

Lessons Learned

Posted by Hashem Help Me - 03 Sep 2018 23:39

It has been quite some time since I have posted on my own thread titled "My Story and G-d Bless GYE". Being that those submissions are in the balei batim forum and therefore off limits to all our single friends here, I figured if I wish to post, it's time to open a new thread.

BH we are at day 627. That's a big number. A number that represents a chunk of life. Different seasons, various occasions, many opportunities, a kaleidoscope of challenges. And with Hashem's help (and as I have written many times - with the help of some great GYE chaverim - specifically "one_day_at_a_time") I have stayed clean.

During this period of growth I have made some observations. Firstly, as a rebbi of mine used to say - no specific type of yid has the "copyright" on yiras shomayim. Eye opening to me has been how individuals from very varying lifestyles all truly want to be close to Hashem. It is not just lip service. It is genuine. I am humbled and amazed how even so called "modern" Jews walk determinedly against the tsunami wave of decadence, indecency, immodesty, and liberalism which is trying to inundate the world and destroy every vestige of holiness in its path. These dear teenagers, married fellows, and even post middle aged heroes ignore the current threatening to drown them and keep moving forward. And of course, being that this scourge does not discriminate, all kehillos and "types" are affected. GYE is like the Kosel - one can find every type of yid there crying for help. In summary, everyone wants to be kadosh v'tahor. Imagine how proud Hashem must be.

A second observation. So many unnecessary tears, so much unnecessary pain. How many bochurim stay clean while in yeshiva and camp only to fall within hours of returning home on their parents' devices which have not been properly filtered. The anguish these boys share is heartbreaking. These are boys who will not enter an internet café or library. They avoid public transportation except when absolutely necessary. They are careful in the street. They are the

brave ones who picked up the phone and shared their most personal and embarrassing secrets with total strangers from GYE. But spending a weekend at home where every other room has an unfiltered device....How naïve can people be? How many drashos have been given, and articles written, and people really still think "it cant happen in my house"?! Is the convenience of unfiltered internet worth these churbonos? I am not passing judgement on anyone specific - just publicizing the very painful issue.

Number three - There are many helpful ideas on GYE. Each successful person here will tell you about the "cocktail" he used to break free. A combination of all or some of the following: shiurim, forum, chats, Taphsic, chizuk emails, 90 day chart, phone conferences, therapy referrals, 12 steps, and of course tefilla, guide people from the abyss of the sewer to the summit of a life of freedom. However I believe if a poll were taken, a great majority of people would credit the human connection as the main weapon in the arsenal that blasted them through and saved them. To hear, and even better, to meet and see, an individual who struggled and now is clean, is a tool that is extremely powerful. It shatters the destructive mindset of "it's impossible - no one gets better". Sitting by therapists, as helpful as they are (and they are part of many people's recovery), is not nearly as powerful as someone being honest and telling you what he used to do and how he stopped. Someone who "has been there and done that" can help rewire the unhealthy thinking and give new perspective - there simply is life, even without sex. Plus one must learn the true and Torah perspective on sexuality. One must be educated that he has been poisoned by the evil and filthy portrayal of an act that we now know is uplifting and elevated, even holy. We are more open to be reeducated by one who initially believed as we did. Secondly, that real person can hold your hand in those first days and weeks when it is really difficult to get started. He can give you the chizuk to get past the withdrawal period. He is an anchor. Thirdly, when you see a successful frum fellow standing before you, you realize you are not the rasha or loser you thought you were. You really are a nice good person who has a struggle. That knowledge gives one more self esteem and resolve to get started. Based on my personal experience I would advise any newcomers to figure out which safe person on the site appears to resonate with them, and then carefully - in the beginning anonymously - reach out and let someone help them.

