

GYE - Guard Your Eyes

Generated: 4 April, 2025, 04:16

Dear R,R & R (Rabbi, Rav & Rebbe)
Posted by cordnoy - 18 May 2014 21:25

[I would like the Rabbinate to eventually read the followin' letter; however, I would like all on this site to chime in. What did I miss? What should be added? what should be subtracted? Have I missed the boat? How should this be sent out? Let me know please; thank you.]

Dear Rav, Rabbi, Rebbe (R,R & R.....all types....whether one is Modern Orhtodox, Reform, Chassidish, Yeshivish, Right wing or Left),

I am a member of your Shul, Synagogue, Sanctuary (S,S & S). I could be the President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary, First Gabbai, Second Gabbai, Board Member, Ordinary Member or Guest. I am writing this to you, for I feel that the Rabbinate in general is not addressing the following issue in the proper manner. The issue I am referring to is people who have a lust or sexual addiction. For this letter, it is not important to define the word 'addiction.' I simply mean: people who have an extremely difficult time guarding their eyes. We cannot walk or drive down the street without our eyes wandering and noticing all that we shouldn't. Every woman, her dress, heels, posture and everything else are scrutinized. No billboard is overlooked. We look again, turn around and gawk if we can. These images remain with us throughout the day/night. They/We/I begin to act out. We masturbate without control. We cannot stop ourselves. We view pornography on the internet. These images and videos remain embedded in our heads. They become a part of us. They invade during tefillah, learning, work and play. We develop relationships with women on the internet. We frequent clubs where naked women dance before us. Some of us are into phone sex. Others are into prostitutes. We are addicted to all types of sex. Some of us fantasize about other men; many of us fantasize about women. There are no restrictions; no limitations. Anything you have ever heard of, we have done or thought about. I can go on and on about all our particular fetishes, but I think you get the message.

Now, as a member of the Rabbinate, I am sure you are well aware of some of this. The way you address this is probably one of the following: You dedicate one speech, sermon, drashah to this topic. You warn your congregants how vigilant they must be to guard their eyes and minds. You tell them that it is dangerous to their souls. Some might even state how the aveirah/sin of Hz"l is a ticket to Hell/Gehinnom. Perhaps Avraham Avinu/our forefather Abraham will stand by the entrance of the Gan Eden and kindly/sternly tell us that we do not belong here. Some of you might discuss the chillul Hashem/desecration of God's Name that is involved. Can you imagine getting caught? Picture the damage it will do to your community, your family, your job, etc. Some might mention that we can become physically sick. We can catch diseases by close contact with multiple partners. This might even be contagious, and we will pass it on further to our spouses or our children God forbid!

Many of you, however, will choose a different route, one that is considerably 'safer.' You will talk about computers, internet and the need for filters and monitors. You will hang posters all around the S,S & S, announcing and informing us of the possible filters, protections and monitors that exist for computers, phones, I-pods and nooks. There are phone numbers to call to assist you in the installation of K-9, Web-chaver, V'shinantem, Net-nanny, Open Dns and Covenant Eyes. You will tell us about the dangers for our families and our innocent children. Some of you may volunteer to be our partner. You will receive in an email all the websites that we visit. There will even be those who set up classes/shiurim to learn from a mussar sefer/book that deals with this important issue.

Some of you will choose to make this into your lifelong battle. You will bring this up every other Shabbos. You will announce special speakers and events that will deal with this. You will try to convince your peers to make a convention about the topic. Let us duplicate Citi Field in our community. Another Asifah; another gathering. Let us create a group of those who can tell others that our house is now protected.

Now, perhaps I missed a method or two, but the above would be the general outlines of what has been happening for the past ten or fifteen years. There probably has been many success stories. You saved many marriages and protected many children. People have come back and reported that they are now clean. I/We commend you for this and we wish you continued success.

