

Torah AND the 12-Steps

Posted by Dov - 08 Jun 2009 21:53

HeiligeH PinteleH Yid, Aaron4, Hoping, etc, etc.,

What I am about to share is for me, not necessarily for you. You may feel completely differently or flat-out disagree and **Kol Hakavod, precious brothers!**

This drash/mussar section of the thread is enlightening and really beautiful, as others have posted. **However, in the spirit of "veHachayos Ratzo Vashov"**, I need to take a deep breath and back up at times like this. I need to remember that (beautiful and true) Torah insights into what the YH is doing, what we are doing, how we do it, etc., never helped me get sober when I was acting out. They are just a luxury we can "afford" in sobriety. They still, are not my mainstay, just a chizzuk and part of my "pay'rosayhem ba'olam hazeh", perhaps...but...

Sof Davar, when a "nisayon" occurs for me, what saves me is **plain and poshut** the Ribono Shel Olam. Not **my** tefillah, nor my efforts against the YH. They may be hishtadlus, like going to work, battle, etc. All I know is that **I** let Him in, calling out to Him in my **worst** moment because **I** do not want to act out and (eventually) die. He does the rest.

In retrospect there is glory in recovery and I *can* appreciate the beauty of what has happened, yes. But in the moment (*and before it*) I can't afford to think of myself as doing any tikkunim, fulfilling a mitzvah/prophecy/whatever. The most frustrating days for my acting out used to be (bedavka) aseres yemei teshuvah, sefira (especially *yesod* days!). These things put the struggle on my plate. When I struggle within a **Torah** context it just proves too complicated for me and I struggle. When I struggle, I get in trouble. And "trouble" is *really* bad for my health.

I do not think of myself, in sobriety or in acting out, as reflecting anything good or bad about this generation or the Jewish people. I am a holy yid like you and any other yid, who is also just another addict in recovery. In that respect I am very much like the goy sitting next to me at the meeting, who may be my sponsor or sponsee.

Sorry if anyone finds this offending or upsetting. It is not the truth, just what works for me so far. It may change tomorrow! Still, today I need to be honest about what works and what doesn't, so far, for me. Much love and admiration for each of you - Dov

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Re: Torah AND the 12-Steps

Posted by Dov - 25 Jun 2009 22:20

[Pintele Yid wrote on 25 Jun 2009 19:03:](#)

Dov - I re-read your posts differentiating the 1st from the rest of the steps and I don't understand how a Lev Nishbar, recognizing that you are an addict, powerless, and totally reliant on Hashem for recovery, is not a Torah concept? Meaning that he finally knew 100% that he had to change. He then reached outward instead of inward and he asked the help of everyone except Hashem. He finally acquired greater "Daas" that the only way for him to succeed will be a Lev Nishbar (signified by putting his head between his knees). Without total reliance on Hashem he wasn't getting very far. He actually didn't go much further and he passed away - maybe because he didn't have guidance on the next 11 steps.

Sholom aleichem again, Pintele Yid!

This is what I was getting at with the division of the steps into two portions, and thanks for wringing out the issue:

After being around a bit with yidden in and out of recovery, and then for the past few months on this site, it seems to me there are **two basic concerns** most yidden have with the 12 steps, SA, or whatever (please tell me if you have seen otherwise):

1- The first step. It sounds christian. Their whole message seems to be that we are all sinners, basically evil, and losers because of original sin. This actually oozes through, I feel, even in the 12&12 (which was basically written by Bill and the NY groupies and not by the "frum" Dr. Bob group). I don't have the page, but it was a discussion about the fourth/fifth step and how "we join the rest of the Human Race" when we recognize our powerlessness. Maybe there is a different way to interpret that...Now, I was a "straight-shooting Mesillas Yeshorim guy ("nimtza, hamilchama eilav panim ve'achor!", etc.)" before hitting "the big time" in addiction followed by my slow and less-than-glamorous recovery. The **big issue for me was always bechira chofshis**, nahama dekusufa, yadayadayada. We frummies of a religion based on personal responsibility, do not take well to the rather pathetic-sounding sine qua non of recovery: "Uh, ."

