

The crux of the issue

Posted by Dov - 13 Aug 2009 00:17

[Holy Yid wrote on 12 Aug 2009 21:35:](#)

[kutan shel hachabura wrote on 12 Aug 2009 17:37:](#)

A big tzadik... was known to walk over to teenagers learning Sharei Teshuva and advise them to stop. He would tell them "Sharei Teshuva is for Sinners".

He knew they were not tzadikim. But he was a long time mechanech, and knew that today the avoida is to realize that we are NOT sinners, that we are special.

This thought is mentioned by Rav Pam also. He writes in Atara Lamelach that today we cannot do teshuva by focusing on how bad sin is. That would only hurt us and drag us down more. Rather we should focus on our miylos and how chashuv we are as the descendants of the Avos and as the bearers of Yiddishkeit and strive to improve ourselves.

Dear yidden who are on many different paths -

I am uneasy with this approach. *Not with the facts* - I **agree 100%** with everything said above - technically speaking. Where I differ is in the *approach*. That is, how these facts are *used*, specifically when applied to *addicts*. I have written about this before and actually first posted my story on this website (Guard used it in the webpage later on) in hopes of communicating this *one* point that made a real difference for me in recovery. It apparently irks some folks and, well, . Eilu ve'eilu is a two-way (or 70-way!) street, you know... W/Hashem's help it'll come out the right way:

I do not intend on criticising *anyone at all in any way*, just to bring to light what some holy, beautiful, and truly loving yidden may not be at all aware of. Misphrasing things in a way that hurts is an accident and **please correct me if I do**. I love you and hope it helps, not hurts c"v.

Yes, we are special. Sha'arei Kedusha basically opens w/this fact and posits that the lack of recognition of how wonderful it is to be a yid and to carry such a high, ancient, and beautiful neshoma, is at the root of falling to aveiro. Yes, it's true.

And yes, thinking of ourselves as "sinners" carries great risks. We carry so much baggage regarding that label. It may mean to us that "it's all over" and be depressed; we may give up and do worse things; we may lose emunah in Hashem's Power, Love for us, and in His Wisdom; and our chances of growing/fulfilling our potential may then be quite poor, etc, etc.

But it seems to me that some people, especially frum yidden, tend to throw the baby out with the bathwater on this one. Here is what I mean:

I am sick. I have a progressive, fatal disease. It is also chronic. It does not *have* to kill me, as I am in remission because of my medication. But I need to take it correctly for it to work. We know of many people who have this disease and successfully live full lives nonetheless. Mine has been full since getting my treatment and, as my wife told *me* yesterday, life is getting better every year. It'll probably stay that way as long as I don't take the credit. Cuz taking the credit would really mean I have stopped "taking the meds".

You know what I'm talking about. It's sexaholism, lustaholism, call it what you like. Surviving it isn't a "challenge" for me, it's not about being on a "higher madreiga", and it isn't very pretty, really. But it's the truth.

Did Hashem love me fifteen years ago? You'll say "YES!". Was I "special"? You'd say "YES!". And I agree. **And by the way**, *while* I was special, I was also teaching a shiur and then leaving to the red-light district to act out. While I was special I was also hooked on a seven year-long telephone relationship with someone I wasn't married to, and while Hashem loved me I made many secret rendezvous to see people who definitely didn't love me at all but *looked* like they did, to me. Just plain nuts...really.

And if you asked me to stop, as my neshoma did, I'd have told you (as I told *it*) "You *know* I will tomorrow, I HAVE to quit!!". It was the same torture many of you know too well. What was I doing? I figured I just really sucked at serving Hashem, and was a first-rate "sinner". In actuality, I was truly serving *myself* in the temple of lust, carefully using the instructions the p* industry had taught me. To me, this is not just a cute moshol, it's the truth. Why am I reviewing this?

Because I believe that as long as a person is *truly* struggling with his YH, he is really lucky! There are s'forim, shmuessin, nigunnim, etc., all there to help him fly right. **The overwhelming majority of people fall into this category, I believe.** They need to employ every aspect of Toras haTeshuvah to be saved from lusting and acting out their lust, to learn how to live lives with progressively less shmutz and be the holy yidden they are meant to be. And they may learn a lot from addicts, too - even the really "bad-off" ones.

