Some thoughts on "Torah and the 12 steps"
Posted by battleworn - 21 Jun 2009 09:41

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A lot of great points were raised in the "Torah and..." thread but I also feel that there's a lot of confusion. You see, I have a very analytical mind and I crave clarity. So I'm sure for a lot of people it's great, but for people like me things really need to be clarified.

Furthermore, I loath debate. When I was a young man I spent more time arguing than most people do in a lifetime. I was quite good at it, so I usually won all the arguments. And it was a HUGE waste of time. Arguing does NOT lead you to the truth. Discussion on the other hand, does. I think that we all want the truth and if we discuss these issues we can help each other get there. I'm not saying we have to agree on everything, but I do think that if we search together with an open mind, we will end up agreeing on almost everything.

I will start, be"H, with a list of things that, it seems to me, need clarification. And then I'll elaborate on each one iy"H. Everyone is welcome to comment, question and/or challenge anything I write, but please no attacking. (And please don't put words in my mouth. If you think I meant to imply something, you can allways ask)

1) In the topic name, does the word "Torah" refer to learning Torah; or does it mean the Torah as a whole, in other words Judaism or Mesorah?

2) "The 12 steps": are we discussing the actual steps; or does it mean joining SA?

3) Those who found that the Torah couldn't help them, was the problem with the Torah in general; or perhaps with what they did or didn't learn?

4) Does this problem depend on the level of addiction; or on other factors?

5) Is SA an alternative for those who the Torah didn't work for them; or is it a Tachbula to get the Torah to work for them?

6) Why do some people feel that they needed to slow down in their Avodas Hashem while others feel the exact opposite?

7) Are there dangers in using Torah that we need to warn people about?

8) Are there dangers in using the 12 step groups that we need to warn people about?

9) Are there limitations to the eitzah of Chazal -"Moshchei'hu l'beis Hamidrash"

That's enough for now. If you feel I missed something, please say so.

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Re: Some thoughts on "Torah and the 12 steps"
Posted by the.guard - 21 Jun 2009 20:33
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a) The purpose that Hashem sent you to this world was to work on this very issue?

b) The reason we are given a lifetime is because that's how long it takes until we get it right?

c) Hashem doen't make bad investments and when He gave you this mission, He knew what He was doing?

d) Everything depends on the eyes and the heart?

e) Every effort that we make is worth infintely more than anything in this world EVEN IF WE FELL IN THE END?

f) The only thing we have bechira on, is Ratzon; success is only in the hands of Hashem?

g) The Torah specifcaly tells us, that when all else fails, all we need to do is have pure Emunah and leave everything up to Hashem?

h) The only way to fight the y"h is to learn how to avoid him?

i) Not only is this nissoyon not a hinderance to your success, but in fact it's the only way possible for you to get to your goal?

j) Hashem is totaly and completely on your side, and he's NOT disgusted with you?

k) Every yerida is always a preparation for an aliyah?

l) The greatest nachas ru'ach for Hashem is when someone who is in the grip of the y'h still tries to fight -This the ultimate Shechina Betachtonim which is the purpose of all creation?

m) Hashem does not expect you do it alone? (And even if you knew that, were you able to get real help - the kind of help that people are getting on this heiliger network?)

n) Every effort end every good ratzon adds up, and at the end Hashem brings the yeshu'a in the zechus of everything together?

This is truly beautiful, in the typical "Battleworn style" that we have all come to love so much!! I would send this as a Chizuk mail by itself. Only, without the "question marks", rather as statements!

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Re: Some thoughts on "Torah and the 12 steps"
Posted by battleworn - 22 Jun 2009 00:33

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Take 2:

8) Are there dangers in using the 12 step groups that we need to warn people about?

This is something I have thought about long and hard.

I think that it stands to reason that if someone considers the Groups an alternative rather than a “tachbula” (see above #5) then they may be in great danger. For Ex: I know someone (not on the forum) that seems to have a very very cold attitude towards Yiddishkeit, and a very enthusiastic attitude towards the 12 steps. And I know that in his case he definitely looked at it as an alternative to Torah.

