

The TaPhSiC Method

“The **Physical & Spiritual Combo**” (“Tafsik” also means “Stop!” in Hebrew).

We all want to stop. Whenever we think of the “big picture”, both spiritually and physically, we realize that sooner or later we HAVE to stop. But we often feel like two different people. After each fall we ask ourselves: “What repercussions will it take to finally stop me? Do I have any hope? How can it be that I am a frum Yid in all other areas besides for this? Do I have Yiras Shamayim - **or don't I?**”

The following tool has worked well with many Frum addicts, in helping them stop these destructive behaviors completely. It may not work for high-level addicts or for people with no *Yiras Shamayim*, but for most frum addicts, this method has worked wonders and has freed many people from the obsession.

What Doesn't Stop Us?

The first thing we need to do is to **face the truth** about ourselves.

“Abstract” spiritual repercussions don't generally stop me, even though I believe that:

- This is one of the most serious aveiros.
- I am destroying my soul.
- I am creating other destructive souls.
- I am losing *Siyyata Di'shmaya* in all of my life (as the pasuk says, “*ki yireh becha ervas davar veshav me'acharecha*”).
- I am cutting off my connection with Hashem.
- I am desensitizing myself to spirituality.
- I am making it ever harder to do Teshuvah.
- It is making me feel like a hypocrite in all other Mitzvos I do.
- I am destroying the “Yesod – foundation”, of my entire spiritual structure.
- My kids and wife can likely ‘sense’ that I am not sincere in my Yiddishkeit, overall.
- These behaviors may likely spiral into worse aveiros.
- I am/will likely end up cutting myself off from the World to Come.
- Moshiach is coming soon; how will I face him?

In spite of the above, my *Yiras Shamayim* will generally NOT stop me from:

- Looking at shmutz
- Being *Motzi Zera Livatala*
- Even if I would make a *shvuah* to stop/avoid it, I'll end up breaking it sooner or later; the desires are just **too** powerful.

Don't feel bad that your *Yiras Shamayim* is not strong enough to stop you. It doesn't mean you don't have any. When Rav Yochanan Ben Zakai blessed his students before he died he said, “May your fear of heaven be equal to your fear of man”. And his students asked him: “Rebbi, is that all?”. And he answered: “*Halevai!*”. And even Rabbi Akiva wasn't able to stop himself when faced head-on with a powerful lust. See Kidushin 81/a where the Gemara tells how Rabbi Akiva started climbing up a tree to sin – until the Satan himself had to stop him from sinning. Imagine! This is the same Rabbi Akiva who cried ‘Shma Yisrael’ with joy as they combed his flesh with iron combs! (See principle 2 of part 2 of this handbook for more on this idea).

The non-spiritual “SHORT TERM” repercussions don't stop me either, even though:

- It makes me depressed.
- I lose time from work.
- I lose sleep.
- I lose money.
- I lose a close connection with my wife.

- I feel distant from my children.
- I don't have time for anyone but "me".
- My whole life revolves around my next "fix".
- I feel like a slave to my desires.

The non-spiritual "LONG TERM" repercussions don't stop me, even though:

- My behaviors may be found out.
- I can lose my good name.
- I can lose my job.
- I can lose my marriage.
- I can lose my children.
- My children may have a hard time with shidduchim as a result.
- My children may need therapy one day for the trauma they may go through.
- My behaviors will likely get worse.
- I can end up in jail.
- I can catch diseases.
- I can end up suicidal or dead.

What Would Stop Us?

Now that we have faced the truth about ourselves, we need to ask: What spiritual and non-spiritual repercussions *WOULD* stop us?

Spiritually speaking, what WOULD stop me?

- I would not be Mechalel Shabbos to view shmutz, no matter how bad I wanted it. I would be able to wait 24 hours.
- If the only way to get my fix in the coming 24 hours was by eating a Ham sandwich first, I probably would hold out and not do it for 24 hours.
- After I finish fully giving in to my desires, I don't want to throw the rest of my Yiddishkeit away. I feel bad about it and I really do want to "come back" to Hashem. If I had a choice to push a "**Stop These Aveiros Forever**" button, I would press it then.

What does this all show me? That I still do have a holy spark within me, and that my Yiras Shamayim is still **existent**. It may not be enough to stop me in general, but it is strong enough to make me want to get rid of these behaviors AFTER the act. And even *before* the act, it is strong enough to enable me to hold out for a while - when the spiritual repercussions are BIG (like Chillul Shabbos or eating Treif). What we can see from this is that there ARE spiritual repercussions that *would* stop us, if they were only BIG enough, and especially when we're not under the spell of lust.