However, once a line is crossed enough times and the "struggle" becomes an addiction, I believe a person actually becomes ill. There is little evidence that he will get cured. It is not a matter of hashkafa/machshava - take it out of the library, please - it is just a matter of experience the addict comes to. I had a theory that addicts are like Par'oh (see RMB"M hilchos teshuvah) but all this is irrelevant, in my opinion. (Some may disagree here, and I respect that 100%) I believe it is then time for what is now revealed to have been a saucy and ecstatic

teshuva game, to end. That is, unless he *enjoys* being road-kill. *I do not mean* he then ought *give in* to the desire **at all**. I mean that the addict needs to bite the bullet and get the help he *really* needs - in my case it was actually working (*not studying*) the steps, SA meetings, and a sponsor. In any case, it means living life differently (ie. not really the same!)....before his *disease* changes it drastically **for** him.

If you are with me so far, then you understand why romanticising the struggle of a guy who is truly an *addict* by referring to it as an epic struggle with his YH, can perpetuate the pathetic slugfest indefinitely. In some cases it may be all that is needed, fine. But promising a shining light at the end of the tunnel for someone who actually, truly believes that *Lust* is his best friend, may be cruel. Why? Because he simply will not believe you *inside*. Would *you* in his shoes?

Somehow this idea has been misconstrued as an insult. How, I do not know. I do not mean this in any way as an insult to yidden who are addicts. **Once the point was reached when I believed I truly had no ability to control myself, (though had no idea why or how) all that the "YH/teshuva approach" really left me with was guilt.** In most cases, encouragement to **fight** for K'vod Shomayim and for the beautiful life a yid deserves to have, is the greatest meleches shomayim and love for a yid. And reminders of Hashem's love are indispensable in this struggle against the YH. But there are cases, like mine, where a yid sees that he has an illness. "Normal people do not do anything like this stuff!" They see that it has taken control of their lives and that it has been getting only worse, never better (step 1). **These people need to be allowed to say they are truly mentally, physically, and spiritually ill.** In my opinion, they (as I did) interpret their failure with using standard Torah concepts of teshuva as proof positive that they are *inferior*. And that is a total lie. A yid who is an addict is not inferior at all. In fact, addiction often comes with a powerful sensitivity that is valuable, a striving for perfection that needs to be learned how to live with. But for one caught in it and left with the "standard YH model", no "self-esteem talks" from Rav Twerski will convince them otherwise. I am a loser - when it comes to lust. In my opinion, *we simply do not have the power to "win", and won't - until we are allowed to admit the illness and to learn how to **live** with that fact.* If they are told that "don't worry, (per RMB"M in 8-perakim) *everyone* who does aveiros is ill! Join the club," I believe these people may not get the medication they need and will take their families down with them. This probably happens frequently. You read about it on "Yeshiva-thingie.org" or whatever it's called...

Furthermore, if after a short period clean, these yidden are convinced that they are ready to live as others do and resume the struggle because they are better, (after all, per RMB"M: been with same whatever, wherever, etc, and not "sinned" is teshuvah sheleimah and won't go back, right?) these guys fall hard and **keep falling hard until they realize they are really sick, not bad.** For decades, I thought I was *fine* in the head and it was only my *body* that was screwed
I won't belabor this point further.

Just one more thing: The goal of the path I am referring to is definitely 100% only closeness to Hashem and learning to live with a clear hakorah that Hashem is with us. It leads to freedom from the aveiros, with Hashem's help. It leads to discovery of our gifts and the fact that they came to us *through aveiros*, makes them even more precious. It was the *last* place we'd have thought to look for Hashem!! But he was there. Can you see a difference in approach here? The route is very different to me, though the goal is similar.

Love,

Dov

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Re: Where I'm at

Posted by battleworn - 13 Aug 2009 17:14

PS. Anyone who read this whole megillah must be a tzaddik, of some sort

Dearest Reb Dov,

I just read your long post and since you were apparently making refernce to me, I want to reply. First of all I want to say that I think you expressed yourself very well and I don't see anything in your post that's insulting to any people.

I do have two comments:

1) There are many different definitions for the word addict. Apparently R' Twerski calls anyone that acts against their better judgement an addict. I know that you mean someone who's really far gone. If you feel that an addict needs a cetain approach and that certain things are damaging for him; and you feel that it's important to inform people of this. Then perhaps you should clarify who exactly is in danger.

