these same receptors, bypassing the need to have the actual pleasurable experience, and just feel that same sense of elation and well-being (intensified). It's addictive. And it requires ever escalating doses of drug to achieve the same effect (for us, kinkier fantasies and images, more dangerous liaisons).

So now our drug addict decides to recover. He abstains from the drug. Any small dose would cause him to relapse. BUT WHAT ABOUT REAL HAPPINESS, LIFES REAL PLEASURES? Don't they act on the very same part of the brain as the drug?

Now no one's going to say our addict shouldn't experience true happiness because it might cause him to relapse into drug taking. Same with sex. There's different ways to get this elaborate system fired up -- with gazing, looking at stills, movies, fantasizing, self-stimulation. Or in the appropriate setting discussed above. They may both have a final common pathway, but whether it's the drug or not is all in the approach.

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Re: New here

Posted by heuni memass - 20 Sep 2011 19:06

Beautifully said Alex.

Thank you.

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Re: New here

Posted by hagaon - 27 Sep 2011 22:28

Thank you for your words alexeliezer.

Also, I apologize for rarely posting here, but the truth is, I come to post here when I am on the verge of a breakdown, so lack of posts is somewhat of a good sign.

Today was extremely hard.

Alexeliezer, I agree with the idea, and b'ezrat hashem we should all strive towards that goal.

But, at least to me, it seems like it will take a life time of striving. A challenge, I won't run away from it.

My goal right now has been to avoid looking at salacious material. I am much better than I was when I joined the charts 3 weeks ago, but the things on the street and the occasional thoughts .

. .

Is there any small (emphasis on small) steps that can start moving it to the next level?

I'm thinking that b'ezrat hashem, if I hit 90, I will try to broaden my definition of staying on the chart beyond what it is now.

Shana Tova to all.

Best Wishes to all.

May we merit freedom from addiction, or at least a move further away this coming year.

And thank you all for being here with me.

-Me

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Re: New here

Posted by blackbigday - 27 Sep 2011 23:05

Alex- according to what you are saying, then if the wife was not really interested in having relations, it would be a lust activity. What about when the wife never actually wants to have relations, and is only doing it to help her husband. That's lust, but what should he do?

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Re: New here

Posted by Yossi.L. - 28 Sep 2011 03:52

The bigger problem is...why is it like that

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Re: New here

Posted by alexeliezer - 28 Sep 2011 15:26

Hagaon -- Good to hear from you, and glad things are going according to plan. Re small steps, I would suggest listening to your conscience (yetzer tov) for advice. I can't recommend a particular step, but if you consider all the various things that we do when we lust (gazing at various things, thinking about various things, doing various things) you can pick one and commit to stopping that one thing. The goal is getting to the point where you're ready to give up lust.

Re the stuff I wrote about the ideal bedroom encounter, believe me, I'm still working at it. I'm getting an amazing response from my wife, though, which is encouraging. She is expressing much more love. And the physical pleasure is better than ever, (which is difficult for an addict to believe).

Bigday -- you ask a good question, and you've shared your situation. There's a thread on the balabatim's forum ("breaking the cycle") with some well thought-out (albeit long) posts about this topic. My opinion is you should continue to engage in all the activities married couples engage in, despite your wife's lack of interest. Is it the pinnacle of sublimity? Maybe not. Is it raw lust? I don't think so. And I don't think it will cause you to relapse if you're careful outside the bedroom. I realize it doesn't fit with the first mehalech I wrote above (about the proper kavanos), but I think it's at least not feeding the wrong neural pathways.

Hatzlacha and KVT

Alex

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Re: New here

Posted by hagaon - 28 Sep 2011 17:51

I am off the 90 day chart. I fell.

But in the spirit of a certain Hasidic Rebbe's teaching's emphasis, I am not despairing.

Day one of my new cycle is Rosh Hashana, a bit apropos.

Note- Historically, and I can not explain it rationally, but erev chag has always been a time I often fail after good stretches. My best ever life stretch a few years ago (basically a year), ended erev Pesach. The yetzer hara I guess, with the chag coming in.

And my new cycle, coming from a higher place (when I joined the 90 day cycle 3 weeks ago, I was spending much time daily watching highly inappropriate material. This fall had signs indicating it was coming, but its not as bad as I was 3 weeks ago, and the material was certainly inappropriate and asur, but not nearly on the same level of explicitness), I hope to have higher standards.

B'ezrat Hashem.

Shana Tova to all again.

And I posted my appreciation to AlexEliezer's post last time. I still appreciate it, but I realized I still have some questions on it, based on the gemara and my understanding of the world. But that will come another time.

Starting again . . .

Shana Tova!

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Re: New here

Posted by alexeliezer - 28 Sep 2011 18:03

Hagaon,

Thanks for your honesty. Glad you're still in the game. Look forward to seeing you through all the way to sobriety.

[All my opinions are [i]daas yochid[i] and anyone is free to disagree. Anything worthwhile, and especially as contentious as these topics can be, is going to need to be argued out. At the end of the day, each of us has to find what works for him and stick with it. So long as it works.]

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Re: New here

Posted by Yossi.L. - 28 Sep 2011 18:09

Finding what works for you is very important. However, even more important then that is to be ready to accept that what you believe to be the right way may be completely wrong. The path to growth is paved with change...

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Re: New here

Posted by gibbor120 - 28 Sep 2011 18:48

hagaon, one of my most depressing moments was being up all shavuot night... and not with a gemarah :-[. Shabbos, was always a hard time for me as well. Not so much erev yom tov, but on shabbos and yom tov. We've all been there or somewhere similar. Have a shanah tova one day at a time!

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