

Yetzer Hara's role in addiction?

Posted by serenity - 21 Aug 2015 22:34

I don't want to start a new thread, but think Mike Dupont might want his thread back.

I'd like to start this thread by asking What, if any, role does the yetzer hara play in addiction? If we define addiction as an allergy of the body that causes the phenomenon of craving together with an obsession of the mind that we can safely use our drug of choice, I'm going to say that the yetzer hara has no part in the allergic reaction. What's my source for that? Aside from what I think I heard on a Shais Taub recording, nothing. I would more ask the question, what is the source that the yetzer hara has a part in causing the allergy and why would we think it does. If someone is allergic to pollen and doesn't go to shul because his allergies are acting up, would we say the yetzer hara caused the pollen allergy?

Lets say that we want to believe the yetezer hara has some part in lust addiction, if not the allergy then the obsession. The yetzer hara makes me think I can lust safely. Again, I wonder why we would we want to think that? What's our motive? If a guy is a mashpiah in Chabad Chassidus (hope don't offend anyone here) and is very devout and holy, and he farbrengs a lot and drinks a lot (not to say that all do that, but it's common enough). Lets say for health reasons he has to cut back and he doesn't listen to the Doctor. Let's say he even admits he's an alcoholic and starts the 12 steps and gets sober. Does anyone say it was the yetzer hara that made him drink? Adirabah, he was drinking as part of a chasidieshe fargrebgen etc., so it was a kedusha, yet he had an allergy and an obsession. Maybe he was born with it and maybe it came later, but does he say or do people say, it was his yetzer hara?

Same question with food addiction

Warning: Spoiler!

. I know that was uncalled for

Gotta go,

Good Shabboss

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Re: Yetzer Hara's role in addiction?

Posted by MBJ - 22 Aug 2015 18:14

Does it really matter? You have a problem to deal with, no matter what the immediate factors. Like the question of am I an addict or just a baal tayva. Who cares about the label, deal with the problem.

My personal take is that there is a definite yetzer hara involved, and I am an easy target because I am an addict.

Another way is that my listing may be my addiction, but my lack of bitachon that has me reach for my addiction is from the yetzer hara.

Food for thought.

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Re: Yetzer Hara's role in addiction?

Posted by shlomo613 - 22 Aug 2015 21:31

I'm undoubtedly 'living the problem rather than the solution' - so I've got no authority to weigh in on this.

However notwithstanding that my one cent worth of experience is, that as long as I thought that identifying the cause of my problems would help me - I was trapped in a bad spiral. Only when i realised that the cause was immaterial and I had tondo te right thing for my own good - did things start to improve.

The long and short of it is that for me I've got enough difficulty surviving and navigating life to ponder on the origins am mechanics of things.

I say the above with due humility this is just how I'm experiencing life at present. And it is a life very much in the gloom, trying to navigate a way, hoping for light.

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Re: Yetzer Hara's role in addiction?

Posted by newaction - 23 Aug 2015 05:06

There was once somebody who approached the Chozes of Lublin. He asked him what can i do with the "Machshavos zaros" during davening shmone esre . He replied for somebody like me those machshavos would be considered "zaros". But for you ? These thoughts are not "zaros" at all , these are your thoughts all day.

Case in point,giants like David hamelech or tanaim ,they had a yetzer hara.Because they were so pure in their actions and thoughts.

To think that WE have a yetzer hara ? That can be so misleading , oh my !!

By us the yetzer hara has been hibernating in deep sleep from lack of anything else to do. Let us look deep deep inside ourselves with real honesty and then look again. Before we decide to throw the blame on the yetzer hara or say about G.od that He wanted this to happen or that to happen.Much of what G.od brings to us it was really because we wanted it or because we invited it to our door.

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Re: Yetzer Hara's role in addiction?

Posted by MJB - 23 Aug 2015 08:25

I've been hooked on masturbation and fantasy since before I was 10 years old. Are you really going to tell me that G-d had nothing to do with it? I wasn't bar mitzvahed. I wasn't aware or

culpable for anything. No, G-d made me this way. It is an opportunity for growth and connection to Him, and b"H I am beginning to understand that, but to say that I brought it on myself as an 8 year old (the first time I masturbated) is crazy. Yes, at some point I knew it was wrong, but by then I was gone.

I am not going to argue nature or nurture because I have no idea, but I was just too young to think that He didn't give me this onus to bear. With a good reason of course.

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Re: Yetzer Hara's role in addiction?

Posted by cordnoy - 23 Aug 2015 14:25

[MBJ wrote:](#)

I've been hooked on masturbation and fantasy since before I was 10 years old. Are you really going to tell me that G-d had nothing to do with it? I wasn't bar mitzvahed. I wasn't aware or culpable for anything. No, G-d made me this way. It is an opportunity for growth and connection to Him, and b"H I am beginning to understand that, but to say that I brought it on myself as an 8 year old (the first time I masturbated) is crazy. Yes, at some point I knew it was wrong, but by then I was gone.

I am not going to argue nature or nurture because I have no idea, but I was just too young to think that He didn't give me this onus to bear. With a good reason of course.

Are you separating God and yetzer hara, and specifically because it started before 13?

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Re: Yetzer Hara's role in addiction?

