

GYE - Guard Your Eyes

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Navigating the ocean of my life

Posted by amevakesh - 17 Apr 2024 10:21

For the past 267 days, there have been sunny skies, calm winds, the boat's been steady, with nary a thought to the pirates that lurk beyond the horizon.

However, clouds are gathering, waves are getting choppier, and worst of all, a cry from the barrelman in the crow nest, "Pirates ahead"!!! I've been warned.

As they get closer, thoughts are swirling through my mind. I hear their evil whisperings in my head. "You thought you were off our radar, not so fast." Will they succeed in overtaking the ship I've put so much effort in constructing?

They're faster, sneakier, and more cunning than I, and I know that once they come too close, I'm doomed. But, I have an itch that needs to be scratched, a void that has to be filled, and I'm having a difficult time doing so.

But one thing I've learned here at GYE. There's safety in numbers. So I'm sending out a call to my fellow mates, can anyone help me out in how to overcome these Bein Hazmanim pirates?

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Re: Navigating the ocean of my life

Posted by jollylemur95 - 16 Mar 2025 13:43

Rebbe u'Mori Amevakesh,

Thank you for shining a light on a very important issue.

(just kidding)

If I can just add my own very inflated 2 cents. (super inflated. Did you see the prices in the grocery?)

Shem is absolutely correct! One is not responsible if someone else uses the encouragement given to him as a license or excuse to act out.

But I think the point can be made that for some people (perhaps a minority) hearing a little hard truth can be helpful. While it is definitely true that as a general rule, our generation can not handle searing mussar, but it is possible that there are some people who can handle a limited amount of it. This obviously would have to be together with an overwhelming amount of positive encouragement. But the point is the same.

I understand it like this:

FEAR is a good thing. A very imperfect example is that we have a healthy fear of death or bodily harm. If we did not, we would never look before crossing the street which would have tragic consequences. It is a good thing to have a fear of falling. It can serve as a motivator to keep our guard up. The problem starts when that fear does not motivate, but instead brings a feeling of hopelessness and helplessness. If that happens then the fear is being used in the wrong way. I heard from Rav Volbe ZT"L that anyone who gets depressed learning mussar is learning mussar wrong. This is in spite of the fact that learning mussar with the accompanying cheshbon hanefesh can sometimes be a little unsettling because we are forced to face our own shortcomings. But we can use that to get better. He told me mussar is supposed to be inspiring. Again this does not negate the need to speak the positive and even more than the negative. A lot more. But hearing the hard truth, **for those who can handle it**, can help bring a healthy fear of doing the wrong thing. This is obviously not just regarding kedusha that we deal with on GYE. It goes to every aspect of yiiddeshkite. Personally, I have a special affection for the writings of the Chafetz Chaim ZT"L. One of the reasons is because whatever topic he is discussing (Shmiras Halashon, limmud hatorah, shabbos, tahara etc.) he always brings us the entire issue. He spends a many perakim speaking of the positive and the negative of whatever topic he is discussing. Because the truth is, that we never lose our status of a yid and a beloved child to hashem no matter what we do. But there is a lot to lose when we fall short. And conversely so much more to gain when we stay strong!

Of course, I reiterate that the positive must be more than the negative. And there are many people who can not handle even that so for them it would be counterproductive to bring it up. Another thing is that the negative should obviously not be given on a public forum. This forum should only be positive (unless it is a given in general terms and not directed at any specific person). Additionally, it would depend on where in a person's journey to freedom he is holding. I would think that hearing the negative at the beginning would be extremely damaging, but at some point, depending on the person, it would be helpful to bring up these hard truths.

It is for this reason that I am so blown away by some of the mentors that I have been zoche to get to know on GYE. Not only do they take the time to help people get to freedom, but they take the time to get to know us personally to see what works for each individual. I am in full agreement about HHM.

Thank you again Amevakesh for bringing this up!!

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Re: Navigating the ocean of my life
Posted by chaimoigen - 16 Mar 2025 15:13

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I would add a small (mostly obvious) point, that sometimes gets lost in the moment.

There's a fundamental difference between validating the **PERSON** who falls, and granting any kind of validation to **his negative actions**.

Every word of the Torah is pure fire, immutable, absolute truth. That which is Assur isn't negotiable, dismissible, bendable, or able to be argued away. An Aveira is pure negativity, and isn't ok. Ever.

We, on the other hand, can be ok, even when we mess up. More than ok, actually. We can still be AWESOME. Even though we've done things that are deeply wrong. **Because those actions don't negate everything else we do and all that we are, and don't define the totality of who we are either.** And because , imperfect, struggling guys that we are, if we keep coming back and try to get better, that's incredible, **and it's what Hashem wants from us** (He does not wabt us to sit Shiva on ourselves and throw ourselves out in despair).

Yes, It's understandable that we sometimes **want** what's bad for us, because we are infected with a colossal Yetzer Hara.

