

The GYE Lighthouse

www.GuardYourEyes.org

February 17, 2010

The following pages are a POWERFUL presentation showing the **severity** of the problem of internet addiction in our community today.

- **Haskamos on our work from Gedolim who talk about the magnitude of the problem in their endorsements.**
- **Recordings from Shiurim of Gedolim & Rabbanim who openly claim that this is by far the most destructive issue facing Klal Yisrael today.**
- **Frightening testimonials from Talmidei Chachamim, our very best and brightest - who have contacted us for help.**
- **A shocking letter from a Rebbe showing the extent of the problem in children as young as 11 years old!**
- **Some quotes showing the "culture of denial" that is prevalent in our community.**
- **Suggestions that perhaps this "culture of denial" is slowly beginning to change, thanks to our work at GYE.**

Our young children - and our very best and brightest, are being pulled into the depths of impurity and despair!

With **your** help we **can** change the world, one person at a time. If each of us does his/her part to help GYE grow, through spreading the word, finding us financial backing and offering to help in any way we can... **Together** we can change the tide.



Click the image above to view a clip from AISH.com about the power of each individual.

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בס"ד י' שבט תש"ע
January 25, 2010

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

There is an international scourge attacking the Jewish People: this is the widespread addiction of men to pornography. Fueled mainly by the Internet, but no less by other means of communication such as telephone and DVDs, this scourge threatens to tear apart the fabric of Jewish life and undermine one of its major foundations, that of *tzenius* (moral restraint).

This addiction has spared no class of Jews: from teenagers to kollel members, from office workers to Rabbis, and from single to married men. I have seen personal lives ruined and marriages wrecked because of this relentless temptation.

A single individual has undertaken to stem this tide of destruction, despite the personal and financial strain which this entails. This is the anonymous administrator of the program known as "Guard Your Eyes." By utilizing methods which have proved successful in treating other addictions, and by providing constant encouragement, support and strategies to victims, "Guard Your Eyes" has successfully helped wean hundreds, if not thousands, from pornographic addiction and has helped return them to normal life.

I have seen the materials and handbooks which this program distributes and have only praise for its methodology and approach to the problems of the addicts. Everything which I have seen conforms to the highest standards of Torah values.


I have been told by reliable people that the Internet program of the same name follows the same standards. Even though Rabbinical authorities have forbidden the use of Internet except where one's livelihood depends on it, it is my opinion that someone who suffers from this addiction may avail himself of this program, since ridding oneself of this illness is no less vital than earning a living.

I therefore highly recommend anyone who suffers from this problem to avail himself of all aspects of this effective program.

"Guard Your Eyes" is worthy of the encouragement and financial support of every Jew.

May HKBH grant its administrator the wisdom, the strength and the means to continue this holy work, and may it help return the Jewish People to becoming a nation regarding whom it is written, והתקדשתם והייתם קדושים ("Sanctify yourselves and you shall then be holy").

With deep respect,


Aharon Feldman

An audio clip from Rabbi / Dr. Avraham J. Twerski



Please listen to this [4 minute audio clip](#) from a talk that Rabbi Twerski gave (on Dec 15, 2009) to understand the terrible darkness of our generation and the vital importance to *Klal Yisrael* **of the work that GYE is doing**.

In the clip, Rabbi Twerski discusses how the world is changing faster than we can keep up with, and how internet addiction has become the most destructive addiction in our community today. He also discusses how **easy** it is to get addicted; less than a second!! ("Kollel guy" responds on [our forum](#): "*If I hadn't personally experienced what he's describing, I would definitely think he's exaggerating*") and how we are losing our BEST & BRIGHTEST to this "horrible addiction".

Rabbi Twerski says (transcript from the audio file):

*"The kind of Shmutz that's out there is unprecedented; I don't know that ever in history has there been a period of moral darkness as bad as it is today... I spent 40 years of psychiatric practice primarily dealing with addictions. And most of the time it was addictions to alcohol, addiction to drugs. More recently, internet addiction has become extremely serious. We have to be aware that addictions are there and we do not have any immunity to them. You have no idea as to what category of people have fallen victim to internet pornography. We would not think that these type of people would be capable of it. But ... the Yetzer Hara is working at full speed and full strength.... It's one of the most powerful addictions. Day - after day - after day - I get letters and calls from people who say, "what can I do to save myself?" because they have fallen into the pornography addiction and it has taken them all the way down. Their learning is no learning, their davening is no davening. It has ruined more marriages than **anything**, ruined families. It's been **terribly** destructive. I saw one sefer that says that before the time of Moshiach the Satan will have absolute control, and I believe that we are now ready for Moshiach because it seems that the Satan has got absolute control in subjugating some of our finest people to this horrible addiction."*

