

New member: 'Yesodi'

Posted by Yesodi - 15 Nov 2015 01:36

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Shalom friends, and Shavua Tov to all!

I'm a 50-year-old male, living in Israel and married for the past 25 years.

Back then, as an unmarried teenager whose life was plagued by the typical and virtually-inevitable Aveirot, I so very much looked forward to one day getting married. And B"H, that day finally arrived.

For the first 18 or so years, I would say that I was overall quite RELATIVELY SUCCESSFUL in keeping myself "clean." For the first few of those years, I did not even have a computer, and even afterwards -- although I did "allow myself" to occasionally look at unclean things (supposedly "LeShem Shamayim," with the hope of maybe "fixing" some of my "performance problems") -- except for a few "accidents" here-and-there, overall I felt that things were under control.

However, over the past 7 years, problems with the marriage became increasingly serious. My wife has felt, from the beginning, that our marriage was a "mistake," and has constantly asked to end it. On the other hand, I -- the pathologically-stubborn optimist -- refuse to give up, because I feel that we have never yet even STARTED to collectively make a TRUE effort to address the issues.

Tachlis, the past 4 years have been almost free of intimate relations, and the past 2 years have been TOTALLY free of them. Feeling -- as I did during my unmarried, teenage, days, that I don't really have much of a choice -- I have relapsed back to my old, unclean, habits.

This probably would have kept on going, until I came across a TED talk presenting a secular, "scientific," presentation of the physiological damage caused by repeated exposure to unclean Internet content. As a result, I decided to join the "NoFap" website, mostly out of curiosity, and without any real thought that I am about to change any of my behavior.

Mostly on a whim, I decided to commit to a "clean month of October" (and, since this was mid-Tishrei, and I happened to be clean since a little before Rosh HaShana, I was already 3-weeks clean at the time). Much to my amazement, I discovered that this simple act of making a "public" commitment had an immense positive effect on my, and I somehow made it through some VERY HARD DAYS only "BiZchut" that silly commitment that I had made without even really thinking about if I was really "serious" about this issue yet! B"H, so far, 65 days have passed, and my thinking has totally changed. I suddenly feel that -- despite any problems that my marriage is facing -- I need to put a STOP to this problem!

And so, I've been a happy member of NoFap.com for almost two months now, and -- while I do not at all regret joining this "secular" site -- I suddenly began thinking: why shouldn't I join with other fellow Jews, in a Torah atmosphere, as well? After all, this is the REAL reason that I am pursuing this journey, and not just (with Kol HaKavod) "science."

So this, in a nutshell, is how I came to this wonderful site. Wishing much Bracha veHatzlacha to

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Re: New member:

Posted by BenTorah.BaalHabayis - 12 Feb 2016 06:43

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Mr Yesodi, I wanted to thank you for inspiring posts. I only recently saw your thread since you bumped it (I've been to GYE for less than 3 months) and I must say I'm amazed at your courage at maintaining your sobriety. B"H I'm doing well so far since I started here, but the circumstances have been pretty easy. The weather is cold so the women outside are bundled up, and my wife & I are on a regular on/off cycle, so it's not too difficult to stay clean. But I fell back into all this during an afterbirth Niddah period, and I don't know how I will manage next time around (whenever that is Bez"h). And here you are, with a difficult marriage situation and no sex for years and yet your clean for over 150 days. That's just mind blowing to me, and at the same time it proves to me that it can be done. If you can do it, anyone can!

I wish you continued Hatzlacha with maintaining your sobriety and I hope that you will see a turn around in your marriage be'karov. May you always be a role model for us!

~~all the fellow members - "BeEzrat HaShem Na'aseh veNatziach!"~~

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Re: New member:

Posted by Yesodi - 14 Feb 2016 19:04

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Amen. Thank you.

The truth is that -- for a combination of reasons -- once a semi-significant clean-streak has been built up, it is really not **that** difficult to continue maintaining it. (And believe me: despite my "Level 8" status of "Tzadik" on the "Wall of Honor" -- which totally cracks me up! -- and with only 23 days left before I become a "Tzadik Gamur" with HaShem's help -- I am in fact quite the opposite!)

