

GYE - Guard Your Eyes

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

[I would like the Rabbinat 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 Rabbinat 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 Rabbinat, 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 shivisi - 21 May 2014 10:35

[TehillimZugger wrote:](#)

ahem, Cordnoy? Chani Friedstein, ahem, thanks for askin'

IMHO I think you should keep such "personal" messages in the "private message" section, not in the public response area. [especially ones which conern "[i]chanies[/i]"].

[TehillimZugger wrote:](#)

Warning: Spoiler!

Please pardon my utter ignorance - would you be kind enough to explain to me what it means when a poster puts the "warning: spoiler" notice in his message?

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Re: Dear R,R & R (Rabbi, Rav & Rebbe)
Posted by think good - 21 May 2014 18:01

thanks cordnoy great post, but I agree with shivisi most addicts will never open up and will remain in denial.

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Re: Dear R,R & R (Rabbi, Rav & Rebbe)
Posted by cordnoy - 21 May 2014 18:04

Not at first, but somewhere down the line...they might.

Take a look at the people on this site.

many swore that they never would go To SA or open up to a real person.

And now.....there are plenty.

Thanks again

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Re: Dear R,R & R (Rabbi, Rav & Rebbe)
Posted by shivisi - 22 May 2014 10:04

[cordnoy wrote:](#)

Take a look at the people on this site.

many swore that they never would go To SA or open up to a real person.

And now.....there are plenty.

As i said 99.999999 percent of those who have "opened up" have done so only after realizing ON THEIR OWN that they could not possibly continue going on with life the way they have been living until that point, and NOT by the initiation of someone else, as has been suggested in cordnoys post.

I'm not saying it CAN"T happen but the chances are very improbable.

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Re: Dear R,R & R (Rabbi, Rav & Rebbe)
Posted by nitzotzeloki - 22 May 2014 11:15

a benefit i think could came out of all this is, when the person finishes a spree and feels completely hopeless and doomed and then remembers "oh yeah the rabbi gave a speech about this and said that there is help out there" maybe out of the desperation that a spree provides they will go to the rabbi.

i know this wont work for all people and i know not all rabbis will deliver things properly but getting awareness out there so people at least have in the back of their mind that there is an address to go to might prove beneficial

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Re: Dear R,R & R (Rabbi, Rav & Rebbe)
Posted by Pidaini - 22 May 2014 17:11

Thanks cordnoy for this, great stuff coming out.

My feelings were very similar to gibbor's, plus.

he was very warm and truly understanding, telling me (as cordnoy wrote) that it would ruin me. He made a point of making it much more practical by saying that it would ruin my marriage.

There was one (or two) main thing(s) that he didn't tell me and that was that I'm not the only one, that I am actually normal, and that I can talk to other people about it. Not only other people, because I would have assumed that he meant kids off the D, had he told me that there were other people, people like me, people that were learning, people that were davening, chassidish, etc. I think I could've saved a lot of time.

1) I personally was first approached by my father, I had left a video open...

I wouldn't have wanted to talk to my father, not if he doesn't tell me that he struggles with it, but give me another struggler I would have opened up much quicker.

Another thing, in the same venue, is that I was talking to a certain Rav about what he called "an addiction that is much much worse than alcohol" and I know that he dealt with certain cases correctly. But while talking to him I saw how he really felt about those people, how he looked down at them, and I felt my stomach clenching, and my heart beating, etc.

To summarize, I wouldn't take up any rav's offer to open up to him, because I know how rabanim look at us, but if he would give an address of where to go to get help, of where those people that are just like me, are, (namely GYE) then I would've probably looked, if only for curiosity sake.

2) The stigma. Doesn't everyone have a yetzer hara that is bothering them to no end? By one person it may be gaavah, another dishonesty, another might be food, etc. etc. If that would be mentioned in the drashos, that everyone has a fight, and the guy that struggles with lust is the exact same as the guy who struggles with gaavah, that should put a new light onto it.

3)Point is that the person struggling needs to get the help, as gibbor wrote. BUT, if the help was much more readily available then it would be much easier to, and many more people would, get help.

Thanks again!!

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Re: Dear R,R & R (Rabbi, Rav & Rebbe)
Posted by cordnoy - 22 May 2014 17:16

[shivisi wrote:](#)

[cordnoy wrote:](#)

Take a look at the people on this site.

many swore that they never would go To SA or open up to a real person.

And now.....there are plenty.

As i said 99.999999 percent of those who have "opened up" have done so only after realizing ON THEIR OWN that they could not possibly continue going on with life the way they have been living until that point, and NOT by the initiation of someone else, as has been suggested in cordnoys post.

I'm not saying it CAN"T happen but the chances are very improbable.

I am sorry but again this is just another made-up statistic. And besides, the people on gye might have realized on their own, but it was only after proddin', cajolin', inspirin', convincin' words of others.

