

Connecting the days

Posted by connected - 05 May 2022 17:34

I figured I'd start a new thread under this category to help me keep track of my progress.

I had a tough day with my wife yesterday. (Actually, if I'm being honest, she had a tough day, and her mood spilled over, dragging me down.) Finally, after putting the kids to bed and having something to eat, I needed to go to the grocery. I got into the car, still upset, and as I was waiting at a red light, this attractive woman walked by right in front of me, and my eyes helpfully escorted her across the street.

Suddenly, the following hit me. And I said it out loud (all windows were closed...).

"What are you doing? You're upset at your wife, so you're ogling other women? Do you think you're somehow getting even with her? All you're doing is destroying yourself."

This helped me snap away my destructive gaze.

This is not the first time I behaved this way while being upset with my wife. But it's the first time I had this thought that helped me out of it. I didn't put that thought there.

Thank You, Hashem, for that thought.

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Re: Connecting the days

Posted by connected - 21 Jun 2022 13:06

55 days

The furthest I've ever made it (I look forward to writing this line every day now...)

BH, the desire to watch porn and masturbate is not (currently) on my plate.

I find that my main struggle now is guarding my eyes. In the street, at work, in shul, when I go shopping.

I try talking to myself.

"What do you gain by looking at her (sometimes him)?"

"Umm, nothing. I just enjoy looking."

"Stop it."

"Why? I enjoy a nice scenery, I enjoy a nice body. What's the difference? I'm not doing anything to them."

"Technically, you are. You're treating them like objects."

"But they don't know."

"It's not always about them, it's about becoming a better person. Treating other humans like scenery makes you callous. And by the way, if you think you're so crafty and they don't know, think again."

Sometimes I win, and sometimes I learn...

Stay connected

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Re: Connecting the days

Posted by Yissie - 21 Jun 2022 14:05

It is very nice to hear someone with such self-awareness to see what are the details of his struggle, and not just I want to look but know I should not.

To help you with your next struggle, looking at them is doing something. It may not be the same bad as other things. The Gemara says it is assur to gaze at even a small finger of a lady. If the goal is to not be a "bad" person, then maybe not. But if our goal is to become clean and not constantly struggle then this is bringing you down.

Even if the aveira is a small one, every time someone holds himself back from doing something, saying something, or just looking at something, he is raising himself up immensely. You may not see it, but you just got way closer to Hashem.

Keep up the good work.

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Re: Connecting the days

Posted by connected - 21 Jun 2022 15:40

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Thanks, Yissie!

Very shtark and very true.

I guess the real struggle with guarding my eyes is that I don't feel an immediate negative effect if I fail, as opposed to P&M, which leaves me feeling worthless the second it's over. (To be

honest, the worthless feeling is there all along, but till the session is over, it's blocked by short-term pleasure, once the pleasure is gone, only the crap stays.)

For me, Shmiras Enayim is much more internal work, and the consequences are much more subtle - but still very real and far-reaching.

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Re: Connecting the days

Posted by yechielmichel - 21 Jun 2022 17:09

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The way I see it, the yetzer hara moves the goal posts. when I was stuck to my phone etc, I wasn't around people that much or paying attention to them... Now, I'll be around people more, and lacking that "stimulation" I start noticing people more. I think it's an upgrade, because it's at least real people and not fake actors and pixels on a screen (so I'm not so

pathetic and depraved). Together with that comes the realization that I might be objectifying people(!), which on the other hand, actually deters me from doing it. I think it helps to realize that there is an inherent beauty and attraction etc, that has to be channeled in the right direction.

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Re: Connecting the days

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[yechielmichel wrote on 21 Jun 2022 17:09:](#)

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Exactly.

The truth is, I've always let my eyes wander and never even entertained the idea of attempting to guard them.

Nekudas Habechira? Perhaps that too.

I'm reminded of a story I heard about an alcoholic who, after recovering, said that the most important thing he gained through recovery is the ability to apologize to all people he wronged while under the influence. Till then, he simply couldn't even see what he was doing.

(Talking about myself)

When we're steeped in shmutz, we're blind to how it affects others.