Posted by serenity - 23 Aug 2015 14:59

Is anyone telling you "that G-d had nothing to do with it"? The question is what is the "it". Sounds like you are saying that is partly an allergy, IE you had a different response to lust than other people and that you had it from a young age. It also sounds like you may saying that the problem for you is the aveira. That it only became an issue for you after you found out it was wrong. So there are two things going on here, your possible pre-disposition to be unable to control yourself when it comes to lust (and possible addiction) and the reason that is a problem

for you. It's important for some people to clarify these distinctions.

Aside from that, the point of this thread for me is to get help specifically defining the role of the yetzer hara, if any, in addiction with Torah sources if possible. The main issue is that, if we consider addiction a disease, what role does the yetzer hara have in that? Does the yetzer hara give me bronchitis to keep me from going to shul? Does it give me clinical depression, so that I won't learn? Does it give me schizophrenia, so I will do? Does the yetzer hara give me a disease as a test to see if I will sin?

Also once we define that role, how does that help my recovery?

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Re: Yetzer Hara's role in addiction?
Posted by MJB - 23 Aug 2015 16:38

I am sorry if I was unclear. I was responding to the following comment:

[newaction wrote:](#)

Before we decide to throw the blame on the yetzer hara or say about G.d that He wanted this to happen or that to happen. Much of what G.d brings to us it was really because we wanted it or because we invited it to our door.

My point is that to say that I invited it in at age 8 is silly. So I do put the blame on G-d. Blame is a charged word implying some wrongdoing. Obviously that is not what I mean. I mean it is a problem that Hashem gave me to deal with for my own growth and benefit.

Serenity,

As for me personally, I have a proclivity to fantasy. Which leads me to lust and acting out. Why? I really don't know. I do know that if I remove the fantasy the rest stays away. I also know that I have to stay sober to keep myself sane and my life functional. Purely practical matters. And yes there is an aveira aspect to it. If it was just fantasy without acting out I wouldn't even think twice, though for me it would be just as damaging. Because you throw in the aveira as well it makes

me have to face my dysfunction because I want to live my life properly before G-d. So in a way the aveira is a blessing.

As for the original post as I said [MBJ wrote](#):

My personal take is that there is a definite yetzer hara involved, and I am an easy target because I am an addict.

If I am indulging my lust I am strengthening my nefesh habehami and isn't that what the yh wants to accomplish?

After all if I get over my lust by turning to G-d and asking for His strength and giving over my trust, isn't the opposite true as well? That indulging my lust is denying my trust in G-d and looking to myself for solutions which is avoda zara and the work of the yh.

[MBJ wrote](#):

Another way is that my listing may be my addiction, but my lack of bitachon that has me reach for my addiction is from the yetzer hara.

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Re: Yetzer Hara's role in addiction?

Posted by newaction - 23 Aug 2015 18:48

[MBJ wrote](#):

I've been hooked on masturbation and fantasy since before I was 10 years old. Are you really going to tell me that G-d had nothing to do with it? I wasn't bar mitzvahed. I wasn't aware or culpable for anything. No, G-d made me this way. It is an opportunity for growth and connection to Him, and b"H I am beginning to understand that, but to say that I brought it on myself as an 8 year old (the first time I masturbated) is crazy. Yes, at some point I knew it was wrong, but by then I was gone.

I am not going to argue nature or nurture because I have no idea, but I was just too young to think that He didn't give me this onus to bear. With a good reason of course.

I was attracted to girls from the the age of 4 as far back as i can remember.

This is G.od's world and He has everything to do with everything.nevertheless Your parents and my parents have a lot to do with our nature and tendencies.The same as our kids have to do with us .

You or anybody else could find a sentence here or there from what i wrote to pick on and start an endless debate. Which honestly i won't waste my time on that.

Today , we have to know that honesty is the yesod that all the program and sobriety and anything good we want , is based on . Honesty is paramount, tantamount to the foundation of all ??? ???? First let us look inside our hearts, clean up all that is negative; stay away not from the triggers but from the triggers of the triggers; then reinforce all the positive and be in constant guard , not only from lust but "in all our affairs" (step 12).

After we have done as much as we possibly can and became spiritual as opposed to before, then we will worry about the Y"H.

Think about it and take from it what can help you, discard the rest.I have no problem with that. Hatzlacha !

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Re: Yetzer Hara's role in addiction?
Posted by newaction - 23 Aug 2015 19:14

[serenity wrote:](#)

Aside from that, the point of this thread for me is to get help specifically defining the role of the yetzer hara, if any, in addiction with Torah sources if possible. The main issue is that, if we consider addiction a disease, what role does the yetzer hara have in that? Does the yetzer hara give me bronchitis to keep me from going to shul? Does it give me clinical depression, so that I won't learn? Does it give me schizophrenia, so I will do? Does the yerzer hara give me a disease as a test to see if I will sin?

Also once we define that role, how does that help my recovery?

The authors of the big book were not sure themselves neither Dr Silkworth.

Most probably the very first times were tailored by the Y"H , but afterwards the person with the dis-ease gets hooked and his brain twisted to the craving of more.

At this point that the brain is sick, the one that discovered that only a spiritual path could cure addiction was Carl G Jung when he said Spiritus (a spiritual way) Contra (can counter, its the antidote of) Spiritum (alcohol). Spiritus Contra Spiritum , is brought down in Rabbi Taub's book "G.od of our understanding" . The whole letter of Dr. Jung is printed there.

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