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 differrently 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 bardichev - 18 Jun 2009 20:52

Boruch response #69 is a kiddush hashem

Heliger Guard thank you for making halt di finger of de platz(I hope you get my yiddish/english) and read it slowly!

Boruch my only qiestion for you is and I am not debating here I only want to re-affirm a point that when rashi (parshas ki savo) quotes the gemara in sanhedrin yarda Torah Lisof Daatan Shel Adam(the Torah delves into the far reaches of a persons DAAS=mind=deepestlevel of understanding. That the supremecy of Torah is true.Boruch you so succinctly point out that the steps are tachbulos .Why am I so excited over you calling them Tachbulos because a tachbulah I don't have the perfect English translation is an idea or a great plan actually it can mean manauvers,whatever its definition it is a tool a necassarry tool a pacemaker an artificial heart you get my drift .a tachbulah is a way to get some where.

Thank you Boruch thank you heiliger Guard

h&h

bardichev

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Re: Torah AND the 12-Steps
Posted by boruch - 19 Jun 2009 10:35

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bardichev wrote on 18 Jun 2009 20:52**:**

Boruch my only qiestion for you is and I am not debating here I only want to re-affirm a point that when rashi (parshas ki savo) quotes the gemara in sanhedrin yarda Torah Lisof Daatan

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Hello bardichev, Sholom uvrocho,

A Step is exactly what it's name suggests, a way to get from place A to place B.

To get successfully from place A to place B you need two things, the *theoretical knowledge* of what it takes to get from one point to another and the *practical recognition* of how to apply and use that knowledge. So, for example you could study driving in *theory* by reading the best instruction manuals but until you take driving lessons and get *practice* in how to apply that knowledge all the theory will remain useless.

The Ramban in his hakdomo to Bereishis says that all of chochmo is learned from Torah and that Shlomo Hamelech was able to plant peppers most successfully by deriving his knowledge directly from Torah. The level of Shlomo Hamelech's knowledge and understanding of Torah was such that he was able to master both the *theory* and *practice* of planting peppers directly from Torah.

How about if I need to grow peppers?

I could do one of two things:

1) Try and learn so well that I reach the madreigo of Shlomo Hamelech in Torah so that I too could derive both the *theory* and *practice* of planting peppers directly from Torah.

2) Get a book on agriculture, study it and then go down to a farm and spend time getting experience until I am ready to grow peppers myself.

Which one will I choose? Obviously the second. Does that mean that a book on agriculture and some months on a farm are somehow equivalent to Torah? After learning the book and spending time on the farm am I on the same madreigo as Shlomo Hamelech? Obviously not. It is just that for me becoming like Shlomo Hamelech is impossible.

Let us now move to the question of mussar and kevishas hayetzer. Rav Yisroel Salanter wrote in Or Yisroel (Iggeres 19) that Torah is the *theoretical* knowledge where practical experience is not required but mussar is the *practical* knowledge of how to apply Torah to life and for that *practical experience* is a must.

In Or Yisroel (Igros 19 and 20) he says that medicine and business have a large body of practical knowledge and have hard and fast general rules that apply to many circumstances and therefore the same approach can be used in different cases. Mussar says R' Yisroel, is different - different people need different paths and what works for one won't necessarily work for another (Iggeres 19). Furthermore he writes what works for one middah in one person will not necessarily work for another middah in the same person (Iggeres 20). For this reason R' Yisroel refuses to give written mussar advice to one of his talmidim and insists that they need to meet *one-on-one* at length before they can determine the correct course of mussar (Iggeres 19).

So as much as medicine and business depend on practical experience, mussar requires even more. That is why mussar advice requires great experience on the part of the Rebbe who then uses his *own personal experience* to work *one-on-one* with the talmid to develop the correct plan of action.

So, following R' Yisroel Salanter, if I needed mussar in parenting, in general, I would not be well-advised to go for advice to someone with no kids and in general if I needed mussar in Sholom Bayis I would not be well-advised to go for advice to a bochur.

That is the problem with addiction. In general **we do not have Rabbeim with their own practical experience of overcoming addiction** to prescribe the right mussar. Is this a chisoron of Torah? No doubt Shlomo Hamelech could have used his knowledge of the secrets of Torah to have derived the practical knowledge to help addicts even without first-hand experience. But when an addict came to one of the most practical mussar teachers of our generation, Rav Avigdor Miller Zt"l, Rabbi Miller told him that he could not help him.