Hashem created people who have an incredible propensity to mess up, more often than not. He still loves us and wants us to get better and helps us do so. Even when we mess up.

But there can be no equivocation regarding the fact that porn, masturbation, lusting over women or men, looking at things we shouldn't, and touching or acting out in any other way is unequivocally wrong.

Believing in our ability to be ok should and does help us feel **that we are above** the negative behaviour. And this realization can and does help us break free. If, however, it somehow validates the actual continuation of the **behavior**, it's misplaced.

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Re: Navigating the ocean of my life
Posted by amevakesh - 17 Mar 2025 11:42

????? ?????? ?????? ??????. Over Purim, I had an ????? in a slightly different direction. In order to give over the message of how damaging this stuff is, it must be preceded by a generous amount of validation beforehand, in order to have any effect.

The ????? ??? famously writes ??????, that ????? ??? there's no ??? of ?????????? ??? ?????? because in our days, there's no one well versed enough in the art of ?????? therefore they can't be considered ??????? to that extent.

????? ?????? ?????????? - When a person hears any type of criticism, his first instinct is to think of 1000 reasons why it doesn't apply to him, and he'll automatically think of ways to justify any behavior. However what's interesting is that this same person, has no problem criticizing himself. Why is it so painful, and why do we have such a hard time accepting a critique from others, when we're fully aware of our imperfections, and have no problem giving ourselves the same exact critique?

I don't think the average person is averse to accepting criticism per se, however, the turnoff for

most people is when they here criticism they think that the person giving the critique doesn't see the whole picture. He doesn't understand the reason why I did it, he doesn't understand my nature, my background, my strengths, my weaknesses. He just sees the act for what it is without the full background. I will concede that I'm not perfect, but not to someone who only sees the sliver of negativity that portrays me in a most unflattering way.

However, if someone can come along and somehow convince me that he understands me, meaning he sees the entire picture, the human being I am, my strengths and weaknesses, he knows what makes me tick, and **within that framework**, he mentions that what I've done is wrong, most people will welcome, and even be thankful for any gentle criticism that they hear. If the person giving it took the time and had the patience, and most importantly, the heart, to really understand me as a person, then I know it's coming from a place of love, and he's looking out for my best interests, to try to help me become a better person.

Multiply this many times over, when the person I'm speaking to manages to convince me and show me how I'm really a better person I thought I was. He's showing me, that the picture I had of myself was limited in scope, and I'm a much deeper and more real person than I thought I was. His vision of myself is deeper and broader, and helps me understand so many of my own behaviors that left me frustrated, and that I couldn't understand myself.

The legends on this site, are the guys that have the heart to take the time to understand another Yid, see him as a whole picture, a genuinely good person, with flaws. Where others see a a dirty clump of earth, they see a diamond in the rough, that may be caked with mud and grime, waiting to be polished. They find the ????? ??????, and with the right skill and precision, they know how to cut it and polish it just so, in a way that brings out its brilliant radiance to the fullest extent. If the tools that they must use to do so is a sledgehammer, then so be it. Which diamond doesn't want to shine its brightest?

Perhaps that what the "???" meant. Rare is the person that can convey the feeling of "he really gets me, he sees me for the human being that I am, the whole me". Those people are far and few in between, but on this holy site I have met quite a few of them that have warmed my heart, and lifted me up. If you haven't had the opportunity to meet one of them, pick the phone, get ready to be understood, and brace yourself for the cutting and polishing which may be uncomfortable, but it'll help you shine brighter than ever before.

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Re: Navigating the ocean of my life

Posted by amevakesh - 17 Mar 2025 14:00

Purim ????" - was a beautiful day for me. There were moments of connection and sincere prayer, moments that I was able to collect money for others without feeling dumb (it's very hard for me to ask others for money, except on Purim). Had a great time, spending time with energetic, drunk Bochorim. Made a few phone calls to some GYE friends, some were drunk some not - all were great to connect to. Spoke to HHM when he was intoxicated (if you think he's good when he's sober, try him when he's under the influence).

There were 2 highlights though, that stood out. 1) Being able to spend a few minutes with a (drunk) GYE friend in person on Purim, was an exhilarating experience. This would have been the highlight, if it wouldn't have been eclipsed by the next one. 2) Sometimes one gets to experience a microcosm of Purim, in the form of his prayers being answered. I was ????" to come face to face with one of the people that I (and others) were praying for. To see him in the flesh, a picture of health, a beautiful, perfectly formed, baby smiling at me, felt like a kiss from above. Breathing in the sweet smell of purity, and watching that infectious smile, melted my heart. ?? ?????? ?????? ?-? ?????? ?????? ?-?.

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Re: Navigating the ocean of my life
Posted by yiftach - 17 Mar 2025 14:50

Yes, it is an unbelievable experience to celebrate the happiness of Purim with friends from this arena (however, the need to track my steps afterwards to remember who I spoke to and what I said, is quite exhausting).