2) I think it's of crucial importance to point out, that you did not find the Torah approach while you were suffering. What I mean to say, is that from all the people that you went to, none of them were able to give you the kind of Torah stuff that GYE does. On the other hand, while I don't know if I am considered an addict by your definition; I assume that Mevakesh, Ykv Schwartz, "Me", Bardichev, Jack, MD, Noorah B' Ammram and many others, are considered addicts (and if not, then noone on the forum is). And they have all done very well, with the help of this wonderful forum, without considering themselves losers etc.

So *lechora* your comments should be directed only to people that don't have the GYE - Torah option. If you disagree, I'll be happy to hear why.

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Re: Where I'm at

Posted by Dov - 14 Aug 2009 00:01

[battleworn wrote on 13 Aug 2009 17:14:](#)

Dearest Reb Dov,

I just read your long post and since you were apparently making reference to me, I want to reply.

Yes, I was calling you a tzaddik too, Battleworn. :D

Apparently R' Twerski calls anyone that acts against their better judgement an addict. I know that you mean someone who's really far gone.

Yes, and I was really uncomfortable w/R' Twerski's extension of the 12 steps to anyone who acts against their better judgement. I believe the *last* thing the 12 steps is, is another "self-help program", or "support group". In my experience, it seems to be an *ego-busting* program, if anything. A getting myself-out-of-Hashem's-way program, too. I just wonder why a person who is "just sick and tired" would seriously feel *the need* to seriously start putting lives and care completely into the hands of Hashem (a *real* 2&3 is the *only* 2&3) or accepting that their character defects are really the *only* reason they are ever upset at anybody (otherwise what is #4 really for?), etc.. So, I'm skeptical if he's watering it down. Nu, but he knows a whole lot more than I do. And I'm not an expert, just an addict with **one** man's experience. Maybe I'm just being selfish? It wouldn't be the first time!

Then perhaps you should clarify who exactly is in danger.

I do not really know, Battleworn, but my heart tells me that anyone who has struggled with lust for years and feels they have lost, and nevertheless wants to get free of it (w/o suicide) *can* use the 12 steps. Does it mean they'll succeed? I don't know. But many do. Can they use what people refer to as "Torah", and make it? Well, I am again skeptical. And for the same **exact** reason that I think many folks **who use the 12 steps** don't make it: They are not really ready to be completely honest with themselves. They entertain ideals, and mistake the ideals for what they believe. They really still believe they need lust/alcohol/cocaine/gambling... Or they don't really allow themselves to believe in G-d. Or they aren't desperate enough in their own failure to care for themselves to give G-d a chance to care for them.

Is it *dangerous* for them to try yiddishkeit? No, but just as "spouting program" (pontificating) will do them no good at a meeting, talking Torah ideals they do not really have the capacity to accept, is just a game. Torah should not be a game. Neither I" should recovery concepts - they make them "weaker" for that person, harder to use. They think, "well, / know that!" (typically steps 10, 11, and 12!), and they don't even know they are *sick* (1), yet, or that *their* faith in Hashem has simply and actually **not** been one that works at all, yet (so they need help w/2&3). That's all I have to say. If you can help me get it all a bit clearer in my head so I'd say less crazy stuff that just ruffles feathers, please do.

I think it's of crucial importance to point out, that you did not find the Torah approach while you were suffering.

No, but I thought I did...

What I mean to say, is that from all the people that you went to, none of them were able to give you the kind of Torah stuff that GYE does.

If I have learned anything from being here, it's that I need to lighten up (from b., shlit"a), and that: It is not the *Torah* (nor I" the program/step) that changes an addict , **but how the addict understands and uses it**. I don't believe a human has the ability to get the meaning **into someone's head**. An addict is just plain deaf, until he/she is ready to hear. All we can do is keep yacking away until *someone* who is ready to "hear" really listens! That's just my opinion.

On the other hand, while I don't know if I am considered an addict by your definition; I assume that Mevakesh, Ykv Schwartz, "Me", Bardichev, Jack, MD, Noorah B' Amram and many others, are considered addicts (and if not, then no one on the forum is). And they have all done very well, with the help of this wonderful forum, without considering themselves losers etc.

I believe their success is purely because they were ready to **hear**. The question I have for you is: How do you define GYE Torah? Something an early addict in recovery has heard before and was attached (by *us*, the addict) to tons and tons of guilt, like "Hashem wants better from you", or "it's all sheker vechozov - the YH has nothing for you" - even though it is all 100% true - may tell the guy: hey, these guys are saying the same thing my 12th grade rebbi told me! Why bother.