When I was fighting addiction, and my own mussar was not working for me, I had no choice, there was no Shlomo Hamelech to go to. So I went to the *practical experience* of millions of addicts.

Their experience is that the basic prescription of AA co-founder, Dr Bob (see a copy of his prescription here) to

1. Trust in G-d

2. Clean House

3. Help Others

is just what the addict needs. Their experience is that "Trust in G-d , Clean House, Help Others" is easiest to achieve through 12 Steps. Their experience is that the best way to get the 12 Steps is by working *one-on-one* with someone who has *experience* of the *same addiction* and *experience* overcoming *that addiction* by using the Steps.

This is how it is summarized in the AA Big Book:

"one alcoholic could affect another as no nonalcoholic could... strenuous work, one alcoholic with another, was vital to permanent recovery."

(p xvi-xvii)

Does this mean that we need to get defensive about the supremacy of Torah? Absolutely not. Mussar, as R' Yisroel said long before the AA Big Book was ever written, depends on experience, and fortunately our Rabbeim had no experience of addiction.

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Re: Torah AND the 12-Steps
Posted by battleworn - 19 Jun 2009 14:04

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The Mesilas Yeshorim gives the moshol of a maze. Obviously if you're stuck in the maze, the easiest way to get out is to take advice from someone who has already found his way out

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Re: Torah AND the 12-Steps
Posted by boruch - 19 Jun 2009 14:19

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battleworn wrote on 19 Jun 2009 14:04**:**

The Mesilas Yeshorim gives the moshol of a maze. Obviously if you're stuck in the maze, the easiest way to get out is to take advice from someone who has already found his way out

Very true, once I realize, with the benefit of R' Yisroel Salanter, that I need someone with very specific experience in the area of my challenges.

The problem that I had for the longest time was that I thought that the general advice of the mesilas yeshorim when he gives the moshol of the maze to learn from Chazal's experience and do a bo'u cheshbon (clean house) was all I needed, and that I did not need any more specific advice than that.

If it were obvious from the mesilas yeshorim that it takes one addict to help another in a way that no non-addict could, then it is very likely that we would have had no dilemmas and debates of "Torah vs 12 Steps" in the first place.

So, I agree with your "tzu shtel" and comparison entirely, but like the best chiddushim, it is only obvious once you have seen it!!!

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Re: Torah AND the 12-Steps
Posted by battleworn - 20 Jun 2009 20:22

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If it were obvious from the mesilas yeshorim that it takes one addict to help another in a way that no non-addict could,...

Whose words are these? (If you don't mind my asking)

This is not exactly what Boruch said earlier. And is therefore not what I meant to bring a source for.

This is what he said:

In general I would not go for parenting advice to someone with no kids (unless it were the Chazon Ish or Satmar Rov).

To me there's a very important difference between the two.

What should be obvious from the Mesillas Yesharim is, that if someone does have experience, and he's offering to help you when you're stuck (IE:you haven't managed to find your way out and there's no logical reason to think that things will suddenly change) than you have to be a fool not to listen. Whether an addict can get help in a different way or not is a totaly seperate

question.

I actually have a whole lot to say about this and about this thread in general, but I don't want to hog up this thread. So iy"h later today I'll start posting my thoughts on a new thread, over here: rehab-my-site.com/guardureyes/forum/index.php?topic=571.0

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Re: Torah AND the 12-Steps
Posted by boruch - 21 Jun 2009 12:46

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battleworn wrote on 20 Jun 2009 20:22**:**

If it were obvious from the mesilas yeshorim that it takes one addict to help another in a way that no non-addict could,...

Whose words are these? (If you don't mind my asking)

This is not exactly what Boruch said earlier.

Not what Boruch said? I am Boruch, and unsurprisingly I am quite aware of what I wrote originally. It seems that besides not realizing that both posts were mine you missed my original point.

The original question was what can the AA program that cannot be found from mussar and Rabbeim. Addressing that I wrote the following including the part about one alcoholic helping another the way no non-alcoholic could,

So as much as medicine and business depend on practical experience, mussar requires even more. That is why mussar advice requires great experience on the part of the Rebbe who then uses his own personal experience to work one-on-one with the talmid to develop the correct plan of action...