Lastly (for now), we see a sad issue. So many people join GYE and then disappear. They had hisorerus, found the site, joined, maybe even posted, and then they are gone..... It is incumbent on those of us who have tasted success to make ourselves available to help others. We know the pain anguish anxiety depression and turmoil these chevra are experiencing. We know where their eyes and hands are - even though they don't want to be doing those things - and we have

the ability to help. Some will argue, "I don't know what to do". Others will say, "Now that I am better it isn't good for me to be focused on this so much". True, but its payback time. Do something. And if you really can't, then at least daven your kishkes out for all the strugglers. And of course - give a nice donation to that great place that got us all back on track - the very holy mosad GYE. If not for them, where would I (and you) be today?

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Re: Lessons Learned
Posted by Hashem Help Me - 23 Sep 2018 19:23

There are flip phones that have no internet access. They are the best option.

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Re: Lessons Learned
Posted by Shnitzel and kugel - 23 Sep 2018 19:52

[Hashem Help Me wrote on 21 Sep 2018 02:56:](#)

So today a good chaver from here, a bochur who BH is doing well, took the plunge and gave up his phone with internet access. Now he only has a kosher phone. As a reaction, I would like to share some thoughts on the matter and would appreciate responses.

Recently I spoke with TAG of Flatbush. They have a standard called Machane Kadosh, which is almost 100% foolproof. It involves cutting out many sites and removing browsers, etc. However they still beg everyone to switch to kosher phones. Why? They claim that every day new applications, updates, upgrades, etc., enter the market creating new loopholes. Investing thousands of dollars, Machane Kadosh has hired cutting edge tech savvy technicians who watch like hawks for all new developments and then rectify whatever can be fixed. However they cannot guarantee perfection. Therefore they urge everyone to use as a phone, a non internet device. Why have at your fingertips a 24/6 nisayon? For better or for worse, we keep our phones with us all the time. How long does it take on a day where one feels down, lonely, bored, curious, or slightly triggered to take a smartphone into the bathroom, or some other private place to get that "quick fix"? For those who need internet access out of their office, TAG suggests having a tablet (or smartphone set up as per Machane Kadosh standards - which is still the gold standard) in addition to their kosher phone, and to train themselves to use the internet device only when necessary - not for their basic (and nowadays constant) communication. An obvious side benefit of this is that one's phone is l'chatchila usable by

his/her children.

Most friends who have switched to kosher phones claim that within a month or two of the switch they came to the realization that they really never **needed** the constant access. They found that the lines between necessity, convenience, and even relaxation/entertainment had become blurred. Even what they had been convinced they needed, they realized was exaggerated. They also claim that their quality of life was enhanced. They feel they had been addicted to technology (even the kosher stuff) and now saw there is a beautiful life without the constant "mental stimulation" the smartphone offered.

Which brings us to the question. Chazal tell us that if one chooses to walk where there is a lack of tznius when there is another route (darka achrina) that is clean, he is called a rasha **even if he keeps his eyes closed**. So why is our scenario different? If one is able (and yes, I understand there are some who are unable) to avoid the smartphone and can use another route - the kosher phone, then even if he is careful and keeps his eyes off the "bad stuff" (which includes a lot more than just pornography - many "pareve" sites contain images that are definitely assur to look at), how would Chazal view him? **Chalila, I am not trying to pass judgement or be mekatreg on any yid, I am just asking.**

There are some people who unfortunately are so addicted that if given only a kosher phone, they will out of desperation purchase an internet phone at Walmart, or find an internet café, or some other outlet to quench their insatiable thirst. However for the vast majority of people, removing the constant nisayon has proven to be very helpful. Yes, some of us with kosher phones still slip and fall from time to time, but don't we all agree that falling once every few weeks or months is incomparable to falling every few days or worse?

Please respond.

For those that don't need the internet should definitely get rid of their smartphone. But at the end of the day there are people that need a smartphone (maybe a minority) mainly for the apps, obviously they should get a filter/webchaver ect but in some cases it's needed, I'd honestly rather give up my smartphone mainly because of the technology addiction and a life free of using phones/laptops is a different life completely but I **need** the apps on a daily basis. (I wish to stay anonymous so I can't specify why) and occasionally I need to access the internet, recently I was stranded somewhere in the middle of nowhere and without having access to the internet I probably would still be stuck there... But of course it's ??????

