

Eye.nonymous (Elyah) official count

Posted by Eye.nonymous - 13 Jul 2009 21:08

I'm new to this forum, but not new to this struggle. I signed up to the weekly E-mail lists a few months ago. I often just glance at them, as I'm trying not to spend so much time reading E-mails. But, even with this, I have gotten chizuk through the themes that keep repeating themselves.

I grew up secular, but did Teshuva in college--I came to Yeshiva in Israel and never left. Now I'm married with five children (our oldest is eight and our youngest is a month old).

I was in the habit of staring at girls, I remember even in nursery school. I just liked the way they looked. Things got worse when I was 10 or 11. My sisters had a "facts of life" book with indecent pictures and crooked ideas, and I found it. It described Mast... as a fun thing to do, and so I followed the instructions. I've been stuck ever since.

I was a member of a shul youth group around the age of my bar-mitzvah. The youth group leader gained my trust very early on, and I could discuss anything with him. Luckily, I learned early on that mast... is wrong. I've been fighting it ever since, sometimes more successfully and sometimes less so. I think now I go two or three months clean, and then I tend to trip up a few times close together. I always feel that the yeitzer hara tricked me, and somehow it's strategy was different than last time. Also, I view it as tripping up for one "phase," instead of multiple times. So, I manage not to get too depressed about it, and can pick myself up again pretty quickly.

I would like to be able to stop altogether. But, I am more concerned with controlling my eyes. I feel that it is impossible to walk down the street without taking a look at every woman along the way. I think the trickiest part is that, in my neighborhood, everyone is dressed so tznius that it's hard to feel that I'm really doing anything wrong.

Besides that, I slip up every once in a while with the internet--probably a few times a year. But then, I feel that I was somehow outsmarted again by my Yeitzer. I wasn't looking for indecent pictures... I was just curious about such-and-such an actress... I wasn't expecting to find such indecent pictures...

I see the progress is still very slow on my own, and that's why I decided to become more involved in this forum.

But, I find this is also a challenge. I think my own situation is rather mild, and I find that by seeing other people's stories which are more involved than my own, I end up getting thoughts instead of getting rid of them. Any advice on this point would also be helpful. Thanks.

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Re: Eye.nonymous (Elyah) official count
Posted by nederman - 05 Nov 2012 08:23

It makes sense. When you engage in some activity for your own pleasure you watch yourself doing it and you think to yourself deep down "I am doing what I want, it must be that I deserve it somehow." So it makes you feel worthwhile.

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Re: Eye.nonymous (Elyah) official count
Posted by Machshovo Tova - 05 Nov 2012 15:29

[TehillimZugger wrote on 04 Nov 2012 17:30:](#)

... care to explain why you disagree with Reb Dov? I don't exactly get it.

Neither do I. I think it's a 'shoresh neshomo' thing.

MT

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Re: Eye.nonymous (Elyah) official count
Posted by Dov - 05 Nov 2012 17:39

[Machshovo wrote on 05 Nov 2012 15:29:](#)

... care to explain why you disagree with Reb Dov? I don't exactly get it.

Neither do I. I think it's a 'shoresh neshomo' thing.

MT

That's what happens when you spend too much time in "pre"-Eitz Chayim.

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Re: Eye.nonymous (Elyah) official count
Posted by Machshovo Tova - 05 Nov 2012 17:53

Yeah, I think it's time to switch to Etz Hadaas Tov Vera.

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Re: Eye.nonymous (Elyah) official count
Posted by Dov - 05 Nov 2012 18:06

First he tells me not to show off....

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Re: Eye.nonymous (Elyah) official count
Posted by Machshovo Tova - 05 Nov 2012 19:39

BTW, are you looking for a chavrusa, or are you already doing it with Eliyahu Hanavie?

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Re: Eye.nonymous (Elyah) official count
Posted by Dov - 06 Nov 2012 18:10

Don't tell him!

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Re: Eye.nonymous (Elyah) official count
Posted by Machshovo Tova - 06 Nov 2012 18:49

Speaking of 'sodos', I just returned from the polls, and I'm not disclosing whom I voted for. It's a

'sod nifla' (that's nifla, not nfila).

MT

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Re: Eye.nonymous (Elyah) official count
Posted by nederman - 06 Nov 2012 18:58

[Machshovo wrote on 05 Nov 2012 15:29:](#)

... care to explain why you disagree with Reb Dov? I don't exactly get it.

Neither do I. I think it's a 'shoresh neshomo' thing.

MT

I enjoyed reading this discussion which I unintentionally kicked off. As far as I can tell Dov said that having a thought is a sakana, Machovo Tova says that a feeling is not assur. I think the two positions are easily reconciled. A feeling is not a conscious thought. It can be viewed as caused by an unconscious thought, but that is not the same as a conscious one. So they are talking about different things.