That is the problem with addiction. In general we do not have Rabbeim with their own practical experience of overcoming addiction to prescribe the right mussar. Is this a chisoron of Torah? No doubt Shlomo Hamelech could have used his knowledge of the secrets of Torah to have derived the practical knowledge to help addicts even without first-hand experience. But when an addict came to one of the most practical mussar teachers of our generation, Rav Avigdor Miller Zt"l, Rabbi Miller told him that he could not help him.

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(p xvi-xvii)

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Re: Torah AND the 12-Steps
Posted by battleworn - 21 Jun 2009 13:24

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Thank you. I knew that that was your post but when I read it on Friday I don't remember it saying that. Being that your post was edited, I wasn't sure if that was what you said. I do not see anything in your orignal posts that says that "no non-addict could". Yes of course you quoted it from the big book and of course it's true for them, but you know very well that we have something that they don't have.

I'll give you a little illustration from your own ex. of chinuch. I have a child that is in big trouble. I've spoken to experts with much experience. But a few months ago I had a little talk with R' Tvi Meir. He spoke very humbly, he doesn't claim to be an expert and he doesn't have experience. But it soon became abundantly obvious that he knew what he was talking about lightyears ahead of all the experienced experts. He poshut knew exactly what is going on in the kid and exactly what he needs, when the experts had no idea.

You already alluded to this in the quote that I quoted before. Right now I'm not sure where you stand on the issue, so please let us know.

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Re: Torah AND the 12-Steps
Posted by Pintele Yid - 22 Jun 2009 09:42

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Dear Chabura Kadisha,

I had stopped commenting on this post for a while because I was doubting my right as a non-addict to respond. How could I have an opinion if I never tread on the "Admas Kodesh" that you have experienced? I decided to respond because Hashem told Moshe "Sha'al' Na'alecha Ma'al Raglecha" but never told him to leave.

What does "Sha'al' Na'alecha Ma'al Raglecha" mean? To me it means that you should have no "covering" and be very sensitive when you enter a place where you are an outsider. With all that said, I ask mechila if I cause anyone pain by saying what I am about to say.

It is blantantly obvious that Torah and Tefillo have not been the solution. Some have related that they actually made the problem worse.

Some have stated that it doesn't work because addicts are too sick to relate to it.

The question that I have been grappling with since the thread has began is why? How is it possible if "Istakel Beoiraysa Uburah Alma", that Torah is the blueprint of the world, so Torah should be able to solve everything? If you have any doubt, it says that Torah is the "Tavlin", the cure for this addiction?

To those who say that the Gemorah is not referring to those who are sick, I say that the Gemora doesn't say "Huchu B'maiy Askinun", "when does this apply", when the person is not an addict, but when the person is an addict then Torah doesn't work.

Therefore, I humbly feel that this is not the correct answer.

The other possibility is what others are saying that **since Torah is unstructured, and since there currently doesn't exist any Torah based 12 step program, then of course anyone who had tried to use Torah to heal their sickness failed, because they weren't implementing Torah in the correct way to solve the problem!**

When Harav Miller said he couldn't help the addict, he was saying the Emes, because he personally never implemented the Torah in the 12 step program! Therefore the only solution, was to go to a professional implementer of the 12 step program.

This post is a challenge to all those who have somewhat succeeded in beating their addiction using the 12 step program and are versed in Torah, (especially those who are well versed in Torah concepts and have initially failed because they used it wrong), with much Tefilo for Syata Dishmaya, to band together to create a Torah based 12 step program or a 12 step program based on Torah. Whatever you want to call it.

Such a program would attract many in our community who have mistakenly stayed away from the program because it wasn't based on Torah. I also think that ultimately, the koach of Torah will help solidify the program and make it more successful for all.

Since the advent of this Website, which has gathered together addicts in "numbers" into one "Chabura Kadisha", there is no greater Eitz Ratzon than now to create it. It could be that the whole reason for some of you who failed through trying to use the Torah to succeed, is specifically so you should create this program for many others to benefit from such a structured program.

Heliga Guard, I don't know the appropriate method of getting this done. Whether it is a periodic "call in workshop" or through a forum. That could be up for discussion. But it seems to me that the bottom line is we start with step one and then search for relevant concepts from the Torah to put into that step, and then bsyata Dishmaya move on to step two etc....

For example, learning mussar won't help you in the heat of the moment, but maybe fleeing from your immediate environment (home or wherever you might be at the time) might be the right answer. You see this from the Torah. **Yoseph Hatzaddik didn' t learn Mussar after 10 drops of zerah left his fingers, he got out! He might have fled to the nearest cemetary for a reality check.** Rav Amram Chasida didn't say Tehillim when he started climbing up that ladder, **he cried fire so others would come and help him out of his mess. Today it is the speed dial on the cell phone (as has been implemented as a result of the 12 step program).**

Hope this suggestion makes sense.

