

Seeking Strength to Overcome Yetzer hara

Posted by yoshi - 08 Jan 2025 13:14

I'm 31 years old, and I've been battling masturbation and pornography for 19 years now, with, of course, ups and downs. My longest break was managing to hold out for six months, but I always ended up going back to this bad habit, which creates problems in all areas of my life. Despite prayers, studying the Torah, marriage, and having children, and with filters on my computer and phone, I have always fallen back into this bad habit.

This is the first time I'm talking about it on a forum, and I hope to find with you that extra strength to finally, with God's help, succeed in overcoming the *yetzer hara*

=====

Re: Seeking Strength to Overcome Yetzer hara

Posted by hopefulposek - 04 Mar 2025 19:07

Just want to say that shem is right on the money as usual, I don't have anything to add except that I found looking at a long term picture very helpful. What kind of life can I live while addicted to porn (and imagine the addiction progressing for another 10-20 years) vs. what kind of life can I have if I continue to work on myself and break out of this addiction. Visualize and have it clear in your mind what it can look like, the beauty of a happy family, giving to others, and being proud of yourself.

And also reach out if you want to shmuz especially during this challenging time, hatzlacha!

=====

Re: Seeking Strength to Overcome Yetzer hara

Posted by yoshi - 05 Mar 2025 09:08

[chosemyschem wrote on 04 Mar 2025 14:30:](#)

[yoshi wrote on 04 Mar 2025 14:02:](#)

Since last week, I haven't been feeling like myself. I can't be productive, and I have a very important deadline after Purim that will play a key role in my career. Because of this, my stress levels are constantly high.

I realize that I'm starting to want to escape and avoid doing what I need to do because this deadline is paralyzing me—it's too stressful for me. And whenever I try to escape, what comes back in full force? The urge to look for pornographic images online. I find myself searching for loopholes in my filter in the late afternoon, not because I actually want to masturbate, but just to feel some excitement. The stress is hurting me, and I want to run away from it.

On top of that, another negative pattern is forming: a loss of direction. Let me explain. I'm on day 41 of my streak, which is longer than I've ever managed in years, but I can no longer congratulate myself or feel happy about it. Instead, I'm starting to think, *What's the point of holding on? You're just depriving yourself of an easy source of pleasure that makes you feel good about yourself—masturbation.* And when I start having these kinds of thoughts in the shower, it's a bad sign. In fact, just writing this right now is making my chest hurt.

I like having solutions to problems, knowing that if I follow a certain plan, I can train myself and succeed in what the program is designed for. But right now, I'm lost. I can't get out of this constant state of stress that's really affecting my motivation. Even worse, it's leading me into paralysis, and that's the worst thing for me because it pulls me into depression. And when I'm depressed, I end up doing things that I regret later.

Ahhh, I hate this situation. It shows that I'm completely stuck, and I feel like there are closed doors in front of me. I can't handle this stress or see how stress can actually be positive and help me move forward. Every time I feel stress, it paralyzes me. The more paralyzed I am, the more I sink into depression. And the more I sink into depression, the more I do things I'll regret later.

Thank you for the honest share. Very relatable.

I would first mention that depression is not a GYE problem, but it is a problem with solutions, as you are no doubt aware.

I completely relate to stress, especially work stress, being a massive trigger. Sweet soothing porn feels like the best cure for so many problems. And as you wrote, it's not even that I want porn or masturbation then. I just want to be out of *here*. Learning how to face life head on and deal with it without using our sweet drug is perhaps *the* central point in many people's recovery.

I think the way to get to that point of facing life is a two step process. First, learn how to manage those immediate waves of stress/urges. The F2F program has some excellent mindfulness techniques that you may find helpful. Simple things like distraction, breathing, a short tefillah may also be very helpful. Just learn how to handle that urgent feeling for a bit without giving in to porn so you have space to resolve that feeling.

The second step is learning how to live a life where that "stress -> porn" cycles doesn't exist. Meaning, of course stressful situations will never stop happening. But learning how to live a life where porn is not the solution to stress. This is obviously an extensive amount of work, but very possible, as many here can attest to.

