

Tayva or addiction?

Posted by unanumun - 03 Apr 2014 05:50

I have been thinking a bit about this question.

While it is clear that there is an addiction as we all stress. (I still don't know about me personally but easy does it) On the other hand is the way I always looked at the problem wrong? Are the urges to look at P* and to M** not the yetzer harah of tayvah?

The truth is probably a combination. While the way to deal with the addiction is to battle it from an addiction point of view, I am wondering about the causes. I know that the oilam taynas that the whys are irrelevant rather focus on the whats and KOT. However, I feel i need to make sense of this. i have spent a lot of time in my life learning mussar and being in touch with what makes me work in many area of my life, so i keep coming back to these thoughts.

No one's addiction started on the first time they M** or looked at P***. I am sure there are plenty of people that have dont these things occasionally as teenagers and moved on. (Maybe i am being naive, but i can't imagine EVERYONE has these problems. I finally realized that I am not alone, but I can't imagine that everyone is like)

So some people have a bigger yetzer harah for loshon horah, some have tremendous nisyonos in shmiras shabbos, some have a hard time learning, and yet others have nisyonos in emunah, and the list goes on.

Every neshama has their tikkun in life, and based on that, the yetzer harah fights him in that area so he can be metaken that area. Additonaly, his life experiences and family background set him up for that tikun to be made. some people nebach grow up in poverty and some nebach spoiled in wealth.

So why is it davke us that were exposed to P* and m* in the various ways that we were? Because that is what we have to have a tikun in. so it definately starts out as a yetzer haroh of tayvah, which is stronger that the average persons yetzer for tayvah.

we all realized at one point when we were younger, "wait this is asur, i shouldn't be doing it." that is when our bechira started. perhaps had we started to misgaber more at that stage many many years ago, we could've conquered the whole thing then. (It definately would have been easier and taken alot less effort) but we didn't. perhaps we didn't have the keylim to do so, or perhaps we didn't want to. but that is the yetzer haroh.

so once we were oiver more and more, slowly we turned into addicts. some people get caught early on and their circumstance causes them to wake up when they younger, some later on, and unfortunately some will probbaly take this addiciton to the grave with them. I think that Hashem creates for every individual person the set of circumstances that wake him up and get him to work on it and find their way to GYE. Each person gets his wake up call when Hashem decides it is time to wake up. maybe it is based on siyaata dishmaya, maybe tefilos, maybe zchus avos but Hashem wakes us up. For most of us by pushing us into a position of rock bottom.

it might be that the reason everyone still has a hard time even after being clean for a long time is because the yetzer harah is still there. The addiction might be dealt with successfully but only once we get passed the first stage of getting over the addiction, then we have to get over the stage of conquering the yetzer of tayva completely.

so basically i think that there is a combination of the two.

Just some thoughts that i wanted to work through for myself and what better place then the GYE forum.

what do you guys think? am I saying devarim peshutim that everyone else also realized when they started the process? or i even totally off base?

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Re: Tayva or addiction?

Posted by mr.clean - 03 Apr 2014 17:39

Don't have much time to read the post in depth so I needed to skim through it but I like what u said at the end, once we work through the addiction part now we need to learn how to deal with the taiva, I know for me it became a thing that every time I had a desire for a woman I blamed it on addiction and that isn't healthy bec IT IS HEALTHY to have desires! That's how we were made. so yea one need find the line in which he is now in the realms of normal taiva and learn how to channel that and deal with that... well said and good point.

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Re: Tayva or addiction?

Posted by Machshovo Tova - 03 Apr 2014 18:37

R' Yisroel Slanter zt"l in Iggeres Hamusar klehrs a chakira, whether the yetzer hara is a physical 'koach hatayva' or a spiritual 'ruach hatumaah'. He concludes that it is a combination of both.

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Re: Tayva or addiction?

Posted by melost - 04 Apr 2014 13:36

I have an illness called sexolism its like any other illness I have a shortage of dopamine in my brain I could only recover when I realized that the yezer horah is for normal people (normal people have a yezer horah they might act out but they are not obsessed with it they can stop they don't waste hundreds or thousands of dollars on it)im sick and I cant fight it

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Re: Tayva or addiction?

Posted by gibbor120 - 04 Apr 2014 21:08

Yes, pondering the nature of addiction will not bring you any closer to sobriety, but I'll offer my 2 cents anyways.

