

Ur-a-jew's Thread

Posted by ur-a-jew - 22 Jun 2010 17:29

My name is Yitzchok and I'm a lust addict.

I first started masturbating in the shower probably when I was around 10 years old. At the time I had no clue that I was even doing something wrong. While I may have occasionally seen naked images as a kid and young teen my interest was I believe no different than any other teen. I think masturbation was common for me during high school. At some point someone taught me the halachos but at that point it was too late. It was some time in my mid-teens that I started actively pursuing lust. For example, my mother liked to read novels and I would read the books she had just to find the sex part. Eventually, I knew which authors were more descriptive and I would go to the used book store and buy other books by that author. While I wouldn't buy a playboy or the like I would look in Vogue or GQ for a naked image that I typically could find. At the same time we had a VCR and my parents were often not home so I would rent Rated R movies and just fast forward to the sex scene. I remember that the video store had on the regular display a video with a note not rentable to under 17. One day I decided to rent it. I came home watched about 10-15 minutes felt too guilty and ran back to the store to return it claiming much to the ire of the proprietor that I had mistakenly picked up the wrong video. When the local supermarket also started renting videos I started renting there and a couple of times took out x-rated videos. While I would at times watch the whole movie I would typically first just forward to the sex or nudity scene. Any opportunity to watch I would grab. When one summer I had my brother's empty apartment which had cable I would go to his house until the early morning hours trying to get in whatever I could. When we went away for Yom Tov and were staying in an empty house, I figured out that if I flipped the channels back and forth between scrambled channels enough times I could unscramble it for several minutes.

When I was turning 20 the age when you're accountable for misa b'yedei shomyim, I resolved to change. I don't how long it took me to get started again but it obviously did. I got married at a relatively young age.

After marriage masturbation stopped, but the lust was still there. I believe there was always some issue in the bedroom that I wanted sex more than my wife. I probably pressured her too much, we were young she wanted to make me happy and the result of it is that now I believe she has an underlying resentment when I get overly in the mood (which one can say is always) which can cause her to shut down completely. My wife has always been complaining to me that sex is always on my mind and she is right.

A lot of my addiction is a blur to me. I know that the advent of the DVD and the internet were

further pitfalls for me. For example, my wife would go up to the country and the times when I was home alone I would rent movies and go back to my bad habits. The Internet didn't help especially when I was in the office. For the most part I have been able to keep my problematic internet out of my house. Moreover, I guess you can say fortunately for me, either because I didn't have the money or because I was worried that it would be easier for me to be caught (other than renting movies) I have never spent money to fuel the addiction. So I never did the phone-sex or have gone to XXX establishments. Unfortunately, with the internet paying for pornography is not necessary there is so much available for free. When I get into my binges and would feel guilty looking at porn I would then look for erotic stories. Even when guilt overcame and I resolved to stop, in the back of my mind I would think to myself: if I would have done this or that I could have probably found something else.

Another problem for me is that I don't need the internet, at some point in my career since I am very computer saavy I had to for my job examine computer hard drives relating to cases I was working on. Generally the first thing I would do is examine the drive for pornographic images. When I had to go away for business it would be back to the same movie habits. Staying up practically all night long just to get in another movie and perhaps another glimpse.

I don't think a Yom Kippur has passed in the past 20 years where I have not made some sort of resolution to stop looking at ma'aros assurios. Yet I also don't think there was a year that has passed that I not in some way broken that kabbalah. Some times have been worse than others. When I was younger, I would often stay late in my office, browse the internet or watch late night cable television sex shows. The guilt was many-fold the watching itself, the not working when I was supposedly working and the coming home too late and therefore not being there to help. For the past five years at least, I have been able to control myself enough to avoid the staying in the office too late problem. But that would just mean that I did what I needed to during the day.

Prior to last Rosh Hashana, the situation with my wife was getting very frustrating and I realized that this was crazy. When I was a teenager I had a chasidische rebbi I used to learn with during the summer. Two things that he had told me that had always stuck with me. First, that it was a chesoron in emunah to watch a Rated R movie and second that he was involved in the preparation of shabbos food packages which required him to drive a truck to the city. He said he never drove alone since the temptation of a hooker was too much for him. I always felt guilty about the former statement since Rated R would generally be good compared to what I was watching. At the same time I could never believe that he would actually be tempted to go to a hooker. This past year I finally realized that if there is someone that I could talk to it was him. I told my wife that I was going to speak to him about the lust issue but the real reason was to finally admit to someone that I had a problem with porn and to get an eitzah. Just revealing the problem to someone was such a relief. He told me that how he also had temptations but his wife was his masgiach and he (with her help) planned his life in ways to avoid temptation. Since that time I don't think that I have sunken as low as I have in the past. The addiction has not

stopped. For example, my facebook account under an anonymous name has all sorts of unbecoming "friends." While there is generally no outright nudity they are pretty close to it and I'm always on the look for it.