Now let's look at the non-spiritual side of the coin. What WOULD stop me?

- If I was about to act out and someone walked into the room, would I continue?
- If every time I acted out, I would become racked with pain, would I continue?
- If there was an electronic eye following me, and every time I acted out, my wife or Rebbe would see me doing it, would I continue?
- If every time I acted out I would feel sick and I would have to take a bus to the hospital, stay there for 2 hours, and get a shot to return me to normal, would I continue?

What does this all show me? It shows that there ARE repercussions that would stop me, if only they were BIG enough.

To sum up: Although the "normal" repercussions, both short term and long term, are not enough to stop me, there still do exist both spiritual and non-spiritual repercussions that WOULD stop me, if they were big enough and *immediate* enough.

Finding the Perfect Formula

So all we have to do now is find the perfect formula; a **combination** of spiritual and non-spiritual repercussions that ARE big enough to stop us.

We have seen that AFTER the fact (when the desires have been quieted), we are much more willing to do what it takes to stop the NEXT occurrence. And we have *also* seen that we are able to hold out better when the spiritual repercussions are BIGGER.

So let's try to use a very powerful tool called *Shvuos*, or vows. Normally making vows is frowned upon by our sages as with someone playing with fire, but when it comes to girding oneself from this temptation, we find that making vows is praised by the Torah and by Chazal. As the Ohr Hachayim in Parshas Matos (30:2) writes:

פרשת מטות פרק ל' פסוק ב'
(ב) וַיְדַבֵּר מֹשֶׁה אֶל רָאשֵׁי הַמַּטּוֹת לִבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל **לֵאמֹר** זֶה הַדְּבָר אֲשֶׁר צִוָּה ה' (ג) **אִישׁ** כִּי יָדַר נֶדֶר לֵה' אוֹ הַשְּׁבַע שְׁבַעַת שְׁבַעַת לְאִסּוּר אִסּוּר עַל נַפְשׁוֹ לֹא יַחַל דְּבָרוֹ כְּכֹל הַיְצֵא מִפִּי וַיַּעַשׂ.

אור החיים
ובדרך רמז יתבאר אומרו לבני ישראל לאמר זה הדבר, על פי מה שאמרו רבותינו ז"ל וז"ל לעולם יהיה אדם זהיר בנדדים אלף עיירות היו לו לינאי וכו' הרי שהגם שהיו מקיימין שבועתן נענשו, ואמר הכתוב כאן כי יש נדדים ושבועות שצוה ה' אותם, והוא אומרו לבני ישראל **לאמר**, אין לאמר אלא גילוי עריות (סנהדרין נו:): פירוש לחשש העריות זה הדבר אשר צוה ה', איש כי ידור נדר וגו': ודקדק לומר **איש**, לרמוז לתגבורת ניגוד התאוה, כאומרם ז"ל (ויק"ר כג יא) בפסוק חי ה' שכבי וגו' (רות ג יג) שנשבע ליצרו, וכן אמרו (נדדים ז:): בפסוק נשבעתי ואקיימה לשמור וגו' (תהלים קיט קו) כי **מצוה לישבע ליצרו**:

Rough Translation (in short): "The Pasuk is saying here that there are *Nedarim* and *Shvuos* that Hashem commanded us to make... such as in cases where one has apprehension about stumbling in the area of *arayos*... to counteract the strength of this desire ...as Chaza"l say about *Bo'az*, that he swore to guard himself from transgressing when *Ruth* came to him in the silo at night, as it says '*Chai Hashem, Shichvi ad haboker* - In the name of G-d, lay here until morning'. And as the Pasuk says, '*Nishbati Va'akayeima, lishmor Mishpatei Tzidkecha* - I have vowed and will uphold it; to guard your righteous laws', **for it is a Mitzva to make a Shvuah against one's evil inclination.**"

Also, the Mishna says in Pirkei Avos: "*Nedarim siyag la'prishus* – *Nedarim* are a fence for abstinence". And another Pasuk in Tehilim says "*Nishba Lehora Velo Yamir - oseh eileh lo yimot le'olam* - He who swears to prevent bad and does not nullify... he will never falter". So it is clear that there are cases when making *Shvuos* is actually a *Mitzva* that Hashem wants us to do!

However, as important and helpful as vows can be in fighting this powerful desire, they are also spiritually dangerous. **The addiction is very often more powerful than vows.** Therefore, it is vital that we learn **how** to make vows in a way that will work and be spiritually safe. Instead of fighting the addiction head-on through the vows, we can make vows that will help us "**walk around**" the addiction. **Do not** make a make vow that you simply will not act-out or look at inappropriate material. Many addicts have tried this and failed miserably, because when we are under a lust attack it is very hard for our *yiras shamayim* to stop us.

