

Tryin'

Posted by cordnoy - 23 Jun 2013 09:41

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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' to 12 Steppin'

Posted by cordnoy - 28 Oct 2014 15:53

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Searchin' for answers, or for anythin' for that matter, I found this, from Dov:

But I didn't get better for years, even though I did all kinds of things to try to fix my sexuality and sexual morality...until things got worse and worse and finally after about 15 years of isolated struggling, found Sexaholics Anonymous and a real, live chevra of people openly staying sober working the 12 steps. Since then, I have been sober one day at a time and personally met hundreds of other frum yidden as well as thousands of gentiles, all with the same exact basic issue and all with the same basic solution.

People who see themselves as addicts and work the 12 steps, generally do not differentiate much between one addiction and another. I'd be perfectly comfortable in an AA or NA meeting simply introducing myself as "Hi, I'm Dov and I'm an addict," and have done that when no SA

meeting was available while we were somewhere on vacation, for example.

But more to the point, we generally do not see our basic problem - or our basic solution - as a sexual one. For this reason, none of the 12 steps addresses sexuality - or in the case of alcoholics, drinking. Instead, the only place drinking or not drinking is even referred to is the 1st step. After that, for the next 11 steps, we talk about sanity (step 2), about our relationship with our G-d (steps 3,5,7,11, and 12), and about self-honesty and our usefulness to G-d and others (steps 3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10,11,and 12). The steps and recovery is not about 'not drinking or lusting', and the sexual healing that definitely occurs in most cases, is just a small part of the journey.

And I want to say that while my wife and I have seen great healing and progress in all aspects of intimacy (including sexually), I don't see that as the main fruit of my recovery, by a longshot. It's overshadowed by my newfound sanity! And I mean that seriously, not being kitch.

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Re: Tryin' to 12 Steppin'

Posted by cordnoy - 29 Oct 2014 06:39

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Movin' on to Step # 7

7. Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.

Many people misunderstand this step and make a big deal out of nothing. They yell (I actually heard a Rabbi yell about this once!) "But what about free will!? Doesn't the addicted person need to take action in order to repent to Hashem? How can you just ask Hashem to take away your bad traits without doing anything?"

The real answer is that there was never any question to begin with. This is only a question when you isolate this step and forget all the other ones that go with it. It is as if the person asking this question has a sudden memory lapse and does not remember the fact that this 7th step is sandwiched between steps 1-6 and steps 8-12, all of which require enormous physical and spiritual work! Certainly, the Jew in a 12 step program takes an enormous amount of action in order to improve.

[And here is where the real fun begins.....]

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Re: Tryin' to 12 Steppin'

Posted by cordnoy - 29 Oct 2014 15:40

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The second question that the Jewish AA critics ask on this step is “even if you tell me that these Jews are taking a lot of action, who says that it is a Jewish idea that one can ask Hashem to take away from him his bad character traits?”

When I mentioned this question to one Rabbi he replied “the people asking this particular question don’t know anything!”

I think that the people asking this question may know something as opposed to nothing, but that the “something” that they know on this subject is not sufficient, because what they don’t know is that there are actually two different opinions on this, not only one. That is something important to know! I will explain below.

The ultimate question raised by the Jewish AA critics is this:

“If every Jew has free will to choose to do either good or evil, then how can a Jew possibly pray to Hashem about anything related to choosing good or bad? Surely, this prayer has no purpose and will not be heard because the Jew has free will to choose, and prayer cannot come and influence one’s free will? Conversely, if prayer could theoretically influence my ability to choose good or bad, then what then is the purpose of free will? ”

The answer to this question is given by dozens of timeless Torah sages. Let’s preface the answer by saying that this topic is the subject of debate (source-see R’ Moshe Feinstein, Igros Moshe Orach Chaim 4, response 40, paragraph 13 versus the Chazon Ish in the end of volume Orach Chaim & Moed, p. 516; see also Chovos Halvavos in Sha’ar Habitachon chapter 4 [see also Rashi in Megila 25a who may agree] versus the Avudraham on the prayer found in the end of Uva Litzion “viyaseim bilibeinu ahavaso viyir’aso” quoted by sefer Ohel Rama on Brachos 33b; see also Maharsha in Kidushin 81b and Moed Katan 28a; this is also brought in the name of the Chasam Sofer in Parshas Eikev in the paragraph “vi’amarta bilvavcha”, although my

Pashkez/Brooklyn edition does not have it-both sefer Ohel Rama on Brachos 33b and sefer Pardeis Yosef in Eikev 10, 12 quote this Chasam Sofer-perhaps it is in another edition than the one I own). You will find more sources for this below.

