

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 sederim 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

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Re: Beginning to (e)merge

Posted by minhamayim - 29 Jul 2024 19:32

Friends,

I remember my 10th grade rebbe asking us the following question. We all know the rule of kol haschalos kashos. So why is it that for many, the start of the zman (or the start of anything for that matter) is so often the easiest and most successful part?! He explained the obvious, that the initial high, the excitement, the freshness; they all have little to do with the real consistent hard work necessary for growth after those feelings dissipate. Therefore, that can't really be considered the beginning of the zman. The real beginning is only AFTER those first few days or weeks.

And THAT'S when we see the klal of kol haschalos kashos.

Yesterday my real beginning began.

I had my first real urge since the start of this new chapter in my life called gye.

I reached out to my first gye friend for support and whoa did he come through!

Let's see if I can try and jump on the poetry bandwagon here and give it a shot. (I have some

Hours so precious

Yielded over as if nill
time

His optimism infectious

Remaining with me until

Assurance garnered

the means has met it's end

the demon's been caged

Now my strength will not bend

How can I reciprocate

Show him what he showed me

When I'm the one submerged in deep

And in the deep it's hard to see

Words like thanks won't do justice

Won't Suffice to be uttered

For helping me to (e)merge

from the gated and the shuttered

This is someone who cares
so much so that he speaks
of another man's mountains
Like they're all his own peaks

For that kind of friend
There's none to say or do
But I sure can remind him
My victories are his too

pulled out,

MinHamayim

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Re: Beginning to (e)merge
Posted by yiftach - 29 Jul 2024 21:50

[minhamayim wrote on 29 Jul 2024 19:32:](#)

Friends,

I remember my 10th grade rebbe asking us the following question. We all know the rule of kol haschalos kashos. So why is it that for many, the start of the zman (or the start of anything for that matter) is so often the easiest and most successful part?! **He explained the obvious, that the initial high, the excitement, the freshness; they all have little to do with the real consistent hard work necessary for growth after those feelings dissipate.** Therefore, that can't really be considered the beginning of the zman. The real beginning is only AFTER those first few days or weeks.

I'm not sure if I can compete with your tenth grade Rebbe, but I would like to rephrase the message.

We experience initial excitement, high, and freshness to understand how we will feel after overcoming the obstacles we face.

Recently, I was speaking with a fellow GYEer and remembered a post I wrote about the slogan "take back control" used in the BREXIT campaign. "Take **back** control" implies that we understand the feeling of loss of control and freedom, and that's what we are trying to **regain**. On the other hand, "take control" implies a promise for change, but we don't know what the future holds.

It's easier to fight a battle when we know what the alternative is, when we have experienced the alternative. That's why we are **granted** the initial phase of a high – to understand what we are fighting for, making the fight more worthwhile!

Hatzlacha!

- Yiftach'l

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Re: Beginning to (e)merge

Posted by minhamayim - 30 Jul 2024 00:37

We experience initial excitement, high, and freshness to understand how we will feel after overcoming the obstacles we face.

It's easier to fight a battle when we know what the alternative is, when we have experienced the alternative. That's why we are **granted** the initial phase of a high – to understand what we are fighting for, making the fight more worthwhile!

Thank you, beautiful.

I agree that the "initial high" should most definitely be used as a tool. The ability to know what success feels like is very empowering. I never thought of it that that is why we are granted it though. Big vort. Interesting. Food for thought.

Thank you,

minhamayim

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Re: Beginning to (e)merge

Posted by feelinghurt - 30 Jul 2024 02:34

A belated big welcome to GYE! I got a lot of chizuk from your posts and your openness in sharing your story. We all have stories like yours (except the part about you and IWLR - that's like from another world - ?? ??? ??? ????, I couldn't imagine that happening to me).

The real beginning is only AFTER those first few days or weeks.

And THAT'S when we see the klal of kol haschalos kashos.

What you say here is sooooo true... IMHO as we go through this battle with victories and failures, I think the most important *yesod* of all is to never lose our self-esteem and awareness of who we are. We are all *yidden*, precious *yidden* that Hashem loves **and will always love** - His love for us is immutable!

The YH will tell us we are all resha'im, fakers, hypocrites, liars, murderers, worthless scum... don't listen to him!! He is the liar! All he wants us to do is to give up. That's right - his whole *tachlis* is to give us *yiush* and make us **give up**. Then we won't do mitzvos, we won't learn, we'll get severe depression, become nonfunctional, and we end up losing, and he ends up winning. **No Way!!** As long as we never give up and are willing and trying to fight this fight, then we've won the war.

