

### Lessons Learned

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

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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 grateful4life - 21 May 2019 16:11

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HHM

All your posts are inspiring and especially this one!

No need to reset. Just continue what you've been doing for so long and may Hashem continue to give you the koach to inspire, support and guide so many others to living a happy and fulfilled life of kedusha.

I'm truly grateful for your friendship.

G4L

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Re: Lessons Learned  
Posted by Dave M - 21 May 2019 16:20

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Dear HHM,

Thanks for sharing with us that powerful experience. I'm not on the same level that you or some of the other more experienced members are to share "advice". But your honesty is very

refreshing and it appear you heeded the wake up call.

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Re: Lessons Learned  
Posted by sbj - 21 May 2019 19:47

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[Hashem Help Me wrote on 21 May 2019 11:42:](#)

If anyone thinks I should reset my count please let me know. I asked and was told that technically the streak is intact according to GYE rules. Regardless I know the truth.

Imho why should you reset? I don't know about GYE rules, but let's use common sense. If you didn't do a forbidden act, just got overwhelmed by images even if you fed it, all you did was in your mind. You stayed in control of your acts, and only acts are really quantifiable that you did it. We can control our actions not always our urges or thoughts, so in my opinion focusing too much on such an incident, going into guilt etc. is rather counter productive. As long as you stayed in control of your actions, just dismiss it, tap your back. You're doing great! Yes, you're human and things can happen to you. And takeh because you were so overtaken in the moment, and you stood your ground, you rather deserve congratulations! I wouldn't even encounter a thought about resetting. Definite, positive, no. Rather make a l'chaim.

p.s. This shouldn't be taken as to minimize the seriousness of bad thoughts. Even a fleeting thought is 'something' and probably, at some level each one counts. We don't see thought as 'something', so we tend to discount it's impact. But it's real, very very real. The less negative stuff that passes thru our mind, so much better off we are.

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Re: Lessons Learned  
Posted by Hashem Help Me - 22 May 2019 03:58

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Thank you for the many responses here on the forum and via text email and phone. It is a zchus to be part of such a special tzibbur of very caring and supportive people. Your chizuk pulled me

through a challenging day and a half. The dormant monster that was awakened and whose appetite was whetted BH appears to be going back into hibernation.....May Hashem repay you b'kiflei kiflayim.

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Re: Lessons Learned  
Posted by Hashem Help Me - 30 May 2019 11:25

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We have to always be prepared. Yesterday I was driving in my neighborhood and I stopped by a red light directly behind a truck. The back door was a life size advertisement for the company using a woman who was already about 75% naked provocatively beginning to pull down her cut off shorts. You can all imagine the facial expressions and body twists of this still picture. (For heaven's sake, why is this legal? Why do kids have to see this?) I slipped my glasses down on my nose and turned to the side. BH my wife was in the car and realized what was going on and told me that she will let me know when the coast is clear. BH I did not obsess about that image, but as expected it is still there (and will probably pop up a bit over the next few days) despite my having seen it for only about one second. Are we supposed to stop driving?!

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Re: Lessons Learned  
Posted by lionking - 30 May 2019 12:03

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Don't stop driving the car of life until after meah vesrim shana.

Hatzlocha Rabba

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Re: Lessons Learned  
Posted by Ihavestrength - 30 May 2019 13:12

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I think it's not about what we see, but HOW we see it. Do we find ourselves feeling like we are chasing that old high again, or do we actively give up our right to lust after the image/person.

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Re: Lessons Learned

Posted by sbj5775 - 30 May 2019 18:06

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HMM, I think your question is rather if we should run from society into the desert, (As Rambam says).

Regardless of driving, all of us have to deal with this more or less. Only, for those of us with a history of lust, it's so much harder as it instantly hits right thru our core. I guess that's why a baal tshuve is greater than a straight tzadik... What we can reasonably do, is minimizing our time outside when we know it will be challenging.

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Re: Lessons Learned

Posted by Hashem Help Me - 07 Jun 2019 04:36

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Erev Shavuos - a three day yom tov this year for those of us not in EY. My memories of Shavuos are a mixed bag. Even the years with much accomplishment in learning came with heavy acting out. What a "great feeling" to come home after a night of learning, davening vasikin, and right after kiddush masturbating..... For me, stress/anxiety has always been a major trigger. The lack of sleep, unstructured days, guilty feelings of not learning more or davening better, and the inability to regulate my emotions - to process even the good exciting feelings of yom tov, or the motzai yom tov blues, are a recipe for disaster. Now I know I have to accept that I am an ok guy..... Wishing all a geshmake peaceful fulfilling sparkling clear yom tov and a similar return to the daily grind afterwards.

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Re: Lessons Learned

Posted by Hashem Help Me - 16 Jun 2019 03:24

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The Rambam says it's an issur d'rabanen for a nazir to go to an event where people are drinking wine - he should distance himself very much being that the michshol is right there. He quotes the gmara, "Tell the nazir do not enter a vineyard, detour around it". Many of us feel like wimps or that our core is rotten since we need filters and gedarim to stay clean. Am i not supposed to stay pure by myself? Thats a big mistake. Chazal recognize human nature and tell the nazir "Hashem wants you to avoid nisyonos". Of course in the era we live in there will be nisyonos. We will sometimes "end up in the vineyard" and have to be strong and "not eat the grapes". However in our daily lives Hashem wants us to protect ourselves as much as we can and be proud doing so.

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Re: Lessons Learned  
Posted by Dave M - 03 Sep 2019 16:17

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Dear HHM,

Haven't seen you posting much lately. I'm missing your nuggets of wisdoms!

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Re: Lessons Learned  
Posted by Hashem Help Me - 03 Sep 2019 17:11

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[Dave M wrote on 03 Sep 2019 16:17:](#)

Dear HHM,

Haven't seen you posting much lately. I'm missing your nuggets of wisdoms!

Thank you for noticing my absence. It's a good feeling that someone cares... BH all is fine here, just it has been a very busy pre-summer and summer. I also find that the majority of my "GYE time" is spent these days on the phone, where so much more can be accomplished. However, b'ezras Hashem the posts will continue....

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Re: Lessons Learned  
Posted by Hashem Help Me - 10 Sep 2019 03:41

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Every once in a while I have the opportunity to meet in person a GYE chaver that has been in touch by phone. So far this has almost always been after many many conversations and

months of communication. Of course usually we are in for a surprise. The pictures we conjured up about how each of us looks, dresses, age etc are many times totally off. However the simcha upon meeting, shaking hands, and hugging a yid with whom we have made a "neshomo connection" is indescribable. It completely transcends the physical world, even bridging religious/cultural differences that normally would minimize contact. And the assistance it gives those of us struggling is enormous. To see with my own eyes these tzaddikim who are on the front lines, facing daily challenges from the toxic environment around us, and yet not giving up is super inspirational. Maybe try it. Hatzlocha.

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Re: Lessons Learned  
Posted by Hashem Help Me - 11 Sep 2019 05:24

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Watching the three 9's turning into 1000 is a humbling event. I daven to Hashem that He be gomel chessed with everyone here, as He was with me, and allow everyone to witness that number change and what it signifies. lyh more to follow, but it is quite late for now.....

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Re: Lessons Learned  
Posted by Dave M - 11 Sep 2019 12:55

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[Hashem Help Me wrote on 11 Sep 2019 05:24:](#)

Watching the three 9's turning into 1000 is a humbling event. I daven to Hashem that He be gomel chessed with everyone here, as He was with me, and allow everyone to witness that number change and what it signifies. lyh more to follow, but it is quite late for now.....

Mazol Tov! Looking forward....

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