

Tryin'

Posted by cordnoy - 23 Jun 2013 09:41

Shalom

I am in my 40s married with children

Recently, I decided to get help on a serious level with my addiction .

My mind wanders and the tayva builds.

It would be easy to blame this on the lack of excitement in marriage intimacy, but I had done this at times before marriage, and at times, when marriage bedroom was good, I'd still fall. Perhaps it still is the reason, but marriage stuff is probably not gettin' better anytime soon.

I have more to write, but as this is my first post, id like to hear some suggestions first please.

Thank you so much

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Re: Tryin'

Posted by cordnoy - 20 Sep 2014 00:17

DMS123456789098765432123456789 has requested not once, not twice, but 1234567890 times that I should provide the answer before Shabbos, for otherwise, he is throwin' his free will into the chollent, so to avoid that.....here goes:

The truth is that there's nothing to get excited about, and as we shall soon see, R' Shlomo Volbe says that this question is founded on what he calls "a complete mistake".

Here are the words of the Mashgiach, R' Shlomo Volbe, who qualifies for us what free will is, and what it is not:

Source-See R' Volbe in Alei Shor, volume one, p. 156

"It is clear from this that free will isn't something that is on the daily schedule of a Jew. Rather, free will is a trait that needs to be learned and acquired....and it takes a lot of work to be able to have "free will"....

We are able to acquire this trait with hard work, and that is why we are held responsible to learn it. According to this concept, we have arrived at a major idea in how to relate to ourselves and to other Jews-we should relate to ourselves and to other Jews as if they have no free will, and that their behavior is governed by his natural temperance, education, habits, and interests....

The great Rishonim indeed teach us that the idea of "free will" is the cornerstone for the whole Torah, and no one argues on this. However, a mistake leaked out amongst the simple Jews of our nation that "free will" means that any Jew has the power to choose good or bad, yes or no, in any situation that ever occurs-and this is a complete mistake."

According to R' Volbe above, who bases himself on Rabbeinu Yonah and R' Yisrael Salanter, Jews do not have "free choice" automatically.

"Free choice" is something that needs to be learned, and maintained throughout one's life by learning mussar, prayer, and working on one's self. Therefore, any Jew who has not yet learned "free will" simply doesn't have "free will". This doesn't mean he can shoot and steal and do whatever he wants-because as R' Volbe also mentioned, every Jew is responsible for learning how to choose freely.

It comes out that according to R' Volbe, an alcoholic Jew may not have free will to stop drinking, and at the very same he is obligated to do whatever he can to find and learn "free will" so that he can eventually stop. Interestingly, this is exactly the intention that AA authors had in step one. Celebrated AA advocates say "You may be powerless over your addiction but you are responsible for your recovery" (Source-see Carnes, "A Gentle Path through the 12 Steps", p.7). This is also taught by R' Avigdor Miller, who explains that it is possible for a Jew to lose free will in one area while still having free will in another area. In our case R' Miller would say it is possible to lose free will over drinking, but still have free will to join AA or seek other forms of help (Source-see Lev Avigdor, Sha'ar Habechira, siman 4, paragraph 43).

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Re: Tryin'

Posted by cordnoy - 20 Sep 2014 00:26

Scary stuff!

This was news to me.

I will try to look up sources over Shabbos.

Sheez!!!

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Re: Tryin'

Posted by Gevura Shebyesod - 20 Sep 2014 01:27

And I didn't start the rhyming thing anyway...

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Re: Tryin'

Posted by lavi - 21 Sep 2014 02:57

thanks for posting all the above.

Hey i know I said I crave attention but...
It is a toeles for me, and, I think a lot of others.

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Re: Tryin'

Posted by dd - 21 Sep 2014 03:24

Cordnoy i have a question on this matter,

Why is powerless against the idea of bechirah b'chlal?

The whole idea of powerless doesn't mean its not possible to over come. It means i'm powerless of doing it on my own. I myself can't overcome the addiction. But with help from hashem and the other steps i could. This is something we see in chazal too. ?????? ????"? ??????

???? ???? ?? . Many times in chazal and in the seforim hakdoshim we see the idea that a person can do nothing on his own even good or bad.

In the deeper seforim like R' Tzodak Z"l sfas emes etc we see that even the good we do we aren't really doing.

Maybe i'm missing something if you could please explain.

Thanks Avraham!!!!

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Re: Tryin'

Posted by cordnoy - 21 Sep 2014 06:30

Well, I wasn't gonna go out of order, but once DD asked his question and mentioned this Gemora, I will skip to a later portion where R"T quotes R"T:

We cannot complete this discussion without bringing Rabbi Twerski's favorite Gemara on the topic. Rabbi Twerski is fond of quoting the Gemara (source-see Kiddushin 30b) which says "the evil inclination of man becomes stronger than him each day and tries to kill him...and if God did not intervene and help out, there would be no way for the man to overcome it [the evil inclination]". The Maharsha and Iyun Yakov explain that this Gemara is actually referring to a righteous person who truly wants to do the right thing, and nonetheless, the evil inclination is so powerful that it is actually impossible to overcome him without Hashem's aid (source-see Maharsha and Iyun Yakov in Kidushin 30b). So what is this Gemara teaching us? That even people who have free will and truly want to choose good are powerless! Understand the chidush of this Gemara because it is a great chidush! Is there any better source for "powerlessness" than this?! I suppose that is why Rabbi Twerski is so fond of it.