Pintela Yid

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Re: Torah AND the 12-Steps
Posted by battleworn - 22 Jun 2009 11:47

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It is blantantly obvious that Torah and Tefillo have not been the solution. Some have related that they actually made the problem worse.

Reb Pintele, Although this a disscussion in itself and I'm not about to get all in to it here and now (I sound like a broken record) I just want to point out for accuracy's sake that Torah and Tefiloh do wonders for an addict when they're done right. In short, you need to know three things

1) Who you are

2) Who you are davening to (If for ex: you think c"v that it was a bad idea to give you this nissoyon then it's not Hashem that you're talking to "Lo osi karasa yaakov ki yagata bi Yisroel")

3) What you are davening for.

When you get that all straight Tefiloh does wonders and when you learn the right way (I discussed it a little in the other thread) then that also does wonders.

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Re: Torah AND the 12-Steps
Posted by Dov - 22 Jun 2009 17:16

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Dear Battleworn - I think pintele means that the problem is not in the Torah and Tefila but in the way they are approached or packaged. *That* needs to be altered for an addict to use them successfully.

This point has some validity. I have already said too much about this already to go on, now.

The ingredient we cannot lose or circumvent, though, is the leiv nishbar. For me, and I believe for others as well, it comes bedavka from recognizing that we need to sit in a room with a bunch of recovering perverts (mostly goyim and perhaps even in a church basement) because our illness.

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Re: Torah AND the 12-Steps
Posted by the.guard - 22 Jun 2009 18:17

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That's profound Dov. Ashrecha.

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Re: Torah AND the 12-Steps
Posted by aaron4 - 22 Jun 2009 19:26

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Pintele,

First you say:

To those who say that the Gemorah is not referring to those who are sick, I say that the Gemora doesn't say "Huchu B'maiy Askinun", "when does this apply", when the person is not an addict, but when the person is an addict then Torah doesn't work

Then you say:

anyone who had tried to use Torah to heal their sickness failed, because they weren't implementing Torah in the correct way

I don't think these are mutually exclusive. It is precisely because someone is sick that they are unable to implement the Torah in the correct way. If your emotional needs are not met, if you're in a negative environment that you cannot escape, and yet you're told 'learning is the only way! If you're upset, go open a sefer!' then it's no surprise that for you, learning Torah will become a negative experience **no matter how full of Kedusha is *really* is**. Once in this state, you're "sick". You cannot relate to Torah properly, certainly not to address the very thing you used as an escape in order to alleviate the pain of learning (as experienced through the negative environment)! And therefore it is impossible for Torah to be applied correctly. Interestingly, although I believe the 12 steps works wonders to address addictive behavior, I don't think it *alone* is sufficient to change the way you relate to Torah without recognizing the reason for the negative reaction and realizing for yourself that the problem was not with Torah but with you environment. For this, one needs therapy.

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Re: Torah AND the 12-Steps
Posted by Pintele Yid - 22 Jun 2009 20:57

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aaron4 wrote on 22 Jun 2009 19:26**:**

Pintele,

First you say:

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aaron4,

I think the question, is very direct. Either Torah can be Tavlin for every level/degree of sickness, or it can't help in every level/degree of sickness. If we take the position that Torah can, then the obvious question is "why isn't it helping"?

You Dov and others have answered that it is not a problem with the Torah but a problem with the person who is sick. You are coming from different angles, but it is still the same line of reasoning. Pardon my stubborness, **but if we follow this line of reasoning, then you are still left with the problem that Torah cannot heal sick people in all circumstances.** This is not supported by the Gemorah that Torah is Tavlin and makes no exceptions of how sick a person is, **or what he personally needs to get him out of it. Whether his problem is that he doesn't have lev nishbar, or he needs psychotherapy etc...**, it doesn't make a difference, because all these reasons point to a deficiency in the person, and the Gemorah doesn't make any distinctions on what qualities a person needs to have for the Torah to be an effective Tavlin.