What I am here to tell you is that be'mechilas kevod torasam/I apologize to you great scholar there is a vital point that you are missing, and it is one that is crucial for us addicts. We are in hiding. This has become a stigma like no other before it. If we would walk to the bimah in the center of the S,S & S and announce that we are steeped into porn, we would be immediately banned and ostracized from the community. We are alone in the closet. Some of us feel that we are the only person in the world with this problem. We do not dare to tell our spouse, parent, Mashgiach or mentor. We hide our guilt and our filth. The danger of getting caught just adds to the thrill of the chase. We listen intently when you are hollering from the pulpit. We try not to squirm in our seats. We wonder if there's anyone else in this room that you are talking to. But ultimately, it doesn't help; we are not affected by your words. If we could, we would masturbate right there, right then; perhaps under our tallis or even with our tefillin on. We know and we heard many times that God has rejected us. We have been banned from His Presence a long time ago. We might feel a tinge of guilt; perhaps a lot of it, but it just leads to a vicious cycle. Within minutes, hours or days, we are back kneeling on the bathroom floor.

So, what you ask, are you missing? What more can you do? You have told us all how harmful

and detrimental this is to us, our lives, our families, our community and our souls. The answer, the solution, at least partly, or as a positive step forward, would be for a bit of empathy, some compassion, some concern, and most of all, some knowledge. Spend some time on the Guard your Eyes website. Learn about all the hundreds and thousands of frum/orthodox/modern orthodox, chassidish, yeshivish, bochurim, teenagers, students, yungerleit, Roshei Kollel, doctors, lawyers and professionals that are experiencing this problem. Learn what makes them tick. Study the causes. Speak to the therapists. Find out why this is becoming more widespread than ever before. Determine if filters or monitors would help these people. Let these people open up to you and listen to their concerns, worries, troubles, guilt, shame and anxiety. Investigate who are the therapists that are available for the different type of addictions. Do you even know what an SA group is? Do you know if they are accessible to your community members? Become experts in the field. Perhaps not all of you have the time and the wherewithal to obtain the status and the level of expertise as Rabbi Dr. Twerski and Duvid Chaim and Dov; but some of you can. Perhaps appoint one of your colleagues to become that expert. Learn about us. And most of all, speak to your congregants; not as a group, but in a private setting. Ask them about life (might be a good idea in general). And then tell them that you would like to ask some personal questions, and that you are asking everyone in the S,S & S the same questions; for this way, they will not be worried that they are under suspicion. Ask them if they have issues with guarding their eyes. They will answer: Who doesn't? Ask further. Tell them that there is help out there. In each S,S & S, there is probably 5 or 10 % of the members that suffer some type of sexual addiction. If my numbers are too high, then put it at 3 %, but you can help. One who suffers alone will suffer forever. That is what all the books and all the studies and all the experts have determined. Ask further. Be a bit of a nudge. Explain that although this particular person sitting before you might not appreciate this line of questioning, but it is worth it to you (and it should be worth it for him), to save or to assist one fellow in this community. R,R & R, I am afraid that you will be surprised, or perhaps even shocked about the amount of people that will "come out of the closet." And maybe, you say, I am saying that, for I would like to be part of a larger group....that might be true, but that is what many people are saying. And again, even if it isn't, can you imagine the relief of that one guilt-ridden, full of shame person will have when he finally is able to reveal his suffering and his grief that he has silently and shamefully endured all by himself for so many years.

R, R & R: either tell me why I am wrong, or please, I beg of you, take heed to some of what I wrote. You will be saving so many suffering souls.

Thank you so much

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Re: Dear R,R & R (Rabbi, Rav & Rebbe)
Posted by gibbor120 - 20 May 2014 23:49

I agree with TZ that it needs to be shorter. Also, lose the r,r, and r. S,S and S. You can't write to R,R and Rs Rabbonim the same way you talk on this forum.

Many rabbonim, especially the good ones, are super busy. I'm not sure your suggestion is practiccical.

Perhaps in their drasha, they can say it is unfortunately not an uncommon problem, and I have helped many people deal with it. He can say something that shows that he does not look down upon an addict, and welcomes addicts to come speak with him. I think asking more than that is probably not realistic.

Also, the addict himself has to take some initiative. I see this as asking the Rav to take way too much responsibility. It's a person's job to seek out help, not the Rav's job to seek out problems. There are probably many people that have various problems. The Rav is there to help IF the person comes to the Rav. I don't think it's the Rav's responsibility to approach the person, and as someone said, the person will likely deny it (until they have no choice any more).

I think rabbonim are naturally becoming more aware as more and more people come to them. I know when I opened up to my rav (cuz my wife found out and I had no choice), he told us that he deals with it often. I hear a Rav Veiner recording, and he also said he deals with it often.