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Re: Tryin' to 12 Steppin'  
Posted by Machshovo Tova - 29 Oct 2014 23:30

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[cordnoy wrote:](#)

... this is also brought in the name of the Chasam Sofer in Parshas Eikev in the paragraph “vi’amarta bilvavcha”, although my Pashkez/Brooklyn edition does not have it-both sefer Ohel Rama on Brachos 33b and sefer Pardeis Yosef in Eikev 10, 12 quote this Chasam Sofer-perhaps it is in another edition than the one I own)...

This is in the 5-volume set (printed in Israel by Machon Chasam Sofer). Your Pashkez/Brooklyn edition is probably the 2-volume Toras Moshe.

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Re: Tryin' to 12 Steppin'  
Posted by cordnoy - 29 Oct 2014 23:54

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In the response I quoted above, R' Moshe Feinstein is of the opinion that prayer to Hashem to help one do teshuva is an ineffective prayer. R' Moshe bases this on the Gemara in Brachos 33b which says “everything is in the hands of heaven except for fear of heaven”. According to R' Moshe, the Gemara quoted is teaching that matters of teshuva and choosing good or bad is something that heaven does not meddle with-these are things that are entirely up to the individual so that he retains his free will status. According to this understanding of the Gemara, heaven could not begin to answer prayers about teshuva and the like, because if they did, then people’s free will to choose would become influenced by heaven, and this opinion holds that

such an idea is “bewildering” (that’s the word used by R’ Moshe).

According to R’ Moshe, step seven doesn’t do anything at all. It simply doesn’t work because “everything is in the hands of heaven except for the fear of heaven”. Don’t panic-we will explain step seven soon, just keep reading for now.

The Chovos Halvavos asked this same question one thousand years ago and gives an answer that supports R’ Moshe’s point of view. The Chovos Halvavos asks “why is David Hamelech asking Hashem so much to help him with his yezter hara? Why doesn’t David stop talking so much and just take action? If David has free will then let David simply choose to do good, and stop talking to God about it-leave God alone already?!”

The Chovos Halvavos answers that even though we all have free will and the ability to take action there are still two reasons to pray to Hashem.....

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Re: Tryin' to 12 Steppin'  
Posted by lavi - 30 Oct 2014 09:48

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thank-you for bringing up this topic and for the mareh mekomos.

i understand that there is even a discussion in the seforim about davening for someone elses success in choices, (although maybe it is less of a chidush there)

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Re: Tryin' to 12 Steppin'  
Posted by cordnoy - 30 Oct 2014 17:00

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My pleasure.

The Chovos Halvavos answers that even though we all have free will and the ability to take action there are still two reasons to pray to Hashem.

Reason one-Despite our free will we can still ask Hashem to remove from our surroundings the worldly things and situations that influence us to choose wrongly. For example, although we may have free will to not look at women in the street, we can still ask Hashem to arrange things so that we don't find any attractive women outside on our way today from the yeshiva to the Doctor's office. In other words, I can ask Hashem to influence the environment to be in my favor.

This is also the idea behind the prayer in the morning brachos "do not bring me into a test" (al tive'ani liday nisayon). This is also the reason why people like the Vilna Goan and Steipler suggested praying before walking outside of one's home that he should not see any evil.

Reason two-Even though we have free will to choose, we might be tired, confused, anxious, or not that physically strong. Therefore, we can ask Hashem to give us mental or physical strength to do a mitzvah. By asking Hashem for this, we can do the mitzvah better, more, or easier.

According to the Chovos Halvavos and R' Moshe, step seven would be better if it would say "we humbly asked God to help our wife make good food so we never get angry at her" or "we humbly asked God to heal our anxiety disorder which reinforces us to drink to ease our edginess". However, asking God directly to remove our shortcomings is not possible, since free will requires us to remove these defects on our own.