To many, it's just *impossible* and we go to find a billion gemoras about how yiras shomayim is not in Hashem's hands, etc, to hang on to our suicide license. The implication of insanity in the 2nd step is just insulting, but for many of us *this* is more like sacrilege! Many end up in the

meetings anyway, or somewhere else than a beis medrash in any case, for help. Gevalt. Whatever works... First problem.

2- The meetings and entire venue is **goyish**. (I doubt seriously that the similarity to "confession" really bothers anyone enough not to use the 5th step and I feel similarly about the word "G-d" or "Power greater than themselves" in the literature; the assumption that relying completely on *Hashem* to remove our bad middos (6&7) is crazy and against mussar etc; the implication that the frowning upon the addicts' praying for any specific personal needs in the 11th; being doomed to lifelong "kiruv (alcoholic/sexaholic) rechokim" suggested by the 12th seems kind of severe. All these problems are small fry.)

Rather, I think the problem is just the general goyishe venue the fellowships and steps represent. It's in a church, they often use the christian prayers at the end! (my goyishe home group does not), and the people with recovery are goyim - and they are talking about MY HASHEM! They have to be, cuz they are having nissim, aren't they? How can this be? Most of us would rather not get involved in such a thing, period.

Well, no wonder people like me have accepted the illness model, given up on fixing ourselves, and gone to join these folks for help. We turn a blind eye at the two big problems, not even caring any more about the issues.

Then we find that **Hashem feeds everyone and sanity is more like food than religion**, problem solved! (even if some goyishe religious AA/SAs think otherwise, maybe even Roy K and Dr Bob)

So. Wadaya think, anyone? And...

Where do we all go from here?

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Re: Torah AND the 12-Steps
Posted by MosheF - 26 Jun 2009 00:51

[dov wrote on 25 Jun 2009 22:20:](#)

We turn a blind eye at the two big problems, not even caring any more about the issues.

Then we find that Hashem feeds everyone and sanity is more like food than religion, problem solved!

Dov, great piece as usual. I'm glad it bothers you and are ignoring it, I can only tell you that most frum guys I meet seem so integrated, it kind fo scary.

Either way, with everything I don't like about this program, i'm following what my sponser tell me to do and I'm sober!!!, I cannot believe after 15 years without ever a full week sober I can actual come into my office and work! for a whole day! without even searching! it's amazing.

gotta go.

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Re: Torah AND the 12-Steps
Posted by Dov - 26 Jun 2009 01:02

As a friend in the program once told me: **if you believe G-d really *did* somehow love you even while you were acting out, then just think how WILD He must be about you now!!**
Keep doing whatever you have to do, friend! Good Shabbos...

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Re: Torah AND the 12-Steps
Posted by battleworn - 26 Jun 2009 12:06

Reb Dov, I love you like crazy! Have a bombastic Shabbos!

And eveyone else too!

I have a lot more to say, but no time before Shabbos.

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Re: Torah AND the 12-Steps

Posted by London - 26 Jun 2009 14:12

A Guten Erev Shabbos

Today's instalment of AA clich?s

- Faith is spelled a-c-t-i-o-n
- People who don't go to meetings don't get to hear about what happens to people who don't go to meetings
- The person with the most sobriety at a meeting is the one who got up earliest that morning
- Recovery is an education without a graduation
- (today's favourite) Your 12 step program won't... keep you from going to hell..... nor is it a ticket to heaven..... but it will keep you sober long enough.... for you to make up your mind..... which way you want to go!

May we all have a sober and clean Shabbos

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Re: Torah AND the 12-Steps

Posted by boruch - 26 Jun 2009 14:35

[dov wrote on 25 Jun 2009 22:20:](#)

and they are talking about MY HASHEM! They have to be, cuz they are having nissim, aren't they? How can this be? Most of us would rather not get involved in such a thing, period.

OUR Hashem wants NON-JEWS to talk about HIM and if we do not want them to, then we are in it for ourselves and not for Hashem.

[dov wrote on 25 Jun 2009 22:20:](#)

Well, no wonder people like me have accepted the illness model, given up on fixing ourselves, and gone to join these folks for help. We turn a blind eye at the two big problems, not even caring any more about the issues.