It seems to me that a feeling (not the thought that may follow it) is a kapparah for the person, it is not a sin. The unconscious thought is there because the person put it there by building a certain belief, but now it's done.

However if I have a feeling and I respond it by thinking about the wrong thing I am accountable for that. But whether the thought is really counted as a sin or not is not necessarily the concern for someone who secretly believes that the more aroused he is the less he is culpable for thinking some more about sex. As Dov said, it's a problem either way.

I also want to add that although the feeling may not be a concern halachically speaking, it is probably one purpose of the mitzvos to change beliefs which are not Hashem's beliefs. For example, if I keep kosher I get a terrible feeling when someone offers me something treif to eat. This shows that I have internalized a belief that treif is not okay, which is what Hashem believes. Similarly, as long as when I see a trigger I feel like I am dying my work is not finished. The work is finished when I don't get that feeling any more. That's nekius.

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Re: Eye.nonymous (Elyah) official count
Posted by Dov - 07 Nov 2012 05:16

I just posted this blue stuff on MBJ's thread. He is very geshmak, and asked about getting free of viewing women the wrong way.

While it is certainly a great thing to become a Kadosh, and Nekius is certainly a part of deveikus (and part of 'fitting my neshomah' better, which the RMCha"L *defines* as being more 'like Hashem'), that does not mean that it is therefore the right way for addicts to go. The Chassidic concept of explaining concepts "al derech avodah" (see the *Divrei Chayim*, the Hornosteipeler *Peleh Yo'eitz* and other sforim - and Rav Avigdor Miller and Rav Shimshon Pincus's writings - for more of that approach).

Theoretical piety is not necessarily practically relevant, 'al derech avodah'. It may be ignored, actually, if it impedes real progress. And Recovery as I am being shown it is the '*al derech avodah*', par excellence. Destination-thinking is really just taking outcomes into our hands...and basic emunah for *everybody* is that ratzon and hishtadlus are **ours** - outcomes are purely **G-d's**.

Recovery focuses on that a bit more to the extreme... 'al derech avodah'. It's just the way it works for so many addicts. As Chuck C used to say, "You can't *think* yourself into right living."
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There are many paths to success, harbei drachim laMakom v'harbei sh'luchim laMakom. I have found that the path to some high things is davka through (durch) the lower road. It is the despised road labelled "Mediocrity". Being just a normal, decent Jew - not The Rebbe. By aiming at Kedusha (or more accurately, at what we label as Kedusha), we often consign ourselves to the same cycle - just on a longer and more bitter track. So:

[color=blue]Messilas Yeshorim: "v'Hachasidus ha'amiti - rachok hi m'tziur sichleinu!" We generally have a poor concept of perfection and piety. And that was written to normals. *Addicts* have a *twisted and* poor perception of perfection.

The perfection and piety you seek seems to me to be a way to abdicate your more reasonable and more likely Ratzon Hashem: just being OK. No, we need to be great. It seems the only way out for us. But that is a lie our disease tells us. And it always has - that's why we kept acting out and flopping even though we were feeling like we were growing holier.

Sure, in long term sobriety and recovery you may always notice a woman's breasts first, or her figure, etc...but what is bad about that? It's just hard-wiring, and quite meaningless. It does not need to lead you to really *interact* with her as though she is a sex candy machine, and that's the point. The old ba'al mussar said on his deathbed that if someone held out money to him right now - he would still feel the desire to reach for it. Was he saying he was a failure? No way. He was saying that he was a success *precisely because* he never pretended to himself that he was pure as the driven snow - or deserved to be. He recognized he had the proclivity - but that did not dictate his behavior. He lived a life of success in freedom from ahavas mamon...but having the desire and seeing it operate in him was not a failure.

To you I believe, it would be a failure. And I am here to say that's a pity. It need not be that way. You *can* grow up along with all us addicts if you need to, and get freedom from acting out your lust by G-d's Chessed, one day at a time. He gives the reprieve daily - like the monn in the desert - so that we recovering drunks, druggies, and perverts do not ever believe that we beat it and are above it all now. For that pride would make us so holy that we would not need Him any more. And that would be the 'sof pasuk'... :-[

Hey - hatzlocha! [/color]

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Re: Eye.nonymous (Elyah) official count
Posted by nederman - 07 Nov 2012 08:00

Nekius is usually just around the corner. It is not such a high state. The road is only blocked by rationalization. You can indeed think your way there but not all by yourself because you secretly believe that your present state is the best one for you. You cannot think your way out while preserving all your current beliefs, something has to change. Someone with the proper skills has to show you that you have alternatives and help you figure out if they are better.