Powerful Audio clip from Rabbi Yosef Viener



Rav Yosef Viener



Rav Matisyahu Salomon

Listen to [this 2 minute audio clip](#) from a Shiur by the renowned Rabbi, R' Yosef Veiner in a speech in Flatbush, where he describes that this issue is by far the biggest problem facing Klal Yisrael today. To see the full video, [click here](#) (Watch from 22:00 and on).

R' Yosef Veiner says (transcript from the audio file):

*"Everybody here knows me quite well, I've been around this neighborhood for many years. They know that I'm not a 'Kanoi' and I don't exaggerate, - and they should know that about Reb Mattisyahu (Salomon) also, and about all the other Chashuvah Rabbanim who speak about this issue. But I will tell you - and there are those who will get annoyed at this and perhaps combative and claim I'm not aware of the real problems going on in Klal Yisrael - I'm **quite aware** of what's going on in Klal Yisrael; and I will still say, that this is the **SINGLE, BIGGEST** problem facing us today - bar none. And the reason is, because if you see someone being Mechalel Shabbos in the street, you know what you're dealing with. You can take him or her in, and try to be mekarev them. If you see a problem out in the open, you can deal with it. **HERE WE HAVE A SILENT KILLER.** No one will know, no one has to know, you can do whatever you want in the privacy of your home and your office, and no one's the wiser. **EXCEPT** Hakadosh Baruch Hu **AND** your wife and your kids after they see the results, or your children, after **YOU** see the results of what's happening to **THEM**. I cannot overstate what a problem this is, and it boggles the mind, because I spent an entire Shabbos Shuvah Drasha last Shabbos Shuvah on this in Monsey; I spent an entire Shabbos Shuvah drasha in Flatbush six years ago, many of you probably remember it. You would think that if credible people who are speaking to an Olam that wants to do the right thing, you would think this issue would be somewhat under control. **IT'S COMPLETELY OUT OF CONTROL.** There's not a week that goes by that I don't have honest teenagers coming crying to me, Bochrium walking into my study with tears on their cheeks, wondering if they're ever gonna learn a blat gemara again. I have parents bringing their children to me "I don't know what happened to him, could you talk to him?"*

Klal Yisrael's Best & Brightest

We got the following e-mail recently:

"I am a Rov, Posek, Magid Shiur and Mechaber Sfarim. I have thousands of talmidim. I have been unsuccessfully battling this problem for at least 40 years. I read thoroughly the GYE handbook and would like to make the author my Rebbe. "K'mayim korim al nefesh ayefoh", this masterpiece has re-instilled a hope within me that maybe I can really be what my talmidim think I am. I pour out my heart to the Aibishter that one day I'll be able to help you rather than enlisting your help. I wish there were words to convey the magnitude of my bracha to you, for your hatzlacha is the hatzlocha of Klal Yisrael."

A prestigious *Mechanech* wrote us once for help:

Dear GUE,

Sorry For anonymity but it would be a *Chillul Hashem* to show my real face. I am a prestigious *mechanech* and respected marriage counselor. I helped a lot of *Bachurim* and couples in their own sexual problems. But as chazal say "*ain chovish matir atzmoh*", I can't be in command of myself at all, I need access to the net for my profession, and being a computer guru, I have outsmarted the filters & locks.

If you would know who the writer is you would weep for weeks. I can't tolerate it any longer. It seems to me that the only way is by including outside help. However SA meetings are out of question due to my caliber, and letting my wife in does also not come in consideration. Do you think I can be helped without blowing my secret?

We answered him and got him involved in our network and forum. About 4 months later he writes:

R' Guard, you can not visualize the effect that GYE has had on my life.
Since I joined the forum my life has simply CHANGED for the better
Like a turtle slowly (actually rapidly) emerging from his shell.
Starting to live a lively life, a life of control and reason.
To understand myself, and the others around me.
I opened my eyes, grasped my deterring situation, and made a swift U-turn.
WOW!! One hundred twenty five days.
125 days ago I joined the forum 125 days ago I was reborn
Right, I consider myself an infant of 4 months old.
I watch my soul growing daily, as a kid would regularly appraise his height.
My Davening has not been with such devotion for a very long time.
The learning has become superior, since the tranquility of my conscious.
I observe my social life advancing, like a professional PR entering a club.
My kith and kin have never been closer to me, then the last few months.
My friends encircle me, as bees would surround their comb
And the list goes on and on...