All this is just one side of the story.

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Re: Tryin' to 12 Steppin'  
Posted by cordnoy - 30 Oct 2014 17:00

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Re: Tryin' to 12 Steppin'  
Posted by Gevura Shebyesod - 30 Oct 2014 18:04

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So how do you explain Pesukim like " LeHatos Levaveinu Eilav..." or "Yached Levaveinu Leyirah...." where we seem to be Davening for Hashem to influence our choices?

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Re: Tryin' to 12 Steppin'

Posted by cordnoy - 30 Oct 2014 18:22

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[9494 wrote:](#)

Cordnoy Bshem Cholvos Halevavos

Reason two-Even though we have free will to choose, we might be tired, confused, anxious, or not that physically strong. Therefore, we can ask Hashem to give us mental or physical strength to do a mitzvah. By asking Hashem for this, we can do the mitzvah better, more, or easier.

According to the Chovos Halvavos and R' Moshe, step seven would be better if it would say "we humbly asked God to help our wife make good food so we never get angry at her" or "we humbly asked God to heal our anxiety disorder which reinforces us to drink to ease our edginess". However, asking God directly to remove our shortcomings is not possible, since free will requires us to remove these defects on our own.

Cordnoy, firstly thanks for bringing down these fascinating topics. Just a question on the second reason of the CH. Surely if we are asking Hashem to remove bad moods, and feelings of uncomfot we are in essence removing free will? I say this because if we are in a good mood and all is going well, we naturally don't feel desire to sin. Nobody feels a pull to sin after feeling awesome. Even if this isn't always the case, most of our sinning takes place under uncomfotable emotions, and by by praying for G-d to remove the bad moods, we at least loose a very very large chunk of bechira.

My pleasure.

As Rabbi Dessler says as well (more later), bechirah has a huge expanse...one can have a lot of bechirah and one can have merely a bit. Removin' the bad moods will help one make proper decisions.

I also would not assert that "nobody feels a pull to sin after feeling awesome." Firstly, the Torah



says otherwise: v'ram levavo v'shachachta es Hashem Elokecha...look at Meshech Chachamah as well regarding the obligation to bentch, based upon the Chazal that when one is haughty, he is 'alul le'va'eit.' As a matter of fact, I have found (and the chevra here can attest to it by my texts) that I have high trigger alerts after 'feelin' awesome.'

Thank you

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Re: Tryin' to 12 Steppin'  
Posted by cordnoy - 30 Oct 2014 18:33

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[Gevura Shebyesod wrote:](#)

So how do you explain Pesukim like " LeHatos Levaveinu Eilav..." or "'Yached Levaveinu Leyirah...." where we seem to be Davening for Hashem to influence our choices?

It seems to me that both reason can apply here; no?

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Re: Tryin' to 12 Steppin'  
Posted by gibbor120 - 30 Oct 2014 21:58

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I think I recall hearing once that davening for yirash shomayim is part of our hishtadlus, and that receiving it is not a "free" gift. So it's not "biydei shomayim" it's "our doing" so to speak.

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Re: Tryin' to 12 Steppin'  
Posted by cordnoy - 30 Oct 2014 22:46

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All good stuff; it's almost time to present the other side.

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Re: Tryin' to 12 Steppin'

Posted by cordnoy - 04 Nov 2014 12:20

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Takin' a break from the 12 steppin' and focusin' on the Tryin'.

We have been here now over 500 days.

It feels like day # 1....ain't that the truth!

What has been gained?

Streaks of 90, 130, 158, etc. are good signs!

Streaks, however, come to an end; that is a bad sign.

By the way, the definition of a streak has a beginnin' and an end; that is not good.

Lots of postin' helps....the poster and others.

Reading material is beneficial.

Groups, such as SA, Oink, Bonk, Phone conferences and others are very good as well.

Therapists and specialists put things in the proper perspective.

Openin' up to real people makes it real, and that is crucial for recovery.

The steps are a great tool for many people.

So.....Nu.....what's gonna be?

Ein hadavar taluy ela "bi."

**BI**-hatzlachah

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