The more a person gives in to his taivah, the more difficult it is to give up. (that's it in a nutshell)

(shhhh don't tell dov). (actually when Dov says, there are no 'levels of addiction' - he simply means that the person who "only" masturbates can be an addict, and the guy seeing prostitutes, may not be. The "type" of acting out is irrelevant to the question of addiction)

Back to our story... The more a person acts out the more difficult it is to stop.

An addict is just someone who has crossed the threshold of using "self-control" to overcome his acting out. Someone whose life is being impacted negatively and wants to stop, but finds he cannot. Someone who cannot stop on his own, but needs outside help.

I know this is not too scientific, it's just a guideline, and it has been and will be debated forever.

Anyway, I don't wish to engage in any lengthy debates, but that's my opinion for whatever it's

worth.

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Re: Tayva or addiction?

Posted by unanumun - 06 Apr 2014 23:45

Machsovam I looked it up again. It could be that there is a parallel to the two aspects of Reb Yisrael's chakira, although his tzad of ruach hatumah is really in general and not just aveira specific, but definitely there is a paralel.

melost, that may be true for you (and many others of us) but be'ezras Hashem you will get your medical cure to your problem, but the yetzer hara of tayvah will remain with us even after that point, but hopefully it will be a yetzer harah of a normal problem and you will be "super" normal in your ability to fight it, after putting in such an effort.

gibbor, I wasn't trying to belittle the addition aspect, but as everyone is saying in the forum, you are never cured, on that point perhaps we can get cured and then learn the tools to fight the regulat yetzer that we failed on the first round.

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Re: Tayva or addiction?

Posted by Dov - 07 Apr 2014 01:49

Wow, what a yesodiesdige discussion, unanumun. Your sincerity is clear, and the way you frame the issue shows you have spent a good deal of thought on it. I thought it over for about 15 years and am occasionally tempted to do it again. But the Torah says *lo sasuru achareo levav'chem*, so I do not, b"H. And I am clean for 17 years, one day at a time so far today and not in fear. Figuring it out obviously does not work for me, but rather leads me to *persist living in the problem* instead of in the solution. It takes great humility and temimus for me to even get close to letting go of the shayloh you are asking about and all that thinking and figuring. But it is well worth it. I generally live in the solution, today. It seems that trying to think my way out of it is the way I keep living *in the problem* instead of in the solution. Oy, that was such a hard concept for me to accept! It took so much failure, time, and pain.

So if I only had a single day to be with you before we left this world or whatever, I would (of course) not continue it. I respect and care for you too much to watch you stepping in quicksand. So our discussion would start very differently and simply. And I ask you know to please just respond if you are able...as follows:

So, when exactly was the most recent time you ended up masturbating yourself or looked at naked people on-line or did whatever it is that you do when you act out your lust, chaver?

And the talk we would then have would go on from there with *me* admitting to you the truth about my *own* experience, and the talk would expand into honesty instead of shame, clarity and connection instead of 'enlightenment', unloading the pekkle instead of adding the weight of chochmes...and we two would move into recovery with Hashem's help.

I see this happen a few times a *week*, in person. And none of the parties involved are therapists or life coaches looking for business. It is free, simple love for a fellow addict (or possible addict) and simply real. Emess *m'erez* titzmoch.

I think *that* is the one thing *R' Yisroel* would ask first if he met you in private (which we all ostensibly are in, here on this virtual forum!). For the middah of emess and clarity of communication are the basis of everything, rather than intelligence, the right information, or even knowing more Torah.

So?

I would be glad to answer any question you posed to me, but is it OK to open up about this for a little intermission in the discussion you have going here, unanumun?

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Re: Tayva or addiction?

Posted by unanumun - 07 Apr 2014 02:14

Dov, despite my short time on the forum, I expected such a response from you at some point as I was writing the initial post.

I understand what you are trying to say. However, you may be right, but as you said it took you 15 years to make that realization. Yes, it is true that it is good to learn from others' mistakes, however may I suggest that the realization came from a progression from thinking about things and coming to a clarity.

So while I am new here and still trying to get clear of what's going on in my head, i have some inner need to put these issues into the rest of the framework of who i am and what makes me tick, and as in other aspects of Avoda Hashem, I have helped myself in understanding what it is that I am up against.