I personally found Dov's twelve step lectures **extremely** helpful for this (link in my signature)

Regarding the loss of direction. This is also an extremely important and relatable point. At the end of the day, if masturbation gives you pleasure and abstinence gives you nothing, it's going to be extremely difficult to hold on to abstinence. As has been discussed many times on this forum, you have to learn how to find a pleasure in not giving in. That can be through the Battle of the Generation approach of learning to view "not giving in" as a positive thing that brings you closer to Hashem. That can be through 12 steps-style surrender. That can be done somewhat by remembering the pain acting out brings in its wake, by focusing on becoming a better person.

Having a month+ of clean days under your belt is a great time to start actively working on that.

There are different tools and you have to determine what is the best fit for you. But one final point is that the swiss army knife tool of GYE is other people. 65% of the total pain is feeling like you are suffering alone (totally made up stat.) Connecting with some of the chevra on here and sharing how you are feeling is dynamite to lust. On top of that, you can get some really good eitzos from people who have been in the exact same place you are in now.

More to say but need to get to work. Hatzlacha chaver, and KOT!

Thank you for this very beautiful response; it goes straight to my heart.

Thank you for opening my eyes. It's true that if I don't gain anything from being abstinent, then

of course, masturbation—offering easy and instant pleasure—will seem very tempting. I must not forget to work continuously on the motivation behind staying clean. I'm starting today!

=====

Re: Seeking Strength to Overcome Yetzer hara
Posted by yoshi - 10 Mar 2025 09:30

Day 40->47 clean !!

I feel less and less the need to come to this forum because I have the impression that the sin of masturbation has really distanced itself from me.

Several thoughts come to mind as a result of this reflection. The first is that when we become too confident, that's exactly when the **Yetzer Hara** takes advantage to make us fall.

The second is that, from my point of view—regarding education and **frumkeit**—**shemirat enayim** is not really a central point. I don't feel bad when I see an bad dressed woman on the street it's not a big deal I only feel bad if I start staring and realize that I'm arousing my **Yetzer Hara**.

In any case, the fact that I'm not very preoccupied with **shemirat enayim** leaves me open to bad opportunities. For example, unfortunately, I recently happened to come across my wife's phone code, and her phone is not filtered. At times, I find myself, almost without realizing it, browsing online, searching for **P** sites—not actually entering them, just "warming myself up." In fact, as I write this, I realize that this has nothing to do with **shemirat enayim**, but rather that I am not so much addicted to masturbation as I am to provocative images, no matter their level of nudity.

Besides that, I talk a lot about sex, and I realize that it takes up too much space in my internal dialogue. For exemple when I don't know how to start a conversation with my wife, I use inappropriate sexual jokes to break the ice—even though it annoys her. I tease her a lot with this. I also often find myself imagining inappropriate things. In fact, a big part of my thoughts revolve around sex.

My wife often tells me that I'm obsessed, and I'm starting to realize that this has nothing to do with **pornography**. There's an internal mechanism that makes me go in circles around this issue, especially when I'm not at peace with a situation.

Wow... Things are coming out of me that I didn't expect. It's tough to realize that, in fact, yes—there is a deep internal mechanism that makes everything revolve around sex.

I have very mixed feelings about what I just wrote.

I think I've never opened up like this before.

=====

Re: Seeking Strength to Overcome Yetzer hara
Posted by BenHashemBH - 10 Mar 2025 14:03

Dear Brother Yoshi,

That's a lot to unpack.

Masturbation is physically limited whereas images / the imagination is boundlessly powerful. It's not the end result or object, it's the "excitement" of open opportunity.

When there is an over-focus on sex (been there, still there, working on it), that only leads to unmet expectations and disappointment, which in turn becomes frustration and being stuck in a place of never being satisfied with the endless wanting of more, more, more. Everything revolves around this one thing, because I got stuck in a race that has no finish line. I'm just running, and it might as well be in a hamster wheel.

Pornography (and the uncontrolled imagination) offers a promise of everything. Anyone that is trying to enjoy everything cannot be truly satisfied with anything.

