

Where is Hilchos Addiction?

Posted by mifatfait - 16 Feb 2012 23:44

I have a question. I may not be fair but it bothers me anyways, so I want to ask.

We know that everything is found in the Torah, not just halachos and hashkafos but also the ??? ?????. The Rambam devotes much of hilchos daas to midos and ????? ?????, as well as in Moreh Nevuchim and ????? ????? and more. All of the greats concentrated much effort on teaching us the about the ??? ???? , how the ??? ????? should and shouldn't look (The Ramchal, Gr'a, R' Yisrael Salanter, etc.). And not just theory, but also fixing things that went wrong. It's all there.

What I would like to know is if and where in the works of the Rishonim or Achronim we find the concept of addiction as a illness that requires a special method of healing, different than the standard approaches that work for everyone else. True, all the 12 steps have there source, but what is the source for the source of it all, the basic attitude of addiction as a sickness? Where is Hilchos Addiction?

Please let me know what you think.

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Re: Where is Hilchos Addiction?

Posted by Reb Yid - 23 Feb 2012 03:45

Hi Gesher!!

Thanks for reminding me of what i once said. I reread it, and I was very impressed!! I was only on the forum for 1 month at the time, and I wrote a piece like that? If you could see me now, I

Hatzlocha!!

Reb Yid

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Re: Where is Hilchos Addiction?

Posted by mifatfait - 23 Feb 2012 06:34

About my question of wheres Hilchos Addiction, like mixed up and gesher i also don't understand the argument of why we don't ask about halacha before sinning - Hashem gave us th Y"H who blinds us and also the Torah to teach us how to deal with him, and I'm still certain that "a source for the source" can be found in the Torah. A quote from the ?irst edition of Mesilas Yesharim (?????? ?????, ????? ?????? ???? ??' ?? ??????):

see there for the full context and a lot more on this, he even discusses how improper thoughts must be looked at from a Torah perspective (and thats what wer'e here for, right?)

However, Reb Yid made a good point that since all the yesodos are in Torah one can view the steps as a tried and true arrangement of Torah concepts that work to free from addiction, and as to where Chazal address the issue directly I can worry about later (see Even Shlomo in my last post here).

has always helped to deepen the perspective, delving to the depths of an idea can help us live it. At least for me.

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Re: Where is Hilchos Addiction?
Posted by Reb Yid - 23 Feb 2012 19:27

mifatfait wrote on 23 Feb 2012 06:34:

has always helped to deepen the perspective, delving to the depths of an idea can help us live it. At least for me.

I think I can explain what Gibor meant. If this is not what he meant, then please take this as my own opinion.

I believe it depends on the reason why you want to understand it. As Gesher reminded me, he was very bogged down at the beginning of his recovery because he needed a certain level of understanding *in order* to work his recovery. In other words - the lack of clarity was keeping him from attempting to correct the problem the right way. Such an attitude is very dangerous, and will definitely slow down recovery. (B"H, Gesher figured that out before it was too late!! Maybe)

I believe that this is what Gibor was referring too.

On the other hand, if someone has admitted to himself that he needs help, and has dedicated himself to working a program whether he understands it or not, then for him, understanding would be a tremendous asset as it will help him work his program more correctly and with more enthusiasm.

This is what I believe you are referring too.

Hatzlocha

next time he'll listen to me sooner! :
Reb Yid

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Re: Where is Hilchos Addiction?

Posted by gibbor120 - 24 Feb 2012 18:29

True Reb Yid, but I think it goes much deeper. It's a control issue. Much of our addiction is

because of our **ego**. We want to be in control and call the shots. We become liberated as we let go, give up control, and let G-d control our lives (he controls it anyways whether we let him or not). If we **MUST** understand before we take any sort of action, we are keeping the control. We **CANNOT** recover until we give up control. I know It's paradoxical, but it's true, we get control by giving it up.

Make any sense? I think part of the problem is that it doesn't make sense until you do it. For

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Re: Where is Hilchos Addiction?