I didn't open the thread as a means of curing myself, rather as a way of clarifying my thoughts in a place that I am able to have an open discussion in these topics.

I have other threads that i started as a means of actually helping myself deal realistically with my problems. There I talk about honesty and clarity.

So as I see it, aderaba, THIS thread is my intermission.

If you feel that it is harming others and distracting them, feel free as the administrator to lock or erase the thread. I think I already accomplished my mission for myself here on this thread.

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Re: Tayva or addiction?
Posted by cordnoy - 07 Apr 2014 02:29

I am a new guy here ...relatively, but I also agree (although I engaged in some of it in the beginning) that all this thinkin' doesn't really lead to anythin' positive (at least to me); I would just circle the wagons.

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Re: Tayva or addiction?
Posted by TehillimZugger - 07 Apr 2014 03:53

[cordnoy wrote:](#)

I am a new guy here ...relatively, but I also agree (although I engaged in some of it in the

beginning) that all this thinkin' doesn't really lead to anythin' positive (at least to me); I would just circle the wagons.

Sure it leads to something positive. It leads to a very positive view of myself. It leads me to imagine that now I understand the whole inyan and I'm an expert and my opinion is worth something. It leads me to believe that someone like me who understands everything so well doesn't need to follow the directions of those who travelled before me. Really Cordnoy, How could you not see all that?!

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Re: Tayva or addiction?

Posted by Dov - 07 Apr 2014 08:55

[unanumun wrote:](#)

Dov, despite my short time on the forum, I expected such a response from you at some point as I was writing the initial post.

I understand what you are trying to say. However, you may be right, but as you said it took you 15 years to make that realization. Yes, it is true that it is good to learn from others' mistakes, however may I suggest that the realization came from a progression from thinking about things and coming to a clarity....

Oy, no. That's not accurate...and it is not even what I meant.

First, I see this expressed here frequently, so let me just say that just because a thing is known by a guy with 2, 5, 10 or 20 years of sobriety time, does not mean that what they are saying is something they just figured out after all those years! But that's just an aside.

Second, 90% of whatever conscious gifts (insight) I have been given ***I never figured out at all.*** They just occurred to me in the natural course of working real recovery when G-d decided it was time for me to get them. They were recognized after the fact. And that's also an aside.

Third, the *insights* themselves are not so precious to me. Rather, it is the growth that *enabled me to be a k'li (so far) for the insights* is what is so precious to me. This is a major point that few seem to grasp. When you wrote that my insights were the product of fifteen years of thinking, you demonstrate that you are coming from an entirely different perspective on that. One that just is not the way life really is, at least for me and many sober guys I know. If I have insights they were not the product of thinking, but the product of getting beaten to a pulp by my own behavior again and again. But please, if you can think your way out of this habit and it really works, kol hakavod! I just doubt many here will actually do that. Instead, many just condemn themselves to a longer, more insidious descent into stupidity and ugliness, like in the 15 years I was referring to above.

So let me take a step back now, and explain

but as you said it took you 15 years to make that realization.

that those 15 years *were the 15 years **before** I became sober*, not the first 15 years of my recovery, at all. They were ages 20-35...when I tried yiddishkeit, mussar, chassidus, psychologists, lots more masturbation, more psychologists (3), working on sholom bayis, rabbonim (4 or 5), saying lots of p'sukim, visiting Rebbes, more mikvah with and without tikkun klali, more mussar, going away to EY for two years, marriage (with lots of sex of course), kiruv rechokim, and therapy *with and without* medication - all to try and finally control this thing...and all to no avail. And let me be clear: even our *masturbation* was often just to try and control it - because sometimes we were weary of fighting, and sincerely felt that the only way to finally feel truly free of the bitter struggle and obsession even just for a while - was to get it over and give into it (please see the Nuclear Reset Button).

During the latter 11 of those 15 years, I was married. I was then an active sexaholic not yet even *close* to recovery. The most important issue on my mind was not getting caught...and the second most important issue on my mind was how to quit and stay clean (of course, impossible). Naturally, marriage just made my problem sicker and worse. I was terrified when it became evident that sex with a real woman (my wife) was never going to solve my hunger...in fact *no* one woman could. But I did not see *that* yet...