Then I found GYE. I found tools and friends and a system. And while it has only been some two weeks (since I discovered the site) my life is changing. I am not embarrassed to work through the program. I have a forum where I could just speak out my feelings and desires and get encouragement. Everything that I do has GYE in my conscience to try and evaluate whether I am doing the right thing. I am forever grateful to everyone who started this site and to Hashem because for once in my life I actually feel there is hope.

While I sometimes question whether I am addicted or maybe just normal, after all I have never done, and I am not tempted to do some of the things that others here have done. What makes me sure that I am an addict, is the inability to stop despite the fact that I know the damage that it causes to me. I may be a smaller-time addict, but I am an addict nonetheless and I realize that I can't go on living like this.

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Re: Ur-a-jew's Thread

Posted by Dov - 02 Sep 2010 04:39

[ur-a-jew wrote on 30 Aug 2010 03:56:](#)

I finally sat down today while waiting for an oil change and started the step four chart. Wasn't as hard as I envisioned. But before I get to that I wanted to share what I guess was a step four moment I had this shabbos. I cam about 20 minutes late to shul. At exactly 8:30 the gabbai motions to the chazzan for pesukei dzimra to finish causing him to walk away even though he wasn't even up to nishmas. I felt myself getting all upset why do they have to be so yekkish. What's wrong with a more heartfelt psekei dzimra that takes 33 minutes. Then I caught myself and realized why are you getting so upset. He didn't do anything wrong. You're the one who came 20 minutes late. If you had come ontime you'd be finished and probably not concerned that they are starting borchu on time. Its your own selfish feelings that are causing you to be upset. The thought process helped and I did not get upset.

Wow, do I know **exactly** what you mean about the psukei d'zimrah thing...sometimes it's a good thing guns are muzktzeh.

Uh-oh....guess i got more writing to do.....

Oh, congrats on the writing thing!

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Re: Ur-a-jew's Thread

Posted by ur-a-jew - 15 Sep 2010 22:58

Ok here's an attempt at the fourth step. Someone I know from over 20 years ago moves into town. He became more modern from when I knew him and when I meet his wife she's the same, comes from a very frum family and she doesn't cover her hair, open v-neck sweater. Very nice guy and we talk on the bus whenever we see each other. I'm sitting on the bus the other day and he walks on with this blond-haired woman and their talking and laughing in the aisle kinda really loud. I say hello to him but I'm wondering to myself who is the girl he's flirting with. Is he not embarrassed he is married with kids. I don't see the woman her back is to me. And I tell myself listen just do your work don't look at her. You're mind will probably start wandering even more. There are no seats and he makes his way to the back where I'm sitting. I busy myself with my work. Towards the end of the ride he turns to me and says . . . oh meet my daughter. At that point I feel like a piece of garbage. Here it's aseres yemei teshuva I should be dan someone lcaf zechus and all I could think of is that he's flirting with this girl when instead he's just having a good time with his daughter who just came back from out of town.

So I was thinking about it this morning. How would I apply the fourth step to this incident. What hit me was that my initial upset was probably not because I was concerned with his marriage or what he was doing. More likely I was just jealous with the relationship that he was having with someone. I tried to think if there is someone in my life that I would be able to have that simple good time with. Maybe with one of my daughters it would depend on whether she was so distracted. Certainly not with my wife. I can have a good time with her but not in public like that. I realize now that it was that subconscious tinge of jealousy that manifested itself into a holier than thou attitude which caused me to suspect him in the first place. That's my thought. What you all think?

The whole incident drove home how careful I need be to try and be dan everyone lcaf zechus but I think focusing in it showed me that I have to be on the lookour for this feeling.

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Re: Ur-a-jew's Thread
Posted by Dov - 16 Sep 2010 03:28

Sounds good to me. If you'd like to, I suggest trying your hand at the four columns on the incident, awkward as it may feel. You have nothing to lose.

