

clarity please

Posted by geshertzarmeod - 14 Feb 2011 10:18

Can someone clarify for me please. How is acceptance of lust addiction as a disease not a "cop out" for a responsible person not to take responsibility for his actions? I read Dr. Twerski's definition of addiction. But cant everything be written off as an addiction? Isnt that what our society has done with psychology? Nothing is our fault anymore. I realize that there is a difference between a one time aveira and a constant behavior pattern. But that still doesnt do it for me. Reb Elazar ben Dordaya succeeded by taking responsibilty for himself. Granted he cried

So is that the answer? taking responsibility doesnt work if you want to stay alive? I dont think so.

Can someone help me here, because this a major hashkafic issue preventing me from proceeding.

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Re: clarity please

Posted by Yosef Hatzadik - 15 Feb 2011 17:48

himself to death

[bardichev wrote on 15 Feb 2011 01:07:](#)

I will frum up here

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Or if this is or not kinegged Torah

Where were all these hashkaffidiggeh Toiradigge Halachadigge arguments when we fell into shmuts

As my rebbe reb doiv

The aaddict says

I don't care what LAV suicide is

B

Did you not read this reply?

[Yosef Hatzadik wrote on 14 Feb 2011 22:57:](#)

With all due respect, ;D

Some people have a greater impediment than others when it comes to doing something which [seems] against Yidishkeit & hashkafa.

We would rather not be cured from cancer via avoda zara...

If we must to believe kefira in order to live in Recovery. Do we want recovery?

Lo sasuru acharei levavchem is written BEFORE *acharei eineichem*!

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Re: clarity please

Posted by ZemirosShabbos - 15 Feb 2011 19:07

i'm sure Yosef can speak for himself but i just want to put in my two cents about the point being questioned.

The 12 Steps and Recovery are a system which has components that are not intuitive and seem to be running against what the common conception of what s'char v'onesh is. They are a system that takes conceptions and ideas we grew up with, reinforced by years of shmoozes, seforim and commonly held beliefs and asks us to examine them and re-build them from the ground up. (hey, that's a good thing).

Of course it may be necessary and may be the only way out for someone mired in the muck. But it is a process and takes effort and time.

So all that is being asked for is some patience and understanding while we're under

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Re: clarity please

Posted by geshertzarmeod - 15 Feb 2011 20:19

Wow Zemiros! Really well said. Thank you

What follows is my attempt at clarity but it doesnt compare to your succinct point.

A word of caution: This post is the result of my thought process and includes a lot of blabbing. You can feel free to ignore it. My next post will really get to the point. So you can skip to it and ignore this one. Or maybe just read point #8. But if you're curious how I got there, here it goes…

1) I'm not questioning the validity of this system

- 2) I'm sold on the system as the only way I'm gonna get out of this mess. Or as others have noted, if it works, who cares why or how?
- 3) I am wondering where I went wrong. But I'm not harboring on the past, rather I'm looking at what is faulty with my past approaches. Do I have to toss them all out and replace them with a totally new approach?
- 4) I'm focusing on where to go from here. In other words while applying all the great suggestions from your website, what happens to my old approaches? Do they get tossed with the bathwater? Or are they worthwhile to continue with the corrective attitudes and suggestions garnered from the website?
- 5) On a hashkafic level, are there underlying faulty hashkafot, about teshuva and Milchemet Hayetzer, that led me down the wrong path that need to be scrapped. Or are they basically accurate, just in need of a little tweaking? (I'm not talking about the attitudes already mentioned on the website, those don't need clarifying.)
- 6) But if as has been suggested that chazal's approach to the YH is not applicable to an addiction which didn't exist then to the same degree, or that Hashem was more of a reality for those generations than He is to us, or because we are so much more into physicality than they were and so much less into spirituality. Then we can't use their model of teshuva.
- 7) I realize that nothing is black and white, in reality there are things that are relevant and things that are not. Its not all or nothing. I assume that we need to pick and choose different aspects that are relevant, as I have seen in many of the materials that are offered on the website.
- 8) But are any of Chazal's methods or teachings detrimental to my progress while following this sytem?

Phew! Feels good to get that off my chest!