B’H all the members of the forum are Yirei Shomayim. But just sometimes (definitely not a lot of times) there are posts which seem to be saying “The only way is the 12 step way and not the Torah way, because the Torah can’t deal with addiction” At least that’s how it seems to me.

Assuming that I’m at least partially right, it would Le’choira be in place to warn people that they must have the right perspective. They have to have it very clear that the 12 steps are not an alternative to Torah but rather a way to get to Torah. What do you say to that?

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Re: Some thoughts on "Torah and the 12 steps"
Posted by battleworn - 22 Jun 2009 00:38

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9) Are there limitations to the eitzah of Chazal -"Moshchei'hu l'beis Hamidrash"

The following is what I posted Chanuka time:

I have two things to say about this:

1)The Gemara over there continues "Im even hue nimoach, Im barzel hue mispotzetz" -If he is stone he will melt, if he is iron he will shatter. The meforshim point out that it doesn't say that if he's stone he will shatter, which is a quick process. Rather we need to melt the stone which is a very slow process (like in the story of Rabbi Akiva)

One of the most important rules of milchemes hayetzer is, that there is no short cut. There are a lot of things that can help, but Hashem will never be mevater on our hard work - which is so dear to Him and so beneficial to us.

2) "Divrei Torah aniyim bemakom echad ve'ashirim bemakom acher" The Gemoroh in Berochos says that if the yetzer attacks, there are a few steps to take that if each one doesn't work you need to try the next one. R' Tzadok Hacohen (in the beginning of the sefer Machshivos Charutz) explains in great detail that according to the persons present situation in his milchemes hayetzer, we can know what will work for him. It is very clear from R' Tzadok that once someone is in the clutches of the menuval, Torah alone will definitely not chase him away.

[I'm just thinking right now that it's really clear in the simple reading of the Gemoroh in Kidushin (the one that ME is referring to) The lashon is "Im pagah buch menuval zeh" Pagah means he suddenly bumped in to you out of nowhere. It's not talking to people like us that know him intimitely.]

In the long [and even not-so-long]term, however, Torah and Kedusha have a very strong power of turning you in to a different person - one that has no shaychus to lowly taivos!

Again, I welcome your comments.

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Re: Some thoughts on "Torah and the 12 steps"
Posted by the.guard - 22 Jun 2009 07:44

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there are posts which seem to be saying “The only way is the 12 step way and not the Torah way, because the Torah can’t deal with addiction

Dear Battle, The first tool in the GYE handbook is called "Attitude". And for that tool alone, we created a whole "Attitude handbook". Most - if not all - of the things that you wrote in reply #3 above appear in the Attitude handbook. This is indeed the first tool that anyone who has not been successful until today, needs to try. He needs to try to change his entire attitude to Yiddishkeit, to Torah and to understanding what Hashem wants from him an is purpose in the world. HOWEVER, this is only the very FIRST tool. This can be helpful for many people who have not reached more advanced stages of addiction. But the moment that the addiction has progressed a little further, attitude alone won't be enough. That is why the GYE handbook lists another 17 tools! Live SA groups is step 15! That means that before we encourage someone to go to the live groups, we try the other 14 steps first. That is the Mehalach on GYE. So those posts that you claim say that "the only way is the 12-Step way", are talking to people who have tried tool #1-#14. For such people, they MUST join a live SA group if they value their lives, if they value their Yiddishkeit, if they want to save what's left of it! London explained this very well above. And so did Boruch in the other post about Torah and the 12-Steps. People whose addictions have advanced to a certain level can not take the cure out of the Torah, in just the same way that they can't learn how to grow peppers from the Torah (even though Shlomo Hamelech could). So I don't understand the "diyun" here. You are right that before someone goes to an SA group they should try getting their attitude straight. Everyone agrees with that, that is **tool #1**. And if that doesn't work, they have another 14 tools to try. But if all that has still not helped, SA is the next and best tool that Hashem has blessed the world with. And anyway, SA is the ABC's of Yiddishkeit as well. It helps us develop a whole new perception of our connection with Hashem, but that can only come through the live groups. I ask you to please read Reb Dov's amazing post yesterday to "gma316" (reply #33 **over here**). It is a bit long, but well worth it!

