

Hello

Posted by longsleeves - 31 Dec 2014 21:48

Hi,

I am so glad that I have found this website, as I'm hopeful that it will help me with this struggle. I have so many questions and I am confused and pained by this issue. There is so much for me to write that I hardly know where to begin. I will not be able to put all the information in one post. Rather, I will start out and overtime I will try to cover all the topics involved. Let me begin by clarifying my status with this issue:

Regretfully, I masturbate on a relatively regular basis. It happens in spontaneous on-off episodes. Meaning, I will do it for 3-4 consecutive days and then stop for a few days (sometimes even a couple of weeks). The clean period, between episodes, is usually extended when I am extremely busy, dating someone, or when I feel closer to God (e.g. around Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur). Ultimately, it winds up averaging to about 3-4 times a week.

I practically only masturbate if I get access to porn that I can download onto a device, which I can then watch before going to sleep. It is for this reason that I do not have access to the Internet in my house. Similarly, I have heavy restrictions on my laptop and smartphone. Furthermore, in the situation that I do discover ways around any of these filters, I tweak them accordingly so that I don't stumble from the same issue again. However, if I ultimately want to access porn, and subsequently masturbate, then I will find a way. Meaning, I have done everything that I can on the "outside" and now I must try to fix the "inside" (i.e. personal decisions).

In order for you to appreciate my subjective struggle, you must comprehend my personality and the way I "tick." I have struggled with an anxiety disorder ever since the beginning of high school (I am currently 26), specifically, general and social anxiety. Baruch HaShem, I have (relatively) recently discovered Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT), which has helped return stability into my life. However, the nature to irrationally and excessively worry has become ingrained into my personality.

Consequently, it has become particularly hard for me to manage my anxiety with worries that involve masturbation. Meaning, despite my success in overcoming social and general fears, I have had less victory with the worries that involve masturbation. Primarily, this is due to the fact that my therapist is not frum and subsequently discussing religious anxieties with him does not prove to be productive. Furthermore, it is easier to identify, and then dismiss, irrational thoughts when I can openly discuss them with my (close) friends and family. Masturbation however, due

to its personal and sensitive nature, becomes more of an internal battle where my conscious is the only voice of reason.

The worries and anxieties revolving masturbation are primarily problematic after the fact. Meaning, sometimes I worry that HaShem no longer likes me and that He will cause bad things to happen to me. For example, recently, due to certain symptoms, my doctor ordered a series of tests. He wanted to rule out a certain type of cancer or tumor. Thank God, nothing too serious was found, but throughout the whole ordeal I experienced many anxieties that revolved masturbation. For instance, when I masturbated during the period of days that I was waiting for test results, I would assume that God was going to punish me with terrible results. I believed that God was judging me more stringently since He was expecting that, while waiting for these life-dependent results, I could refrain from this sin. I would think that I was a terrible, irresponsible person who cannot sustain even in these crucial times. In other words, the circumstance garnished higher consequences, as more was expected of me.

This concern of immediate punishment presents itself in other areas, such as shidduchim. For instance, if I masturbate while in the middle of pursuing a shidduch, I am concerned that this will cause the match not to work. I think to myself, "if I was truly serious about getting married, and earnestly wanted to find my wife then I would prove this to HaShem by refraining more often from masturbation." Furthermore, even when I reassure myself that this is not how God works (that I am normal man with sexual desires and HaShem understands), I am always worried that I have somehow recently excluded myself from this understandable, forgivable level of masturbation. In other words, I will tell myself, "even though I have been OK until this point, now that you masturbated so many times this week, you are no longer OK with God and He will consequently actualize those dreaded results" (e.g. cause the shidduch not to work).

Incidentally, this worry about masturbation affecting a shidduch is currently plaguing me. Meaning, after refraining for two-and-a-half weeks, I slipped-up and masturbated last night. Additionally, I recently started dating this girl that I kind of like. I am afraid that HaShem will cause the shidduch to fall apart as a result of my negligence with masturbation. Is this thought rational? Is it accurate for me to believe that my success in finding my spouse is directly (or indirectly) linked to my accomplishments and failures with my battle with masturbation?