However, it really is true that after starving the "little fellow" for the first several weeks, he really **does** gradually lessen his pestering, and if one makes even a moderate attempt to avoid triggers and banish lustful thoughts as soon as they attempt to pop in, the appetite really **does** go on vacation for the most part. In secular circles, this has been named the "**flatline**" effect, and while some people for some reason become scared when this happens, it really is a blessing that should be embraced.

So, the truth is that it is really not that mind-blowing at all. The initial period was difficult, but once the flatline generally set in, there were only a very small number episodes where semi-serious urges attempted to take control. But for the most part, continuing the clean-streak requires only a small amount of "maintainence effort." For me, one of the most important realizations was that I simply need to find a new way to **keep busy in times of boredom**. Because looking back, it seems that the vast majority of my previous indulgences were ultimately rooted in boredom, and not a true urge. The urges almost always came only **afterwards**, when -- out of boredom -- I allowed myself to indulge in unclean thoughts and/or visit unclean websites.

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Re: New member:

Posted by Yesodi - 16 Feb 2016 00:37

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[Yesodi wrote on Unknown:](#)

Thank you. I recognize that I am living in "victim-land" and how problematic and unhealthy it is to do so.

Moreover, I very much want to -- and also recognize that I will most likely need to receive help in order to -- [1] break free from this "victim-land" and also [2] start the serious "sweeping" that I know that I need to perform on "my side of the street." However:

- My terrible financial situation does not allow me the luxury of experimentally investing thousands and thousands of dollars on therapy that -- as you write -- often produces limited and short-lived results at best.
- I often give semi-serious thought to seeking out whatever counseling resources might be available via the public health system. But then I always start thinking how impossibly difficult it will be to weigh and start implementing the proposed changes without any cooperation from my "other half."

The end result is that I feel deadlocked and paralyzed. On one hand, effectively forced to "go it alone." But on the other hand, too clueless and weak to start fixing the serious accumulation of damages without help from others. And so meanwhile, the situation just gets increasingly worse..

Besides words of encouragement / praise for my current clean-streak (may HaShem give me strength to continue it forever!), **can anyone here offer me PRACTICAL ADVICE** on how I might **break out of my paralyzed "deadlock" situation?**

I've been bringing in close-to-zero Parnasa for the past several years, and my savings are running out. Returning to my previous line of nicely-salaried employment seems to no longer be an option, and with all of my family and personal problems, my attempt at self-employment has not been working out yet.

My mother, who does not understand the complexities of my situation, is "certain" that psychiatric medication is the thing that I should seek, but I am quite sure that the heart of my problem is my lack of an answer to the big puzzle of **"how to fix my personal, family/marital, and employment problems without any support or even just cooperation from my wife?"** -- and not clinical depression or anything similar.

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Re: New member:

Posted by markz - 16 Feb 2016 00:55

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See [HERE](#)

Keep on Trucking

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Re: New member:

Posted by neshamaincharge - 16 Feb 2016 00:58

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Our lives are so similar, it's scary.

I don't know if I have any answers for you, but feel free to contact me if you want to chat.

I'm BH in a lot better place now.

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Re: New member:

Posted by Yesodi - 16 Feb 2016 01:33

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[markz wrote on Unknown:](#)

See [HERE](#)

Keep on Trucking

Thanks for offering an answer. Unfortunately, I did not find it extremely helpful:

- As for the insight that "she is right, and I am a dufus" -- this is something I already know, and have also made clear to my wife. I am the first to admit to the many, serious, faults

that I have and that often annoy or anger my wife. And I also understand that it is MY responsibility to do my best to fix my own shortcomings. But without quality communication with one's partner, and in the face of an almost constant barrage of negativity and hostility from one's partner, it is very hard to make any progress in fixing one's shortcomings in "solo" mode.