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Re: Connecting the days

Posted by Hashem Help Me - 22 Jun 2022 11:09

To go a step further - Maybe next time you are in the street and find yourself looking, imagine going over to that individual and saying, "Hi. I really enjoy looking at you. I am a real mentsh so i don't want to stare at you without permission. Is it ok if i continue enjoying your body?" As corny as that sounds, imagining that conversation and the reaction one would get (hysterical screaming, possibly being arrested....), should be a deterrent.

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Re: Connecting the days

Posted by Hashem Help Me - 22 Jun 2022 11:14

What yechielmichel wrote is definitely true. Many guys that were hooked on hyper stimulating pornography barely noticed the street matzav. Once they BH moved away from there, their subconscious "need" for this pleasure drives them to find any stimulation they can - so now "the street" that was never really a challenge, rears it's ugly head. The good news is that the same techniques that help a guy regain control will work regarding the street, and b'ezras Hashem one learns he can do a great job there as well. One of the main strategies is "ika darka achrina", when possible to simply avoid overly triggering locations, but that's a shmuz for a different post.

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Re: Connecting the days

Posted by connected - 22 Jun 2022 12:23

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Oof! This made me cringe.

I really need to internalize this. It puts to rest the illusion of "I'm not doing anything to her". Oh, you think you're not? Just ask her...

Thanks for this insight!

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Re: Connecting the days
Posted by sleepy - 23 Jun 2022 02:46

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Re: Connecting the days
Posted by sleepy - 23 Jun 2022 02:47

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Re: Connecting the days

Posted by Avrohom - 23 Jun 2022 03:41

Hi Connected, I haven't posted on the forum in a while - and I love your thread - so I thought I'd share my 2 cents.

I've been clean from P&M for a number of months now, but I'm realizing that I'm still having the same struggle in different areas - Shmiras Eineyim online or on the street and fantasizing. And when I'm engaged in those activities the same negative feelings - (about myself, stress, the low urge that won't go away that feels like a constant hunger of sorts) continue. I appreciate your words of Chizuk here - It's hard to realize how these kinds of thoughts lack the human dignity and decency that we should have for ourselves, our wives, and the woman we are looking at. I hope to internalize this a bit more now and am looking to tackle this next stage with greater focus and understanding. Thank you!

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Re: Connecting the days

Posted by Hashem Help Me - 23 Jun 2022 11:15

"connected" post=382256 date=1655900622 catid=4i dont mean to bust your bubble but i dont understand how one is harming a woman by looking at her .true she might not want it if you ask her , but what she doesnt know ,wont harm her or do anything to her.(unless you mean you will be harming her in a kabalistic way)Hezek r'iah is not a kabbalistic concept. In addition - having pleasure from someone in a way they would find revolting and nauseating, is downright disgusting and selfish. It happens sometimes that the woman being gazed at realizes that someone is gawking at her, and to say the least, is very upset by it. Imagine how you would feel if you would find out that your crotch is being analyzed in the street by various strange men and ladies, and from the appearance of their intent focus and facial features, one can see they are fantasizing about your potential "performance" with them. If you can't control yourself in the street, you owe it to society to stay home.

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Re: Connecting the days

Posted by Hashem Help Me - 23 Jun 2022 11:21

Somehow the above post got a bit tangled up. My comments begin on line 4 with the words "Hezek r'iah" which by the way refer to damage done by looking jealously at another's property.

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Re: Connecting the days

Posted by Yissie - 23 Jun 2022 14:04

Part of my struggles has been with looking at other bochurim, and I was struggling with one of my chavrusos. I was told by my rebbi that since he was confident I would not do anything inappropriate with him, it is fine to continue learning with him. (This was on condition that there was no physical contact except shaking hands, which was only when he initiated.)

The issue that we discussed was if it was healthy for me and if I was able to concentrate on learning when being with him, but as long as he did not know, there was no reason to stop.

This psak was specifically for this case, just bringing out that my rebbi holds the issue about looking at others if it will not lead to anything is a personal struggle (yes, disgusting and selfish)

not bain adam lachaveiro. But if thinking about what she would think about you looking at her would be a deterrent, then by all means you should use it.

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