This I know first hand from myself and from those who have opened up to me and from those who have told me that they joined SA or other such groups because of others on this site.

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Re: Dear R,R & R (Rabbi, Rav & Rebbe)
Posted by gibbor120 - 22 May 2014 20:15

print flyers, have a video presentation, Kumzitz with dov or Duvid Chaim, the possibilites are , we could

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Re: Dear R,R & R (Rabbi, Rav & Rebbe)
Posted by cordnoy - 22 May 2014 20:39

My point was only to educate the Rabbonim and for the senior chevra on this site to guide the process.

I do think there is what to be gained.

Pidaini hit a raw nerve with many of us.

the Rabbonim look down at the people with these problems.

That is probably true for many of them or some of them.
So let's just ask all shuls to have a GYE night. We could demo all GYE has to offer

I am not effected by this sentiment, for I generally do not @##\$\$%%^&*** care what people think about me...especially if the people don't know it is me that the Rav is talkin' about. But let's face it...there is some truth in that. We were/will be/are doin' things that are pretty stinkin' low....especially me.

that bein' said...we are people as well, and we are interested in climbin' outta the @#\$%%Ae mess we created, and it will probably be much more effective if they talk positively and discuss improvement and growth and steps and process instead of excommunicatin' and gross and vile and filth and 'die in Hell' kinda rhetoric.

thanks

b'hatzlachah

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Re: Dear R,R & R (Rabbi, Rav & Rebbe)
Posted by shivisi - 22 May 2014 23:12

[cordnoy wrote:](#)

And besides, the people on gye might have realized on their own, but it was only after proddin', cajolin', inspirin', convincin' words of others.

This I know first hand from myself and from those who have opened up to me and from those who have told me that they joined SA or other such groups **because of others on this site.**

We have to agree that GYE members are not a proof! once they're ALREADY here, they have already admitted that they have a sex problem, then they are convinced to open up!

It wont work in a shul setting!

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

Posted by cordnoy - 22 May 2014 23:41

As Dov has said many times: Many are here but they are still hidin' behind their fake names....that is not called "openin' up."

Thanks

b'hatzlachah

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

Posted by startrekuser - 23 May 2014 16:37

Thanks Cordnoy. Excellent post! This really does address what was on my mind and that I mentioned to you in our chat.

I agree with you that the problem is probably more widespread than anybody knows. In today's society the opportunities to become a sex addict are more numerous than I can count (and I'm a math person). In addition, there are so many men that reach out on this website and that is probably just a fraction of the men that have a problem. Like many problems in Jewish communities, it takes a long time for our communities to admit to a problem and to deal with it in a constructive way. What you are doing is very constructive and I will consider sending an email like this to my rabbi.

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

Posted by startrekuser - 23 May 2014 16:42

It's probably a mix. I found GYE on my own after reading something by a rabbi that says we (especially men) need to guard your eyes in order to bring holiness to the Jewish people and the world. I literally did a search on "guard your eyes" to read more about the topic and found

this website. Granted, my case is mild compared to most everybody else here, but I probably would never have stopped masturbating if it wasn't for this website and the inspiring stories and encouragement from everyone else here.

- David

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Re: Dear R,R & R (Rabbi, Rav & Rebbe)
Posted by SIB101854 - 23 May 2014 22:44

I am not sure that an approach that appears to be based on a letter that reads like a "Kol Koreh" plastered on the walls in the average Torah observant neighborhood will work or resonate well as a means of facilitating discussion on the issue of sexual addiction and how it manifests itself in our community and as individuals.

GYE, in contrast, works because it requires anyone who is a member to take a long look in his mental mirror and realize how low he has sunk and that he is an addict. That is a fundamentally individual decision-not a Kol Koreh that indicts an entire community as a cop out.

Yes, we have problems communally in addressing the issue outlined in such passionate terms, but we all have individual problems that only the individual must realize from the bottom of his heart. I don't think that condemning the entire community is either feasible or proper, when the problem is rooted in each and every person in the form of acting out in very different contexts as an individual. GYE exists as the only really communally sanctioned forum for discussing addiction to porn and masturbation, but only the individual can make the choice to sign up here, pour out his guts, and decide what he wants to do with his life, with the full recognition that even with the best of intentions and all the technologically advanced weapons at his behalf, he could either slip or have a fall, major or minor.

That being said, I think that we need also to think very seriously about how we, as Torah observant men, prepare for marriage, aside from a chasan class where we learn the basics of some of the most complicated Halacos in SA- Hilcos Nidah. Learning about emotional intimacy, how to be a giving spouse, and recognizing that marital intimacy is part of one's marital obligations, and that the Torah approach to marital intimacy on the physical level neither is hedonistic nor prudish, as well as the fact that some of the greatest Rishonim wrote about seforim about marital intimacy strike me as crucial elements of preparation for marriage.

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