

Beginning to (e)merge

Posted by minhamayim - 24 Jul 2024 21:00

Hi! I am so happy and relieved to be here. If I may, I'd like to share my painful story.

I grew up in a sheltered Torah home. My father is a mechanech known for his passion in fighting the internet and the nisyonos hador. Ever since I can remember I've always been consumed with sexual curiosity. It started with hijacking woman's clothing catalogs I found in the mailbox, discovering masturbation, fantasizing about pretty much any attractive female I knew including family members, and more. Throughout my years in mesivta I would occasionally purchase or rent movies, and even had some opportunities to watch porn. I used to have streaks where I would abstain from being motzi zerah. Sometimes it lasted a few days sometimes even weeks. But they never lasted very long.

As all this was happening I was very busy portraying myself as a serious bachur and trying desperately to learn and get better at learning. BH, even with all my daydreaming and fantasizing I was able to block out the guilt and shame and throw myself into my learning enough that I made it through my yeshiva years. In fact, I was so deeply troubled about my identity and so desperately wanted to be considered a "good guy" in learning and yiras shamayim, I would join "extracurricular" shiurim and sedarim staying in the beis medrash till late at night. Although this definitely helped my overall shteiging, the truth is that I was way behind and should have been honest about where I needed to focus.

I found myself extremely confused as to who I was and what I really wanted. On the one hand, I was a bachur with big ??????. I was zoche to learn in yeshivos where I witnessed true gadlos b'torah. I craved it. The genuine ahavas hatorah and meyushavkeit that I saw in my Rosh yeshiva, rebbeim, and older bachurim was something I knew I needed. On the other hand, how could I throw myself entirely into achieving that goal when I knew that I wouldn't be able to? When I knew I would fall again and again. When I knew it just wouldn't be real.

BH I became more serious in beis medrash and was even one of the few in my shiur to get into THAT yeshiva in Eretz Yisrael. But there things got worse. The hustle and bustle of the geula neighborhood and the nisyonos it presents is something that I'm sure is all too familiar to many of you. I found myself deliberately getting on to packed buses (vhameivin yavin), taking late night walks in neighborhoods I should never have entered, pretending to be preoccupied with an important phone call, and just generally consumed with sexual fantasies. And then I discovered those free chat lines. And those unfiltered computer kiosks. I found myself again going to sleep late, sometimes entirely missing first seder. All the while continuing to prop up my image as a chashuva Ben torah. The double life continued and deepened.

I continued on to BMG and got engaged soon after to a wonderful bas talmid chachom. Like many, I clung to the desperate hope that shidduchim, engagement, and marriage would help me solve my problem. But in between my "streaks" I was still busy with chat lines, porn, and masturbation. Davening was always a bizarre fluctuation of intensity, tears, and disinterest. In halacha I was sometimes meticulous and sometimes lax. I would be proud yet disturbed whenever complimented on my learning achievements, hashkafic sincerity, or general intelligence.

During my engagement and after my marriage it became clear that I had an issue seemingly not connected to any of this, that severely affected my shalom bayis. I was, and still am, very determined to make my marriage work, and I know the issue is mine. I went to therapy for 3 years for it. I spent lots of money, tried different therapists with different modalities, all the while really trying to make things work. It helped a little, but things were really not simple. I have to give a shout out to my wife for being the trooper, for bearing with me, for seeing the good in me and the possibility for me to heal and our marriage to blossom.

All this time, freshly married, struggling with my marriage and much inner turmoil, I felt lonely and isolated. I didn't know what HaShem wanted from me. I cried, I ignored and moved on, cried again and ignored some more. Over the past year things got to the point that I sadly moved on from just porn, masturbation and chat lines.

And then...

2 weeks ago, Hashem in His overabundant mercy rescued me, and I stumbled upon this precious website. Out of desperation I sent a couple partner requests. IWLR emailed me within a few hours. To make a long story short, it turns out that we knew each other very very well. I will forever be makir tov to him for introducing me to the possibility of recovery. I've been in touch with Harav Hatzadik HHM over the past week and my life has changed. I'm finally able to address what I've known all along. That this dark hidden part of me has directly and INDIRECTLY seeped into every aspect of my life.

I have no words to thank everyone who's posts I've read and who I've spoken to over the past week. The power of being able to share, be vulnerable, and come clean, with those whom you know will accept you, is indescribable. 3 years of therapy and I never shared this! I even managed to convince myself that it wasn't related to what I was there for. I am more connected

with myself than ever and my marriage has changed because of that. Everything in my life is different than just two weeks ago.