Then we find that **Hashem feeds everyone and sanity is more like food than religion**, problem solved! (even if some goyishe religious AA/SAs think otherwise, maybe even Roy K and Dr Bob)

So. Wadaya think, anyone? And...

Where do we all go from here?

I think that I do well when I am not on the defensive about religious AAs.

I do well when I do not have to treat Hashem saving those who put their own houses in order to the best of their ability, those who help fellow addicts and those who Trust in Him to keep them sane, as if it were about food and not about religion.

To me rigorous honesty demanded by the program is about facing uncomfortable truths. Yes, I have a disease but it's root was a Spiritual disease, a disease that came directly from my own selfishness, resentments and fears, and a disease that came from my lack of honesty, openness and willingness to admit and fix those problems. Had I done that hishtadlus and had I trusted Hashem, I would have been sober much more than 10 days when I initially joined SA.

If I would, for myself, succumb to any temptation to believe some of the claims on this board, claims that have no basis in AA/SA literature, no basis in AA/SA history and no basis in common sense, for me at least, it would be nothing more than excuses and lies. It would be the problem and not the solution. Of course, for others perhaps it is about progress and not perfection, and if it works for them, well for today, that's fine. When I hear from SAs struggling with the perceived "threat" of the religious AAs and SAs I do not doubt that they are doing the best they can with the program that they have received.

But for those who know from the program that they must remain teachable there is much to learn. An honest look at the Steps shows that **it is not about food, it is about the Third Step, offering ourselves to Hashem, not as food for Him to eat but as His servants. It's that simple.**

And it doesn't even matter whether everyone in program is teachable. Because there are enough people who are desperate for anything that has better results than what for too many is a program of relapse and there are some who are open, honest and willing enough to discover something better. Sooner or later people will see that there is a better way. And as Rav Noach Weinberg Zt"l used to say,

[Rav Noach Weinberg Zt wrote:](#)

Jews have been accused of many things over the years, but no-one has ever accused us of being unintelligent

Frum Yidden are smart when they see that others are on to something good they will want it too

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Re: Torah AND the 12-Steps

Posted by yechidah - 26 Jun 2009 19:11

My dear friends

(just to explain why I think I am here)

Yechida is the fifth & highest level of the soul.(the first four are nefesh, ruach, neshama and chaya) On this level, all Yidim are one. No sin, no matter how low or vulgar cannot contaminate that deep place within us. It is pure in its essence. It is also the level in which all Yidim are one- without barriers or distinctions. We all can tap into this and derive strength from it.

This is why this website will be a powerful vehicle in bringing Moshiach closer. Aside from the obvious- i.e.- helping us deal with challenges that are so powerful and dark- there is a true Ahavas Yisroel expressed here that I have not seen anywhere else. This is what Hashem sees and this is why He wants to help us.

I have been on this website for a while. It was Dov's posting of June 25 that prompted me to speak, though with great hesitation. Why? Firstly, I am not wise. Second, I don't pretend to know you well, and I am afraid of speaking in a way that would seem that I know something that I really don't. That would be dishonest.

All I can say is that I realize that I do not know why you (I mean Dov) have to deal with what [b]you are dealing with. But one thing is clear- **We need you here** You are right that there are factors that have nothing to do with your choice. I'm talking about Dov but this is true for all of us. The main purpose of us getting out of this filth is to help others get out of it- with chizuk and love. So when we lose faith and get discouraged- think about the potential neshoma that Hashem will send your way to help.

We see the rich man help the poor. True reality is that it is the poor person is helping the rich. We who seem at times low are really very high. Yes it's a paradox but it's true.

Dov- I don't know you but Hashem send you here to help us and in a very powerful way you were sent by Hashem to also help your stable wife that will one day understand you.

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Re: Torah AND the 12-Steps

Posted by boruch - 26 Jun 2009 19:57

I just noticed this:

[MosheF wrote on 25 Jun 2009 18:03:](#)

[boruch wrote on 24 Jun 2009 23:12:](#)

Moshe I have seen a number of people like you in the rooms. To me it seems that there is too much mumbo-jumbo nonsense being spoken about the supposed differences between "Spirituality" and Religion between "Higher Power" and Hashem, words and concepts that were originally only used to give space to atheists and agnostics have now been forced down the throats of frum yidden. Nothing is said about how the early AAs found the G-d of their Tradition, spent hours in prayer and Bible Study and strengthened their own religious communities.