Again, the 4th step is a moral inventory of ourselves. So I am plugging for the 4th step inventory: a few good sittings just to write out as many emotional struggles as you can come up with that plague you. From as far back as you can remember until this very day. All the stuff that made a big enough impression on you to remember years later, cuz you live with it. Anything you need to squeeze out into your memory is likely a non-issue...just what you remember and think is m'rakeid in your head at times.

No solutions at all.

Just the list of the facts as best we can see them.

That's it. No kabalos and no suggestions for getting better, at all. It's the 4th step, and talk of solutions has no place. Just keep going till you feel you have covered all you can, then move onto the next steps afterward.

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Re: Ur-a-jew's Thread
Posted by ur-a-jew - 22 Sep 2010 20:17

Dov thanks for the clarification re the 4th step. The worksheet I was using is setup differently from what you described. The problem is that it had more of a check-off chart with respect to how the particular issue effects me, i.e., my pride, pocketbook, sex, etc. I see the maaleh of having to write these things out rather than just checking something off. Hopefully chol hamoed will provide this opportunity. A good yom tov to all.

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Re: Ur-a-jew's Thread
Posted by Dov - 26 Sep 2010 05:04

Sounds good!

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Re: Ur-a-jew's Thread
Posted by ur-a-jew - 28 Sep 2010 04:08

Ok I need help on fourth stepping something. I was in shul this morning and I realized that I get really annoyed at a certain Rov (and I recalled having the same feeling towards a different Rov when I was growing up) when they put on what I consider a show, like these loud outbursts of kavannah. For example, he will shout out shema. It all seems very fake. I'm not sure why it bothers me. Its not like it's hurting me. The only things I could think of is that it threatens my pride or I'm just jealous, although if I really believe it's fake then why would I be jealous.

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Re: Ur-a-jew's Thread
Posted by Dov - 29 Sep 2010 01:09

Two things:

This issue is parallel to the perennial GYE question of, "Well, how do I know I am an **addict**? Maybe I am just a ba'al tayva and have a bigger than normal YH for schmutz. Yes, it bothers me, and yes, I know all about 'doing teshuvah (I've done it seventy-five times already, :o on this very same thing!). But who says I need to bring out the big guns; that I must actually learn how to live a different way? That's kind of drastic, you know. Maybe I'm just a nice Jewish boy with a *little problem?!"*

And for me, the response is:

Well, you may be right. The only question is whether it bothers you enough. True, a *normal* person might see the cost of what I am doing and freak out, saying, "are you a lunatic!? You have everything going for you and look at what suffering you are causing yourself and those around you...what about your future - can't you see that it will not stop tomorrow, just like it didn't stop *today*? (and you were pretty sure yesterday that it *would*...) Before this is over, it will certainly will destroy everything you have and a lot that *others around you* have! You absolutely **need** to stop!"

Nope. They are wrong. Until *I* see that I *need* to stop, I cannot stop. And even then, I absolutely cannot stop on my own. That seems to be the way it works. Unless I finally come to view myself as having a hopeless - yes, hopeless - problem, a problem even bigger than I am, I will not get the help I really need. I will stick band-aides all over myself...haven't we all?

So it is with working the 4th step process on our emotional mishegaas'n. We can't seem to really take it as seriously as we must, until we are bothered by it; until we see that it really makes our lives **unmanageable**; that it is something **we really do not want any more**. That is the 6th step.

You can write it out, as you have, but the question you are now apparently asking is, "How do I know if I am tired of this resentment yet? That I do not really need/want it any more?" It seems to me that you are on the sixth step, chaver.

That's the first thing.

The second thing is this:

Is this a big fish for you? OK, fine, I am not suggesting to sweep it under the rug, but could you perhaps have greater resentments and bigger, wider-ranging issues. Issues that feed your addiction? You - we all - probably do.

Let's ask Hashem to reveal a bit more of the truth about ourselves so we get the biggest bang for our buck. There may be elephants in the room. By all means, pursue this lead with all you've

got - but be ready for having some scales removed from your eyes and take Hashem's lead for further growth.

Hatzlocha,

Dov

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Re: Ur-a-jew's Thread

Posted by ur-a-jew - 17 Oct 2010 14:53

Okay I got to get moving again. The fourth step has been a struggle for me just getting the time to put it all on paper. Its a little odd since I actually appreciate the fourth step since it really gets me focused on what issues I have to deal with. So I am going to start at least the first one or two columns right here now. Ive written these before to myself. Most of these are not current resentments. I'm actually on a high right now with my wife. Even though she's ossur to me, we are both acting like newlyweds.

