

Torah AND the 12-Steps

Posted by Dov - 08 Jun 2009 21:53

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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 battleworn - 17 Jun 2009 21:22

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Excuse me please for asking a dumb question, but is this thread about the 12 steps or about the groups (SA)?

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Re: Torah AND the 12-Steps

Posted by Pintele Yid - 17 Jun 2009 21:49

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Heiliga Chabura,

The entire purpose of this post is to present an idea to initiate a project that might help us all. This will be done at the end of this post so if you are tired of reading this too long post, please skip to almost the end of this post, before the story of the Imrei Emes.

First, I want to ask mechila from any of you if my posts on this or any other topic caused you any stress. I understand that this site was basically founded on the principles of the 12 step program, specifically to help yidden in, or were in, or about to be in "stage 3". But the reality is that since every yid needs help with attaining kedusha, many others not in the intended target audience need this website as much as the air they breath.

From the fact that some of you fell into "stage 3" proves to me that your neshamos are on a higher level than mine as it says in sukkah daf nun bais amud aleph "kol hagadol maychavaro yitzro gadol mimenu". This makes sense because it says in Avoda Zarah daf gimel amud alef "Ain Hakodosh Boruch Hu Ba Btrunya Im BiriyoSuv". This means that Hashem doesn't throw on anyone a load that he cannot ultimately handle. Heiliga Chabura, those of you who are in "stage 3" are/were there **because you have what it takes to get out of it and be mesakin the world in the process. How you accomplish it (through 12 step or Torah) doesn't really make a difference. The bottom line is that you are doing it -slowly but surely.** Although yidden on every level are fighting their personal fight, some are shooting arrows, others are shooting with pistols, some are shooting rocket propelled grenades **but with your struggles, you are firing atom bombs against the koichois horah..**

I took the heiliga guard's advice and reread the entire thread. To state the obvious, we are not debating if someone who has found success in the 12 step program should chas vesholom ditch it for a solution found in the Torah. That would be against the teachings of the Torah, since it says in Medrash Eicha Parsha Bais Siman Yud Gimel, "Im Yomar Lecho Adam yesh chochma bagoiyim Ta'amin". **What we are debating is whether Mamamorei Chazal can effectively accomplish the same objective as the 12 step program.** The big challenge with utilizing the Torah, is that the Torah did not present a solution to "stage 3" in a structured program. The other problem as mentioned several times in this thread, is that it is hard to find a mentor that can successfully guide someone in "stage 3" back to leading a normal life using only Torah. But that doesn't mean that Torah cannot be used successfully - it just means means that finding the , is extremely difficult.

You might ask me "well who cares what theoretically Torah can or cannot accomplish, since I cannot use it to help me". **The answer is that we should care since it said in the Torah that Torah is the "Tavlin". By saying it is not a solution for all "levels", we are denying something that is written in the Torah.** Yes choshuver Rashkebehag, Torah can not only fight the "normal" Y"H, but also help with an addiction. The other alternative suggests that addictions are Chas Vosholom more powerful than Torah.

Chazal are full of strategies on how to climb out of whatever mess we are in and stories of others that were in similar situations. They gave us the "chuchma" handed to us on a silver platter. What they didn't give us much of was "binah", how to put this all together into a structured program. They left the "daas", how to internalize and make it "personal", for us to shvitz on.

Heiliga Guard - I am positive that these chazals can even help those that are "underwater". Together, and only with Hashem's help, we must figure out how to get the Torah "submerged" by applying it to our lives. Then everyone will have the possibility to be healed through it.

Efshshar Letaken - Please please please don't ever think that "Eish Ochuloson" is talking about someone who learns Torah in "stage 3". As you know, it says in Berachos chuf bais Amud Aleph that "Ain divrei Torah mekablin Tumah". The Y"H wants us to think that way, because if we do, then we feel inadequate and wouldn't have the desire to learn. On the contrary, Hashem told us "Veshuchanty b'soch Tumasum". This applies to people at all levels.