And as I said before, it was not understanding that brought me to my knees and to being ready to do whatever it would take to never act out my lust again - rather, it was just plain suffering. I had to get beaten down, there was no other way for me. My ego was just too big to admit defeat.

Finally I got sober out of sheer fear, and within a week was directed to SA in order to *stay* sober (sober in SA means never having sex with myself [masturbating] or with anyone other than my wife). Somewhere during the first 5 years of *sober* time, I saw most of the things I share here. Maybe it was in the first year, maybe later on. But more and more basic recovery concepts jelled for me as the years *sober* went on and they still continue be"H. I still understand very little - but I am sober and life is great nonetheless. For **understanding does not bring sobriety. It is sobriety that brings understanding.**

And I would gladly trade all the understanding I have and will ever have of recovery, for today's plain sobriety.

This is the main thing I am here to report, and it is the opposite of what you keep writing. Instead of *thinking* ourselves out of this problem and into right living - the experience of addicts on 12 step recovery is that we can only *live* ourselves into right thinking. And by 'live', we mean taking actions of sobriety and recovery. Those actions are attending regular meetings, getting and using a sponsor, and honestly working the steps one day at a time.

But that takes a bit of humility...or enough humiliation. Otherwise the brain keeps on trying to 'master' the lust and our sexuality in order to 'make us get sober'. It seems to be insulting to our intellect to make it follow our sobriety. Nu. But it's a living...

Sobriety and honesty with other real people that brings sanity and honesty with ourselves. The other way around just does not work for us.

And I submit that it has not worked for you, either - rather, I suggest that your path of thinking is precisely what made you the frum sexual compulsive guy who sits in that chair posting for help on GYE, in the first place. In AA they say, "Our very *best* thinking is what *got* us here." No shame, there. It's just the way it is.

A very hard thing to accept. Especially for frum guys, who have a ready excuse that can 'separate' the problem from ourselves: blaming it on G-d by saying it was not me and my
But after a while passes in sobriety, maybe six months to a year, we begin to see that the problem was never in our penises, but in our minds. A whole new world...very far from the old temptation/sin/good-bad thing. And it works.

Is this making any sense at all, chaver?

- Dov

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Re: Tayva or addiction?

Posted by metalking - 07 Apr 2014 23:56

I'm pretty new here but was priveleged to learn something quite interesting so please allow me to share it with you all.

Firstly, it seems no matter the addiction, sex, porn, drugs, alcohol, etc, the 12 steps seem to work for all of them just replacing your specific struggle in the big book and 12 steps with your addiction. i.e.- we replace "alcohol" with "porn/sex"

To me, (and feel free to correct me), the 12 steps and the Big Book seem to be an exercise in negation of SELF. Indeed, those words are in several of the prayers in the book. Negation of self is humility. Additionally, lots of the others steps that are suggested for healing are humbling, which is another negation of SELF. Having to go to a group and admit to others that we have a problem, giving over our control to Hashem etc are all humbling, or negating of one's SELF.

This makes sense because addicts have for lack of better words, "damaged senses of SELF." Dr. Bentzion sorotzkin, in many of his articles on these topics, (www.drсорotzkin.com/) points to problems with SELF over and over again.

I, myself, admit to arrogance, self-centeredness, disconnection from others, selfish behaviors, all problems with SELF.

So here's my point/punchline: Everyone thinks of the Yetzer Hara as the Evil Inclination. Thats

actually a very Christian-influenced translation. The Hebrew root word is "Ra" made up of "reish-ayin." "Ra" doesn't mean "bad/evil". The same root "ra" is found in the Hebrew word "ro-eh", a shepherd, and "Rei-ayhu", a friend. Are friends and shepherds inherently bad? No, rather what "Ra" means is "piece" or "SELF"!!! A person is your friend because you see a piece of your self within them. A shepherd is gathers all the pieces of the flock together. This is why they have the root "Ra" in their words.

Similarly, Lashon Ha-ra is called such because speaking it causes relationships to break into pieces. It pulls people apart.

Your Yetzer Hara is not the Evil Inclination, its your SELF inclination. Addicts have to use therapy to negate their SELVES in order to fight this tremendous Yezter Hara, inclination to SELF!

(Full disclosure: in the spirit of the Talmud, I wish I could remember the name of the Rabbi who's DVD shiur I watched on Lashon Hara who explained what "Ra" meant to all who watched.)