Learning the role that physical sex plays in intimacy and connection is where you may find its value. Understanding the goal helps you exit the endless chase and realize appreciation for what you have.

The need for sex, more sex, and sexier sex is fake news offered by a society that is trapped in their world of taking. It feels good on the outside then leaves us hungrier for more. Real intimacy will feel good on the inside too. Satisfaction lives in here, not out there.

Hatzlacha and kol tov

=====
=====

Re: Seeking Strength to Overcome Yetzer hara
Posted by chosemyshem - 10 Mar 2025 15:24

Relevant Dov post:

[Markz wrote on 29 Aug 2016 23:21:](#)

Who says that shmiras eynayim is the key?

[Dov wrote on 14 Sep 2011 23:00:](#)

Who says that shmiras eynayim is the key?

Ok, it's necessary, yeah, and it is one of the only ways to actually walk the walk and not just talk the talk....and there are many ways to do that, as well.

But to me it seems poshut that the problem is lusting, not shmiras eynayim.

I know what it is like to go nuts over a perfect-looking woman that walks by. I know what seeing porn does to me and how it makes my entire mind change into a sick one, where porn and sex seem truly to be in my very best, bet's interest - and Hashem seems awfully crazy to suggest (demand) otherwise.

I know all that from the inside, like you.

And yet it still boils down to **lust**. If I am wanting it, wishing for it, and often ready to fantasize

over it, then I am going to flop practically whenever I see a triggering thing, as you describe. If I am still lusting, then I do not truly believe that orgasm (and sex) is *optional*. I believe I deserve it, that it is natural, and that I must do it. That it is ultimately my *right*, as a man with hormones and the right body parts.

If there is not a backdrop of readiness produced by lust, then what else praytell is the answer to your riddle?

So shmiras einayim is a great tool - to help us live without lusting. We are dry drunks if we are still lusting. And what you describe sounds to me just like that. Lust and fantasy alive and well, behind a scenery filled with shmiras einayim and sincerely good, decent behavior. In the end, it will not work.

The tachlis of *my* shiras einayim **needs** to be only to *help* me live real life today and that means free of the tyranny of lust today, and not chas veshilom as an end in and of itself: "I am shomer my eyes!" Big deal. Between the lines: "But I still see many women as sweet (withheld) sex candy; that their greatest value is in being 'hot'; that their body parts are above all, pleasure sources; and the temptations are crawling all over me, nebach." No. This is not going to work, and will not allow simcha even when it does work for a while. Many here and elsewhere seem to feel like "guarding your eyes" is what it is all about. Gevalt, gevalt. Lo sereid b'ni imochem.

=====

=====

Re: Seeking Strength to Overcome Yetzer hara
Posted by yoshi - 12 Mar 2025 10:18

day 49 clean!!

=====

=====

Re: Seeking Strength to Overcome Yetzer hara
Posted by hashem help me - 13 Mar 2025 11:02

[yoshi wrote on 12 Mar 2025 10:18:](#)

day 49 clean!!

And b'ezras Hashem in Yovel one goes free.....

=====

Re: Seeking Strength to Overcome Yetzer hara
Posted by yoshi - 16 Mar 2025 14:03

day 50 -> 53 clean!!

A little scare this Friday morning, on Purim day—my filter was deactivated, but I managed to contain myself and reactivate it when I realized that I could truly lose all the efforts I had put in place just for a bit of pleasure, and in the end, it's really not worth it.

Otherwise, second Niddah period—let's see if I can go back-to-back.

=====

Re: Seeking Strength to Overcome Yetzer hara
Posted by yoshi - 17 Mar 2025 09:24

Well, yesterday I started searching for P on the internet again, despite the filters I set up for myself. And on top of that, I actually managed to find some. But at this point, I don't even have the strength to watch it anymore. Every time I come across the hard stuff, I just feel disgusted now.

But the real excitement seems to come from the search itself—trying to find a loophole in my filters, seeing if I'll finally manage to access those shocking images. I feel like that's what really excites me. And I realize that this is going to be the second part of my journey: I'm still caught in the grip of addiction, but I know I'll break free from this part too.