**I therefore humbly suggest that we, who are right there with Hakodosh Baruch Hu Bosoch Tumosainu, start a project together to try to relate as many chazals as we can to our struggles, even in circumstances relating to people in level three. Besyata Dishmaya,**

**we can hopefully build a structured program based on Torah and at least reach the level of Binah, in the implementation of Torah Tavlin. Of course, Da'as will ultimately have to be worked on individually. To quote my Tanya Rebbi, "The Tanya will give you directions to the palace of the king, bring you into the palace and show you the door leading to the room where the treasure chest is found, unlock the door for you, lead you by the hand to the chest, give you the key to unlock the chest, guide your hand so the key fits into the keyhole, but ultimately you have to turn the key".**

For those who might think that they are on too low of a level for this project to benefit them, please do it for me, Bardichev and others who think we can be helped by Mamorai Chazals. At Im Yirtzah Hashem, everyone will benefit from this project. I suggest that we start with Yoseph Hatzaddik, since his struggle with Aishes Potiphar is from the Chumash and is also currently being discussed in the chizuk e-mails.

Please bear with me one more moment so I can end with a chizuk vort that I heard from my Tanya Rebbi. I am attempting to modify it to our situation. There was a Gerrer Chusid who lost all of his family in the Holocaust. Although he had a beard, payos and yarmulka before the war, the Nazis Yimach Shemem Vizichrom took them away from him and he didn't reclaim them after the war. He moved to Tel Aviv and after some time, he missed his Rebbi, the Imrei Emes. He decided to visit him and when the Imrei Emmes saw him, he recognized him and invited him into his study and asked him to tell his story. (Parathetically, the Imrei Emes lost half his family and 250k chassidim in the Holocaust.) After the yid told his story, both he and the Imrei Emes put down their heads and weeped for a very long time. At some point, the Imrei Emes picked up his head and stopped weeping and asked the yid a question. It says in Parshas Ekev (Tes, Yud Zayin), that Moshe picked up the luchos and broke them "Li'aynachem", in front of "your eyes". Lichoira, "Li'aynaychem" is extra since he was talking to klal yisroel? He answered that it is because **the luchos were only broken in front of Klal Yisroel's eyes. In truth, there is a place where the Luchos were never broken.** He applied it to the Holocaust and all the other massacres that we have endured over the years. He said that "although your family and much of my family and much of my Chasidim were killed - they were killed only in a bechina of "Li'aynachem". But there is a place where every heiliga yid still lives unbroken and totally whole."

My beloved brothers. I wish to apply this to our situation. Although we "break" our neshamos from time to time, (sometimes more often than we like and in ways even we can't believe we do), **we should remmember that this is only L'aynainu.** But in the sefira of Kesser, in the bechina of "kol Yisroel", our Neshamos are totally clean and whole.

Next time the Y"H wants to tell you how bad you are, send him to the Nazis. No matter what

your stage, remmember "Veshuchanty b'soch Tumasum". You might not know where that place in you is, **but the Pintele Yid in you knows, and is living in harmony with Hakodosh Baruch Hu as it says in the Zohar (and bought in the Tanya) on the posuk in Berashis Vayepach Bapov Nishmas Chaim, Man D'nofach M'Toicoi Nafach. .**

Is the project a good idea?

Chazak V'ematz

Pintele Yid

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Re: Torah AND the 12-Steps

Posted by the.guard - 17 Jun 2009 21:51

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Ahron, maybe try Zohar... it works for me! See chizuk e-mail #476 from on Lag Ba'omer (on [this page](#)).

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Re: Torah AND the 12-Steps

Posted by the.guard - 17 Jun 2009 21:59

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Dearst Pintele (and Barditchev). That's an amazing idea!!

I currently have 10 categories on our new site. I think I should change one of them to "Torah and Chazal". And every day we would post Ma'amarim and Chazals that relate to this struggle... Will you and bardichev help provide the material for me to post each day?