Posted by mifatfait - 26 Feb 2012 21:53

That's very good, gibor.

To subdue ourselves and listen to others is one of the most important things, I think I remember seeing somewhere that needing control is a trait of the addict, so recovery is to let things slide. someone who will only do it once he understands it. well, sadly he never takes the first step. Maybe the one day at a time idea can help, because for this second only everything is a lot simpler.

But after it's all said and done, I still want to know where is Hilchos Addiction. Just 'cause I'm bad. So I've been researching a bit, got some half cooked ideas. But thanks to all you guys I'm not so desperate, I feel comfortable enough to start as is.

MB

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Re: Where is Hilchos Addiction?

Posted by mifatfait - 04 Oct 2012 22:03

I think I now know why there is no Hilchos Addiction anywhere. Cause my addiction has nothing to do with my relationship to Hashem or His torah. It's a sickness like all other sicknesses, that which lusting for every female I see is an avaira is completely circumstantial, hey, alchoholism and all the others are addictions just the same - with no Torah prohibition whatsoever.

So if I want to get truly sober and recovered it's not gonna be cause the Torah told me to, but

because if I don't my life is gonna go in the garbage. If I have an infection I take antibiotics not because the Torah prescribed them, but because I don't like being sick

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Re: Where is Hilchos Addiction?

Posted by E-Tek - 04 Oct 2012 23:20

I learned from R' Berkowitz to treat Vilo Sosuru as "the addict's mitzva".

In short, the mitzva calls for identifying areas in which one lacks control, identifying where a person tends to start down a slope, and applying two steps: A. Avoid it, (G.Y.E.) and B. Deal with the problem at the source by changing your attitude towards it (that's what nederman is trying). However, without successful application of A, B will never work. We need to figure out how to apply A, and that's where this website and/or 12 steps come in.

I have a more in depth class I personally gave on Velo Sossuru (5 recordings) as part of shiurim I gave on The Six Constant Mitzvos. If you want them, PM me an email address.

Edit: I don't have recordings of R' Berkowitz addressing this precise topic, but he discussed it in Artscroll's The Six COnstant Mitzvos in the last mitzva.

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Re: Where is Hilchos Addiction?

Posted by nederman - 05 Oct 2012 01:07

You are wrong about the avoidance, if you purposely "avoid" you make yourself into more of an addict. A person who has recovered does not run from the averah. He maintains mindfulness so as to choose not to do the averah.

Today I went to the gym at work. I got on a treadmill and there was a half naked woman next to me. I had to remind myself that I do have a choice. That's all.

It's a subtle difference but it's like day and night. I think the keyword is indifference.

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Re: Where is Hilchos Addiction?

Posted by E-Tek - 05 Oct 2012 03:18

Maybe. I feel a person shouldn't be indifferent to a mitzva, and Lo Sosuru literally says NOT to look, so that means to feel that you can't. We may not be disagreeing here, who knows.

But, as the Vilna Gaon says in Even Shlomo, one must do whatever is necessary for his own shleimus, within the guidelines of the Torah, and if one needs indifference in order to stay clean, kol hakovod. I know whatever I'm doing hasn't had too much long term worth, so...

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Re: Where is Hilchos Addiction?

Posted by nederman - 05 Oct 2012 09:50

You cannot see the difference because it's humiliating to realize that you think of yourself as worth nothing except for your performance as a Jew. And that belief is the same thing that makes you want to lust.

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Re: Where is Hilchos Addiction?

Posted by rebdovid - 05 Oct 2012 15:45

Perhaps someone can explain the basis of this idea that addiction is a sickness.

Where does this come from?

Is this based on science and medicine? I believe this is not a clear issue. There those in medicine who would strongly disagree.

The belief that we have bechira is one of the yesodos in yiddishkeit, it would be nice to have some of our Rabbonim to agree that this belief doesn't go against Yiddishkeit, and I am not talking about Dr. twersky but gedoley Torah.

