

A message for a recovering addict from the Parsha

Posted by yidintrouble - 27 Dec 2014 00:09

My Parsha thought for the week: This week the Torah describes Yosef's revelation to his brothers. First he asks if his father is still alive and then he tells them not to worry about what they had done because it was all hashgacha. Chazal remind us that there was no need for Yosef to ask about Yaakov Avinu because the brothers already mentioned that he was alive.

Chazal teach us that Yosef was giving a subtle rebuke to his brothers and then immediately after the rebuke he brings them close to him. As I was studying this I thought to myself about how many times I rebuked myself for acting out and how the self rebuke was followed up. Chevra it is important to remember that when you rebuke someone it must be done with love especially if the one you are rebuking is yourself.

When you put someone on the spot their natural reaction is to get defensive. In my opinion this applies to self rebuke as well. If we do not rebuke ourselves with love we will become defensive internally. If we won't love ourselves and see our value in the hashgacha we will not be able to overcome our addiction. Love Hashem and love yourself and rather than treat yourself from a place of bitterness and disappointment treat yourself with love and respect. This will set you up for success!

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Re: A message for a recovering addict from the Parsha

Posted by doingtshuva - 28 Dec 2014 02:21

welcome!

It's a very nice and useful message.

Thanks, and maybe try posting Verter every week.

About a year ago there was a Weekly Shabose Tzetle that was put together by the members of Gye.

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Re: A message for a recovering addict from the Parsha

Posted by yidintrouble - 28 Dec 2014 09:43

Thank you for reading my post and for your feedback. I will do my best to continue posting on a weekly basis!

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Re: A message for a recovering addict from the Parsha
Posted by yidintrouble - 02 Jan 2015 22:11

Parsha thought of the week: This week we read about how Yaakov crossed his hands to give the greater Bracha to Ephraim. Yosef seeks to correct this apparent error but Yaakov assures him that Ephraim is in fact worthy to receive the better Bracha. If we know anything about a bracha we know that a bracha doesn't make miracles happen. A bracha can help someone reach their potential but it can't change what that potential is. Yaakov saw a potential in ephraim that Yosef could not and Yosef saw a potential in Menashe that was not actually there at all. My friends before I came to recovery I didn't believe that I had the potential to become sober. I waited for my life to be entirely unmanageable before I could surrender and let my eyes take in the potential that others saw in me rather than the limited potential that I saw in myself. As Yaakov blessed his children for each of them to reach their full potential may our father in shomayim bless us to reach our potential especially the potential that we don't even know that we have!

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Re: A message for a recovering addict from the Parsha
Posted by yidintrouble - 09 Jan 2015 22:12

I have 2 thoughts to share this week. The 1st relates to the Egyptians and the 2nd relates to the Jewish People.

The Torah tells us a new king arose and the king did not know Yosef. On the surface this is quite inconceivable, I think it would be similar to an American ruler that did not know who Albert Einstein or Andrew Carnegie was. Yosef and his family made historic contributions to Egyptian culture that could not have attained the level of greatness it was enjoying without their contributions. How was it possible that the new ruler had forgotten Yosef? My friends, I think that an addict knows the answer to this question all too well. I have had the personal experience of asking myself how I can be so disloyal to my family. How can I act in such a lowly and degrading manner? If we take a look at things happening today in France we can ask ourselves how such things are possible. I think the answer is that these events are the natural result of what happens when you remove the presence of Hashem from your life. When I was active in

my addiction I had removed Hashem from my life, even if it was a complete removal, but it was nonetheless a removal and possibly a complete removal. Let us continue to surrender ourselves to Hashem because even though it is unimaginable to most people that Hashem, and morality and decency can be forgotten we are living once again in times where Hashem and morality and decency are being removed from the world and anyone that thinks differently is only in denial. We must continue to work on our recovery and continue to strive for a higher level of connection to Hashem lest we ever come to forget or deny his existence in all aspects of our lives.

To an addict like me, the theme of slavery is a very sensitive one. I was a slave to my addiction. I was a slave to lust. The Torah tells us that the Jews were reluctant to leave Egypt and attain freedom. How familiar does this sound? It sounds very familiar to me. I was reluctant to abandon my addiction and live my life as a free man. I believe that many addicts like me have a tremendous fear of being responsible for our own actions, of being expected to live as a responsible adult. The Torah also teaches us the Jews tested Hashem because they suffered from 'Kotzer Ruach', a shortness or narrowness of their spirit, and we are Am K'shei Oref, a stiff necked, a stubborn nation. I believe that this is a direct result of spending years as a slave. We get used to not being responsible for ourselves, we get used to relying on external stimulation to make us happy rather than looking inside and being happy only with what we have from Hashem. This week is a perfect time for us to look at our history, to look at the slavery and ask ourselves if we are truly living today as free people or as slaves. Are we taking responsibility for ourselves? Are we looking to external stimulation for happiness? We have so much to be thankful for in our lives. In the zechus of our brothers and sisters around the world starting now, let's do more living as free people and less living as slaves.