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Re: Torah AND the 12-Steps

Posted by Pintele Yid - 17 Jun 2009 22:50

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Heiliga Guard,

I will I"Y"H do my best, I hope that Barditchev will also agree. Maybe there are others as well that can volunteer.

I think that instead of doing a daily post on another Maimar Chazal, we should start with one Maimar until we figure out how exactly it fits into the program. We will then move onto another Maimar. Sometimes less is more.

Is this OK?

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Re: Torah AND the 12-Steps

Posted by bardichev - 17 Jun 2009 23:12

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guard heiliger guard and pintele yid

i feel like i just went to the mikva erev yom kippur

i feel like i am putting on my tallis for kol nidrei

pintele that is such a chashuve maasesh with the imrei emes

i dont want to add because it will only be migare-ah ch"v

Heiliger guard i will bl"n do my part .

i am not so into maamarim and tanya (not ch"v for any reason just chisaron yide-ah and had no

rebbe in it maybe abit in whats called the poilishe prakim)

I can present a torah thought and try to give a practical application to it

i humbly suggest this area should be called "BAIS MEDRASH"

like in mushchayhu lbais medrash

once this is up and running we need to bury the virtual hatchet in the spirit of ailu-vi-ailu

one condition should be that there can be questions and shakla vitarya but to debate the mehalich then the debaters can visit torah and 12 steps et.

HEILIGER GUARD !!!! schorcha harbeh MEOD!!!!!!!

h&H

bardichev

p.s. pintele yid

hust mir ungerirt in de pintel fin mayn neshama!

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Re: Torah AND the 12-Steps

Posted by Pintele Yid - 17 Jun 2009 23:34

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Bardichev and others that want to participate,

I am not talking about Maimarim in the sense of Chasideshi Maimarim. I am initially talking about mayses and limudim related to our battle found in Tanach, Gemorah and Medrashim. We can try the others once we have exhausted the ones found in the aforementioned sources.

When the category is set up on the site, the first one will be how the masseh of Yoseph Hatzadik relates to us.

I have to shut down for the night but will I"Y"H be on tomorrow. Hopefully the category will be set up by then.

Pintele Yid

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Re: Torah AND the 12-Steps  
Posted by Efshar Letaken - 17 Jun 2009 23:39

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Pinteleh!

Wow! very overwhelming!

I will need more time to take it all in.

you are Kemaiyan Hamisgaber!

E.L.

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Re: Torah AND the 12-Steps

Posted by boruch - 18 Jun 2009 11:08

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Here is my attempt to make sense of what had once seemed to me to be a total mystery.

I was a bochur of 20 learning Torah and mussar desperately to get cured to no avail. And I learned Torah and mussar desperately for 23 years and still no progress on my addiction and still no progress on procrastination and other major shortcomings. I was extremely desperate. I had Rabbeim who were very down to earth. Rabbeim who spoke very directly. Rabbeim who said everything I needed to hear and yet all to no effect. Rabbeim who I accepted entirely. And still no progress. A true mystery. At least that is what it seemed to me at the time.

But today I see that the key to unraveling the mystery lies in examining the truth of the claim that addiction is blameless because it is a disease.

**Many frum members of the 12 Step community claim that addiction is some mysterious disease that is totally beyond blame. They say that I was not to blame for my addiction. Are they right? Is it true?**

Let's start by saying that if these frum people are in the 12 Step community it is safe to assume that they will accept their own 12 Step literature. Here is what the AA Big Book says about the disease that causes addiction:

"Being convinced that self, manifested in various ways, was what had defeated us, we considered its common manifestations. Resentment is the "number one" offender. It destroys more alcoholics than anything else. From it stem all forms of spiritual disease for we have been not only mentally and physically ill, we have been spiritually sick."