So now, I'm going to create another account—one where I won't even try to look for shocking images, whether I find them or not.

masturbation: day 54 clean !!

pornography: Day 0: The Beginning of a New Journey. !!

=====

=====

Re: Seeking Strength to Overcome Yetzer hara
Posted by BenHashemBH - 17 Mar 2025 13:47

[yoshi wrote on 17 Mar 2025 09:24:](#)

But the real excitement seems to come from the search itself—trying to find a loophole in my filters, seeing if I'll finally manage to access those shocking images. I feel like that's what really excites me. And I realize that this is going to be the second part of my journey: I'm still caught in the grip of addiction, but I know I'll break free from this part too.

Shalom Brother Yoshi,

This sort of excitement, the thrill of the chase can be hard to shake, especially once you've begun and the longer you are in the chase, the harder it is to exit.

One reason may be that it is a rationalization. I have a filter, so I might (probably will) find something, but I tell myself it's less deliberate and it's not absolute. But recognize that is a fallacy. Looking at a woman's little finger for purposes of lust is still assur, even though it's just a pinky.

If you can foresee the outcome and see that first poke not as a small thing but as the beginning of a process that leads directly to a big deal, that may help. Especially after the first poke it becomes only more compelling, if it's possible to pause and disconnect for a moment, to try and view your situation objectively. Imagine you are behind a window looking in at yourself and try to see clearly exactly what you are doing. This poke is pornography. This poke is pornography. This poke is pornography.

Are you curious how many times you can poke a sleeping bear before he wakes up? No!
Because that's obviously senseless.

Don't poke the bear.

Don't poke the filter.

Don't look at the pinky.

Don't allow yourself to ignore how you know it ends just because you aren't there yet. If you can really think about it, you know. You know. You know. You know. This poke is pornography.

When you wrestle back your hijacked seichel from the YH, you can see clearly the choice you are making. Yes. Your choice. Don't buy into his game - he's been playing if far longer than we have. There is no such thing as 'just' when it comes to lust.

Knowing doesn't mean I suddenly become a Malach and never slip even a little; but at least I can stop fooling myself and own my reality. Then, when I start to comprehend my situation, I can start holding myself accountable and become able to assert my koach against it.

I believe in you Brother, that you will succeed in breaking free from this too. Hatzlacha!

=====

Re: Seeking Strength to Overcome Yetzer hara
Posted by amevakesh - 17 Mar 2025 14:06

Hey Yoshi, don't know how this thread slipped under my radar. Just went through the whole thing in one go. Yours, is a journey of inspiration. You're growing day by day minute by minute, taking on new ?????, reaching for new heights, setting new goals. You're gonna make it big, and will help others along with you. Keep on doing what you're doing and being the inspiration to all of us!

=====

=====

Re: Seeking Strength to Overcome Yetzer hara
Posted by yoshi - 17 Mar 2025 14:56

Thank you for your response, my dear friend.

I just want to add some nuance to what I'm saying. As I'm trying to express here, I'm not even at the stage where this is about whether it's forbidden or permitted. When I reach that stage, then yes, I will be able to start seeing it more through the lens of mitzvah/avera in relation to my actions.

Right now, I'm at a stage where it's completely automatic. I feel bad, I feel disconnected from myself, like I've lost awareness of my own state (I've already spoken in this topic about certain phases I go through). Instinctively, I turn to seeking excitement as a way to shake myself up a bit and search for pleasure. But this excitement that I feel during the search is even more deeply ingrained in me than the habit of M.

Recently, I have been able to recognize this addiction mechanism within myself. My first step is to bring myself back to a place where there is a real conflict between the Yetzer Hatov and the Yetzer Hara. When I do these searches, it's not that I'm deliberately trying to "wake the bear." As I said, I've reached a point where seeing P actually disgusts me. (Of course, I agree that if you awaken your Yetzer Hara, it will consume you, and you will fall.) But right now, this is more about the work of a 31-year-old man who realizes that he still has a 12-year-old child inside him—one who never dealt with certain issues.

