

Yetzer Hara VS. Addiction - Which is it?

Posted by needtoquit - 31 Dec 2012 21:20

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I'm not sure if this topic has been covered in depth but it is something which has troubled/interested me almost since first joining GYE. Which is it that you struggle with? The Yetzer Hara or the Addiction? And how can you tell?

From reading the forums carefully it is clear that many of you have formed opinions about your own struggle, whether it is with the Yetzer Hara or addiction. This has lead me to believe that it truly could be either and there are those fighting both present among us.

However, how does one tell about them self? How do I know if it is the Yetzer Hara who pushes me to act out or an addiction?

I think we can all agree that the answer to this question is vital because the treatment varies depending on it. So, does anyone have any ideas about how to distinguish between them? Does anyone **know** which one they suffer from?

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Re: Yetzer Hara VS. Addiction - Which is it?

Posted by jack - 31 Dec 2012 22:50

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here is my 2 cents.the yetzer hara is a general term that represents the force that exists inside every single one of us that tries to get people to veer from the course that Hashem wants us to travel.in addicts, the yetzer hara has been fed a tremendous amount, until it became a thick rope.it started out as a little string.but everyone was born with it.it depends how much you feed it.if you feed it a lot, it becomes an addiction.if you keep it hungry, it stays a thin string.if you feed it enough, it will kill you, literally.and that IS THE job of the satan - to kill you.that is the job that Hashem gave to the satan - to try to kill people.if you feed it even though you will get in trouble, you are an addict.if you feed it and you can't stop feeding it, you are an addict.if you are going to lose your job,family, etc, and you STILL feed it, you are an addict. if you can stop, you are not an addict.for example, i have no urge to smoke marijuana - i am not a marijuana addict.i have no urge to drink - but alcoholics do.i am not an alcoholic.but i DO have the urge to watch you-know-what.a very strong urge.and i have this urge during davening, learning, in fact all the time.i fed this yetzer hara for 38 years.i am an S & L addict.it is only through GYE that i have learned to control it.not get rid of it, but control it.

did this answer your question?

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Re: Yetzer Hara VS. Addiction - Which is it?

Posted by gibbor120 - 01 Jan 2013 01:18

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What are you doing now to stay sober? Is it working? If it is - great! If not, maybe you need to try something else. Keep it simple. Pondering the nature of addiction in depth will not get/keep you sober.

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Re: Yetzer Hara VS. Addiction - Which is it?

Posted by melost - 01 Jan 2013 20:03

I think you are thinking too much - I think

addiction this is the first thing we need to know we are sick and have a illness called sex addiction

avrohom

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Re: Yetzer Hara VS. Addiction - Which is it?

Posted by me3 - 01 Jan 2013 21:36

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I think your question as an important one and I've given it much thought.

*Yetzah Hara* is the self destructive urge for immorality, addiction is the effect that this has had on us and how it has warped us.

Personally I look at it from the context of an *aveira*. P & M or whatever you struggle with is clearly a sin. It is also an addictive behavior. Therefore, in order to accomplish *azivas hachet* which is necessary for *teshuva* it is helpful to follow a program designed to overcome addictions. If such a program happened to have been designed by a non-Jew so be it, it's irrelevant. It is just a tool to accomplish *azivas hachet*.

Dov likes to look at it as a sickness which is also true because we have trained our minds to respond these things. We are not normal in that respect. Once we can achieve some sense of normalcy, we can look towards doing a complete *teshuva*.

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Re: Yetzer Hara VS. Addiction - Which is it?

Posted by needtoquit - 02 Jan 2013 09:15

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[jack wrote:](#)

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did this answer your question?

Thank you for your thoughtful response.

My question is more on the in between stages. I think we can all agree that at the point of losing

ones job, family, etc. one is unequivocally an addict. I also think that we can all agree that the first time a boy has the desire to look at something he shouldn't he is not addicted. What I am looking for is some clarification about at what point during that lengthy journey into addiction one is "addicted". Because as you say it is all about how we feed our Yetzer Hara which makes him into an addiction.

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Re: Yetzer Hara VS. Addiction - Which is it?

Posted by MBJ - 02 Jan 2013 16:04

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I don't think there is a black and white line that you cross that goes from baal tayva to addict. It is a process. It is also a very personal line that everyone must determine for themselves.

Ultimately, whether you are an addict or not depends on firstly, to what extent will you go to feed your lust and how much does it control your life, and secondly how hard is it to try to break away from it.

I have found in my journey thus far, that I am someone who lusts too much but not a lust addict. Like someone who drinks more than he should but is not an alcoholic.

my \$0.02

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Re: Yetzer Hara VS. Addiction - Which is it?

Posted by chaimcharlie - 08 Jan 2013 13:01

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I pondered this question for close to a year - right from when I found GYE. When this Rosh Hashanah I masturbated in the bathroom an hour before Tekias SHofar, I knew that I need more help, whatever my correct label is or not. So I joined SA and have been sober ever since, one day and one miracle at a time.

Many, many times I wonder/fantasize if joining SA has been the worst decision of my life, all these "goyish" haskofos, and all sorts of other ridiculous questions (all usually as an excuse to go back to my beloved drug). But then I remember how only the very best of my own thinking got

me in this mess to begin with, hey, that's all i did to try to stop for 10 years. So i better take a chill and continue doing the simple, stupid things that work.

Hatzlochoh!

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Re: Yetzer Hara VS. Addiction - Which is it?  
Posted by reallygettingthere - 12 Jan 2013 01:20

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[needtoquit wrote:](#)

Thank you for your thoughtful response.

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Keep in mind that someone can be a functional addict as well.

The fact that they can get by only makes it harder for them to recover because they think, "hey, I'm not an addict I'm getting by"

Is that how you want to live your precious life, just getting by?

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Re: Yetzer Hara VS. Addiction - Which is it?

Posted by the.guard - 13 Jan 2013 17:24

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Yetzer Hara is when we would "like" to do something wrong. It sounds tempting. And if we're presented with the opportunity, it is hard to resist... That's all a standard Yetzer Hara.

Addiction, on the other hand, is when we feel we "need" it. When we feel we can't live without it.

The tools of GYE and the 12-Step program are designed to give us **freedom** from the addiction. Freedom from that desperate "need" that makes us feel we simply cannot live without it... But we'll always have a Yetzer Hara, even those who are "free" from the addiction for years.

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Re: Yetzer Hara VS. Addiction - Which is it?

Posted by moish u.k. - 14 Jan 2013 18:05

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I used to ponder this question, but i don't anymore. Today the question i must focus on is, what works?

I am fortunate to have met people with many years of recovery. If i want their solution to work for me, then i've got to do what they do. If they achieved their recovery by believing that they have an addiction which they are powerless over, then this is the hashkofo i take on for myself.

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