(p. 64 para 2,3)

The disease is not just a physical or mental disease, there is a spiritual disease. This is how it works. The addiction is caused by selfishness which in turn causes resentment. That resentment causes all forms of spiritual disease in addition to the physical and mental disease. Here is the key to recovery from these three diseases, from the spiritual, mental and physical

diseases:

"When the spiritual malady is overcome, we straighten out mentally and physically."

(p. 64 para 3)

Once we take care of the spiritual disease the other diseases disappear. How and why does that work?

Simple, the real problem was always the spiritual disease and as soon as the spiritual disease is removed then the physical and mental disease heal automatically.

So what is this spiritual disease? What is this spiritual disease that can take hold even in Frum Yidden like myself who learned Torah and Mussar, who had the right Rabbeim and had heard everything that they needed to?

Bill W explains in his 12&12,

"Now let's take the guy full of faith, but still reeking of alcohol. He believes he is devout. His religious observance is scrupulous. He's sure he still believes in God, but suspects that God doesn't believe in him. He takes pledges and more pledges. Following each, he not only drinks again, but acts worse than the last time. Valiantly he tries to fight alcohol, imploring God's help, but the help doesn't come. What, then, can be the matter?"

(12&12 p.31)

So Bill W asked our question too. And as we may have noticed we are not alone in our confusion over this question, we are in the good company of Rabbis, Doctors, Rabbis who are also Doctors and everyone else who was just as baffled as we were:

"To clergymen, doctors, friends, and families, the alcoholic who means well and tries hard is a heartbreaking riddle."

(12&12 p.31)

But to me the answer is really simple.

"This answer has to do with the quality of faith rather than its quantity. This has been our blind spot. We supposed we had humility when really we hadn't. We supposed we had been serious about religious practices when, upon honest appraisal, we found we had been only superficial. Or, going to the other extreme, we had wallowed in emotionalism and had mistaken it for true religious feeling. **In both cases, we had been asking something for nothing.** "

(12&12 p.32)

Toveil vesheretz beyodo - trying to purify myself while still clinging to the causes of my impurity. My addiction was caused by selfishness and resentment. Yes I can learn Torah and mussar but even then I still have bechira. Torah and mussar will never be enough, if after all the Torah and mussar I still stubbornly insist on being toveil vesheretz beyodi, Torah and mussar will never work for as long as I still cling to the causes of my addiction - my selfishness and resentment - and the truth is that I had not been either ready or honest enough to give them up and I was not even ready to admit it:

**"we really hadn't cleaned house** so that the grace of God could enter us and expel the obsession. **In no deep or meaningful sense had we ever taken stock of ourselves, made amends to those we had harmed, or freely given to any other human being without any demand for reward.** We had not even prayed rightly. We had always said, "Grant me my wishes" instead of "Thy will be done." The love of God and man we understood not at all. **Therefore we remained self-deceived, and so incapable of receiving enough grace to restore us to sanity."**

(12&12 p.32)

No matter how much Torah and mussar I learned I could not do teshuva until I was ready to be honest enough to change. As long I was unwilling to take the actions I needed to do for teshuva, Hashem would not free me of my spiritual disease. As long as I was unwilling to fix my maasim by doing a real searching cheshbon hanefesh that broke through all my levels of denial then my spiritual disease would remain and I would remain an addict with a full-blown spiritual disease. I would still be unprepared to give to others for their sake and not for mine. I would still be unwilling to daven for anything except for myself and I would still be deep in denial.

**So I disagree very strongly with those who claim that I was free from blame because I suffered from a disease.** Yes it's true, as long as I remained in my addiction I was hopelessly stuck and unable to change. **But I had a choice.** The heart of my disease was spiritual and not mental or physical and for that I was entirely to blame.

Hashem was ready to help me as soon as I would do the teshuva that I needed to. Not teshuva for the aspects of the addiction I could not control, but teshuva for all the direct causes of my addiction that I could have been ready to give up that I was not ready to give up. I alone was entirely to blame.