"Ein Chodosh tachas Hashemsh" There is nothing new as far as addictions are concern, human nature is the same since Odom Harishon, in fact you can trace addiction to Chet ets hadaas. There needs to be a direct link to Torah when it comes to this belief that we have no choice.

There is one source I know of that speaks about the lack of control addiction, in Tanya Chapter 17 the Alter Rebbe explains that a Roshe loses his freedom of Choice, to me that sounds like an addict.

But I have yet to find a source that says it a sickness not in science and not in Torah, so other than the 12 step program this idea is not based on strong foundations at all.

As far as seeking a program that works, it's a known fact that the 12 step program doesn't work for all. You can see for yourself.

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Re: Where is Hilchos Addiction?
Posted by Dov - 05 Oct 2012 17:19

Of course the 12 step program does not work for everyone!

And how many very messed up and uncouth - or even really bad - frum yidden do you know? I am not talking only about the secret masturbators and porn-hiders, but mainly about the liars, abusers, and very selfish people among us. There are and always have been quite a few. So obviously Torah does not 'work' for everyone, either. This is not a hashkofah problem, just a fact that everyone knows. Mesiras nefesh is a big part of keeping Torah - in the program we translate that exactly - mesiras nefesh is surrendering of my self-will to Hashem. ("Nefesh" means "self-will", as in Avraham Avinu to bnei cheis - "im yeish es nafshechem"; and "mesirah" is giving over - surrendering).

The fact that many do not get sober in AA, SA, NA, etc., proves nothing about those tools any more than bad Jews prove anything about Torah. Torah is still Torah, and perfect. It is still just stuff in a book until it is used right. And that takes motivation and siyata dishmaya.

But Torah 'works' much more often for people to be *good people* if they are really *trying* and *do not let go of it*. And l'havdil, it is the same for the 12 steps and many other tools. And if a person uses it honestly and consistently - even when it is not comfortable, it often works.

I assume we agree on all that. If not, let me know please.

As far as the disease thing, i will agree with you on your reading of Tanya and will be glad to speak it over on the phone, but think it is a topic that is best not posted here on GYE, of all places.

All these things are just philosophy, and have little to do with actually recovering. Recovering happens when I start to take real action - not when I start to 'understand' things. Just like Torah, l'havdil, the ones who are obsessed with "mah ksiv boh" never get Torah. It is not just Torah that they do not get - it is also a wife, children, and real life. Having to know everything and understand everything about those things leads to never committing to marriage, never actually engaging in parenting, and never really living. I think.

Hey, can you PM me *if* you want to talk?

- Dov

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Re: Where is Hilchos Addiction?

Posted by rebdovid - 05 Oct 2012 18:47

Dov,

Torah is not just a tool but it's a vehicle to touch the Divine to connect with Hashem. As a side benefit we may become better people, therefore even if one is a bad person he should still bentch lulov and esrog.

Why shouldn't we discuss the very foundation of the 12 step program here from all places? Why can't we frum people get a hasskomo from a godol and possek on whether this is a decease or not? How do you define a decease? When is SA become a decease? These are critical questions.

The only thing I was taught not to question is the Torah and what our Rabbonin teach us. So yes we are desperate people since we cannot control our behaviors so we look for answers and solutions, but the answer must be according to our scared and dear Torah.

Looking forward to hearing from you,
Dovid

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Re: Where is Hilchos Addiction?
Posted by nederman - 05 Oct 2012 19:03

Torah comes after derech erez. Derech erez is accepting reality. If the best thing in your life is sex right now and a guy doesn't accept that he is going to become an addict. Torah is for people who prefer life to death and happiness to pain.

Check out orange-papers.org for a contrarian view on 12-step program.

I think 12-step is shooting too low these days because I have seen how much better cognitive therapy is, but at the end of the day you should do something that works. It all boils down to what beliefs you want to keep and which you want to work to change.

Watch out that if you don't have a plan you will end in SA.

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