- As for the attention-deficit problems to which you allude: as part of my honest efforts to do all that I can to "fix myself," I underwent testing that discovered that I too suffer from such problems. And thus I've been taking Ritalin for the past several years. However, while it definitely does help in clearing my brain-fog and sharpening my concentration and focus, it is not a magical cure-all.

But Tachlis, I did not find your answer to be so applicable to my situation. Thank you, nevertheless, for trying!

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Re: New member:

Posted by Yesodi - 16 Feb 2016 01:38

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[neshamaincharge wrote on Unknown:](#)

Our lives are so similar, it's scary.

I don't know if I have any answers for you, but feel free to contact me if you want to chat.

I'm BH in a lot better place now.

Thank you so much for your response. While it did not offer me any suggested solutions to my life-puzzle, it scored very high on "Tzarat Rabim -- Chatzi Nechama"! (And maybe even more than just "Chatzi"!)

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Re: New member:

Posted by markz - 16 Feb 2016 02:00

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[Yesodi wrote:](#)

[markz wrote:](#)

See [HERE](#)

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- As for the insight that "she is right, and I am a dufus" -- this is something I already know, and have also made clear to my wife. I am the first to admit to the many, serious, faults that I have and that often annoy or anger my wife. And I also understand that it is MY responsibility to do my best to fix my own shortcomings. But without quality communication with one's partner, and in the face of an almost constant barrage of negativity and hostility from one's partner, it is very hard to make any progress in fixing one's shortcomings in "solo" mode.
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But Tachlis, I did not find your answer to be so applicable to my situation. Thank you, nevertheless, for trying!

Was that a reply to the link about jobs I sent you?

I'm lost

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Re: New member:

Posted by Yesodi - 16 Feb 2016 02:28

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[markz wrote on Unknown:](#)

Was that a reply to the link about jobs I sent you?

I'm lost

Apparently not. What I saw was your ["See HERE" link](#), which I now see is an entire thread, and not a single post. Didn't see anything regarding jobs there....

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Re: New member:

Posted by markz - 16 Feb 2016 02:29

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Strange...

Did you notice a cement truck?

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Re: New member:

Posted by BenTorah.BaalHabayis - 16 Feb 2016 05:14

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[Yesodi wrote on Unknown:](#)

Amen. Thank you.

The truth is that -- for a combination of reasons -- once a semi-significant clean-streak has been built up, it is really not **that** difficult to continue maintaining it. (And believe me: despite my "Level 8" status of "Tzadik" on the "Wall of Honor" -- which totally cracks me up! -- and with only 23 days left before I become a "Tzadik Gamur" with HaShem's help -- I am in fact quite the



opposite!)

However, it really is true that after starving the "little fellow" for the first several weeks, he really **does** gradually lessen his pestering, and if one makes even a moderate attempt to avoid triggers and banish lustful thoughts as soon as they attempt to pop in, the appetite really **does** go on vacation for the most part. In secular circles, this has been named the "**flatline**" effect, and while some people for some reason become scared when this happens, it really is a blessing that should be embraced.

So, the truth is that it is really not that mind-blowing at all. The initial period was difficult, but once the flatline generally set in, there were only a very small number episodes where semi-serious urges attempted to take control. But for the most part, continuing the clean-streak requires only a small amount of "maintainence effort." For me, one of the most important realizations was that I simply need to find a new way to **keep busy in times of boredom**. Because looking back, it seems that the vast majority of my previous indulgences were ultimately rooted in boredom, and not a true urge. The urges almost always came only **afterwards**, when -- out of boredom -- I allowed myself to indulge in unclean thoughts and/or visit unclean websites.

This is very interesting. You see, as we all know Chazal already taught us this yesod "Aiver koton yesh bo'odom...". But I've been a little confused about this whole thing because on the other hand I see people talking about "needing to come up for air". I experienced this first hand before I joined GYE. I would go for a week or 2 without acting out, but towards the end of those 2 weeks I would be platzing. My kabolos lasted for one week at a time, from Motzei Shabbos to Motzei Shabbos. And I would be looking forward to the expiration of my kabala so I could act out. So clearly even though I didn't act out for 2 weeks it didn't make it any easier. Adraba, the pressure was building up the whole time. So how do I reconcile that with the maamar Chazal?