So, I'm not sure which rabbonim are in the dark. They may not know much about GYE, and we can tell them about it. I told my Rav about GYE and gave him some of the materials. He told me that someone else in our shul is also heavily involved in GYE (no, i don't know who it is).

I'm not sure I was so clear, but those are some of my stream-of-conciousness thoughts.

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Re: Dear R,R & R (Rabbi, Rav & Rebbe)
Posted by TehillimZugger - 20 May 2014 23:55

THANKS GIBBOR

VERY WELL SAID!

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Re: Dear R,R & R (Rabbi, Rav & Rebbe)

Posted by cordnoy - 20 May 2014 23:56

[Dr.Watson wrote:](#)

I don't really understand what's happening in this thread. Is this a letter to be delivered to all robbonim? Are we being asked to give it to our own Rav, post it through his door, or something, or is it going to be published?

Second, I have absolutely no idea how well my Rav understands my problem because I've never once shared it with him. That's my fault, not the Rav's. Perhaps if I told him what I'm struggling with I might discover a very understanding source of chizzuk.

This was a suggestion. If the oilam here does not think it worthy it will be dropped. As of now, from those who chimed in, the majority consensus has been to tone it down, shorten it, and do not put too much stake in the results.

Regardin' your second question - that's exactly the point. You haven't discussed it with your Rav, for you did not approach him. But if he randomly would approach you, or like others said, indicate that he is accessible and available for these discussions, you might find a receptive, understanding, knowledgeable mentor, and it would be extremely beneficial.

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Re: Dear R,R & R (Rabbi, Rav & Rebbe)

Posted by Dr.Watson - 21 May 2014 00:08

[cordnoy wrote:](#)

Regardin' your second question - that's exactly the point. You haven't discussed it with your Rav, for you did not approach him. But if he randomly would approach you, or like others said, indicate that he is accessible and available for these discussions, you might find a receptive, understanding, knowledgeable mentor, and it would be extremely beneficial.

My mashgiach gave shmuz on the topic once and stringly urged anyone who had this problem to discuss it with him. All it did was make me resolve more firmly to overcome this problem on my own so I'd never have to talk to him about it. That firm resolve lasted about a week and it never again occurred to me to speak to him about it.

Honestly, there was nothing more he could have done to help me. If he was more pushy I would have resented him. My failure to accept the help he was offering was entirely my fault, not his.

You didn't really answer my first question. There is a huge difference between a letter you send in the post and one you publish in the newspaper. Speaking only for myself, I would never dare send this to my Rav, for several reasons. I'm not saying you should drop it, I'm saying tov acharis dovor meireishiso.

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Re: Dear R,R & R (Rabbi, Rav & Rebbe)
Posted by cordnoy - 21 May 2014 00:20

this would not be published in a paper.

it would only be sent in a post after the board (us guys) approve it.

regarding your first point in this last post, that again is precisely my point...your mashgiach was probably ill-informed. he kinda figured that if he would issue stern warnin's you would stop. of course not. you just go deeper into hidin'. if the rabbanim become more in tune to what's goin' on, they could speak on a much different level, and then people will feel more comfortable to open up.

for example; im sure all of you heard the internet/filter/pornography/clickin'/poison/invadin' your house sppedch/sermon/drasha more than once in your lifetime. what is always the endin'? If you don't listen to us, you're gonna end up doin' all sorts of aveiros which will permanently damage your soul, leadin' to divorce and excommunication and suicide. why does it need to be that way? why can't they say that if you don't heed our warnin's, and even if you do, but you are overcome with desires, which may happen to some people, you will then need to seek help, and we are here for you, and we have some knowledge as to how to treat you, and there are solutions and answers and assistance available, but we are here now to try to circumvent that.

I don't know about you, but in my lifetime, I never heard that speech.

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Re: Dear R,R & R (Rabbi, Rav & Rebbe)
Posted by Dr.Watson - 21 May 2014 00:28

I hear. It reminds me of a shmuz I heard in which the Rav said again and again how 'dark and dangerous' TV was, but at no point during his 20 minute talk did he say why.

I still have a lot of thoughts going round and round but I can't seem to get any clarity with them. I guess I'm not sure what you expect from them, how could they possibly understand?