Boruch, you seem to imply that you want more religion in the groups, seems the opposite of what I want. If they were to preach religion it would be JC and his group and that is the last thing I want. Battleworn, you also seem to want religion in the rooms but orthodox Judaism, not gonna happen anytime soon but the mubo-jumbo nonsense is good because that separates the groups from religion so we can work on our addiction not on our religion.

Moshe, even Clarence Snyder of Cleveland who was a fundamentalist who had his sponsees surrender to Yoshke would never discuss religion in groups. There is no reason to discuss the specifics of religion in groups at all. Furthermore there is no reason at all to bring up religious specifics when sponsor and sponsee do not either share religion or religious viewpoint. So that is not the issue at all.

The issue is the meaning of the Third Step.

Among religious people the Third Step Surrender offering ourselves to the G-d of our understanding is all about becoming in the words of the Big Book "Agents" and Employees of G-d. We can share the generic part of this with all religious people who identify with serving G-d. We do not need to get into any specifics. Becoming an "Agent" and Employee of G-d is what all religious people understand as becoming His servants. And that is a good thing. We Frum Jews call that becoming avdei Hashem. They say, Thy Will not mine be done, and when we say that we mean battel retzoncho mipnei retzono - the highest form of avodas Hashem.

Yet I have a frum sponsee who had no problems with Hashem, who nevertheless understood from his former sponsor, a secular Jew, that he should not identify the God of his understanding with Hashem. Rather when he was a child, unbeknownst to my sponsee, it was really his father (at least that was this sponsor's theory) and now it should be something else, presumably the group.

This may be a somewhat extreme example, but I believe that it is indicative of the tone of much of what I have heard in the rooms and much that I have read on this thread about how Spirituality is allegedly entirely different from Religion.

As though a Frum Jew could be in program a *Spiritual* secular employee of Hashem and in Shul or Beis Hamedrash a *Religious* religious employee of Hashem. I believe that anybody out of program would recognize this for the meaninglessness that it is, and yet I suspect that more than a few in program might in all sincerity believe that there may be something to this convoluted thinking.

That's because they are doing a secularist version of the program that not only does not go into Religious specifics, it secularizes the Third Step by divorcing serving God of your understanding (which in secularist groups is just secular wording for doing program) from serving Hashem (Religion).

Of course for atheists and agnostics this is no mumbo-jumbo, it is a vital lifeline which enables them to begin a climb to accepting G-d. But for us frum Jews, to whom are you offering yourself in the Third Step if not Hashem?

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Re: Torah AND the 12-Steps

Posted by the.guard - 27 Jun 2009 21:12

An honest look at the Steps shows that it is not about food, it is about the Third Step, offering ourselves to Hashem, **not as food for Him to eat but as His servants.**

This was one of the funniest lines I ever read! ;D

The way I see it, spirituality is not the same as religion. Religion is an "organized" set of principles and divine service to a specific G-d. "Spirituality" on the other hand, requires only the acceptance of a spiritual higher power. I believe that Dov meant simply that an addict needs **spirituality** to be able to regain his **sanity**. For him, it is much like "**food**". All the particulars of religion though, are completely irrelevant to the healing process that happens in the 12-Step groups. So Dov is still right. ***Problem solved!***

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Re: Torah AND the 12-Steps

Posted by battleworn - 28 Jun 2009 09:18

I feel that it's time to introduce myself. Reb Dov expressed an interest in getting to know me better and it will also be'H help other people understand me better.

(Most of what I'm about to say is not in my story that I posted many month's ago.) My struggles with p*** and mast. started from a very very young age. I have had a lot of ups and downs. When I was in the grip of lust, I was liable to do very crazy things. Just as an example, I once traveled by train from Brooklyn to Manhattan in middle of the night; despite the fact that I as far as I knew I had more than a 50% chance of getting attacked or killed. Hashem in His mercy arranged it that I should only have 20 dollars on me, thereby saving me from a doing worse aveiroh than I actually did.