There are a number of possibilities. Namely, I would assume that Chazal weren't necessarily referring strictly to acting out but to lusting in general, and since during those 2 weeks I was still lusting big time that would still fall into "Masbio Raev".

But I'm wondering if perhaps they were referring to this "flatline" effect you mentioned. I will research this to understand the concept better. Either way, thanks for the tip!

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Re: New member:

Posted by BenTorah.BaalHabayis - 16 Feb 2016 05:22

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Yesodi wrote:

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I wish I had something to offer. I truly feel for you and I hope Hashem will send you a yeshua very soon. From an amazing maaseh that happened with my brother recently I know very clearly that "Yeshuas Hashem" really can be "K'heref Ayin". So hang in there!

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Re: New member:

Posted by Yesodi - 16 Feb 2016 14:51

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[BenTorah.BaalHabayis wrote on Unknown:](#)

This is very interesting. You see, as we all know Chazal already taught us this yesod "Aiver koton yesh bo'odom...". But I've been a little confused about this whole thing because on the other hand I see people talking about "needing to come up for air". I experienced this first hand before I joined GYE. I would go for a week or 2 without acting out, but towards the end of those 2 weeks I would be platzing. My kabolos lasted for one week at a time, from Motzei Shabbos to Motzei Shabbos. And I would be looking forward to the expiration of my kabala so I could act out. So clearly even though I didn't act out for 2 weeks it didn't make it any easier. Adraba, the pressure was building up the whole time. So how do I reconcile that with the maamar Chazal?

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But I'm wondering if perhaps they were referring to this "flatline" effect you mentioned. I will research this to understand the concept better. Either way, thanks for the tip!

First of all, Kol HaKavod on your current streaks of 2 weeks at a time. This is already a significant accomplishment, and a stepping-stone towards even longer streaks. (Buy why do you write of only 2 weeks, if your forum status shows a current streak of "70 days"?)

IMHO, it is 100% clear that this "[flatline effect](#)" being reported by so very many people (even gentiles) is **exactly** what Chaza"I was referring to.

And I think that you hit the nail on the head. So, although it is true that Tachlis, "HaMa'aseh Hu Ha'Ikar" and the main thing is to abstain from **physically** acting out ... it is still very problematic to allow ones mind to indulge these lustful thoughts, even if one does not physically act out on them immediately. It is problematic **spiritually**, because you are deepening the enslavement of the "Mochin-related" Sfirot of your soul (Chochmah, Binah, Da'at) by the Sitra Achra. And it is problematic **physiologically** and **strategically**, because you are indeed simply **building up the carnal pressure** in your head -- which will ultimately seek its eventual release.

The trick is to understand that **you can control what you choose to think about**, and thus learn how to **banish these lustful thoughts**, and **avoid the situations that can trigger them**, in the first place. It begins with internally making a **rock-solid decision** to totally avoid **everything** that can lead to a fall! Of course, evil thoughts will always try to "pop in" again, but the moment you recognize them for what they are, you must throw them out and force yourself to think about (and do) something else! This is something that you can "exercise" and gradually strengthen with time. In the beginning, one might be able to go for only a few hours or days without such thoughts. But over time, one will surely succeed in lengthening this period. And the nice thing is that -- as one starts succeeding in this -- it becomes **increasingly easier to continue** succeeding in this!

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Re: New member:

Posted by BenTorah.BaalHabayis - 16 Feb 2016 18:34

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Thanks for elaborating on this. I want to clarify - before I joined GYE I was clean on average for 2 weeks at a time. But since I joined I've clean B"H for over 70 days. And largely it's because of what you described - because I came to understand the idea of "lusting" and that it's what's

underlying the acting out, and I decided I don't want to lust because I'm much happier with my life when I'm not lusting. And this has worked really well so far, as I've been experiencing urges only very occasionally. I pray to Hashem to help me keep it up!

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