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Re: Hello

Posted by cordnoy - 31 Dec 2014 21:58

Welcome,

You are among friends.

Your writin' is eloquent.

you expressed yourself and your issues clearly.

I will suffice my comment with one point: Many of us do not view this as a religious struggle whatsoever. There are SA groups, that have nothin' to do with Judaism. My person therapist is not even Jewish. It seems to me that it should not be your focus at all.

My life was unmanageable...not because of Gehinnom, any punishments or aveiros; it was simply not a life.

I am here and use all other tools to get my life back.

b'hatzlachah and welcome again

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Re: Hello

Posted by Bigmoish - 31 Dec 2014 22:40

Welcome!

[longsleeves wrote:](#)

Furthermore, it is easier to identify, and then dismiss, irrational thoughts when I can openly discuss them with my (close) friends and family. Masturbation however, due to its personal and sensitive nature, becomes more of an internal battle where my conscious is the only voice of reason.

Isolation tends to be difficult.

But if there's one thing we know how to talk about here, it's masturbation.

You should find many like minded individuals to share your thoughts with.

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Re: Hello

Posted by skeptical - 31 Dec 2014 23:02

Welcome to GYE!

You've found a place where the members are religious Jews, so you can talk about hashkafa and know that you'll be understood.

You've found a place where the other members are dealing with the same things as you, and who can relate, because they've been there.

Please make yourself comfortable, there's a ton of information and great camaraderie.

One thing I've noticed in your writing is that when you're content with life and are happy with what you're doing, you have less of an issue. When your anxiety is up, and you're making nervous calculations, the issue surfaces.

Therefore, it is important for you to work on your anxiety. Don't worry about what Hashem thinks of you (He thinks you're great, by the way). Stop worrying about this aveirah or any other. It's counterproductive. CBT can help with this, don't throw in the towel.

Focus on living life to the best of your ability. Focus on being happy with what you have. It's a big mitzvah to serve Hashem with joy, because trying to serve Him any other way just doesn't work. Hashem loves you, the proof is He gave you the breath you just took.

Hatzlacha!

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Re: Hello

Posted by dms1234 - 31 Dec 2014 23:30

WOW! I used to not masturbate the night before a test because i thought it would affect my chances but then i noticed that when i do masturbate i did well. i later realized this was silly because my masturbating doesn't really affect how i do unless i study less because of it. What i am trying to say is that you think that masturbation is some superstitious thing and God does a cause an effect thing. If life was like that, then we would all be dead by now. God is patient and merciful. I think you need to take a deep breath and relax.

You should start out like Skeptical said by focusing on your anxiety issues. Maybe see a therapist?

Check out the [GYE Handbook](#) and [Skep's tips](#)

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Re: Hello

Posted by shomer bro - 31 Dec 2014 23:33

I can totally relate to you. When I've fallen, i also sometimes think that now i can't date because of this. But it's not true! Hashem wants to see us trying and working on ourselves and thats what we're judged by, not just be the results. ly"h you'll find your bashert soon and with much clarity.

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Re: Hello

Posted by yidtryingharder - 01 Jan 2015 01:09

Welcome

Wow I used to be the same way, I thought I would die or get cancer. Every pain I used to have was a cause of tremendous fear that these were my last moments on earth.

Then I'd get depressed about the fact that how can I come before a heavenly court with so much masturbation and would cry myself to sleep. Then I would find my stress causing me to

masterbate again.

Now about the shidduch thing I also thought the same way. But I got married to a girl who I masterbated while fantasizing about her during our dating period.(btw she's the only girl I dated)

God loves us because we are who we are don't think otherwise.

I think I saw it on gye though I'm not sure. There's a simple test to see if the y"h or the yetzer hatov is talking the y"h usually uses the term I me or another first person language. Whereas the yetzer hatov uses us you. Meaning he's talking as an outsider if when you think about whatever "punishment" your gonna get from hashem it usually is I'm gonna die or hashem hates me

Just a thought

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Re: Hello

Posted by longsleeves - 09 Jan 2015 21:13

Thank you for your response.