I also have an inborn -very powerful, longing for Hashem and love for every jew. I have found that these two things are interdependent. It's very clear to me that the lust is just a "levush" –a cover up. When my longing for Hashem is locked up and can't express itself, it ends up being expressed as lust and/or outrageous curiosity.

For the past 15 years, each time that I fell, I soon bounced back up –bechasdei Hashem- as a bigger, better and wiser person than I was before. As a result of all my ups and downs, I developed a very heightened awareness of the difference between being close to Hashem and not being close. Between that and my love of Hashem and Jews, I became extremely sensitive to other people's spiritual pain.

When I see someone become distant or when I see someone struggling with their y'h, I feel great pain even if he himself doesn't seem to be suffering at all. When I'm davening I can sometimes spend literally hours pleading with Hashem to "turn the lights on" for His children that are having trouble finding their way. As this developed, I've been forced to reach ever higher levels of Emunah and Bitachon; otherwise I would simply not be able to handle the pain at all. I don't really expect everyone to understand me, but even if you don't, at least you can understand that you don't understand. All this is, as I said, a result of my struggles. It's not a result of any special "avodah" or whatever.

I believe that it's very common among lust addicts to have this powerful spiritual longing. It may often be so well concealed that we are totally unaware of it. But that doesn't mean it's not there. Once we become aware of it and learn how to express it, it can shine very strong. I assume that some of you can relate more to what I'm saying, and some less.

My apology last week was clearly not sufficient. But I needed to introduce myself before I can do it right.

When I see something on the holy GYE network, that in my opinion, can c'v cause a Jew to have less of a relationship with Hashem than he could have had; it pains me in a very tangible way. The obvious thing to do in such a case, is of course to discuss it with Rabeinu Guard. This is what I've always done. The problem is that my brain and his brain are almost totally incompatible. Our hearts are compatible "and then some" and that's what counts the most, but our brains –forget about it. In general I don't have this problem with other people and I assume that in general he doesn't have this problem with other people. But Hashem in His infinite wisdom (which it would be foolish of us to expect to understand) arranged that we can hardly communicate with each other.

As for me, it's totally baseless and unfair to blame him for not understanding me. I therefore take back, sincerely regret and publicly apologize for being disrespectful and for blaming him. Rabeinu, please forgive me!

I also want to sincerely apologize publicly to Reb Dov. I should have handled the situation differently, without discussing in public what shouldn't be discussed in public. Reb Dov, please forgive me!

I also want to apologize to whoever was bothered by the stir that I caused. Please forgive me and I hope you understand me better now.

I except upon myself, to put more effort in to staying patient under all circumstances.

Furthermore, while there's no way that I can take these issues less seriously; there are ways to avoid problems. To that end, from now on, I will direct my questions etc. on this thread (and on my thread) primarily to Dov and Boruch. Obviously, I don't mean to ask others not to answer. It's just that I'm letting you know that the feedback that I'm looking for, is primarily from Boruch and Dov.

I know that we all have a whole lot more in common than we have differences and I'm sure we can accomplish very great things together.

with tremendous love to all, batle[no longer]worn

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Re: Torah AND the 12-Steps

Posted by boruch - 28 Jun 2009 10:20

[guardureyes wrote on 27 Jun 2009 21:12:](#)

An honest look at the Steps shows that it is not about food, it is about the Third Step, offering ourselves to Hashem, **not as food for Him to eat but as His servants.**

The way I see it, spirituality is not the same as religion. Religion is an "organized" set of principles and divine service to a specific G-d. "Spirituality" on the other hand, requires only the acceptance of a spiritual higher power. I believe that Dov meant simply that an addict needs **spirituality** to be able to regain his **sanity**. For him, it is much like **"food"**. All the particulars of religion though, are completely irrelevant to the healing process that happens in the 12-Step groups. So Dov is still right. ***Problem solved!***

1) dov was explaining the difficulty of coping with einom yehudim talking about getting nissim from Hashem:

dov]the people with recovery are goyim - and they are talking about MY HASHEM! They have to be, cuz they are having nissim, aren't they? How can this be? Most of us would rather not get involved in such a thing, period.[/quote]

When ainom Yehudim Trust Hashem, offer themselves to Him as His servants, right their character defects and help others as Hashem wants them to, is it so shocking that they should get miracles? And if it is shocking how does the food comparison address that?