So let's try this:

If we made a *shvuah* in the name of Hashem (and actually pronounce Hashem's name) that AFTER we act out (on our bottom line behaviors) we will do x,y or z – **would we keep this *shvuah***? Most frum addicts would. After all, it is AFTER the acting out. The desires have already been silenced and we feel bad. We don't want to throw away the rest of our Yiddishkeit. So would we not keep a *shvuah* that we made in the name of Hashem? Will we transgress one of the 10 commandments “*Lo sisah es Shem Hashem Elokecha lashav* – Do not swear in G-d's name in vain” (and as the pasuk continues, “for Hashem will **never cleanse** he who swears in His name in vain”)?

That is the “Spiritual” side of the “TaPHSiC method”. Now on the Physical side of the coin, we have to make the *shvuah* to do something hard and painful. Not too hard that we might come to even break the *shvuah* in Hashem's name c”v, but hard enough to make us not want to act out next time. Something we know will hurt, but something we know we can keep.

For example, one guy wrote that he vowed to give \$200 to tzedaka after every fall. Within 4 falls, he was free of his addiction. Another person (in Israel) wrote that he succeeded breaking free by making a vow for one year that every time he fell, he would have to take a trip by bus to the Kotel and stay there for 90 minutes. This ultimately helped him to stop completely, because each time he felt that he was about to give in, he would remember what he would have to do and be deterred.

Some other examples might be: *“I swear in the name of Ado-nai – for one week, that if I am motzi zera livatala, then within the following 24 hours, I will:*

- *tell my Rebbe*
- *tell a close friend*
- *fast the following day from “alos hashachar” until nightfall. (If it's Shabbos or Yom Tov, I will fast the day after.)*

At first, these *Shvuos* should be for short periods of time, as in the example above. If we see that this is working well for us, we can extend the *shvuah* for longer periods of time. If we see that the deterrent turns out not to be strong enough for us, we might need to find something a little more painful.

Here are examples of two vows that we helped someone set up. After making these *Shvuos* he testified that he felt a new freedom in his life!

1) I swear for one month that if I am intentionally motzi zera livatala while fully awake, or if I intentionally obtain adult sexual material of any sort, digital or printed (examples; DVDs or Magazines), or if I intentionally go to - or search for - any websites or web pages, pictures, videos, chats or forums, for the purpose of viewing adult sexual content or messages, or facilitations of sexual encounters, or if I initiate contact with - or respond positively to - any woman other than my wife for a sexually related purpose, or if I partake of any illicit sexually oriented services of any kind, then I will donate \$500 to GYE and tell _____ (a close friend) what I have done, for each day on which I do any one - or more - of these things. If I forget that I made this Shvuah and do one of these things, I will only donate \$100.

2) I swear for one month that if I have any sort of sexual encounter with any person besides my wife, then I will donate \$3000 to GYE from my next month's salary and I will tell _____ (a close friend) what I have done, for each day on which I do this sin.

The Double-Fence TaPHSiC Method

An even more powerful form of the TaPHSiC method is to make it into a **double fence** by using it for both before *and* after the fall.

For example: Make a list of things to do **before falling**, such as taking a half hour walk, reaching out by phone to a friend from GYE for help, etc. Then, make the *shvuah* that if you act out **before** doing the things on your list, you will have to do something **very** painful (say, give \$500 to Tzedaka). But if you act out **AFTER** doing the things on your list, you will only have to give \$50 to Tzedaka. In this way, you will feel obligated to do the things on your list before giving in, because you know that once you give in and the lust has past, you won't be able to ignore the *shvuah*. The genius of this is, that by the time you are finished doing the things on the list, the lust attack will usually have dissipated. And often *before* giving in, even thinking of the things you will have to do will make you drop the whole idea in the first place. This double-fence TaPHSiC method has been shown to be one of the most powerful ways for frum addicts to break the addiction for the long term.

A member shared on our forum how the double-fence TaPHSiC method works for him:

I made a commitment that if I wanted to look at shmutz online I would first do one of 4 things, (1) talk through how I'm feeling with my wife, (2) go for a 30 min run or exercise, or (3) learn Torah for 30 min, or (4) read about the holocaust for 30 min. Then I made a shvuah that if I did anyone of these 4 actions before looking, then I would only have to give \$75 to Tzedakah. But if I did not do any of these 4 actions but just went right ahead and looked, I would have to give \$750 to Tzedaka. I am unemployed now (so a lot of time on my hands), and so taking a \$750 hit is just not possible for me right now. When the Yetzer Hara gets us in the moment, he makes us forget all consequences. With this method, it's just much harder to forget the consequences. B"H I haven't looked at any shmutz online since I made this commitment. It helps me a lot and I hope it can help you too.