Happy sukkos to all

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Re: Lessons Learned
Posted by Hashem Help Me - 23 Sep 2018 20:48

If you have to have a smartphone, then definitely have TAG set it up as per Machaneh Kadosh standards. Its probably your best hishtadlus to stay clean.

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Re: Lessons Learned
Posted by Hakolhevel - 28 Sep 2018 13:57

Since people need internet yes. The question is how much. I think if we really evaluated our life, we could give up on most of our phones interenet and rely on our work computers.

Not that I've taken the plundge yet. but I hope i will...

I can tell you that I see my brother who is home from yeshivah now and he is on the computer a lot of the time. I have no idea what he doing, but seriously, what does he need to be on the computer for?

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Re: Lessons Learned
Posted by lifebound - 29 Oct 2018 00:26

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weeks or months is incomparable to falling every few days or worse?

Please respond.

I switched to a flip phone recently, didn't think I could do it but it's been a month+ and I haven't dropped dead yet...

I'm sure it was a good move for me, but I've found that the more I cut off access, the more desperate I become, taking bigger risks to get my fix. And truth is, I don't need internet access at all to act out, it just makes it easier...The periods in my life where I didn't have internet access, was when fantasy and lust got way worse, and I ended up crossing boundaries, doing shameful things I thought I never would.

So yes, removing the easy access was a good step. But that alone will not keep me sober.

Just sharing my experience so far.

(also, I was self-conscious about what other people would think about me switching to a basic phone. But I just say, "I wanted to see what life is like without a smartphone, just to disconnect for a bit" and most have said something like, "Wow, I love that idea...I wish I could do that!")

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Re: Lessons Learned

Posted by ??? ??? - 29 Oct 2018 00:42

wow ! great job switching as a first step!

As far as other people's comments , i heard a great Peshat in last week;s pasha why the TORAH tells us about Lot;s sons in law .To teach us they were being ????? he said hashem said he is going to destroy the city and they made a joke out of it..LOT is a crazy old man....let's go back to enjoy life. This is the first ???" ???? " ???? ?' ???? ?" ??? ?????? ????? ??? ??? ?????????? ????? ?????? ?.

great luck in you're battle. Got to run now but hope to get back to the crux of you're comments later

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Re: Lessons Learned

Posted by Hashem Help Me - 01 Nov 2018 11:32

As i have written in my other thread "My Story and G-d Bless GYE", there was a slight SSA component to my struggle too. Let's leave out triggering details. One of the uncomfortable situations i had was at chasunas when the music became very "rocked up" and people were "doing the moves". In my sick mind, i was 100% convinced that the underlying thoughts going through the musician, singer, and dancers minds were sexual. Either i would be triggered or i would just be uneasy thinking how "bad" all these people were. BH last night i attended a chasuna, and i had a blast. I danced, i enjoyed, i actually experienced a normal "high" from the whole experience. As i left, i did a doubletake. Did that just really happen? Not one thought of sex? Not one fixation on the crotches of people's pants? Not one drop of uneasiness or negative judging of the wedding participants? Chevra, there is hope for everyone. Stick to the program, stay focused, and get advice/chizuk from others here. It really works. I wish everyone here on GYE should experience that level of menuchas hanefesh that i was zoche too. Hatzlocha to all.

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Re: Lessons Learned

Posted by Hashem Help Me - 04 Nov 2018 23:48

Recently BH I have been able to witness the hatzlocha of quite a few individuals here. Many of them were totally convinced (as I was) that they could never break free. And now they celebrate having the menuchas hanefesh of being clean. Some are single, some are married. The ages range from teenagers to 65. The protagonists in these success stories are modern Orthodox, yeshivish, chassidish, sephardic. The secret - Connection. Some are in SA/PA live and/or telephone meetings. Some are not doing 12 steps at all. But all are in touch with at least one person. Why does connection work? Is it the accountability factor, is it the emotional support - the care and concern, is it the reality factor - a real live person actually got out of this, or is it simply the ability to call in an emergency? Who knows? Who cares? It works. If you have not tried it yet, it's time to do so.