2) dov added some parenthetical words that you did not quote:

[quote= wrote:

Hashem feeds everyone and sanity is more like food than religion, problem solved! (even if some goyishe religious AA/SAs think otherwise, maybe even Roy K and Dr Bob)

It does not sound like his problem was with the religious specifics you discussed, Guard, because Dr Bob, co-founder of AA and Roy K, founder of SA both believed in not getting into religious specifics and yet dov seems uncomfortable with their position.

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Re: Torah AND the 12-Steps

Posted by battleworn - 28 Jun 2009 11:37

Reb Dov asked "Where do we all go from here?"

If I understand correctly there are two problems. 1) For people who do go to the groups, most people can not be expected to figure out by themselves how to fit it all in.

2) People obviously don't want to get in to that situation in the first place. Many people will refuse to go to the groups because of this.

I would like to humbly make a few suggestions from a few different angles.

1) If Boruch and Dov can come to an agreement about what type of group is most appropriate, then anyone that is encouraged to go to SA, should be directed if possible to the right kind of group.

2) Even if we don't have a consensus on that, they can provide the right Hashkafa on how to fit it all in without doing damage to his Yiddishkeit. (If it's Boruch's kind of group, he can explain how to fit it in to his Yiddishkeit and if it's Dov's kind of group he can explain how to keep it separate.{Though I still have no idea what this means.} Or then again, maybe it doesn't depend on the type of group. In any case, there has to be some sort of "hachra'ah" on the matter).

3) We can be careful to keep people away from groups that are antagonistic to religion [or any other problems that we might be aware of]. (I know of at least one such group in Israel. Is it characteristic of SLAA?)

4) We can try to incorporate tools from SA in to the network. [A simple example: We can try to encourage the members of the Accountability Groups to exchange tel. #s so they can call each other in case of emergency.] This way, more people can be helped on site.

5) This Shabbos, Hashem put a new idea in my head. Perhaps we can get one of the yichidei segulah of our generation that know how to get through to peoples hearts, to say a series of shiurim on the tools and perspectives for dealing with this situation. Of course listening is not enough, but if people want to change, then when they know what to do, they'll do it.

If we attack the problem from both sides, then be'H we might just reach the ideal solution much sooner than we thought.

Please let me know what you think.

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Re: Torah AND the 12-Steps

Posted by the.guard - 28 Jun 2009 11:45

I therefore take back, sincerely regret and publicly apologize for being disrespectful and for blaming him. Rabeinu, please forgive me!

Battleworn, I can only agree to forgive you if you promise to keep inspiring us all on the forum!!

I don't think I am as smart as you and Boruch and Dov, but you have my word that if you can come up with a formula that **all three of you** agree on, I will be more than happy to include it as the official policy of GYE from now on. If the three of you cannot agree, I can take it to Rabbi Twerski for a final decision.

It seems to me that the questions we want to address are:

- At what level addiction should we send someone to the groups?
- Is it only after he tried all 13 tools of the handbook, or there's nothing wrong with sending someone earlier than that as well?

- Are there legitimate problems with some of the groups?
- Do we need to give hadracha to a Jew who is joining?
- Would it be possible to develop one day a strategy or program that is just as powerful and successful as the 12-Step groups, but with a Torahdik approach?

Please tell me if I'm missing anything.

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Re: Torah AND the 12-Steps

Posted by boruch - 28 Jun 2009 12:27

My take:

- At what level addiction should we send someone to the groups?

I am now more aware of the relapse issue in group meetings that Kokorikoo was talking about. I am now also more aware of the history of AA.

I believe that for both those reasons (in addition to others) we should encourage newcomers to work Steps first before going to groups. That is how they did it with Beginner's meetings in the old days. In Cleveland in the 1940s they had a 93% success rate (DR. BOB and the Good Oldtimers, p. 261). Here is how they did it then:

"The newcomer is not permitted to attend a regular AA meeting until he has been given a thorough knowledge of the work (through the 4 1-hour beginner classes)."