Here's an example of the 'Double-Fence TaPHSiC method' that someone in Jerusalem set up for himself: (The parts in parentheses are not spoken)

I swear in the name of Hashem that for one week;

*(Part 1) ...if I act-out, which means either being motzei z"l - **or** intentionally seek out and/or gaze at erotic images for more than 2 minutes within any given half hour's time, then I will go to Kever Rochel (which is not so far from Jerusalem) within 72 hours.*

(Part 2) ...if I did this without having spoken to a person about my desire to act-out within the previous 2 hours, then I will travel to Meron (which is much further and harder to go to from Jerusalem) within 72 hours and stay there for at least 5 hours, and I will tell my wife why I am going.

(Additional clauses, as needed)

(Clause 1) ...If I am unable to travel to Kever Rochel or to Meron because of an 'oness', then I will go within 72 hours of being able to.

(Clause 2) ...If I travel to Meron, then I will not have to travel to Kever Rochel as well.

(Clause 3) ...If I act-out without remembering this shvuah (at least in general), I will not have to travel anywhere.

We can keep making minor adjustments as we go along. That is why it's best to make the vow only for a week at a time at first, and then maybe a month... (We must make sure to renew the *shvuah* BEFORE it expires. Often the addiction convinces us that we're doing OK, only to catch us off guard when we suddenly realize that the *shvuah* has expired!). Once we are confident and comfortable with the vow and see that it really works for us, we may need to make this vow only once a year!

It's a delicate balance, but with careful thought and *siyatta dishmaya*, most Frum addicts can find a formula that really works for them, over time. And once we have found it, we will know. There will be a sudden feeling of joy – a tremendous new freedom in our lives. We will feel like we have literally been freed from the self-imposed “prison” that we have been living in for so many years!

Cautionary Notes

Although the TaPHSiC method is very powerful, finding the perfect formula is delicate and DANGEROUS business. If we vow to do something *too* painful, we run the risk that we'll break our vow, which besides for the serious sin, can lead to deterioration since the person can *chas veshalom* feel that if he has transgressed this sin, there's no hope for him anyway! On the other hand, if it's not painful *enough*, there's always the risk of continued falls. Feel free to send your *shvuah* ideas to us before making them, for advice.

It is important to write up a list of the vows for our records, and also to enable us to review them carefully before making them each time. In addition, having a list of the vows will help us refine them as we discover the ones that worked for better or for worse, and we can then use this refined list to make the vows again for progressively longer periods of time.

It is also important to understand that the TaPHSiC method is like putting an electrified fence at the edge of a cliff. If you come close to the edge, you will be “shocked” and back away. However, it goes without saying that if someone continues to walk alongside the edge of the cliff, the repeated shocks will start becoming very painful. At some point, he may just turn the electricity in the wires off, which will lead to a fall soon after. Or at some point, even the electricity won't help and he'll stumble and fall through the fence.

Therefore, in conjunction with this powerful method, it is vital to put up other fences as well; fences that will keep us far away from the “edge of the cliff”. This means installing a good filter. And on top of that filter, we need to install an “Accountability system” as well, such as [eBlaster](#) or [Webchaver](#) which sends reports of our internet usage to someone we would be ashamed to disappoint. This makes the “physical repercussions” all the more real, and keeps us far from even trying to find loop-holes in our filter.

We also need to learn to keep busy and to replace our acting out with alternative fulfillment, such as finding hobbies that interest us, spiritual discovery and growth, and reconnecting with life more; with our wives, kids, family, friends and community. (See our [Kosher Isle](#) for some great ideas on hobbies, activities and spiritual growth.)

Also, for some “higher-level” addicts, the withdrawal symptoms can become excruciating. Therefore, it is advisable to have a support system in place as we try the TaPHSiC method; either a therapist or a live SA group where we can share our pain in withdrawal, or even a good friend (from [the forum](#) perhaps) who we can call and “talk it out” with when times get tough.

Also, for some addicts, living suddenly without the “drug” we have come to rely on can lead to serious depression or a deep feeling of inner void. A psychiatrist can evaluate us and subscribe temporary medication that can take “the edge” off these feelings. For example, there are SSRI medications today that have almost no side effects and can be taken for just a year or so, until we are more balanced and more used to living life without our “drug”.

The bottom line is, that although this method is like putting a strong electric fence at the edge of the cliff to stop us when all else fails, we need to continue to use the many tools of the GYE network (See [“GYE in a Nutshell”](#)) to keep ourselves safely away from the edge.