

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 Losasuru - 27 Jul 2014 17:09

[SIB101854 wrote:](#)

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.

Most Chosson shmuzes that are given these days (BMG requires every chosson to get a chosson shmuz in addition to the chosson classes on hilchos niddah) are based on this exact idea that intimacy is central to married life and is not only not hedonistic and prudish but rather it can be transformed to the highest levels of holiness.

Problem is for those who have been grappling and inundated with filth for years have already developed a vulgar mindset about sex and are sadly ingrained with earlier habits and views.

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Re: Dear R,R & R (Rabbi, Rav & Rebbe)
Posted by cordnoy - 27 Jul 2014 17:34

Mr. Losasuru,

thank you, but as my letter was voted down by the oilam here, may I suggest you edit it and draft a newer version please?

Tizku l'mitzvois

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Re: Dear R,R & R (Rabbi, Rav & Rebbe)
Posted by Losasuru - 27 Jul 2014 23:54

Mr. Cordnoy,

Although awareness certainly has to be created, I am not of the opinion that a letter will do the trick. If believe that if a Rosh Yeshiva of a prestigious yeshiva was sent a letter stating that there is a widespread problem of pornography addiction and the like, his response would likely be somewhere along the lines of "not in my yeshiva! Maybe there are a talmidim struggling with shmiras einayim etc. but nothing more..".

Maybe if a group of talmidim/congregants somehow were able to present factual and statiscal figures of just how many people are drowning in their struggles in their insitutions would they be able to get their leader on board. If that can happen,maybe that influential rosh yeshiva/mashgiach/rov can accelerate raising awareness by speaking to fellow rabbanim etc. Maybe GYE can somehow create a group to go around and meet all rabbanim and r"y's and to present to them the harsh realities.

I think personal meetings would be more effective than letters. Or maybe have meetings and letters! I don't have a concrete solution but awareness definitely needs to be raised!

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Re: Dear R,R & R (Rabbi, Rav & Rebbe)
Posted by cordnoy - 28 Jul 2014 00:06

sh'koyach!

Thanks

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Re: Dear R,R & R (Rabbi, Rav & Rebbe)
Posted by kilochalu - 28 Jul 2014 02:16

[cordnoy wrote:](#)

Mr. Losasuru,

thank you, but as my letter was voted down by the oilam here, may I suggest you edit it and draft a newer version please?

Tizku l'mitzvois

hamaschil bemitzva omrim lo gmor, it is your zchus and achrayusto continue with this,

I didn't have a chance now to reread all of the replies but from what I remember the replies were mostly agreeing just suggesting various constructive changes

in general the oilam held that it is a great idea, maybe won't solve all of the worlds problems, room for others to carry out other ideas, but no real tainos that this should not be done, maybe integrate some of the suggested changes and continue on with this tremendous zikuy harabim

b'hatzlacha!!

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

Posted by Bezrat - 28 Jul 2014 13:52

Well done for this topic!

Perhaps add to your letter to Google "Rabbi convicted or molestation"

Or remind them of the recent conviction of Rabbis

There are noted psychologists who identify this as a cultural crisis.

The Al-mighty put us lust addicts here for good, since He never creates for bad.

Go for it!

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Re: Dear R,R & R (Rabbi, Rav & Rebbe)
Posted by SIB101854 - 31 Jul 2014 00:08

Like it or not, the fact that so many of us are susceptible to triggers , regardless of the time of the year,that can R"L send us down the rabbit holes of masturbation and porn is a pyschological and cultural crisis-both in the Torah observant and secular worlds. For us, it is an issue that goes to the heart of our committment to Torah and Mitzvos, or should be viewed as suuch. The secular world views it as wasting time, and having significantly negative impact on productivity at work, and as objectifying women as sex objects-a view that is not so far from the hashkafa that should be the backbone of Tznius.

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Re: Dear R,R & R (Rabbi, Rav & Rebbe)
Posted by Losasuru - 31 Jul 2014 15:22

[Bezrat wrote:](#)

Well done for this topic!

Perhaps add to your letter to Google "Rabbi convicted or molestation"

Or remind them of the recent conviction of Rabbis

It is unclear why bringing up wrong-doings of "rabbis" would be of any help. You are treading very deep waters by grouping all rabbis as sinners.

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

Posted by cordnoy - 31 Jul 2014 17:22

I think what he meant or might have meant was to demonstrate how far or extreme this addiction can go....not that isolated cases prove a frequency for that, but it is out there. Additionally, it can be used as a reference point to show the dangers of this addiction and what it can lead to.

Thinkin' about this a bit more (sorry for that), I think (sorry again) that when the Rabbis or some of them or the outside world hear about these molestation cases, they say to themselves or to their colleagues: My God! What sickos we have! when in the truth, most of us here, or many of us here, or some of us here know that our addiction - if left unchecked can lead to such things as well.

Perhaps I wrote that in the original letter or somethin' like that.

I am not sayin' that we/I/you are a future molester; I am sayin' that many molesters started off as bein' lust addicted.

In conclusion: if there is one idea that everyone associated with GYE can agree upon (and yes, i mean you as well), and if you would ask yourself, what would be the number one advice you can give someone, or what would be somethin' that can help another get out of this mess? I believe the answer would be to somehow get out of the isolation. Remove the blanket. GEt out of the closet! Somehow, get it into the open (and no; don't broadcast it on CNN), for a heavy load will be removed from your shoulders. Our leaders can help with that....somehow.

Thanks (and sorry for the ramble)

b'hatzlachah

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Re: Dear R,R & R (Rabbi, Rav & Rebbe)
Posted by newaction - 15 Sep 2014 22:19

i told my wife the other day , you know those LGBT community i think they are casualties of addiction , most of them cant help it. she said wow thats a new one ; inferring i became more lax and less radical about the "shmutz" of humanity. Honestly i see things and people in a different way than before. With regard to cordnoy's idea . Maybe the Rav should have a team or lower rank rabbis sending the message for him to the kahal or yechidim and on his behalf that such and such phenomenon can be treated and if anybody wants more info they could pass it for him . In that way it can be easier for the congregant and still the Rav is doing his job.

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Re: Dear R,R & R (Rabbi, Rav & Rebbe)
Posted by cordnoy - 19 Oct 2015 12:51

[:cordnoy wrote:](#)

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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

Thanks Mark for reminding me about this....heck of a letter.....imho.

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Re: Dear R,R & R (Rabbi, Rav & Rebbe)
Posted by stillgoing - 19 Oct 2015 17:55

but it's true.

I feel like there are some R ,R or R"S that Are doing some of your suggestions. (just not the R,
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Do you think that it's an issue that some of them may be afraid to rock the boat that provides their livelihood?

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

Posted by Mesayin - 19 Oct 2015 18:21

I hear the suggestions but it is obvious that what R,R&R's are doing is targeting the ones that haven't fallen yet.

All the filters and asifas are just to protect those people who don't know yet the harm that the internet can cause.

Rabbi Efraim Wachsman shlita stated by the citifield asifa that this is not for those who have already fallen into the deep challenges. (I don't recall the exact words he used.)

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Re: Dear R,R & R (Rabbi, Rav & Rebbe)
Posted by Shlomo24 - 19 Oct 2015 19:00

i beg to differ. my rebbeim have helped me out a TON in life and getting the help i needed. and i am not the only one, i have many friends who struggle with SA or SSA and most of them have some1 they call their "rebbe" who helps them out. while in public many things are to protect the "innocent ones" from falling, in private it is a whole 'nother story. just because it's not the front page doesn't mean it's not being done.

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