I have a long way to go, but finally I feel ready and equipped to fight this battle. I look forward to continuing to grow the friendships I have created, and to live a pure, authentic life together forever.

Your friend,

MinHamayim

=====
=====

Re: Beginning to (e)merge
Posted by BenHashemBH - 24 Jul 2024 21:23

Welcome minhamayim. Thank you for sharing and I look forward to b'ezras Hashem having a chance to connect with you on your journey.

Hatzlacha

=====
=====

Re: Beginning to (e)merge
Posted by neshomo kedosha - 24 Jul 2024 22:28

Welcome!

Thanks for sharing your story, felt a lot in common with what you wrote. It's a big journey and it's amazing that you've started it! (Can't say I'm fully there yet)

Hope you have lots of hatzlacha

=====
=====

Re: Beginning to (e)merge

Posted by yiftach - 24 Jul 2024 22:32

Welcome!

We have a new warrior on board!

I read your post, reread it and reread it again. I felt like you're describing (many parts of) my story. Living a double life... Balancing between shteiging and watching... Looking around at everyone's menucha... These are feelings that plagued me for too long.

??? ???? ???? , browse around the site, you'll find sooo many people who are struggling just like you. Every one with their own variant. The common denominator, we're all here to WIN IT! We're here cuz we have a burning desire to be FREE!

Your post shows determination and clarity. You've got what it takes, and TOGETHER we'll make it to the finish line.

Get to know your new GYE family members. Each one's precious in their own right. Here's a hand, join the circle!

All I can say is, with IWLR and HHM you're off to the most amazing start! I remember the first time I spoke to IWLR, it was so soothing. A genuine ben Torah can also be struggling! I don't have to feel like I don't belong in the system just because I struggle. There are actually people like me who struggle.

And with HHM as your captain... You're all set! Now you can finally bring your great dreams to fruition.

Looking forward to know you better!

All the best,

- Yiftach'l

=====
=====

Re: Beginning to (e)merge
Posted by iwannalivereal - 24 Jul 2024 23:10

Welcome to the forums chaver!

I doubt I'll ever forget where I was when I found out who you were. The way you uneasily said - I think I know who you are. And then you guessed my name. And I still didn't recognize your voice. The pain I felt for you when you told me who you were. I would have never known what you were going through all these years.

Our meeting a few minutes later in a dark parking lot was a unique gye experience that hasn't happened to me yet. The swirl of emotions, (the cloud of smoke), and the reality of it all is something that I'll never forget. I can't get over the tremendous yad hashem that brought us together under such crazy circumstances. I really must thank you for calling me out and not hanging up the phone... The amount of chizzuk this new "layer" in our relationship has given me is above and beyond. Seeing behind the scenes of someone I've known for years and years... and boy does it feel real to be vulnerable and sharing with someone who knows me from real life.

Iy"h this'll be a new begining of a new you, and together we will shteig forever!

=====
=====

Re: Beginning to (e)merge
Posted by redfaced - 24 Jul 2024 23:16

Welcome aboard dear brother.

Your inner clarity is something that is so special and will really get you places!

Looking forward to hearing more from you.

Hatzlocha!

=====
=====

Re: Beginning to (e)merge

Posted by minhamayim - 24 Jul 2024 23:28

IWLR,

Where I was and what I felt at that moment is not something I'll forget either. That rush I experienced, memories of our history and friendship crashing through me. Mentally attaching the story i had just read to the you that I had known all along. All in one moment.

That powerful force of connection we both simultaneously experienced. No. You're right. That is not something either of us will ever forget.

your good friend

minhamayim

=====
=====

Re: Beginning to (e)merge
Posted by Heeling - 25 Jul 2024 00:06

Welcome, dear brother,

I'm sorry for what you have gone through and continue to go through. You sound like a brilliant man. With HHM and IWLRL at your side, your good to go.

Keep fighting my friend and NEVER look back because you ain't goin' that way,

=====
=====

Re: Beginning to (e)merge
Posted by Muttel - 25 Jul 2024 00:52

Wow, what a powerful post!

Minhamayim, getting to meet you, sharing our struggles, challenges, and successes has bonded us in a way almost nothing else can. Seeing your sensitivities, passion, your will to change, and growing self-knowledge gives me the confidence you will get **you** back!

Yes, you will get to great heights ??????"?! I have so much to share, so much to say, yet overwhelmed with emotion.....