That's how I came to the Steps. Betachbulos taaseh milchomo -- we need to learn strategies in the battle with the yetzer hora. If I refused to get the openness, honesty and willingness through Torah, at least I could take a lesson from others before me who had trodden this same road and discovered methods and tools to help in the battle. Ein chochom kebaal nissoyon. I could learn from those who had been there and succeeded.

**There are some in the frum community who say that we should only learn from yidden. Is this true?**

Well, if we had the choice of learning tachbulos, tools and strategies from the millions of frum addicts who preceded us, then certainly, what is the need to learn from aynom yehudim, from non-Jews? There is just one problem. There have been millions of aynom yehudim, of non-Jewish addicts but there were never millions of Jewish addicts. And so we need to learn tachbulos, tools and strategies from non-Jews.

**Is it a weakness of Torah that we have never had millions of addicts? Of course not, the fact that we have not had millions of addicts is a strength of Torah. And so I disagree absolutely and totally with those who think that taking tachbulos, tools and strategies from non-Jews who have much more experience with addiction than we do (for good reason) is somehow a weakness in Torah.**

What does the the experience of millions of non-Jews teach me? It teaches me that the 12 Steps are the best tools and strategies to learn to break through my denial, to move away from

my selfishness, for me to gain readiness to change and readiness to *surrender* the sheretz that I was so desperately grasping onto while I was learning Torah and mussar.

**So to me it is not a question of Torah vs 12 Steps. It is a simple question. Am I ready to change? If I am honestly and fully ready to stop being selfish, If I am honestly and fully ready to get rid of my shortcomings and to make up with all those whom I have harmed then I do not need the Steps at all, because I have already taken all of the Steps with my readiness. If that's the case then all I need is Torah. But if I am not ready to change and I am so stuck that I do not even know what I have to be ready for, then I have to be an absolute fool to ignore the experience of millions of non-Jewish addicts who learned how to get the readiness by using the strategies of the 12 Steps.**

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Re: Torah AND the 12-Steps

Posted by aaron4 - 18 Jun 2009 12:22

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No matter how much Torah and mussar I learned I could not do teshuva until I was ready to be honest enough to change....That's how I came to the Steps.

I understand this and it's unrefutable in that it's your actual experience and so could not have been any different, however at it's core, learning mussar properly does **exactly** this. It's about making a cheshbon hanefesh (4th step inventory), truly and honestly understanding your middos (such as selfishness that leads to spiritual maladies and addiction), and working on improving them (willingness to change).

So it's all there, it's just not as simply stated as the Steps, especially since someone who learns in Yeshiva is exposed to these lofty concepts long before they're able to fully understand what they mean, let alone how to apply them (in truth, they don't even know that there's something to be **applied**). And usually, by the time they're ready to understand, the "old" words that they've seen before do not take on new meaning without a life changing event to alter their attitude. An event like hitting rock bottom, going through the steps (which are brand new and therefore seen in their proper light for someone **desperate** for life) and eventually, coming back to Torah and Mussar and seeing that in an entirely new light. Only **then** do you realize that it was there all along, right under your nose, and yet you saw nothing but words on a page. If we could only help people "hit bottom while still on top", they will hopefully see this in their lives long before we did in ours.

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Re: Torah AND the 12-Steps

Posted by boruch - 18 Jun 2009 13:58

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[aaron4 wrote on 18 Jun 2009 12:22:](#)

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I understand this and it's unrefutable in that it's your actual experience and so could not have been any different, however at it's core, learning mussar properly does **exactly** this. It's about making a cheshbon hanefesh (4th step inventory), truly and honestly understanding your middos (such as selfishness that leads to spiritual maladies and addiction), and working on improving them (willingness to change).

Those are very elegant words. But the reality for me was that long before I knew what a 4th Step was, or even that there were 12 Steps, I was making a daily inventory with sefer Cheshbon Hanefesh. And I believed that I honestly and truly understood my middos and I was very seriously working on them.