I've gotten resentful at:

My wife -- particualry when

1. She's refused to have sex with me.
2. She spends beyond our means.
3. She criticizes me.
4. She doesn't want to have to do with my family.
5. She's given me the silent treatment.
6. I feel she given more attention to her program or others than to me.

My daughters -- when

1. They don't listen.
2. They don't want to have a relationship with me.

One particular daughter -- when

1. She talks with complete chutzpah

My siblings and brothers and sisters-in law

1. When they show my parents disrespect

My mother -- when

1. She criticizes my wife.
2. She criticizes me, in particular for not keeping in touch with her enough, or not attending some family event.

My father -- when

1. He doesn't get along with my mother
2. Embarrasses me by being a flirt.

People who talk or blackberry in shul.

Banks for charging me too many fees.

My original list had G-d with a question mark for not giving me enough money to meet my needs. It had a question mark because anytime I really feel that way I tell myself that given all that I have done wrong I only have myself to blame. So in reality I'm just upset with myself since I know that I've caused my predicament.

This will have to suffice for now.

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Re: Ur-a-jew's Thread

Posted by ur-a-jew - 19 Oct 2010 03:39

Im going to try and finish the third and fourth column with respect to my wife. Truth is its a little difficult because I'm on such a high with her that I really don't want to focus on the negative. At the same time, I got to be realistic and realize that life is somewhat cyclical and that if it happened in the past, its likely to recur again unless the root of the problem is dealt with. Hashem please help me see this through.

So basically, I would get resentful at my wife when she did not want to have sex when I did. If I was in the mood for sex and she wasn't I began to just feel that she obviously did not love me and care for me as much as she should which caused me to tense up with her which only drove her further away from me which caused me to get restless, hound her why she was ignoring me ultimately driving her to completely shut down with me not even wanting to talk with me. A vicious cycle.

This resentment I guess effected my self-esteem since if I was good and satisfying for her she woud obviously want me. It effected my emotional security since I would be overcome with this feeling that the only way I would be able to deal with life was by her giving in to me and having sex. And I wouldn't be able to cope and deal with life because she had refused to have sex with me.

I believe that there were multiple character defects that was to blame for this conduct. First and

foremost, I think I was just being selfish and inconsiderate. I now know and I knew then when I stopped to analyze it rationally that she really loves me and actually adores me. Usually her non-interest was simply exhaustion or me driving her away by being so-focused on only sex. I also now know that a large part of it was hormonal since she was on the pill. The major differences between now and a year ago is 1) I am sober; 2) She is off the pill and really a different woman. I am sure there is an element of jealousy in there too. Because my world-view was molded by porn and the promiscuous lifestyle that society portrays I convinced myself that everyone else out there is having sex all the time and I'm stuck with a woman who just doesn't get it.

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Re: Ur-a-jew's Thread

Posted by The Never Believer - 19 Oct 2010 16:46

[ur-a-jew wrote on 17 Oct 2010 14:53:](#)

My wife -- particualry when

1. She's refused to have sex with me.
2. She spends beyond our means.
3. She criticizes me.
4. She doesn't want to have to do with my family.
5. She's given me the silent treatment.
6. I feel she given more attention to her program or others than to me.

man, do our wives know each other?! jesus, there must be some place where they all learn to be this way. We've come to the point where my wife and i call each other pb and j. she pb

(psycho bitch) and im j (jerk). its kinda tongue in chek but its kinda not.

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Re: Ur-a-jew's Thread
Posted by Dov - 20 Oct 2010 03:34

David's erudite and sensitive post notwithstanding, here is an idea that has nothing strictly to do with the 4th step, but more like 8 and 9:

How about agreeing (in your own heart - don't say a word to *her* about it) to shift your focus in bed for just one day from sex and getting what you want in it (which is quite natural for anybody and certainly for an addict), to having a nice time holding her and just having fun with her. Chill a bit about the 'tachlis' and look into starting to practice the feeling of enjoying her physical company rather than...the ummm, technically sexual act. These women (even the pb-types) may be in a rough spot. They may be wanting some fun and sweetness yet cannot even imagine asking for it from a guy who they *know* is so focused on the right position of whatever...gevalt.

What do any of us have to lose?