The baby chelek is undeniable, although many times one has to remember what could've been and appreciate the blessings that came their way.

Happy ??????!

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Re: Navigating the ocean of my life
Posted by Muttel - 17 Mar 2025 17:09

Oh, I wish I could've shared in that experience!

I hope to also come face to face with that miracle, soon... Only I probably wont be drunk.....

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Re: Navigating the ocean of my life

Posted by chosemyshem - 17 Mar 2025 19:01

[Muttel wrote on 17 Mar 2025 17:09:](#)

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Bro, why not?

Warning: Spoiler!

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Re: Navigating the ocean of my life
Posted by amevakesh - 19 Mar 2025 11:48

There's a fantastic insight in one of the stories in R' Y. Spero's new book ("One for the books", for the full story, ??? pg. 137), that speaks to the battle we all face. Most of what I'm writing, is directly quoted from the book.

One day a young woman came to the Chazon Ish crying hysterically. Through her sobs, she began to pour out her soul. She had been drafted into the army, and while there, had made choices that haunted her. In her eyes, she had done the worst things imaginable. The burden of her mistakes had crushed her spirit. In her mind, she was beyond redemption, so much so, that she no longer wanted to live.

With boundless empathy and understanding, the Chazon Ish sat with her and said, "From this moment on, your life begins anew. Nothing that happened before matters anymore." But she resisted, She couldn't believe it. The shame and guilt ran far down into her heart, refusing to let go.

Seeing her reluctance, the Chazon Ish continued offering a profound insight. "?????? ???? ???? - The thoughts of sin are worse than the sin itself " He explained that the YH doesn't merely want a person to sin. That's temporary, fleeting. **What he truly seeks is to trap the person in despair, to make him believe he's lost forever.** These feelings of worthlessness, of hopelessness, of desperation are far more damaging than the sin itself. The Chazon Ish was telling her that her worst enemy wasn't her past mistakes, but the belief that she couldn't rise from them.

I don't know for sure which sin this woman was agonizing over, but it was done in the army, and if I had to guess, it was probably in the area of immorality. Yet even so, his goal is not the sin itself, rather it's getting the person to give up on himself, and throw in the towel. To fight the battle alone, is to thwart his main objective. KOMT!!!!

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Re: Navigating the ocean of my life
Posted by cleanmendy - 19 Mar 2025 14:22

[amevakesh wrote on 19 Mar 2025 11:48:](#)

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One day a young woman came to the Chazon Ish crying hysterically. Through her sobs, she began to pour out her soul. She had been drafted into the army, and while there, had made choices that haunted her. In her eyes, she had done the worst things imaginable. The burden of her mistakes had crushed her spirit. In her mind, she was beyond redemption, so much so, that she no longer wanted to live.

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Thanks for posting that, a huge Chizuk!

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Re: Navigating the ocean of my life
Posted by chosemyshem - 19 Mar 2025 15:07

[amevakesh wrote on 19 Mar 2025 11:48:](#)

I don't know for sure which sin this woman was agonizing over, but it was ~~done~~ being in the army .

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Hagiyus huh gezairas shmad!!

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Fixed that for you
Re: Navigating the ocean of my life
Posted by amevakesh - 25 Mar 2025 15:22

Having a rough time lately in my personal life. In the past I've refrained from posting when the going gets rough, but this time it's harder then it's been in a while. Filled with sad emotions, struggling to stay afloat, feel like I'm running on empty. But gotta try to remain positive. At least now, lust isn't in the cards, that would've made it so much harder. What's keeping me going is [Minhamayim's Vort](#) of ????? ????? ??????. Brought me to tears this morning when I was saying

???? ?????. Onward and forward, one step at a time.

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Re: Navigating the ocean of my life
Posted by 138eagle - 25 Mar 2025 18:05

[chosemyschem wrote on 19 Mar 2025 15:07:](#)

[amevakesh wrote on 19 Mar 2025 11:48:](#)

I don't know for sure which sin this woman was agonizing over, but it was ~~done~~ being in the army .

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Hagiyus huh gezairas shmad!!

Careful!!!

You may lose your funding!

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Re: Navigating the ocean of my life
Posted by alex94 - 25 Mar 2025 19:38

[amevakesh wrote on 25 Mar 2025 15:22:](#)

Having a rough time lately in my personal life. At least now, lust isn't in the cards, that would've made it so much harder.

Same and same. Often it's very hard to feel, but I know that I am million times stronger and more powerful with lust out of the picture.

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Re: Navigating the ocean of my life
Posted by cleanmendy - 25 Mar 2025 22:18

[amevakesh wrote on 25 Mar 2025 15:22:](#)

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Gadlus!!!

I was getting too sure of myself after 80 days, But after almost two years clean straight to be vulnerable like that!

Gadlus!!!

We learn 2 things,

1. No one is invincible

2. You'll always be loved and respected here, no matter what goes on in your life.

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