Now I'll step down from my soapbox and try to live by my own words.

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Re: Beginning to (e)merge

Posted by minhamayim - 30 Jul 2024 05:50

Lichvod R' feelinghurt,

Thank you for your kind welcome and for your true heartfelt words. Reading your own thread and seeing how unbelievably strong of a person you are, reminds me how much potential strength must lie in each of us as humans. It's a mechayiv for me and I thank you for that.

MinHamayim

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Re: Beginning to (e)merge

Posted by minhamayim - 07 Aug 2024 05:59

Hello Everyone,

Today was day 23 for me. Over the last few weeks I've come to realize how much subconscious lusting is ingrained in me.

I've definitely had my fair share of real urges to act out over this period. Bh I overcame them all.

But I noticed that even when viewing images on "kosher" even "frum!" websites, there is an element of forbidden enjoyment that's present. Maybe this is something I have to be careful about forever, maybe not. But right now this is clearly toxic for me. **If I'm going to rewire my brain I have to be aware of everything that's going on in it.**

Which brings me to what I'd like to share with you guys. Today I had to be somewhere where there was a TV on. I am happy to report that after catching a couple glimpses of the "harmless" show playing, I sat facing the other direction for the rest of the time. bh I think this was a step that will bez"h lead me to more intentional, proactive not reactive living.

Your friend,

MinHamayim

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Re: Beginning to (e)merge

Posted by Muttel - 07 Aug 2024 08:18

Wow, that's amazing stuff!!! I'm not sure exactly what you're referring to as far what "a harmless show" is, but definitely, the main thing isn't what's playing, rather the fact that we're lusting. For some it's hard porn, for others, it can be a frum, tznius dressed woman that they find attractive....

minhamayim , it's super heartwarming to see your meteoric growth!

Here's wishing for your continued success and aliya to a life of purity and happiness!

Your friend and brother,

Muttel

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Re: Beginning to (e)merge

Posted by minhamayim - 07 Aug 2024 11:38

I'm not sure exactly what you're referring to as far what "a harmless show" is, but definitely, the main thing isn't what's playing, rather the fact that we're lusting.

Thanks!

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Re: Beginning to (e)merge

Posted by minhamayim - 07 Aug 2024 23:34

On the subject of brain rewiring:

Today I was driving, and after again and again being hit with the need to keep my eyes off the sidewalk, I found myself saying out loud

" GOSH! THESE FEMALE THINGS ARE EVERYWHERE!!! "

talk about objectification!

Apparently I've got some work to do.

Thanks for listening,

MinHamayim

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Re: Beginning to (e)merge

Posted by Heeling - 08 Aug 2024 01:32

[minhamayim wrote on 07 Aug 2024 23:34:](#)

On the subject of brain rewiring:

Today I was driving, and after again and again being hit with the need to keep my eyes off the sidewalk, I found myself saying out loud

" GOSH! THESE FEMALE THINGS ARE EVERYWHERE!!! "

talk about objectification!

Apparently I've got some work to do.

Thanks for listening,

MinHamayim

Can relate to that. Keep workin' brother!

Your moving ahead!

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Re: Beginning to (e)merge

Posted by minhamayim - 08 Aug 2024 04:18

Friends,

Tomorrow bez"h, I plan on being in an airport.

Hashem, please help me be ????? ??????.

I pledge to report back here honestly how things went.

please daven for me that I don't let us down.

MinHamayim

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Re: Beginning to (e)merge

Posted by Muttel - 08 Aug 2024 07:47

Oh boy, can I relate to this. Airports was where my eyes just roamed freely, it was like an alcoholic in a bar.... On the other hand, knowledge that there will be accountability really helped me recently and I'm sure will help you as well!

Here's wishing you a safe and clean journey, full of Aliya and bracha, and free of michshol and chet.

With love of a brother,

Muttel

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Re: Beginning to (e)merge

Posted by minhamayim - 08 Aug 2024 23:29

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Bh I arrived safely. The word ????? in ????? ??? has a deeper meaning to me now. (As do the words ????? ????)

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Re: Beginning to (e)merge

Posted by minhamayim - 08 Aug 2024 23:35

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