My reason is different because it doesn't focus on deficiencies in the Torah, Chas Vshalom or

even the sickness. It focuses on the implementation - period. If you don't know how to implement what the Torah is offering, you can be as "healthy as a horse" but you will still fail. **Therefore, the Chesuron is not in the Torah nor the person - just the implementation. Since to date, implemetation of the twelve steps within a Torah framework is non-existent, and we all agree that a real addict can in most circumstances can only be helped if he uses the 12 steps, how could anyone have been possibly successful using Torah to combat addiction?**

It is precisely that reason why I suggested we develop an implementation of the Torah utilizing the twelve steps. Either start from the 12 steps and then find Torah (Tanach, Mishna, Medrash Zohar etc..) that fit with each step, or start with the relevant Torah concepts and then slot in where they step they are relevant to.

This will then give those addicts familiar with Torah concepts, a foothold into the twelve steps, and you would also have access to many more Rabbeim, educators etc... who would be more open to using them to deal with the issue correctly, instead of either saying they have no idea how to help you or worse, tell you the wrong thing.

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Re: Torah AND the 12-Steps
Posted by Dov - 22 Jun 2009 22:26

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Dear pintele yid , aaron, etc.,

Pintele Yid wrote on 22 Jun 2009 20:57**:**

Pardon my stubborness, **but if we follow this line of reasoning, then you are still left with the problem that Torah cannot heal sick people in all circumstances.** This is not supported by the Gemorah that Torah is Tavlin and makes no exceptions of how sick a person is, **or what he personally needs to get him out of it. Whether his problem is that he doesn't have lev nishbar, or he needs psychotherapy etc...**, it doesn't make a difference, because all these reasons point to a deficiency in the person, and the Gemorah doesn't make any distinctions on what qualities a person needs to have for the Torah to be an effective Tavlin.

Pintele, et al., I agree 100% that the gemora is to be taken literally. It should apply in all circumstances. Still, it may be the "packaging" or our "approach" to Torah realities that really sets some addicts up for failure in controlling their problem using Torah.

Nevertheless, you, in my opinion, are missing something, here. That "something" is the basis for my beliefs that ***leiv nishbar*** **is the main ingredient needed rather than "Torah" per se**, and that an addict needs a change in *approach* to Torah for it to have any real useful meaning to him.

There are two parts to the 12 steps experience in recovery:

Part 1- quitting and not starting back up again (step one)

Part 2- learning how to live in such a way that the addict will never get so uncomfortable that he will need to use his drug, again. (all the other 11 steps)

Once a yid becomes an addict, he is no longer dealing with the yetzer hora AT ALL. And *that* is ultimately why Torah doesn't work for him.

All my correspondence about this Torah issue has been **regarding the steps**, ie.: recovery. The steps are part 2, and not for quitting. **The last 11 steps are certainly in Torah** and are ultimately (through the oxford movement) based on some Torah sources. **The ikkar freedom experience of the "program", though, is not in these 11 steps. It is in the 1st. And that simple self-preservation isn't in Torah, *at all*. Rather, it is clearly a gift from Hashem *into* the individual addict *directly*.** You cannot teach that.

For all of us who have not yet stopped, or still use our drug on a regular basis, I believe the *pegamm* is probably *not* with the 11 later steps. They are either simply not ready for them or need to work them all over again from scratch. Rather, the *pegamm* is mostlikely in their acceptance of **true mental illness, physical illness, and spiritual illness**. Step one has just not happened yet (or it keeps getting "taken back" for further "experimentation").

*Torah and tefillah are not a tavlin for this person, **at all**, because his problem has nothing*

whatever to do with the yetzer hora any more.

Hashem tells us His Torah is the tavlin He made for the yetzer hora, not for the result of following it. The confusion resulting from the bashed-in head the addict got for a tryst with his female friend (whose husband discovered!) them will certainly not be healed by learning Torah.

Once I was **addicted**, whenever that occurred, my *desire* problem became **a disease**, like having my brain work differently than normal as the unfortunate result of getting my head bashed-in by that guy above, or - for a drug addict, getting a physical dependence on his drug (documented in gamblers, as well!).

Part of the problem here is that many pesukim refer to the YH as a "disease", RMBM (Sh"P) refers to bad middos as "illnesses", and we use that jargon all over the place because of the *similarity* to the human experience of physical illness. This blurs the lines, in my opinion, though I use it in my kavvanos in tefillah every day to my Eternal Best Friend, Hashem. This is not just a comparison, like Mishlei's "prostitute" meaning the YH for apostasy, rather, it is actually a real illness. **This distinction is crucial.**

But for the innocent, frum, early recovering addict it is mostlikely impossible to tease them apart. He may wish *above all else* NOT to be told he is mentally ill. "Hey, the *YH* is a badge of shame I can wear just like y'all do! Just don't call me a pervert, cause that means I'm really screwed up!" (And they'll say this in jail. I know, because I have been there with them.)