AAs used to focus on telling *their own story* to the addicts who came to them. When the prospect would see that this guy really understands, they'd open up. Then they'd share their solution. That's hard to do in this venue, no?

We end up sometimes putting the cart before the horse, giving advice, telling, rather than sharing. It's not our fault - maybe there *is* a way to really share our solution w/o "telling". But that is very hard to do with Torah. Torah is the truth, period. Ultimate Truth just doesn't lend itself to "sharing", does it?

It's possible, but doing it that way looks very different from the way it is usually taught. It should be that way, because Torah is a *responsibility*, not only a tool. We are trying to offer it *primarily as a tool*, and that is rather new, I think.

So *lechora* your comments should be directed only to people that don't have the GYE - Torah option. If you disagree, I'll be happy to hear why.

That's why. I don't think I disagree with you, I (and we all?) just have some problems that need attention, that's all.

Love,

Dov

PS. I just read #3 and laughed my head off, though Pinteleh's probably right on! Then I read Tomim's post and now just don't know. What I *do* know, is that Uri has a lot of more important things to do than make more tzoers for himself. ILU (i love uri)

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Re: Where I'm at

Posted by battleworn - 16 Aug 2009 14:41

Dearest Dov, thank you for your reply.

I believe their success is purely because they were ready to hear.

Great! So the big question is, who's ready to hear. I believe that the overwhelming majority of the posters (perhaps all of them) are ready to hear and ready to turn their lives around. Do you disagree?

Actually since you posted your original comments on Uri's thread, let's take him for example. Do you think that he is an addict who's not ready to hear and change? Do you think that he needs to be warned against using the very tools that have been working so well for us here on this holy network?

Yes, of course it's hard for him to let go of lust! But don't you see where things are headed? Just like rest of us, he is coming to realize that "It's either me or the lust -either I go the way my Neshomoh is pulling me or the way my guf is pulling me; otherwise I'll get torn in two!"

His withstanding Thursday night's test was *Limaalah miderech hateva* by all standards. How did he do it?

The answer is because he's in touch with his Neshomoh! And when a Yid is in touch with his Neshomoh, he's close to Hashem!!! This is the kind of guy that you find around here! This is what's been happening on this holy forum and it's only getting better and better!

This is the source of the bardichev style simcha and this is what makes us The Chabura of Winners. I agree with you, R' Guard and R' Twerski, that if someone can't make it with the winner approach, then it's time to try the loser approach. But I just wish that we could pool our resources more, to improve on the winner approach.

The question I have for you is: How do you define GYE Torah? Something an early addict in recovery has heard before and was attached (by us, the addict) to tons and tons of guilt, like "Hashem wants better from you", or "it's all sheker vechozov - the YH has nothing for you"

It seems like you haven't had a chance to read the vast material on this holy network. For starters I would highly recommend the GYE Attitude. The experience until now has been that everyone who reads it feels that their eyes were opened to a whole new world. (If you read it and didn't feel that way then you are indeed the exception to the rule) I know that you read the Torah Tavlin chabura, but maybe you should read it again.

I love you so much and I hope we can clear up the lack of understanding between us. I think you are a tremendous asset to the GYE network; you have so much to offer and you are so good at giving it over. I just ask of you to recognize what's going on over here. Look what pure Neshomos make up this holy chabura. These guys have fallen so much and tried so much but they still come shining through. Not only don't they give up, but they display such tremendous power and willingness to do whatever it takes. **They are ready to change their lives around from being self-centered and *gashmiusdig*, to being "Hashem - centered" and *ruchniusdig***

Personally I believe, as Norrah once wrote "all the Jews who come to this makom kodosh want to stop...even if they themselves don't know it!!...." And if we spotlight the Neshomoh of the person and appeal to his good side it will shine forth in all it's strength! And I have good reason to believe this.

With tremendous love and respect, battleworn

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Re: Where I'm at

Posted by the.guard - 16 Aug 2009 18:11

Dearest Battleworn, the more powerless we admit we are, the more we **"need"** Hashem. And the more we "need" Hashem, the more **connected** we are with Him. Our neediness of Hashem is the very *Kli* that lets him in. (See Chizuk e-mail #262 on [this page](#). What do you think of that vort?) That's why the Zohar says (Balak) that the *Teffilah Le'ani Ki Ya'atof* - the teffilah of the Ani is the most powerful, and it "delays" all other teffillos, it breaks through all doors and comes right before Hashem... The purpose of step 1, admitting powerlessness (admitting we are *losers* against lust) is **only to lead** into step 2 and 3, which are "a complete reliance on Hashem". So even if someone is *not* a level 3 addict, they can benefit from this approach, because it is a Yesod in the whole Torah. So why should we be afraid that someone who is not a "real" addict will attempt to use this concept in his avodah?