But beneath the surface there was a lot buried very deep that due to both pain and pride I would not and could not look at. I was too proud to go for help and it would have hurt a lot. So I did not. And deep down in my mind if it seemed too difficult and too painful then I was off the hook. End of story. And that's exactly where I was wrong but I was too biased to see it and too isolated to go for help. I spoke to Rabbonim and even Gedolim but I did not get anywhere close to where the real pain was and to where the real problem was. I spoke in generalities not disclosing the true issues because I myself was in denial of them.

In the end my wife schlepped me from therapist to therapist. With the therapist too my wife and I never got close to the real issues. We made a big deal out of the small things and totally ignored the big things. As if by mutual agreement. And we got nowhere. This is what the AA Big Book has to say about the honesty, openness and willingness of the addict:

"More than most people, the alcoholic leads a double life. He is very much the actor. To the outer world he presents his stage character. This is the one he likes his fellows to see. He wants to enjoy a certain reputation, but knows in his heart he doesn't deserve it.

The inconsistency is made worse by the things he does on his sprees. Coming to his sense, he is revolted at certain episodes he vaguely remembers. These memories are a nightmare. He trembles to think someone might have observed him. As far as he can, he pushes these memories far inside himself. He hopes they will never see the light of day. He is under constant fear and tension--that makes for more drinking.

Psychologists are inclined to agree with us. We have spent thousands of dollars for examinations. We know but few instances where we have given these doctors a fair break. We have seldom told them the whole truth nor have we followed their advice. Unwilling to be honest with these sympathetic men, we were honest with no one else."

(p. 73 para 1-3)

[aaron4 wrote on 18 Jun 2009 12:22:](#)

So it's all there, it's just not as simply stated as the Steps, especially since someone who learns in Yeshiva is exposed to these lofty concepts long before they're able to fully understand what they mean, let alone how to apply them (in truth, they don't even know that there's something to be **applied**). And usually, by the time they're ready to understand, the "old" words that they've seen before do not take on new meaning without a life changing event to alter their attitude.

What was missing was not missing in Torah it was missing in me. I was not honest, open and willing. I knew very well that I had to be and nothing that you write above was true for me in any way at all. I just excused myself that since it was so painful for me I didn't have to do it. Of course if anyone had told me that at the time I would have argued with them. But I was lying, lying to myself and everyone else.

[aaron4 wrote on 18 Jun 2009 12:22:](#)

An event like hitting rock bottom, going through the steps (which are brand new and therefore seen in their proper light for someone **desperate** for life) and eventually, coming back to Torah and Mussar and seeing that in an entirely new light. Only **then** do you realize that it was there all along, right under your nose, and yet you saw nothing but words on a page. If we could only help people "hit bottom while still on top", they will hopefully see this in their lives long before we did in ours.

Well that was not my problem at all. For me it was nowhere near as convoluted as you make it. I needed spoon-feeding and I needed the benefit of people with experience. Fortunately none of my Rabbeim or chavirim had the experience of being addicts and so I went to the Roman Catholics who had excellent experience.

For me your words sound very wishful, almost like the ending of a romantic novel, but in my case at least nothing could have been further from the truth. Deep down I knew all along what I had to do, I just had no-one with the experience to show me how to make it easy. And if my experience is any indication I believe that there may be many, many others who like me needed the experience of others to make it easier for them.

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Re: Torah AND the 12-Steps

Posted by aaron4 - 18 Jun 2009 14:12

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For me your words sound very wishful, almost like the ending of a romantic novel...Deep down I knew all along what I had to do, I just had no-one with the experience to show me how to make it easy.



although I think it helps address at least the intellectual/ideological question that is at the heart of this thread (how Torah and the Steps work together). As for the immediate, practical answer, you conclude:

I see your point, it is a bit romantic

And if my experience is any indication I believe that there may be many, many others who like me needed the experience of others to make it easier for them.