You mentioned about SA groups, which has me thinking. When does masturbation/sex leave the realm of normality and become an addiction? Meaning, in the non-frum world, is it not normal and accepted to have sex and masturbate on a relatively regular basis? What is the harm in it? If you're not an orthodox jew then it would seem expected for a sexually healthy individual to masturbate.

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Re: Hello

Posted by longsleeves - 09 Jan 2015 21:19

Thank you for your response.

You mentioned about SA groups, which has me thinking. When does masturbation/sex leave the realm of normality and become an addiction? Meaning, in the non-frum world, is it not normal and accepted to have sex and masturbate on a relatively regular basis? What is the

harm in it? If you're not an orthodox jew then it would seem expected for a sexually healthy individual to masturbate.

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Re: Hello

Posted by longsleeves - 09 Jan 2015 21:23

Thank you for your response.

You mentioned about SA groups, which has me thinking. When does masturbation/sex leave the realm of normality and become an addiction? Meaning, in the non-frum world, is it not normal and accepted to have sex and masturbate on a relatively regular basis? What is the harm in it? If you're not an orthodox jew then it would seem expected for a sexually healthy individual to masturbate and have sex.

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Re: Hello

Posted by cordnoy - 09 Jan 2015 22:52

No, it doesn't.

Their lives/our lives become unmanageable.

My recovery has nothin' to do with religion (for others, this is an important part of it, and that's fine as well), for I was/am completely religious and it never stopped me before, and it won't now.

My life needed changin' and that's what I went/goin' about doin'.

Just met with a Mormon for 45 minutes.

b'hatzlachah

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Re: Hello

Posted by gibbor120 - 09 Jan 2015 23:08

[longsleeves wrote:](#)

When does masturbation/sex leave the realm of normality and become an addiction? Meaning, in the non-frum world, is it not normal and accepted to have sex and masturbate on a relatively regular basis? What is the harm in it? If you're not an orthodox jew then it would seem expected for a sexually healthy individual to masturbate and have sex.

WELCOME!

I'll try to give a general description. I realize that we can argue about the details, but this should give a general sense of things.

When a person compulsively masturbates etc., even when it interferes with other important things in his life, and he wants to stop because he values those things, but he cannot.

This applies to a goy as well. No less than if he was addicted to alcohol or drugs, and he could not stop.

Some have reported that it was easier to give up drugs than to give up masturbation.

Make sense?

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Re: Hello

Posted by longsleeves - 13 Jan 2015 19:58

Yes, it makes total sense.

I guess I am trying to comprehend where I stand with my own subjective struggle. The part that I have a hard time grasping is when the masturbation issue does not simply fit into a given

psychological category. Meaning, in my case, there is a lot more than compulsion driving the repeated behavior, but at the same time it bothers me that I do it. I don't feel compelled to masturbate as much as I want to for the pleasure. This is why I don't masturbate every day (rather a few times a week) and can even go for weeks without it. However, due to religious reasons, it bothers me that I do it. Subsequently, this is an action that I don't want to do but I am doing it anyway (=addiction). I see it as being analogous to a person that is trying to eat healthy but slips up a few times a week (and can even go for weeks without eating junk). When the individual indulges in unhealthy snacks, he is doing it more for pleasure than compulsion. But at the same time it bothers him when he eats unhealthy. Would it be accurate to state that this person, as well as the equivalent struggle with masturbation, is an addict?

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Re: Hello

Posted by cordnoy - 13 Jan 2015 20:14

Please keep in mind that the same mind that got us into this mess in the first place is now tryin' to psychoanalyze what it is that triggers us and causes this type of behavior; perhaps we should focus on recovery and change our mindset, then let us let our imagination go wild regardin' all this thinkin' stuff.

but, like always, WW....

b'hatzlachah

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Re: Hello

Posted by gibbor120 - 13 Jan 2015 22:39

I personally have a hard time with the "addict" label, and spent a lot of (wasted) time trying to figure out "am I and addict or not"?

Really, it doesn't matter what you call it. You have a behavior that you would like to stop. Try some of the tools in the handbook. Chat with the chevra here to get ideas. See if it works. If not, try something else.

Understanding how to categorize it really won't help much at all.

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