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Re: clarity please

Posted by geshertzarmeod - 15 Feb 2011 20:22

I think David touched on this point to some degree. I think the real focus of my problem is as follows. If it's an addiction, then it is a danger for the addict to go back to normal usage. An alcoholic cannot have a drink after work, as it will set him back to the beginning. (Where does Kiddush on wine fit in? Don't answer that. Its not important) So what does a sex addict do? Never have sex again? Obviously M is out of the question as is P and inappropriate gazing. But normal sexual activity is a must for a married adult. So why cant normal wine drinking be acceptable for an alcoholic?

We are taught to use everything in its proper place, time, and amount. Abstinence is not an option in Yiddiskeit. So I go back to the Rambam, correct the problem by going to the extreme and then regulate it to normal appropriate behavior. Why can't this be done for any addiction / aveirah?

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Re: clarity please

Posted by Yosef Hatzadik - 15 Feb 2011 20:36

Yasher Koach Reb **ZemiroShabbos** for defending my honor! :D

I am not negating the Recovery that we learn around here. In fact, I also take part in the 12 Step Calls & have found myself growing immensely thereof.

BUT, I also understand that for many people arriving here, GYE is their first foray into the Recovery World. For many of us, our cultural & educational background ingrained in us an apprehension, aversion, & avoidance toward psychology & other secular behavioral ideas. Non-Jewish sourced material which discuss God/Higher Powers are as forbidden as pork! What we are discovering here is turning all that on its head!

We thought we know what is Right & what is Wrong. We KNEW that all the shmutz we were busy with was in the Wrong category. We thought we know what is Right. Although we did not live up to our own standards, we did have all the proper hashkofos organized in our minds. Now, to be informed otherwise is a difficult shock to absorb. It is imperative for someone with such a worldview to be convinced that GYE is not *kefira* or *neged Daas Torah* for such people to agree to even step over our threshold.

Once they are here for a while they will see for themselves what path they are to take. By bombarding them in our initial welcome with an enthusiastic outpouring of knocking their deeply held ideas is likely to backfire.

This was my intent in the above posts. I wanted to show our new friend that his ideas about Bechira are not incompatible with recovering from addictions. I wanted to write it in his language

so that he will understand & accept it.

This is not to say that we cannot learn anything from gentile recovering addicts. Just that many newcomers think so. They have yet to learn that this is a misconception. A few months ago I discussed GYE & the 12 Step Program with a Chasidishe Godol. I put forward the concern which some have about learning Recovery from Goyim..... His responded with a smile that if we can learn the problem from them, we can also learn the way out from them.

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Re: clarity please

Posted by ZemirosShabbos - 15 Feb 2011 20:40

Gesher, i am no expert in the 12 Steps and cannot answer the very good questions you put out, but i would like to just add a different addiction that might be more analogous to lust, and that is eating.

of course you have to eat every day, but how are you eating? why are you eating?

are you eating to escape something, for comfort, to lose yourself in?

or are you eating to have energy?

lust might be similar, a married person he will need to be active, but the motives and expectations are what need to be examined.

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Re: clarity please

Posted by geshertzarmeod - 15 Feb 2011 22:06

Gentlemen, I really appreciate your back up, support, encouragement and understanding. Im

going to let this sit overnight, and see what comes of it.

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Re: clarity please

Posted by geshertzarmeod - 16 Feb 2011 10:26

Forgive me for beating this thing to death, but I think its been very helpful for me. And I hope maybe there are others out there who havent verbalized it but are grappling with he same issues. If it helps anyone else I will feel that it was worth all our effort and time.

The Gemara tells us that Chazal realized that there was no way to control the YH for avodah zara. So they killed it, gone. Sounds to me like it was b'geder an addiction. Maybe Chazal realized that in fact if something is so overpowering, then there is no controlling it. There are steps in Chazal for how to prevent it. But once you're addicted you need something else. You need drastic measures.

Now its interesting that they also got rid of the YH for promiscuity. But the world stopped functioning because all of the creations stopped procreating. There was no sexual drive. So they brought it back. Yes there are steps to prevent the problem. But once again, if you're addicted you need something else. You need drastic measures.

Introducing GYE the 12 steps or anything else that works.

I really think this could be a valid approach. Opinions?