And let me take this from another perspective as well... Even if someone **was** able to *beat* the Yetzer Hara of lust, like you, Mevakesh, Nura, Bardichev, and the other Tzadikim, but they still have a Yetzer Hara for other things, right? The Yetzer Hara is the "ego", and only the biggest Tzadikim manage to completely subdue him. So even if we aren't "losers" against "lust", we are still "losers" against the yetzer Hara in general. And we always *will be*, until we accept the words of Chazal - that "*Ilmalai ozro, lo yuchal lo*" - and throw ourselves onto Hashem's care with complete abandon. The Ba'al hasulam calls the yetzer Hara by it's scientific term: the "ratzon lekabel". And he explains that until we don't have a proper "hakaras hara" - which grows as we make progress - we don't have a proper kli for *aniyas teffila* against the Yetzer Hara. As we

So why should we have a problem with this word "loser"? I think you are perhaps just afraid that others might "misunderstand" the connotations of the word. But as soon as we tell them that the "loser" aspect of step 1 is only so that we can be ready for step 2 and 3, it takes on a whole new meaning. Indeed, this is the *only* truth about the Yetzer Hara ultimately. We are losers against the "ratzon lekabel" - because Hashem created us with it - it is our entire essence, and there's **no way** we little mortals can reverse our *TEVA* **unless** Hashem does it for us. And He won't do it for us as long as we still think we're winners. Because *why would a "winner" really need Hashem to do it?* And without the *need*, there's no *Kli*. And you can't fill up a cup that's full.

Rabeinu Guard, I think it's a pity that you answered for Reb Dov. He can speak for himself better than anyone else could. You know very well that we have no disagreement on the need for every addict to turn away from "???? ???? ?" and give Hashem his whole heart (see "Torah Tavlin"). I was referring to what Dov means by loser and Dov's version of the 12 steps. If the word loser means something else to you, that's your business.

see reply #81 on this page rehab-my-site.com/guardureyes/forum/index.php?topic=430.75 That is also hinted to in the ?? in Yisorel. Hashem and us are inseperable.

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He is already in us.our neshama is a peice of Him.**We just gotta let our neshama pull us towards Him.**

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Re: Where I'm at
Posted by the.guard - 16 Aug 2009 20:51

There's no such thing as "Dov's version of the 12-Steps", nor is the word "loser" Dov's word. He is simply taking it from the 12-Step literature and philosophy.

There is no disagreement here, it's all semantics....

See my reply to someone [here](#). I fully agree that we can't get to a true *kli* without first doing everything within our power. But at some point, we *will* come to realization that we can't on our own - whether it's with lust or with the "ratzon lekabel" in general. We can't beat it on our own. But the only way to get this hakara and this "kli" is if we have tried everything humanly possible first. So of-course, hishtadlus is a must.

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Re: Where I'm at
Posted by Dov - 16 Aug 2009 21:57

Guard/Battleworn - I may not have made up the term loser against the YH but I sure am one. When all is said and done, we all seem to fall short. I believe that standing up to the YH and/or surviving an addiction is too tall an order for **me**. You seem to be discussing what the Torah tells us about these issues.

The Torah itself is surely the Solution, for everything. Nevertheless, *this approach itself* is the weak link in any Torah-based approach. If my first concern is: "What does *Hashem* say about this?", I may have boxed myself hopelessly in. Because I'd be relying only on *my understanding* of what the Torah says; or even only on *my understanding* of what the tzaddik is telling me (if in person). Ultimately, **for some addicts**, the turning point may need to come down to a stripping away of all their ideals. Of what the Ratzon Hashem is and of what is right or wrong. They violated all that, or know that they *would*. The game is over and the emperor really has no

clothes at all. **They have been separated from their ideals for a long time but suddenly realize that there is nothing out here!**

So, the only thing that really matters at the breaking point of recovery is: survival. That is my opinion, because it was my experience and I make friends mainly with other addicts who understand what I am talking about, even if they didn't fall asleep at the wheel because of acting out and almost get killed like I did. **Now, I admit that for me, b"H, survival included being a part of the Jewish people and having a connection to my concept of Hashem.** But the real loss of that had to truly *mean* death to me, in order to work.