And because it's a child, he doesn't even ask questions; he just does what he wants. When certain triggers arise, he instinctively searches for the excitement of discovering something "new" or "hidden" online, things he has never seen before. But now, he is no longer 12—he is 31. And there are things in his life that matter to him much more than that momentary excitement. He needs to address certain unresolved issues to finally be able to make a real choice.

I hope to reach the stage you describe as soon as possible. And when I do, I will also repeat to myself: "This too is pornography." And I hope that I will be able to stop myself before even starting.

=====

=====

Re: Seeking Strength to Overcome Yetzer hara
Posted by yoshi - 17 Mar 2025 14:57

Shalom Brother Yoshi,

This sort of excitement, the thrill of the chase can be hard to shake, especially once you've begun and the longer you are in the chase, the harder it is to exit.

One reason may be that it is a rationalization. I have a filter, so I might (probably will) find something, but I tell myself it's less deliberate and it's not absolute. But recognize that is a fallacy. Looking at a woman's little finger for purposes of lust is still assur, even though it's just a pinky.

If you can foresee the outcome and see that first poke not as a small thing but as the beginning of a process that leads directly to a big deal, that may help. Especially after the first poke it becomes only more compelling, if it's possible to pause and disconnect for a moment, to try and view your situation objectively. Imagine you are behind a window looking in at yourself and try to see clearly exactly what you are doing. This poke is pornography. This poke is pornography. This poke is pornography.

Are you curious how many times you can poke a sleeping bear before he wakes up? No! Because that's obviously senseless.

Don't poke the bear.

Don't poke the filter.

Don't look at the pinky.

Don't allow yourself to ignore how you know it ends just because you aren't there yet. If you can really think about it, you know. You know. You know. You know. This poke is pornography.

When you wrestle back your hijacked seichel from the YH, you can see clearly the choice you are making. Yes. Your choice. Don't buy into his game - he's been playing if far longer than we

have. There is no such thing as 'just' when it comes to lust.

Knowing doesn't mean I suddenly become a Malach and never slip even a little; but at least I can stop fooling myself and own my reality. Then, when I start to comprehend my situation, I can start holding myself accountable and become able to assert my koach against it.

I believe in you Brother, that you will succeed in breaking free from this too. Hatzlacha!

Thank you for your response, my dear friend.

I just want to add some nuance to what I'm saying. As I'm trying to express here, I'm not even at the stage where this is about whether it's forbidden or permitted. When I reach that stage, then yes, I will be able to start seeing it more through the lens of mitzvah/avera in relation to my actions.

Right now, I'm at a stage where it's completely automatic. I feel bad, I feel disconnected from myself, like I've lost awareness of my own state (I've already spoken in this topic about certain phases I go through). Instinctively, I turn to seeking excitement as a way to shake myself up a bit and search for pleasure. But this excitement that I feel during the search is even more deeply ingrained in me than the habit of M.

Recently, I have been able to recognize this addiction mechanism within myself. My first step is to bring myself back to a place where there is a real conflict between the Yetzer Hatov and the Yetzer Hara. When I do these searches, it's not that I'm deliberately trying to "wake the bear." As I said, I've reached a point where seeing P actually disgusts me. (Of course, I agree that if you awaken your Yetzer Hara, it will consume you, and you will fall.) But right now, this is more about the work of a 31-year-old man who realizes that he still has a 12-year-old child inside him—one who never dealt with certain issues.

And because it's a child, he doesn't even ask questions; he just does what he wants. When certain triggers arise, he instinctively searches for the excitement of discovering something "new" or "hidden" online, things he has never seen before. But now, he is no longer 12—he is 31. And there are things in his life that matter to him much more than that momentary excitement. He needs to address certain unresolved issues to finally be able to make a real choice.

I hope to reach the stage you describe as soon as possible. And when I do, I will also repeat to myself: "This too is pornography." And I hope that I will be able to stop myself before even starting.

=====

=====

Re: Seeking Strength to Overcome Yetzer hara
Posted by yoshi - 17 Mar 2025 15:00

Thanks, man! This kind of post really warms my heart.

=====

=====