(Cleveland Central Bulletin 1943)

Most importantly, through working with the newcomer on the Steps we will know who is serious.

- Is it only after he tried all 13 tools of the handbook, or there's nothing wrong with sending someone earlier than that as well?

I do not believe that we should ever ransom anyone to taking the Steps or using a set of tools

before we give them information. In my opinion recommending looking at the different tools and doing the Steps first is the first thing, if they accept that fine. If they are only interested in the groups we can tell them that they can find the groups on sa.org. If we have been working with them either through the Steps, tools or other ways and feel they are good candidates then we can give more specific information that will identify groups with large frum makeup.

- Are there legitimate problems with some of the groups?

Groups that have little direction, relatively low sobriety and significant relapse can be a problem. Newcomers who do not get a good sponsor, who are not committed enough to work the program well can get ideas that make the problem worse -- they can be lead to believe that because they have a disease they can't help relapsing, they can discover new ways to act out and once they are SA members they may feel they are part of the solution even when they have repeated relapse.

- Do we need to give hadracha to a Jew who is joining?

I think that anyone who has done the Steps before going has the best hadracha that there is. Additionally the most important guidance in my opinion is to find a sponsor who is religious and to begin Step taking as soon as possible.

- Would it be possible to develop one day a strategy or program that is just as powerful and successful as the 12-Step groups, but with a Torahdik approach?

I believe that it will eventually be possible to use a Torah approach to develop our experience of what has worked best within the AA system into a program that is entirely developed from Torah concepts and sources

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Re: Torah AND the 12-Steps

Posted by London - 28 Jun 2009 16:31

I have been reading the last few posts with great interest, and would like to offer my thoughts.

One of the basic tools of 12 step fellowships is that we do not advise anyone to do anything. It says in chapter 5 of the AA BB that here are the steps that are "suggested". We are not (at

least I do not think I am) gurus of recovery we only have our own experience and perspective. People's tolerance to their addiction is very personal and differs from one to another. I had to reach level 3.5 before I came into recovery I know people who have never been online but struggle with mast and fantasy that go to the meetings, they had reached for them their own rock bottom.

The groups offer 24 hour support that GYE does not. People who attend meetings will get contacts of other members to call 24/7 and take calls of other struggling members. Posting on the internet is a fantastic tool, but if I am in the heat of addiction, and about to go to a really inappropriate place, the forum at this time is useless but my cell phone can save me, I know this as in the past I have been pulled back from the brink of the abyss by making a call at the last second.

Another point that has been bothering me is that people are giving advice and opinions on some very serious matters that can have a major impact on people's lives. People, who do not have long term recovery, people who have not been to meetings. Six months of sobriety is amazing, but it is not long term recovery, 3 – 4 years is still considered early recovery. I am not the biggest Talmid Chochum on this site, and perhaps this site is catering only for Talmedai Chachomim, as on this thread most of what has been discussed has gone totally over my head, but when I get to meetings I hear a really clear and simple message. Personally I think that matters are becoming overly complicated, and for most addicts who come into recovery whose brains are messed up, we should not be quoting a plethora of seforim. A simple message, you are ill, you cannot cure yourself, your life is messed up, but there is One who can help you – plain and simple. Before we start creating programs etc lets try and put some serious time of recovery in place. Let's not run before we are walking. Let's try and keep matters really simple. That is not to say that we cannot create "tools" to aid our recovery like, telephone contacts, or perhaps a monitored instant chat where people can talk to someone instead of looking at prn. In my time in recovery I have been both to Israel and the US and met a lot of people in SA recovery, and from my experience most people are plain and simple Yidden, most of us did not do too well in Yeshiva as our minds were too preoccupied.

Recovery is medicine, and like medicine it can take time to find the right dose to become effective. So we should "suggest" to people to work through the tools until they find the level that keeps them sober.

If I have offended anyone, I ask mechillo, this is not a personal attack on anyone, these are my concerns.

Thanks

London

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