That is when I got desperate, for me me me. I would be a total liar if I'd have thought it was for k'vod shomayim. Because if I were really truly concerned for k'vod shomayim, then why was I acting out so much? I see this frequently in the recovery rooms. New guys come in and say, "gee, you guys really pegged me, but I'll be OK because you say the answer is G-d. And I have a G-d already! Bye!" They surely do not do well, and frequently return - if they are lucky, cuz they wouldn't have acted out so much had they really "had G-d" in the first place. No - the start of my recovery was 100% **for me**. And *that* is why i *really* called for help - and got it. I did not give up on living (defined, of course: as a Jew) at all, rather, I totally gave up on doing it **my way**. As proof (though I didn't realize it was proving anything) I let go of myself and went to *other people*. I followed directions of other people. Not what *I* interpreted was the right thing to do. They were sick people who I knew could understand. B"H they just opened me up to my self. And I think I'm getting better, slowly.

I lost at doing it *my way*.

Shockingly (and the fact that it was a surprise is important) the Answer was all about the one thing I was most vexed about: Relating to Hashem directly. The biggest boosha was how far I was from Hashem all those years, how I had turned my back on Him, rejected and failed at His values, eitzos/mitzvos.

And yet now, the solution was: Nu. Talk to Him. Go to Him. *Don't ask questions, just go to Him.*

Now, if you had told me "dov, just put the magazine down and go to Hashem, He's right here for you even in gehinnom!" five years *earlier*, I'd have told you that I was already *with* Him, (after all, I was davening, etc., no?) just doing a really poor job of it.

Why can't someone get this in GYE? They should be able to, I guess. It may depend on lots of factors. For me, it's about desperation, giving up on "leaning/depending upon my own binah" (Pirkei Avos), and realizing that things really can't continue this way and I have no power to change them, at all. I have **no one** to turn to (*least* of all, me!), only Avinu Shebashamayim. Help me Tatty!!

This is different than being "sick and tired".

I hope this megillah was helpful to somebody.

Love, Dov

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Re: Where I'm at

Posted by Noorah BAmram - 17 Aug 2009 03:34

On the other hand, while I don't know if I am considered an addict by your definition; I assume that Mevakesh, Ykv Schwartz, "Me", Bardichev, Jack, MD, Noorah B' Ammram and many others, are considered addicts (and if not, then no one on the forum is). And they have all done very well, with the help of this wonderful forum, without considering themselves losers et

I've thought about this question many times, as to my bonafides as a certified "addict" and I don't have a clear answer even to myself (perhaps the self is not the one to discuss it with for)

I joined a 12 steps group more than once and couldn't come right out and say "my name is Noorah and I 'm a sex addict"! I knew that if I did say it, then I was just saying it like

As to the GYE forum- one of the strongest things that it does for me is the fellowship aspect, plain and simple the chizuk that I get and give to all the holy chevrah on the forum is priceless!

Another area where the forum keeps me sober, is the accountability aspect, the fact that if G-d forbid I do have a fall, having to come here and admit that I Noorah fell will be very difficult and

GYE also keeps me focused on recovery, I spend a lot of time here (sometimes I wonder) and this goes along way in combatting any dangerous feelings of complacency that crop up after periods of sobriety!

I'm not even sure who I'm addressing, dov, battelworn, guard, - but if you read my post then to "self is an addict in denial! Who knows

With love to all

Noorah

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Re: Where I'm at

Posted by battleworn - 17 Aug 2009 05:30

Reb Dov, thank you very much for reiterating that. What you call the watered down version of the 12 steps, is basically what R' Guard is referring to. That is R' Twerski's understanding of the 12 steps and it is just a question of semantics if you want to call it "The 12 steps" or Torah. They -of course- don't have any problem with the Torah attitudes that you discussed in your original post . His definition of the word loser is also what you would call the watered down version.

Are you going to answer my questions ?

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The crux of the issue

Posted by battleworn - 17 Aug 2009 10:05

{This post belongs on top, but I don't know how to get it there.}

As many of us know issues about the 12 steps keep coming up on and off for many months already. My feeling is that the problem lies in lack of clarity and lack of clear communication.

I feel very strongly that we have only three choices. Either we clear this up once and for all, or we choose the 12 steps or we choose the Torah approach.

Parts of this post were removed.