The next thing you know, even the *addicts* are conveniently convinced it was their YH all along, so all they have to do is "*really* learn and *really* daven."

AA seems to believe that "once an addict - *always* an addict". If I ever view my addiction as a personal weakness or a moral/religious struggle, I am dead. Really dead. Certainly you do not suggest that non-addicts can have any opinion whatsoever on whether AA is right or wrong in this yesod? Help me understand what is going on here, please, friends.

This was the main point in my first post on this forum a few months ago, and dayenu if it'll be my last point.

I love you and look forward to Hashem's gift of continued recovery together, each person according to his need. - Dov

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Re: Torah AND the 12-Steps
Posted by boruch - 23 Jun 2009 08:53

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Pintele Yid wrote on 22 Jun 2009 09:42**:**

The question that I have been grappling with since the thread has began is why? How is it possible if "Istakel Beoiraysa Uburah Alma", that Torah is the blueprint of the world, so Torah should be able to solve everything? If you have any doubt, it says that Torah is the "Tavlin", the cure for this addiction?

...

This post is a challenge to all those who have somewhat succeeded in beating their addiction using the 12 step program and are versed in Torah, (especially those who are well versed in Torah concepts and have initially failed because they used it wrong), with much Tefilo for Syata Dishmaya, to band together to create a Torah based 12 step program or a 12 step program based on Torah. Whatever you want to call it.

Such a program would attract many in our community who have mistakenly stayed away from the program because it wasn't based on Torah. I also think that ultimately, the koach of Torah will help solidify the program and make it more successful for all.

...

Since the advent of this Website, which has gathered together addicts in "numbers" into one "Chabura Kadisha", there is no greater Eitz Ratzon than now to create it. It could be that the whole reason for some of you who failed through trying to use the Torah to succeed, is specifically so you should create this program for many others to benefit from such a structured program.

Pintele,

I agree with almost everything you write.

There is no question in my mind at all that there is nothing absolute about the 12 Steps and their current wording. When the first 40 alcoholics sobered between 1934 - 1939 (the 100 men

and women referred to have been explained by some to have included wives and family members who also belonged to the groups in those days) there were no 12 Steps. There is much evidence that when Bill W the founder of AA later wrote that the early AAs (the Alcoholic Squadron of the Oxford Group) had either 4 or 6 word of mouth Steps that was just his later interpretation and analysis of what had worked then, rather than a factual description of a concept of Steps that existed at the time. The Steps only came into being with the creation of the Big Book in 1939. So it was and is possible to get sober using the basic methodology of AA without 12 Steps and without AA literature. The main difference that the literature and Steps made was the unprecedented growth. It had originally taken 5 years to get 40 alcoholics sober, whereas by 1955, only 16 years later, there were nearly 6,000 groups and 150,000 recovered alcoholics.

It seems very clear to me that Bill W who created Big Book and the Steps did so in the light of his own understanding and culture. There is no question in my mind that someone qualified taking the same basic elements of recovery and expressing and developing them in Torah terms would come up with a different and almost certainly better system. Even if it were no better, at the very, very minimum it would be more culturally appropriate for Torah Jews. To my mind that would be the direct equivalent of what Bill W did in 1939 when he took the system of recovery that his Alcoholic squadron used and expressed it in 12 Steps.

There will, I believe, undoubtedly be some who will try to insist that the 12 Steps are what has worked and the Big Book is what has worked and if it is not broken one should not fix it. I suggest that they take note of these words in the Big Book,

"Our book is meant to be suggestive only. We realize we know only a little. God will constantly disclose more to you and to us."

(BB p.164 - A Vision for You)

But here we must be extremely careful. Bill W did not create the Steps on a notepad after his recovery in 1934. He created them after 5 years of having lead a movement that sobered 40 alcoholics. I encourage anyone who successfully creates groups that have sobered at least 40 alcoholics with a minimum of 5 years of experience who feels that he understands both AA history and the process of recovery to do the same. If Hashem gives me the merit of creating groups that are instrumental in a minimum of 40 recoveries with a minimum of 5 years of experience, then, if it is His will, I believe that with His help, at the appropriate time I would take the necessary action.

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