A SHOCKING e-mail that we recently received from a Rebbe in a vibrant Jewish community:

*I am a Rebbe in a small Yeshivah where I deal with regular frum middle-school age boys who have not had much success in the regular school systems for various reasons. It was recently brought to my attention that many of these boys, ages 11-14 are addicted to pornography and hotzoas zera livatala. They view this as if it were normal and not even something to work on. Many of them do not even know that this is assur, and they couldn't believe me when I said looking and thinking about these things is not allowed from the Torah. Hopefully, I will slowly and persistently work with them on this topic. I have even read some of the stories from your website to them, to show them **where this can lead**, in the hopes of sparking their input.*

All the kids who were involved could not imagine stopping for even a few weeks at a time, so I guess they are addicted. I offered a two week, and then a 4 week, incentive to any boy who took up the challenge to be free from both porn and hotzoas zera. Two boys are already on their 3rd week. One boy did ask me how he would be able to sustain this when he feels very bored and doesn't have enough to do to fill his free time, and pornography is an easy time consumer. Another boy said he used it as a way to fall asleep at night. And yet another boy said his father caught him and did nothing about it!

An additional problem is most of these boys have iPod touches or other devices with Wifi, so that having blockers on their computer wouldn't really solve their problem. Others are very savvy and can break - in their own words - "any block" on a computer.

Some boys did become interested when I told them that there was a hot-line on this site for people who needed chizuk... They did say that having someone to talk to when they were feeling weak would help a lot, and I encouraged them to call me, but maybe another venue would help.

One amazing thing that I did see, was that after our discussions, they were discussing the matter with each other in an open way about their nisyonos and giving each other their own brand of advice. Either way, I think a small revolution was created in this class to overcome a topic which I know I never heard about in Yeshivah.

Would you suggest anything else that I can practically implement and help all the boys in the Yeshivah understand and, if need be, change this dangerous habit?

We sent this Rebbe our handbooks (downloadable on the top right of the [home-page](#) of our website) along with other useful advice and tips on dealing with this issue.

Rabbosai, if *Klal Yisrael* doesn't awaken to the dangers that we face today, **we will be raising an entire generation of addicts - *Rachmana Letzlan!*** Think about how the marriages and *Yiddishkeit* of such children will be affected one day!

Every *Mashgiach* and Rebbe in today's generation needs to be equipped with the tools and knowledge of how to deal with these issues. GuardYourEyes has set for itself a goal to make this a main-stream issue in today's religious world, and to provide information to all *Mechanchim* on how to **deal** with these issues. The handbooks we have today are just a start. They will IY"Y be expanded and split into different versions, one of which will be designed specifically with *Mechanchim* in mind.

Besides for helping those who struggle, GYE plans on having an entire division one day, dedicated just to "PREVENTION". But... **we can't do this ALONE.** *Please help us find financial backing to open a world-wide center and network. There is so much we want to do, but we need Klal Yisrael's backing. And that means YOU.*

"BaLetaher" wrote on the forum recently:

Hello to everyone,

This is my first foray into the world of GYE, and I'm really hoping that it will become a real force in my life, as I've been battling the *other forces* for too long.

I'm happily married to a beautiful and loving woman, and together we are raising a bunch of wonderful children, yet there is a side of me that no one knows about, a side of me that has been eating away at me for almost as long as I can remember. That side of me is the Mr. Hyde to my Dr. Jekyll, the crazed sicko who gets set loose at night and does horrifically shameful things. Being a true *Ohaiv Ha-shem*, who really loves the *Aibishter* and his Torah and Mitzvos, this creates an enormous amount of conflict in my life, leading me to feelings of isolation - despite being surrounded by people who love me; and despair - despite leading a relatively successful life.

To compound those feelings, I am involved in *Avodas Hakodesh*, so while people are looking to me for inspiration, I'm sometimes involved in things that if they had the slightest clue of, they would pillory me in the town square. This makes me feel even more like a fake and a fraud, despite the fact that all I really want to do in my life is bring people closer to *Avinu Shebashamayim*. Many times, I have thought about quitting my job, recognizing that I'll never really be able to inspire others if there's no gas in **my** fuel tank, but I'm reminded of the fish's response to Rabbi Akiva, "*If in the water, the place of our life, we need to fear, how much more so on dry land, the place of our death!*" So I guess I will try to stay close to the water. Besides all the teaching I do, I personally learn for hours every day, sometimes immediately followed by a most inglorious session of *shmutz!*. I just keep trying to slog through the muck.