Hatzlocha!

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Re: Ur-a-jew's Thread
Posted by ur-a-jew - 28 Oct 2010 00:05

One of the people on my fourth step list is my father when he causes me to be embarrassed. I wrote when he flirts but its not limited to that its his whole outgoing personality including his ability to tell his life story details and all to people he has just meet and making his presence known wherever he goes. He really is nice but when you're his son (to me it could be very embarrassing). A couple of days ago I had the opportunity to use the fourth step when I was together with him. I don't think I got any less embarrassed or annoyed but it was comforting to have this awareness of what was going on within me and it allowed me to focus on positive things about him (and when I later described it all to my wife she remarked how she had never

seen me open up about this before)

So my father picks me up early in the morning to pay a shiva call at a relative. We come and there are only two people there and my dad is well what's for breakfast. I'm mortified, they knowing my father show him where the cake is. After davening, breakfast is waiting for him and they tell me to sit and eat as well. I'm just so annoyed that I insist that I'm not eating although no one understands why and inside I'm just tense because of the whole incident.

Now as soon as the what's for breakfast comment was made bells starting going off in my head saying fourth step. Having already put this on the list I knew I was in the danger zone. At the same time it was competing with the gaavah feeling of can't we just do what were supposed to be menachem avel and not make this into a whole production. I didn't really get passed the fourth step since the resentment really just sat in me and for the most part stayed with me until I got to the office.

At the same I did tell myself focus on the positive. So what I saw was that the same outspoken attitude allowed my father to say brochos out loud whereas I couldn't bring myself to do it. And regardless of his motivation for picking me up (I did the driving) if it wasn't for him I wouldn't have gone and I was actually glad that I did go.

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Re: Ur-a-jew's Thread

Posted by ur-a-jew - 27 Jun 2011 15:20

[ur-a-jew wrote on 15 Jul 2010 15:00:](#)

Now here is the difficulty. Dov has maintained that a first step has to bring us to the recognition that giving into lust would be suicide. The reason this is necessary is because if the alternative is: not giving into lust or suicide, most people will hopefully almost instinctively choose their life. The problem starts when we don't see giving into lust as suicide. If I don't see it as suicide then the first problem is that I may not make the chesbon at all because when I'm not dealing with what I perceive as a life-threatening situation I don't always make chesbonos I'll act without thinking. For example, driving without a seatbelt can result in a life-threatening injury. But most people don't look at driving around the corner as a real life-threatening risk. As a result, there are times when I will get into a car and not buckle my seatbelt. It's not that I don't value my life, it's because I'm not making the chesbon in the first place. If I was on a plane and I was going to jump off I would take a parachute because I know that if jump without it I will kill myself. It's an instinctive chesbon but there is a chesbon.

The second issue with not seeing the unmanagability as suicide is that I may make the chesbon but since its not a life or death alternative I may choose the lust option. To use Dov's moshol

even if I am overwhelmed with debt I may go and buy something I can't afford if its not that expensive. If the bank is knocking at my door to foreclose on my house I'm not going to buy a brand new car because however badly I want a new car I want my house more.

So the question I have is how do I come to the realization that looking at the half naked lady walking down the street is suicide for me. While I recognize that looking at the big picture lust has made my life unmanageable and it is slow death I honestly am not at the level where I see little acts of acting out are suicide.

Anybody's thoughts would be most welcome.

Somebody asked me about this yesterday because it seems it was never answered. I guess I would answer it myself in three different ways.

First, if I do my first step honestly, I would see that during the times when I succumbed to lust, I didn't want to. I told myself I'll look a little and zeh hu. But it never really worked that way. Once I started down the road of lust I wasn't able to stop (at least not until I made myself sick). So when I do it honestly, I do see even the first look as suicide. Second, one of the advantages of being around fellow addicts is that we get to see our own weaknesses in other people. While I may not be see my downfall from looking at the first image from my own conduct, I see how that happens to others and I apply it to myself.

Third, having obtained a little sobriety and started learning to love life, I realize that, to the extent I am able to, I never want to give this up. I think to myself, there is no way I want to go back to where I was. Why in the world would I want to go back to a situation where I have to live a double life with my wife, my friends and my rabbeim. So the longer that I am sober the more I see acting out as suicide.

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Re: Ur-a-jew's Thread
Posted by Dov - 04 Jul 2011 22:15

That was beautiful. Thanks again, chaver.

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