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Re: Lessons Learned

Posted by Ihavestrength - 05 Nov 2018 01:15

Another great post 😊

For me, having someone real to talk to was helpful mostly because it enabled me get over *shame*. Telling someone what I've done, and knowing that he doesn't think I'm a loser or worthless because of it, was *huge*.

Also, for me, it is quantity over quality. I mainly speak to one person, but we have a real relationship, and we meet up when we can.

Lastly, I think the main reason having someone to talk to helps me is because I have an ally. Up until I had an ally I was fighting alone, and lone soldier is weaker than a pair.

P.S. Having someone to talk to was probably necessary for me to get whatever recovery I have, but it definitely wasn't sufficient.

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Re: Lessons Learned
Posted by Hashem Help Me - 15 Nov 2018 12:30

700 days. I am humbled and truly grateful to the Ribono Shel Olam for His allowing me to be where i am today, and for the zchus of having some involvement in others' recoveries from this issue. And as i have posted on this thread and on my original one (in the balei batim forum), i have enormous feelings of hakaras hatov to the many individuals here, and to GYE itself, for the chizuk, advice, education, and friendship i have received here. Although many of the "family members" are faceless and even nameless, in the olam ha'neshamos the bond between us is real and strong. Hatzlocha to all.

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Re: Lessons Learned
Posted by lampowerless - 15 Nov 2018 16:33

Wow! Mazel Tov on 700! That is Amazing! You are a real role model to so many, B'h today I hit 84 clean days I would have never been able to get to this point if not for all the help and devotion that you have shown to me. Thanks a lot for all the chizuk, advice, education, and

friendship you have shown to me!

Looking forward to celebrating many more milestones!

🥰 Love Yankel!

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Re: Lessons Learned
Posted by ??? ??? - 15 Nov 2018 20:07

MAZEL TOV on 700! ????? ????? ?????? ?????? ??????? ?????? ?????? ?7000

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Re: Lessons Learned
Posted by Shnitzel and kugel - 16 Nov 2018 02:52

Mazel tov for reaching 700! Wow! Really inspirational! I'm sure the eibishter gave you extra strength due to you helping people out, including me.

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Re: Lessons Learned
Posted by Hashem Help Me - 25 Dec 2018 12:31

A few chevra have reached out and are curious what should be their Shovavim "project". Being that these weeks have specific significance in doing teshuva for shmiras habris related issues, people want to actually do something real. Of course many kehillos already have minhagim related to this zman. Be it minyonim saying tehilim, slichos, fasting, special shiurim (which GYE also offers), etc... Maybe it would be an idea that during this time period we dedicate an amount of time to help others in this struggle. One of the most powerful tools in getting better is to have a partner/mentor/anchor encouraging, advising, sympathizing, etc. Even if you dont feel ready to advise, just being available as a listening ear and supportive shoulder for someone else is a tremendous chessed, and is mighty helpful to the new guy on the block who is

courageously pouring out his pain and frustration. Sharing that people actually get better is a reassurance for this tzubrochene neshama. In the zchus of our being mechazek others may Hashem give us a complete slichah and mechila for our past actions and give us extra shmira in our own journeys to kedusha tahara and dveikus b'Hashem.

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Re: Lessons Learned

Posted by Hashem Help Me - 27 Dec 2018 03:21

A recurring theme that comes up is "attacks of lust". Whether due to severe stress, a triggering encounter in the street, extended boredom, or the inability to regulate roller coaster emotions, one faces intense urges which threaten to "explode". Some things that have worked for me. 1. Change locations as soon as possible, especially if alone. 2. Get on the phone with a chaver who is willing to hear the exact details of what I am experiencing - what appears like a monster to me, is just a clinical description of my imagination to him. He can let the air out of the balloon... If I cant get through, I leave a voice mail. Somehow by spelling it all out, it loses the intensity. 3. Exercise in some form. 4. Stay calm. Panic and its over. Accept that good normal people have urges. It is not bad to have urges, it is bad to act on them. Knowing to expect these "attacks" from time to time also minimizes their effect. Hatzlocha to all - I hope this was helpful.

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