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Re: Some thoughts on "Torah and the 12 steps"
Posted by battleworn - 22 Jun 2009 08:59

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So those posts that you claim say that "the only way is the 12-Step way", are talking to people who have tried tool #1-#14.

Are you talking about your posts or about other people's posts? I was talking about other people's posts. Nothing at all about "the Mehalech on GYE"

So I don't understand the "diyun" here

I think if you read through the whole thread carefully, you'll see exactly what the diyun is. I understand that you don't have time but what can I do about that?

You are right that before someone goes to an SA group they should try getting their attitude straight. Everyone agrees with that, that is tool #1.

I don't know who you mean by "Everyone" can you explain?

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Re: Some thoughts on "Torah and the 12 steps"
Posted by battleworn - 22 Jun 2009 09:09

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One more point:

But the moment that the addiction has progressed a little further, attitude alone won't be enough

I don't know if you read #3 where I discussed this. It seems that you agree with Dov on this. (Ayin shom, you'll see that I asked a kasha on this pshat.) I would like to also know what others have to say about it.

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Re: Some thoughts on "Torah and the 12 steps"
Posted by the.guard - 22 Jun 2009 09:22

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I don't know who you mean by "Everyone" can you explain?

Im ani kan, hakol kan ;D

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Re: Some thoughts on "Torah and the 12 steps"
Posted by battleworn - 22 Jun 2009 09:23

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I ask you to please read Reb Dov's amazing post yesterday to "gma316" (reply #33 over here). It is a bit long, but well worth it!

The post is beautiful!!! But what does it have to do with our discussion?

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Re: Some thoughts on "Torah and the 12 steps"
Posted by the.guard - 22 Jun 2009 09:31

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It explains why it takes "live groups" to develop this powerful awareness...

BTW. Battle, I need your input in **this thread**. I may be missing something in my answers...

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Re: Some thoughts on "Torah and the 12 steps"
Posted by battleworn - 22 Jun 2009 09:34

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I think that it shows that no matter how badly addicted one is, the answer still lies in perspective!!!

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Re: Some thoughts on "Torah and the 12 steps"
Posted by the.guard - 22 Jun 2009 09:54

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I think that it shows that no matter how badly addicted one is, the answer still lies in perspective!!!

True, but every situation in life requires a particular perspective. How can one achieve the proper perspective for **beating addiction?** By going to those who are "melumadim" in the right perspective for **this particular situation.**

Second, even Dov could never have done it with perspective alone. Till today he is still joining meetings and calling sponsors. **11 years!!** If it was just perspective, don't you think he would

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Re: Some thoughts on "Torah and the 12 steps"
Posted by battleworn - 22 Jun 2009 10:15

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True, but every situation in life requires a particular perspective. How can one achieve the proper perspective for beating addiction? By going to those who are "melumadim" in the right perspective for this particular situation.

Rabeinu Guard, it's exactly the perspective that we were discussing over here. We are talking about addicts, and it's the same material.

Second, even Dov could never have done it with perspective alone. Till today he is still joining meetings and calling sponsors. 11 years!! If it was just perspective, don't you think he would have gotten it by now?

On the contrary it was the meetings that gave him the perspective.

In answer to your question, the y'h never gives up. Even what we already know very well he will always try to make us forget. The musser seforim say it all the time. And that's why the M'B says that everyone is mechuyav to learn musser every day. But if you want to know if he really needs to continue going to meetings or he can move on to something bigger and better, now that's a good question. I think it may be related to the question in #6 above

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Re: Some thoughts on "Torah and the 12 steps"
Posted by battleworn - 23 Jun 2009 22:32

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Raboisai, if anyone can answer any of the questions that I asked (especially#3, #6 and #8) I would greatly appreciate it. Thank you very much!!!

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Re: Some thoughts on "Torah and the 12 steps"
Posted by the.guard - 24 Jun 2009 11:14

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Battle, you didn't answer my e-mail.

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Re: Some thoughts on "Torah and the 12 steps"
Posted by battleworn - 24 Jun 2009 11:20

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Rabeinu, I'm working on it. You better get ready!

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