

I (a female) grew up in an ultra-orthodox/orthodox community, and was routinely sexually abused by a an esteemed brooklyn institution's yeshiva bochur 11 years my senior. I was 5/6/7/8 years old.

Today I am in my mid twenties. If you passed me by on the street you might think i'm a perfectly normal person, sophisticated and intelligent even.

My three sisters are married and have kids. I'm still wondering if i might be a lesbian. I'm still trying to focus on reality instead of instinctively falling back on the defense mechanism i created as a child: dissociation from reality. I'm still trying to feel less ashamed of my existence. I'm still trying not to indulge my ever present, unnaturally strong, pain.

Every man that begins a relationship with me ends up regretting it: I cannot trust, I cannot believe intimacy. This is not merely thoughts i need to change. This is the way i am now wired. If i could easily change it, i would have done so already. I try with vigor.

Because there is nothing else I would like more than to experience genuine love. To experience a breath of fresh air without shame. And to be the person i would like to be without perpetually self sabotaging myself.

After severe internal chaos, that includes a suicide attempt when i was 16 and countless agonizing episodes, I understand that the only way i can achieve that is by fighting myself every day.

I will do that. I will fight every day in order to be just to my own self. But by now, I am well aware that it will never be easy.

The pain and the consequences of sexual abuse truly cannot be understood.

I am sure, or perhaps i am just thinking ideally within the context- that

this yeshiva bochur who now has five beautiful kids, and learns Torah every day, has asked god for forgiveness.

But that is actually the TRUE injustice of sexual abuse. The perpetrator can liberate himself. The victim CANNOT.

Sexual abuse, like another commentator said, is truly a cancer.

What incredible anger I feel when i learn that the effort in the orthodox community went towards eradicating the possibility of hope, concern, understanding and aid. Shame, true true shame on this community.

If only i had been armed with some knowledge as a kid that it was not me who had to feel ashamed. IF ONLY MY PERPETRATOR HAD HEARD A COUPLE OF WORDS ABOUT THIS CRIME AND ITS CONSEQUENCES.

What callousness. What selfishness. What outright immoral behavior this response from the orthodox community is. Keep hiding, keep idolizing only your image as a religion, and eventually if it isn't already, the orthodox community will be nothing but stupid savages.

5:03 PM, September 17, 2008