With much brotherly love,

Muttel

=====
=====

Re: Beginning to (e)merge
Posted by eerie - 25 Jul 2024 03:18

[minhamayim wrote on 24 Jul 2024 21:00:](#)

Hi! I am so happy and relieved to be here. If I may, I'd like to share my painful story.

The power of being able to share, be vulnerable, and come clean, with those whom you know will accept you, is indescribable. 3 years of therapy and I never shared this!

Your friend,

MinHamayim

Welcome, dear brother!!! We are so happy that you are here, we care for you, we want to hear from you, and we look forward to hearing lots of words of wisdom

The words I quoted above literally jumped out at me. Such powerful words. And such truth! This is the power of GYE! And I wish all of our brothers that are struggling, out there, alone, I wish they knew that we are here, they can join this wonderful family, they should have **HOPE**, they can get **HELP**, they **can CHANGE!**

=====
=====

Re: Beginning to (e)merge
Posted by proudyungerman - 25 Jul 2024 03:53

Just joinin' in with the rest of the oilam to welcome you from way out here in Burma!!

BTW, very kdai to call yiftach and eerie...

=====
=====

Re: Beginning to (e)merge

Posted by minhamayim - 25 Jul 2024 04:50

[Muttel wrote on 25 Jul 2024 00:52:](#)

Wow, what a powerful post!

Minhamayim, getting to meet you, sharing our struggles, challenges, and successes has bonded us in a way almost nothing else can. Seeing your sensitivities, passion, your will to change, and growing self-knowledge gives me the confidence you will get **you** back!

Yes, you will get to great heights ??????"?! I have so much to share, so much to say, yet overwhelmed with emotion.....

With much brotherly love,

Muttel

Reb Muttel,

Thank you! The way you were there for me those first few days was a tremendous chizzuk and was monumental to my haschala.

Thank you for your vote of confidence.

- honored to be called your brother.

Minhamayim

=====
=====

Re: Beginning to (e)merge
Posted by minhamayim - 25 Jul 2024 05:31

OK! Thank you all for your support. Every thank you, post, and PM is a great chizzuk.

What I'm about to say is a lot harder for me than writing up that first post.

Like I mentioned, I was bh thrown into the "speaking to others stage" pretty quickly, thanks to the unbelievable hashkacha of making contact with IWLR.

So, I was having a long first conversation with one of the tzaddikim who is active on this site. He was convincing me to post my story so others in a similar situation to mine can see that they are not alone and that there is hope for them. I took his words to heart and began writing my story. When I was done, I sent him the draft asking him for any haaros. Because I was doing this for the klal, I wanted to make sure that certain specific messages were given over clearly. He responded with a few suggestions even adding a few sentences (The shout out to my wife was his idea).

Why am I boring you with all of this, you ask?

The following is an email I sent him a few hours after my first post.

"Hi I don't know if you saw the post yet, but I'm having a hard time and you made me feel that I can share my feelings with you and I appreciate that."

I'm getting compliments on the thread on how well and thought out the post was. Even though I know that I wrote it, the ideas you gave me really really enhanced it. I originally thought that I was posting for others like you were meorer. After I posted and people were responding I realized how much I enjoyed and needed the validation of others and their recognition of my talents (writing abilities, clarity, depth, even emotion).

I feel like I continued and only reinforced the double life, deception, and fakeness that is me. All in a place where I was meant to expose myself and be vulnerable and "begin to (e)merge."

I'm again realizing what I've known for a long time. That although I come across as a very confident person, in reality, I am so desperate for respect it's ridiculous. The places this monster has quietly crawled into over the years is devastating. And its also possible that this is not even the doing of this monster.

You're probably not sure exactly what I'm bothered by.

No need to respond quickly this is not urgent.

I'm writing this because I know that ACTUALLY being vulnerable, raw, and real, is what I need to practice.

Sorry to put this on you. thanks for listening"

Rabbosai,

If I'm gonna do this I'm gonna do it all the way!

your friend,

MinHamayim

=====
=====

Re: Beginning to (e)merge
Posted by Muttel - 25 Jul 2024 08:07

Even though I posted once already, I feel the need to write again.

Seeing you take your devils by the horn is beyond inspiring. Your self awareness and drive to (e)merge and become whole, complete, and one reality is going to get you far. Take your maalos and just keep driving on, you will show us all the tremendous potential you possess....

Muttel

=====
=====

Re: Beginning to (e)merge
Posted by yiftach - 25 Jul 2024 11:10

Vulnerability can be perceived as a weakness or a strength. Embracing vulnerability might just be the key to liberation and present an opportunity for newfound resilience.

Hatzlacha!

=====
=====