Today is day 1 of my journey. I hope you can give me the *chizuk* I need to make it out of my living hell.

"shmiratainayim" (an older Bochor) wrote on [the forum](#) lastweek:

I have learned here on GYE to accept this addiction as a fact, but it's so hard to fight it. I'm single, in the *parsha* of *Shidduchim*, and gifted with the capabilities to create an uprising in the Jewish world (in *chinuch*, *kiruv krovim* or *kiruv rechokim*). But I'm wasting my potential at the computer screen. When away from the computer, I learn from early morning to late nights, with *hislavavus*, *amailus*, etc. I can take a *Maharal* and compile/summarize it into such an understandable manner that even non-religious Yidden see it as sensible, understandable and pertinent. I can address large audiences and present a powerful and heartfelt message that leaves them truly touched - and with a smile on their face. I have a lot of potential, but I waste it all by not giving up on this one vice!!!! If only for the sake of the people I can help later on in life, please help me break this addiction. Please!

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**"Kollel Guy" Responds:**

I have a scary thing to tell you. Being that you are an addict, there is *absolutely* nothing that *anyone* can tell you that will "convince" you not to go back to it. It might make an impression on you, you might not do it *now*, you might not do it



tomorrow either, but when it comes to 'addiction' vs. '*divrei hisorerus*', 'addiction' wins - by hook or by crook. Addiction is a disease, and it must be dealt with using a **different** set of tools than you're used to thinking of. That's what you'll learn on GYE.

I tried for years to kick my p\*\*n habit by 'getting my act together' in numerous ways. And while everything else in my life fell into place through 'getting serious' and 'shaping up', **this just wouldn't budge**. And I'd go through streak after streak, fall after fall, each time thinking that a different '*nekudah*' was really what was causing the problem. And then I'd try to work on that *nekudah*, thinking that had I only worked on it sooner - I would have been done with this long ago. And I'd be confident that now that I was going to develop that new 'mindset' or start that new '*hanhagah*', I would no longer have the problem.

Needless to say, I'd be back to the same question of "*where did I go wrong this time?*" a week, or a month, or 3 months later.

And this continued until I found this site and learned what an addiction is, and its nature, and how it controls a person's thinking, and how **a different set of tools** are necessary to beat it.

Until we don't recognize that distinction, **we are like people trying to blow up a tire with a hole in it**. No matter how hard you try, unless you patch up that hole first, you won't get very far.

I seriously hope you read [the handbook](#) and "**Hit bottom while you're still on top**".

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**"On the Road" posted on [the forum](#):**

There was a recent scandal which has rocked the frum community involving the issues we are working on here on GYE. I thought to myself that the Rav involved could have been **me**, and it scared the heck out of me. G-d knows I am trying very hard to get out of this. I recently got a job (that is not very *bekavodik*), but it will help me put food on the table and **keep me away from the computer** for a few hours a day. I think that just being out and doing work outside of a computer terminal is going to be helpful for me. Thanks GYE family!

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**MosheW posted on the forum:**

The other day I was listening to a Torah CD from a very famous Admor in Israel (it was from a weekly chumash shiur that over a hundred people attend each week). He was talking about simchas ha'chaim and learning Torah. Out of the blue, he said that over the past weeks he has been dealing with two people; one a magid shiur and the other a mechaber of seforim, and both have fallen victim to a Yetzer Hara called "internet". He then went on to explain how they got hooked. I guess people are starting to approach Rabbonim about this issue more and more.

**"MGSBMS" wrote on [the forum](#), after reading the post from the Talmid Chacham above:**

Before I joined this site, I was slipping and falling on a daily basis for about a year. Not "live" acting out, but I was getting there. Then, *besiyata d'shmaya*, I found this site a few days after Pesach and I had a clean streak for four months. After a fall at the end of August, I had another clean streak for another 4 months. While I was on these clean streaks, I hardly had to fight. Just reading the daily chizuk e-mails and counting the days on [the 90 day chart](#) was a great motivator!