This powerlessness over the evil inclination is certainly true of the wicked people who have no strong desire to overcome their evil inclination. This is supported by several other chazals, vian kan makom liha'arich.

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Re: Tryin' to Rhymin' (thanks Gevurah)
Posted by skeptical - 21 Sep 2014 07:17

I, too, don't (anymore) see being powerless as taking away free choice.

The way I see it is like an allergy.

Someone who has a peanut allergy is powerless to peanuts. No matter how much he may crave peanuts, he must stay away, because once he partakes, he is powerless to the reaction, and it may kill him.

Some of us have an allergy to lust. It's not good for us, no matter how much we may think we like it, we must stay away, because if we partake, our body and mind will get stuck on wanting more and more and more, until it takes over our lives.

We have the free choice to indulge or not, just as the guy with the allergy has the choice. But we are aware that we are powerless to the effect it has on us.

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Re: Tryin' to Rhymin' (thanks Gevurah)
Posted by dd - 21 Sep 2014 09:32

Thanks cordnoy and skept!!!!

I know this is a whole sugyah. But it think for the time being its not even so relevant. The main thing is i need to do what works for today. Right?

Cordnoy i'm trying not to do to much think. Actions are what count.

KOL TUV!!!

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Re: Tryin' to Rhymin' (thanks Gevurah)
Posted by Shmeichel - 21 Sep 2014 16:07

thanks cordnoy and skep

in my humble opinion you are so right

we are so powerless that the only power we are left with is to scream for help

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Re: Tryin' to Rhymin' (thanks Gevurah)
Posted by cordnoy - 21 Sep 2014 18:41

Continuation:

Once we are discussing ways to qualify “free will”, it is fitting to tell you what R’ Eliyahu Dessler famously says about it; this also sheds light on step one and closely resembles the idea laid down by R’ Volbe.

R’ Dessler coined a concept called “Nekudas HaBechira”, which means that a person always has a choice in every situation of temptation, but what exactly is the nature of a person’s “free will” will depend on the individual at that time, and with those circumstances; the nature of his free will may even change every day of his life.

According to R’ Dessler, free will is when a person’s level of truth meets face to face with his level of sheker, thereby creating doubt. In this place of doubt, where one can choose either way, we say that he has free will. Of course, it must be a situation where the person’s nature plays no role on choosing one way or another, because if so, then this again is not considered “free will”.

If I am correct, this teaching of R’ Dessler seems to mirror the words of R’ Volbe above.

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Re: Tryin' to Rhymin' (thanks Gevurah)
Posted by Shmeichel - 21 Sep 2014 19:54

gr8 words

is the choice of seeking help, equal to the burning desire of seeking addictive behavior?

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Re: Tryin' to Rhymin' (thanks Gevurah)
Posted by cordnoy - 21 Sep 2014 20:40

Shmeichel,

If the question was directed to me, please explain.

Thanks

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Re: Tryin' to 12 Steppin'
Posted by cordnoy - 22 Sep 2014 15:56

As we continue on:

R' Dessler gives several clear examples to illustrate his point-a Rosh Yeshiva will never take a gun and murder people in a shopping mall when he is angry. Therefore, in regards to murder he has no free will to murder. Similarly, an angry, disgruntled neurotic man with a loaded assault rifle in his car trunk will have no free will not to murder people after being laid off from his job. In either case, their nature will motivate them to kill or not kill.

Free will exists only be in a case where either the neurotic man or Rosh Yeshiva has a doubt about what to do, and choose one way or another.

R' Dessler continues to explain that as a person does teshuva, his level of free will moves up. Conversely, when a person sins, his point of free will moves down.

See R' Dessler in Michtav Me'Eliyahu, volume one, p. 10, p. 113, and volume 4 p. 95.

In either of the two extreme cases where a person does total evil or total good, they will also lose their free will entirely, and be subject to the whim of their evil or holy nature, and their free will is taken away (See Tanya chapter 17 who discusses this at length, and the Ba'al Shem Tov in Kesser Sheim Tov 152 who mentions this in passing).

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Re: Tryin' to 12 Steppin'

Posted by cordnoy - 23 Sep 2014 00:09

R' Avigdor Miller also says that by (Source-see Lev Avigdor, Sha'ar Habchira, siman 4, paragraph 53) using free will properly, Hashem gives him more free will; by misusing bechira to choose bad, Hashem reduces his ability to freely choose. This is exactly what R' Dessler says above about Nekudas Habechira.

In another place R' Miller writes that (Source-see Lev Avigdor, Sha'ar Habchira, siman 3, paragraph 27) because it is possible for a person to lose or decrease his free will, a Jew is therefore responsible to guard his ability to choose and not to lose it. Sometimes people place themselves in situations where they lose their ability to choose as a result, and they are responsible for putting themselves there, because it was their choice that they entered that situation. So although the Jew may not have free will once he is already in this situation, he is still responsible for walking into it. This is another place where R' Miller would say that it is possible that a Jew has no free will to stop drinking, although he may be responsible for creating the addictive cycle in the first place.

The point is, according to all these sources, it is possible for a Jew to have no free will over drinking or drugging and to be powerless to stop.

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