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Re: clarity please

Posted by Yosef Hatzadik - 16 Feb 2011 16:27

You didn't beat it to death yet! ;D

I received the following via PM:

[dov wrote on 15 Feb 2011 18:03:](#)

..... But I just want to say to you that I cannot figure out and in particular, what you are referring to as the avodah zara in "refuah al y'dei A"Z". But if it is "foreign ideas" or "ideas that do not fit well according to your understanding of Chaza"l or the gedolim"...then I feel there is room to share this:

There is more latitude than most people realize in the words of Chaza"l as they apply to a particular person in a particular situation. What is rightfully labeled as "neged Derech haTorah" in one situation (like some of the behavior that the original Mussar derech [and original chassidim] espoused - which made Reb Yisroel [and the maggid and friends] so controversial) may be exactly what Hashem wants from a yid at times. And particularly when the yid we are referring to is already stepping - actually, *living* - outside of the bounds of "Derech haTorah". Especially if the yid we are speaking about is not just doing an aveiro here and there, but actually has twisted thinking and is has a heart, mind and body that is not successful at being a decent kosher guy like most other people in the community.

This yid may need to use unusual tools that express Hashem's Will just perfectly. Kind of like how Hashem's Will is expressed through a child becoming ill or worse, sometimes. Strange, no? Not very nice, no? We say Hashem keeps the Torah - but is it allowed to kill 'innocent' people? Well....it's not that simple, though the community at large desires a great deal to keep it looking that way.

I believe that desire is where resistance to addiction recovery is coming from and always will. At it's most raw and basic level of practice, the recovery derech **has** to be wrong for normal people, for it is not *made* for normal people.

Only one who really sees the end in view will have the motivation to naturally reach for G-d. A goy just as much and as deeply as a yid. The reaching will be done differently, but the motivation is the very same in recovery that I am familiar with.

I am not too concerned with what *lav* suicide is - I have my own reasons for avoiding it. And I

dare say that you are the same. When death stares us in the face and we are slipping off a real cliff, we will grab for Muktza on Shabbos, too. You will, too. And it will not be because it is halachically permitted - all the cheshboinos are off when your life/my life is actually, directly threatened. That is the root of the halachik reality.

So if what you are talking about there is truly 'serving another G-d than Hashem', I agree with you in theory. In practice, I do not believe anyone who says we need to resort to yoshke or to any other false beliefs in order to get better from addiction. I believe in Hashem's Torah, in Chaza"l, *and* in what I see before my eyes: that even though it is false, my *body* truly, deeply, and innocently believes that lust, porn, and masturbation are in my very *best* interest. That's addiction and that is what many of us have to work with here, rather than deny because it is against the Torah.

The truth is surely what Hashem wants for us. Ein av morish sheker livno. He wants us to live and work with the truth.

Does any of this make sense to you, or am I seeming *sillier* the more I explain where I'm coming from?

If I am, then I'll stop.

All the best,

Dov

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Re: clarity please

Posted by geshertzarmeod - 16 Feb 2011 17:58

Yosef you must be a navi! Because my last post originally ended with another question: Why would Chazal, knowing the nature of the beast, leave us without a plan? But I thought better of it because I really wanted to know if my explanation made any sense b4 going any further. And sure enough you answered it anyway! :o Amazing!

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Re: clarity please

Posted by Yosef Hatzadik - 16 Feb 2011 18:24

[geshertzarmeod wrote on 16 Feb 2011 17:58:](#)

Yosef you must be a navi!

[Yosef Hatzadik wrote on 10 Feb 2011 17:28:](#)

I am still not a Malach either. I am not even a REAL Tzadik yet! I am still only a Tzadik Wannabe. :-\

& I am not a Navi either - yet! ;D

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Re: clarity please

Posted by ZemirosShabbos - 16 Feb 2011 18:53

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Re: clarity please

Posted by geshertzarmeod - 16 Feb 2011 20:37

Thanks for keeping me smiling!

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Re: clarity please

Posted by geshertzarmeod - 19 Feb 2011 22:21

I just wanted to say that I have more clarity thanks to all of the great input that this post received. It gave me alot to think about and definitely helped clarify most of my issues.

I would like to clarify that when I asked about lack of responsibilty, I wasnt talking about ongoing responsibilty, as most assumed. I was refering to responsibility for past actions. Which thanks to Rabbi Reisman's shiur was clarified that there are aspects of our past aveiros that are in fact beyond our control, and that the nisayon may not have been possible to pass. That sits with me alot better than saying that its a sickness and its beyond my control. I dont know why calling it a sickness rubs me wrong. Maybe its just semantics but I have a hard time calling a tendency towards lust a sickness. We each have our tenencies and it may be harder for some of us to overcome and maybe HKBH didnt expect us to overcome it at this point.

I don't get wht it has to be a sickness.

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