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Re: Tayva or addiction?
Posted by Dov - 11 Apr 2014 21:31

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Re: Tayva or addiction?
Posted by metalking - 12 Apr 2014 00:55

You're welcome. If you'll allow me, I'd like to address a point I've seen you make about which works for curing this disease (of Arrogance/aka Extremely strong Yezter Hara.)

You said, and I paraphrase, "Torah doesnt work for wackos like us. the 12 steps taught me

Derech erez and Derech erez kadma l'torah."

This disease is not about Lust and Sexual Addiction, those are effects. The cause of those effects is Arrogance. The Torah and mitzvot are exercises in humility so they should cure Arrogance. The problem is that Torah and exercises are SPIRITUAL exercises. If your kavana when doing them is in the wrong place, then keeping the Torah and mitzvot just leads to stronger Arrogance i.e. - worse acting out!

If your kavana is in the wrong place, then learning Torah is about being the big shot in Yeshiva or learning for an intellectual exercise. I'm so smart- I chahpped that Sugya.

If your kavana is in the wrong place, giving tzedaka becomes about I'm such a Tzaddik, I'm such a generous person!

If your kavana is in the right place, Torah learning is about learning how to act properly in life. Its about humbling yourself to the Sages of the past and admitting they knew more then we do. Its about recognizing the awe-inspiring beyond genius of Hashem's Torah and the way He runs the world.

If your kavana is in the right place, Tzedaka becomes a humbling statement of "This is not my money, this is Hashem's money and its my responsibility to share it with those who need it more than me!"

Assuming you agree so far, the question becomes, then why did Hashem create the 12 steps? the 12 steps are a default solution for those unable to see past their own arrogant thinking. When you have to go in front of "perverted" strangers and admit your own perversions, you are by default humbled. Who can call themselves a Tzaddik after doing that? When youre lusting and you call someone and admit it to them and beg them to convince you not to masturbate, you are humbling yourself, admitting your weaknesses. Instant negation of Arrogance. Again, only temporary. which is why one has to work the 12 steps constantly. Just like Hashem instructed us to learn Torah and do mitzvot constantly.

Is that what Hashem wants? To torture us with Lust and acting out until we are forced to humiliate ourselves by admitting our perversions to others? Is there a way to save face, not have to go thru the 12 steps, and learn how to keep the Torah and mitzvot to learn humility / avoid arrogance?

The answer is Yes! The problem is the very solution!! And this is truly Hashem's greatness!!! The Lust is the effect, the cause is the Arrogance. So all one must learn to do (and it isn't easy) is use their own lusting to recognize when they're being arrogant in thought, speech or action.

Next time one experiences the Lust desire starting, stop and do a self-assessment. Say to oneself, "Hashem just made me Lust. I MUST be acting/thinking/speaking arrogantly somehow and correct it. Here on the site, we should teach examples of Arrogance:

Sadness = Arrogance - I'm unhappy with How Hashem runs the world, I know better.

Anger = Arrogance - I'm unhappy because MY GREAT EXPECTATIONS weren't met.

Worry = Arrogance - I don't see how Hashem is doing what's best and I need to know.

Fear = Arrogance - I don't see how Hashem is doing what's best and I need to know.

Depression = Extreme Sadness = Arrogance

I would be willing to bet most people would say they felt one of those emotions right before or at the time they were lusting.

One starts to lust, ask themselves, "Did I just learn some Torah and think I'm a tzaddik?" Did I just haughtily judge someone unfavorably for their actions/speech?

This is a tall order and requires a lot of effort and prayer to Hashem. One might try this technique and not be able to come up with a way he was being arrogant. At that point, you gotta start talking to Hashem. Say "thank you for this Lust. I understand I was being arrogant somehow but I can't see how. Please show me." It's amazing how often I do a prayer like that and the reason just pops into my head right after. Gift from Hashem. He's the best!!!

again, if one is still falling, then at a certain point I agree with you that they need the 12 steps. But the correct statement to me isn't "The Torah doesn't work for me." That implies a deficiency in the Torah. The deficiency is in the individual. "I am so blinded by my arrogance, I cannot use the Torah properly to increase awareness of Hashem in my life and humble myself before him, I need a crash course in humility. I need the 12 steps."