There's a reason that in SA we speak only of ourselves and our own experience. A Rav won't be able to do that. If they would just know where to send people who go to them with the problem maybe that would be enough. Like I said, maybe they already know that, I never asked.

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Re: Dear R,R & R (Rabbi, Rav & Rebbe)
Posted by TehillimZugger - 21 May 2014 00:39

[Dr.Watson wrote:](#)

In SA we speak only of ourselves and our own experience. A Rav won't be able to do that.

DEPENDS WHICH RAV MY DEAR WATSON... DEPENDS WHICH RAV...

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Re: Dear R,R & R (Rabbi, Rav & Rebbe)
Posted by Dr.Watson - 21 May 2014 00:45

[TehillimZugger wrote:](#)

[Dr.Watson wrote:](#)

In SA we speak only of ourselves and our own experience. A Rav won't be able to do that.

DEPENDS WHICH RAV MY DEAR WATSON... DEPENDS WHICH RAV...

I'm fairly sure that even if my Rav were an addict he wouldn't tell me about it. Not even if I told him my problem first. Not even if it would help.

A Rav that really *had* what to share and would be *willing* to share is a one in a billion, possibly less (I wouldn't be surprised if there were less than 8 such Rabbonim in the world at present)

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Re: Dear R,R & R (Rabbi, Rav & Rebbe)
Posted by Machshovo Tova - 21 May 2014 01:04

[Dr.Watson wrote:](#)

I hear. It reminds me of a shmuz I heard in which the Rav said again and again how 'dark and dangerous' TV was, but at no point during his 20 minute talk did he say why...

Either you never watched TV, or you watched too much. We need to be told why TV is dark and dangerous??

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Re: Dear R,R & R (Rabbi, Rav & Rebbe)
Posted by Dr.Watson - 21 May 2014 01:42

[Machshovo Tova wrote:](#)

[Dr.Watson wrote:](#)

I hear. It reminds me of a shmuz I heard in which the Rav said again and again how 'dark and dangerous' TV was, but at no point during his 20 minute talk did he say why...

Either you never watched TV, or you watched too much. We need to be told why TV is dark and dangerous??

It seems like I'm the only one getting confused here so I'll just leave the oilam to it.

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Re: Dear R,R & R (Rabbi, Rav & Rebbe)
Posted by Machshovo Tova - 21 May 2014 01:46

[Dr.Watson wrote:](#)

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The concept of Mussar is that we need to ingrain in our thick skull again and again that it is wrong, maybe it will penetrate (see Mesilas Yeshorim's hakdamah).

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Moh nafshoch, so why speak it about it at all?
Re: Dear R,R & R (Rabbi, Rav & Rebbe)
Posted by Dr.Watson - 21 May 2014 01:50

[Machshovo Tova wrote:](#)

[Dr.Watson wrote:](#)

...

The concept of Mussar is that we need to ingrain in our thick skull again and again that it is wrong, maybe it will penetrate (see Mesilas Yeshorim's hakdamah).

So then speak about *why* it's wrong. Moh nafshoch. I'm getting more confused by the minute.

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Re: Dear R,R & R (Rabbi, Rav & Rebbe)
Posted by kilochalu - 21 May 2014 03:57

[cordnoy wrote:](#)

for example; im sure all of you heard the internet/filter/pornography/clickin'/poison/invadin' your house speech/sermon/drasha more than once in your lifetime. what is always the endin'? If you don't listen to us, you're gonna end up doin' all sorts of aveiros which will permanently damage your soul, leadin' to divorce and excommunication and suicide. why does it need to be that way? why can't they say that if you don't heed our warnin's, and even if you do, but you are overcome with desires, which may happen to some people, you will then need to seek help, and we are here for you, and we have some knowledge as to how to treat you, and there are solutions and answers and assistance available, but we are here now to try to circumvent that.

I don't know about you, but in my lifetime, I never heard that speech.

they are speaking to the hopefully majority who are not addicts, who may be scared enough by that speech to not take the first drink or at least not become addicted

you don't agree that that is an important speech?

we just want them to add that if someone is already in the quicksand they should be aware that there is help (hope) to be had

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Re: Dear R,R & R (Rabbi, Rav & Rebbe)
Posted by cordnoy - 21 May 2014 07:23

yes...I agree to the basic speech, but there are slight nuances that can be changed or addressed

thanks

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