Despite my romantic musings, I couldn't agree with this more. That's why ***I'm personally waiting to get started*** with learning from YOUR experience Boruch! Not Mesillas Yescharim, I'll work on that myself, but the STEPS. What do you say??

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Re: Torah AND the 12-Steps  
Posted by Dov - 18 Jun 2009 17:16

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Thanks for your clarity and detail, Boruch. One of the issues I have had with "using Torah" was that there is very little in Torah that is broken down into small, bitesize pieces. We - I - learn a maaseh about mesiras nefesh and feel inspired! Yet when I'd get home and my 17year-old doesn't do my will I'd be upset and lash out! When the light turned red and I was in a hurry, I'd feel annoyance inside. Where is the ein od milvado, the Hashem echad, even the simple gam zu letovah inherent in simple faith in G-d? Yes, the concepts are all there, but as long as we keep pretending to learn trust in hashem from things way above us, the ideals are ideals and not inside us. *Al levovecha* is nice (you know the kotzker/reb tzadok on this) but it is **not at all enough for addicts**, as you seem to be making clear. **We need quality and reality inside us, not just quantity.** I hope you do not see what I have posted as differing from what you have written. I think I agree with what you have written and especially respect your experience a great deal, . I am only sharing w/you an understanding of the advantage that the structure of the steps holds and why Torah - *as it is taught* - didn't work. It still won't, until this basic problem in *how it is approached* is solved, at least for addicts. To the yidden who contribute to the Torah/Bais Medrash project: share and inspire! but consider what is bite-size and can be put into action by an addict, some crazier than others. I used to love getting lost in madreigas and ecstatic connection to Hashem. But that is simply not what he wanted from me and it didn't help me. If anyone thinks I am critisizing the Torah, you have not heard me.

Love,

Dov

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Re: Torah AND the 12-Steps

Posted by boruch - 18 Jun 2009 18:15

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[aaron4 wrote on 18 Jun 2009 14:12:](#)

Despite my romantic musings, I couldn't agree with this more. That's why ***I'm personally waiting to get started*** with learning from YOUR experience Boruch! Not Mesillas Yescharim, I'll work on that myself, but the STEPS. What do you say??

I say let's get started, you can head over [here](#) and begin with us online today.

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Re: Torah AND the 12-Steps

Posted by boruch - 18 Jun 2009 18:27

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[dov wrote on 18 Jun 2009 17:16:](#)

Thanks for your clarity and detail, Boruch. One of the issues I have had with "using Torah" was that there is very little in Torah that is broken down into small, bitesize pieces.

Thank you Dov, I certainly respect your experience. In general my own experience has been that I know of no better and no more down to earth and practical teacher of Mussar than Rav Avigdor Miller Zt"l and his teachings are available in many forms from Beginner (Artscroll's Rabbi Miller Speaks) to Moderate (Thursday night series), to Intermediate (Tapes on mussar seforim, Awake My Glory, Rejoice O Youth) to advanced (Lev Avigdor, Shaarei Orah, Toras

Avigdor).

His depth and practicality while popularly recognized go far beyond what meets the eye.

And as Rabbi Miller said many times there are many situations in life that are not covered in any sefer. So Rabbi Miller's seforim are excellent for the average healthy person but I needed guidance from someone with addiction experience. In general I would not go for parenting advice to someone with no kids (unless it were the Chazon Ish or Satmar Rov). In general I would not go for Sholom Bayis advice to a bochur. Likewise I needed an addict to advise me on how an addict needs to reconnect to Hashem, one bite-size Step at a time.

I can add that a sponsee of mine shared with me that an active abusive sex addict went to Rabbi Miller wanting to hear that he had no hope and that he was doomed forever to burn to cinders in Gehinnom. My sponsee tells me that this addict told him that Rabbi Miller simply told him that he could not help him and that he should go and seek professional help.

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