Last week Dov posted on Uri's thread something that really touched upon the crux of the issue. A discussion started for the umteenth time but it's obvious that we now understand each other much better than before. Uri asked that the discussion should be moved off of his holy thread, so I'm moved the posts to here.

REB DOV, PLEASE CORRECT ANYTHING THAT I MISREPRESENTED!

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Re: The crux of the issue

Posted by the.guard - 17 Aug 2009 20:15

Dear Battleworn, I am sorry that I had to remove part of your previous post, but I am afraid that some of the things you wrote could be understood wrongly by those who could be helped by the 12-Steps, but because of what you wrote there they may decide *not* to try them. I am sure you understand.

I feel very strongly that we have only three choices. Either we clear this up once and for all, or we choose the 12 steps or we choose the Torah approach.

You're right, so **let's clear this up once and for all.**

As we have been emphasizing many times in the past 150 Chizuk e-mails or so, there is absolutely **no contradiction** between the Torah approach and the 12-Steps, and they can and **SHOULD** be used **in conjunction** with one another. The 12-Step yesodos are all about Emunah, living with Hashem, trusting in Hashem, learning true self-honesty, and being **selfless**. And a Jew who is lucky enough to be forced to internalize the 12-Steps will often find the Torah approach - and his entire yiddishkeit - to be much more real and meaningful; i.e. he will often start to discover that he was a Jew only on the outside, but now he will start to really "feel" Hashem and the Torah ideals internally as well ... (this could occasionally - but *rarely* - cause a slowing down in Mitzvos at first, as the layers of "fakeness" - "hypocritical" and "route" fall away as the **real truth** about himself is revealed to him).

I do not really want this discussion to continue anymore. Neither Rabbi Twerski, nor anyone else on the forum, nor any one of the approx. 700 members of the Chizuk e-mails, seem to find any contradictions between the 12-Steps and the Torah. Rabbi Twerski even wrote a whole book called "Self-Improvement? I'm Jewish" based on Jewish sources... and he writes at the end, "now turn the page and read the 12-Steps, it's the same thing"...

So Battleworn, **please continue** to inspire us with your derech, because you are doing a tremendous job and inspiring many people, and your approach is the *SAME* derech in essence, with only some minor variations in semantics. For example, the 12-Steps uses the word "loser" to describe the acceptance and recognition that only Hashem can help us, while in the "Torah approach" you call that very same thing "winner" since we always knew that only Hashem can help us... (We "knew", but did we really "feel" it?) Anyway, is there a big difference? Not at all.

I don't see a *To'eles* in the continuation of this discussion/debate. (Feel free to PM Dov though). **GYE views the 12-Steps as an important set of tools and principles to help us make our Emunah, Bitachon and "living with Hashem" more real, and how to get out of "self-centered" thinking. Period.** (And this in turn, can not only help us break free of the addiction, but it can take our Yiddishkeit to a new - and much more "real" level as well).

With much love and respect,

Mr. G

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Re: The crux of the issue

Posted by Efshar Letaken - 17 Aug 2009 21:50

Outch! :'(

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Re: The crux of the issue

Posted by the.guard - 17 Aug 2009 21:57

I just saw a Gemara somewhere, on the Pasuk "*Heim Yedabru Es Ha'Oivim Ba'shaar*" - that Talmidei Chachamim become like "enemies" to each other when they battle out the *Milchamta shel Torah - Lisheim Shamayim*, but then they are again closer than ever, as the pasuk says "*Ve'es Va'heiv Besufa*" - the Torah brings love in the end...

;D)

I know Battleworn means Lisheim Shamayim, and I hope I do too (at least I can't imagine what personal gain I have for promoting the 12-Steps! I never was even part of a 12-Step group). Therefore, I am sure that this will only end in more love and respect for each other.

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Re: The crux of the issue

Posted by Ykv_schwartz - 17 Aug 2009 22:40

(Easy for me to say this, when I got the last word in and closed the discussion, eh?)

[guardureyes wrote on 17 Aug 2009 21:57:](#)

I just saw a Gemara somewhere, on the Pasuk "*Heim Yedabru Es Ha'Oivim Ba'shaar*" - that Talmidei Chachamim become like "enemies" to each other when they battle out the *Milchamta shel Torah - Lisheim Shamayim*, but then they are again closer than ever, as the pasuk says "*Ve'es Va'heiv Besufa*" - the Torah brings love in the end...

kiddushin 30b

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