I opened today's email after being depressed for two days after my fall, and I was shocked to see that it was written **just for me**. Without going into details (because I feel it could cause a *chilul Hashem*), I was able to identify with this quote fully (cited above on p.8):

*"To compound those feelings, I am involved in Avodas Hakodesh, so while people are looking to me for inspiration, I'm sometimes involved in things that if they had the slightest clue of, they would pillory me in the town square.... Besides all the teaching I do, I personally learn for hours every day, sometimes immediately followed by a most inglorious session of shmutz!"*

I related to that **so much**, that it felt as if someone was reading my mind! And I must add that it gave me a tremendous amount of *chizuk* to know that I'm not alone in this kind of conflict. But this is all more reason for the *Marbitzei Torah* on this forum to blaze the path and show the way of *milchemes hayetzer* - and not let it take over our lives!

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**To the Talmid Chacham who recently joined us (quoted above in blue), Dovid wrote:**

Welcome to our community. I am not as big a *Talmid Chacham* as you, but I also felt the "contradicting life" and it hurt... But the thing is, an addiction is a disease... Just like a *Talmid Chacham* and an *Am ha'Aretz* can both get rabies or allergies or prostate cancer, they can both get this addiction... And the truth is, contracting this disease was hardly our fault - if at all... We were born into a world that didn't give us much of a chance in this war... We were born into an age where the efforts to turn everyone into "mindless drones" that worship sexuality and lust is too great... But as the Titanic is sinking, this little paddle boat of GYE is filling up... And we're not just gonna paddle to the shore, but we're gonna fill **the hole** that's sinking the ship... So we need you, **especially** since you are a *Talmid Chacham*... Thank you for joining the revolution!

## The Culture of Denial in Our Circles

**When I asked Rabbi Avraham J. Twerski to help us spread the word (he writes a weekly column for Hamodia) he responded:**

*"I recommend GYE at every opportunity I get. But I can't put it in Hamodia because they are not permitted to acknowledge that internet even exists."*

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**Steve wrote on our forum:**

*I was once driving a big time talmid chacham through town (about 5 years ago), and I opened up to him with my nisyonos of p\*\*n and mast\*\* to see if he could help me and point me to sources that could help me have chizuk, or give me chizuk himself. He clammed up like I had the plague; like I had infringed on his kedusha...*

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## Are Things Starting to Change?

[Phillip Rosentahal](#), a technology expert and addiction therapist, was asked to speak at the past two Agudah Conventions in New-York and in the Mid-west. He mentioned our work (at [www.guardyoureyes.org](http://www.guardyoureyes.org)) **both times** in his talks, and even held up our [handbook](#) to the crowd to demonstrate our step by step approach for learning how to deal with these issues... Phillip later told me on the phone:

*For 5 years I tried to get them to let me to speak at the Agudah convention and it was like talking to the wall. So when they finally said "yes" (this year), I asked "what happened?" So Rav Zweibel said to me, "we're not going to stand up and say this, but we're admitting defeat. We thought we could just tell the world, this is not going to happen in our world, we don't need it, thank you very much. But that's it. We realize now that we made a mistake. And now we've got to deal with it and try to put the worms back in the can".*

Before the recent convention in the Midwest, Rav Zweibel wrote an e-mail to Phillip asking about our work at GYE, and at the conference, he asked Phillip more about what we do and discussed the possibility that the Agudah would develop some sort of program for its members that would help people who struggle in these issues...

We hope to work together with the Agudah in the future, to help them develop a program for Mechanchim, Askanim and Rabbanim that would focus on both prevention methods as well as in-depth training on how to deal with these prevalent problems.

**In another, more recent e-mail, Phillip Rosenthal wrote me as follows:**

*I just returned from Minneapolis where I spent two and a half days working with the community there and educating them about technology, Internet and the addictive nature of it. During my presentation to the adults of the community, I dedicated a considerable part of my time talking about GYE. The response was quite good, and a few people in the audience actually nodded their heads in recognition of the site. That told me that they are most likely subscribers. I am pushing the word to the klal and these efforts are reaping benefits, as I see.*

*I was interviewed by HaMishpacha magazine and HaModia recently. In both interviews, I discussed GYE. I, of course, have no say in what they will write, but I am hopeful that they will use my remarks.*

*Hatzlacha rabbah,*

*Philip*

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**Mishpacha & Hamodia? Hard to believe they'll write about it, but who knows? Perhaps thanks to GYE, small cracks *are* finally beginning to appear in the "culture of denial" prevalent in our community.**

**Help us save Klal Yisrael from this generation's greatest test!**