(All of my ideas and thoughts are courtesy of the Torah wisdom I have had the blessing of learning from Rebbe Nachman, Rebbe Nathan, Rabbi Shalom Arush and Rabbi Lazer Brody. Everyone should read and internalize "The Garden of Emuna. Also, the ideas on Arrogance and emotions was courtesy of Rabbi jonathan Rietti. He has a website with mp3 lessons on a huge range of topics all seen thru the eyes of Torah but in a manner appealing to all types of jews from Secular to Charedi. www.jewishinspiration.com I have his entire collection on MP3)

SHABBAT SHALOM AND CHAG KASHER V'SAMEACH if I'm not on before Yom Tov to see your reply.

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Re: Tayva or addiction?
Posted by Dov - 13 Apr 2014 07:30

Your sincerity is clear to read between the lines. Please understand, I never said there is a deficiency c"v in Torah. If you note some other posts of mine you will see that and may understand where I am coming from better. I'd be glad to talk on the phone about the issue any time if you would like that. I had the privilege of talking with three new GYE guys erev Shabbos,

I am simply and honestly writing for the guy who like me is an addict. Who has already been through the Rabbi Arush (and Rebbe Nachman zy" a) thing, and is still having sex with hookers 'every now and then' (between sincere Teshuvah ila'ah experiences), or still having sex with himself (you may call that zera levatola, but it's just having sex with ourselves, really, and seeing the issue primarily as a wasting of sperm misses the entire issue), or still compulsively sneaking porn or other sexual behaviors just as any alcoholic keeps getting drunk...or drinking to try and control *how* drunk he ends up getting by perhaps drinking in a more 'measured' way. (have you ever done that? Try to see only a little, spend only a few minutes looking at only a little nudity, or only masturbate yourself on weekdays or only once a week/month/year? I and many here have.)

These are sincere, good people I am talking about. And many of them are even Jews, many even frum.

And I have seen enough people drown in Rebbe Nachman's teachings and keep masturbating and getting worse for years and decades. *And none of it is Rebbe Nachman's fault, nor the fault of his beautiful teachings!*

I agree with basically all you wrote, except the relevance of the part about the root cause being arrogance. Sure you are right, as many tzaddikim have told us. And to be sure, the 12 steps is all about bittul of anocheus, period, and works for goyim exactly the same way it works for Yidden. But I have never met a person who can really work on his humility directly, to stop an addiction. It seems the actual connection between my arrogance and my acting out of my lust or drinking alcohol or heroin use or gambling, is just too hard to believe. Especially in the moment.

If it really works for you, then I suggest that you do not really want to act your lust out enough to relate to the issue. Telling addicts they should want to be good more, is not what you are trying to do, I am sure. But that's what you are ultimately saying, I think.

Dogma does not win against this. I think you can see that. Even Rebbe Nachman's dogma, and even Hashem's dogma.

It seems to be my experience and the experience of many recovering, sober addicts, that the first thing that has to go is the lying and faking. And sadly, that cannot be done in the privacy of our own homes, even in a forest in hisbodedus. It needs to be done with other safe people. All you say sounds 100% correct. But an addict thinking to himself "this is Hashem's money, etc, etc," is just does not cut it. Wanting it does not 'do' it.

*We - especially if we are referring to frum guys who have been doing this for years, especially if we are referring to married men (or women) - are inveterate hidlers, tricksters. The frummer we are, the bigger hidlers and tricksters we have had to be all this time! Even Rebbe Nachman - and even Hashem's Torah itself - cannot save us from that. Action is needed. Not 'religious' action, but *human* action: openness with safe people and quitting the lying are the start.*

GYE is a great start. But when those who need it take the *next* step and open up to real recovering people like them, they start to *stay* better. It's not 'thinking right' and 'right kavonoh' that does it, it seems. I am sharing an observation that many here can corroborate firsthand.

But hey - if it works, then that's great! Continued hatzlocha with 'thinking right and fixing your kavonah! I am sure it works for *some* people. Your advice may be great advice, theoretically speaking.

And yet the only things that matter to me and that I think are relevant to this discussion are the answers to these questions:

Is it working for *you*? Can you please describe exactly what you mean by 'working' for *you* in clear, practical terms? Exactly how long has it worked so far? And can you share your own personal experiences so far about what it is like for you?

Thanks for your patience with my long-winded posting, chaver.

- Dov

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