And nekius doesn't mean that I see women as geese, which is probably a much higher state. I still see their bodies but I feel strong against the yetzer hara because I see it with clarity, with objectivity, I see that it's all advertising, it's all marketing, I see where it leads me and I also see that I have much better places to go because I have been there. And the yetzer hara doesn't bother with people like that.

And definitely Hashem wants everyone to be a tzadik without rationalizations, a clean man, and you should do that any way you can.

If after your are clean you want to go on to prishus (even from there Kedusha is way off) then kol ha kavod. I think if an addict wants to pursue prishus though he should double-check why he is doing it. If he wants to go to a higher state then he may well lose his sobriety because that kind of low self esteem is what gave strength to his yetzer hara. Also, behaviors of prishus may rekindle the irrational belief that he is powerless (if I have to run away from it I must be weak!) However if he wants prishus because he has done a painstaking cost-benefit analysis and he can spell out why the advantages outweighs the disadvantages then I think he would be free to go ahead.

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Re: Eye.nonymous (Elyah) official count
Posted by Dov - 07 Nov 2012 22:46

Dear nederman,

It is unclear to me why you call it 'irrational' for a person to simply observe that he or she is actually failing for years and years at enjoying porn and masturbation successfully. Even the AAs do not mean in their 1st step that they admitted they were "powerless *against* alcohol." They say they finally admit that they are powerless **over** alcohol - meaning over *using alcohol*. That they cannot successfully **use** it, is the entire point.

SA's "powerlessness" is about being a failure at *using* erotica and lust successfully. Not about being a failure at *not* using it. This is so basic, perhaps (as Messilas Yeshorim writes about the most basic things) you are not aware of it.

Now, the frum guy who uses them is doing it even though it is assur. The fact that these things are assur is *personally* irrelevant to him or her, for he does them anyhow! So for him - especially if he is an addict and it is naaseh lo k'heter as Chaza"I put it - it is for all practical purposes identical to alcohol. No inherent evil is in it as far as he is concerned. The only real and relevant question left now is: can he use it successfully, or not?

The 'powerlessness' in AAs 1st step is the terrible answer for the suffering addict: "No, I see I cannot use it successfully." I hated it - though it brought amazing relief in its wake. In the moment, it's a true tragedy for him or her. Those who have been there know what I mean. But we have no other options *but* to stop using lust and erotica, even though we love it so much. We can't afford it any more. That's the 'bottom'.

Do you hear what I am writing here and how it differs from your refrain of referring to *powerlessness over the yetzer hora*? Addiction and recovery have got nothing to do with the yetzer hora, at all. And it certainly has nothing to do with *beating* the yetzer hora, as I tried to explain.

That's why surrender is the only option, for it is no longer a moral issue - only a **practical** one. Morality is for fighting and controlling. Not this - it is just practical matter: Derech Eretz...which is kodmah laTorah. Or as Bill called it, "Enlightened self-interest."

Your chaver in recovery (and lots of other things I hope),

Dov

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Re: Eye.nonymous (Elyah) official count
Posted by nederman - 07 Nov 2012 23:06

Dov,

I am going to let you have the last word here because I was threatened with ejection from the web site, and also because we have already been over this.

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Re: Eye.nonymous (Elyah) official count
Posted by mifatfait - 08 Nov 2012 08:09

[dov wrote on 30 Oct 2012 20:19:](#)

It is so precious for me to admit to Hashem, to myself and to others (so I really do admit it to Hashem and myself and it is not a sham) that I am over-sexed. Way over-sexed.

That's is not my entire issue, by any means. But it is a problem I have. It makes it virtually impossible for me to comprehend that my wife can be deeply in love with me, Hashem can be doing His very best for me, my life can be really really great...and yet sex is not on the menu tonight. What!!??

Yup.

Sex really is not that relevant. My 'great white hope' for decades - and it is not really that big a deal. Incredible. Shocking. Sacreligious - really.

Nu. Growing up is hard to do. But I do not have to pretend that I am all alone! I have recovery buddies and not just silly virtual ones I only 'know' on GYE...but of course really do not know, at all. I have in-person, real recovering people I can call and meet any day I need to. And I stay in touch.

This recovery is for real and for keeps. So thanks for being a part of it, Eyeball guy!

- Dov

I had a long conversation the other day with someone from SA, it brought out to me my true feelings on this matter. My true feelings on the matter are that if I don't have sex very soon with the perfectly shaped girl I will die, I cannot go on breathing only in my imagination. I must die, because my wife cannot give me the physical shape and emotional intensity I need to keep on living, and I don't ch'v want her to die, so every time I see a attractive shape on the street, I feel that I cannot go one living this way.

I told the SA fellow that if I miss a few meeting he should call me to make sure I'm still alive. He said that my goal is to die sober, if that means to die from it, that's fine.

This is where I'm holding almost one month into recovery, maybe one day I'll learn that sex is optional. I better, cause if not I'm dead.

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