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Re: A message for a recovering addict from the Parsha
Posted by yidintrouble - 17 Jan 2015 01:43

The Torah teaches us that Aharon HaCohen carried out the first three Makkos rather than Moshe Rabbeinu because Moshe Rabbeinu had a debt of gratitude to the land and the river. The concept of gratitude to inanimate objects has even found it's way to secular society. We see old buildings that were formerly the homes of great citizens become national landmarks. We see movements to protect the environment, and other examples. We are taught that when a person does not show gratitude for a benefit received it is a sign of a flaw in the person that they didn't feel worthy of the benefit. This is regardless of whether or not the benefactor was animate or inanimate. Chevra when I think about this concept I have no choice but to think about the greatest gifts I have ever received. The gift of my life and the gifts of the lives of my family.

We are all very familiar with the object of our bodies that facilitates the gift of life. Are not worthy of that gift? Do we not have a debt of gratitude to our bodies and the creator? Perhaps we can reflect on this idea the next time we have a temptation and use the lesson of hakaras hatov that

we learn from Moshe Rabbeinu to help us in our commitment to sobriety and our creator and of course ourselves.

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Re: A message for a recovering addict from the Parsha
Posted by yidintrouble - 06 Feb 2015 20:20

I have some questions about this week's Parsha. 1) Vayishma Yisro - The Torah tells us that Yisro heard of the miracles that happened to the Jews and he was inspired to join them in the desert. Can it be that Yisro is the only person that felt such a level of inspiration based on the magnitude and the multitude of the miracles? 2) How can it be that Moshe Rabbeinu allowed a system to be in place for all of the questions among all of the Jews to be brought exclusively to him? I would like to suggest answers to both of these questions in a way that relates to recovery. Regarding Yisro - I can personally testify that Hashem has performed for me a multitude of miracles, it is only through a miracle that I am alive today. I heard a story from an addict who escaped from the World Trade Center on 9/11. The fact that he survived did not slow down his addiction at all. The truth is that unless we have the will to accept the inspiration that a miracle can provide us, the miracle is not going to change us at all. Regarding Moshe Rabbeinu - It makes perfect sense that all questions should be brought before the most qualified Posek, and there has never been a Posek more qualified than Moshe Rabbeinu. However, we see that Moshe Rabbeinu accepted the suggestion of Yisro to establish a system of a Supreme Court, higher courts and lower courts. Imagine if a single person would be considered the highest possible authority in recovery and every addict would want this individual to be their sponsor. This would be an impossible situation. While we might like to believe that OUR problems are worse than the person sitting next to us and WE need the expert sponsor the reality is that this is probably not the case. In reality what we need is a sponsor, and we should rely on that sponsor to determine if we should seek a wiser or more experienced sponsor than the one that we start with. Asking a question to any Posek is better than not asking the question at all and we rely on the Posek to determine if the question should be brought to a wiser and more experienced Posek.

From this week's Parsha may we learn how to act on the sparks of inspiration that are constantly flickering all around us, and may we learn to open ourselves up to those that are close to us and rely on their guidance and wisdom to determine the level of help that we need rather than trying to be our own sponsors and guides through recovery!

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Re: A message for a recovering addict from the Parsha
Posted by doingtshuva - 08 Feb 2015 21:42

Wow, what a nice lesson.

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Re: A message for a recovering addict from the Parsha
Posted by yidintrouble - 13 Feb 2015 20:20

The Gemara in Shabbos Daf 31A cites Hillel Hazaken as saying "That which is hateful to you, do not do to your fellow. That is the whole Torah; the rest is the explanation; go and learn."

Wow! Of all of the concepts or Mitzvos that Hillel picked this is the one that he picked to say that this encompasses all of the Torah! This is a particularly interesting concept for someone in recovery. When we consider how integral God is to our recovery it can be challenging to look at this lesson from Hillel that is all about Bein Adam L'Chaveiro. Fortunately for us we have steps 8 - 12 of the program that solves this riddle. God's role in our lives is to help us as long as we are ready and willing to be helped. God can help us help ourselves, but as we learn regarding Teshuvah, God cannot forgive man for the wrongs that he has committed against his fellow, that forgiveness must come from the man that was wronged and nobody else.

As addicts we have certainly wronged many people. We can surrender our defects of character and ask God to remove them, but removal of our defects does make repair the damage that we have done, it only prevents us from causing further damage. The work to repair the actual damage that has been done only comes when we make amends to those that we have wronged and continue to share the light of recovery with those that are in need. The damage that we have done in this world is in reality a damage to the world but not a damage to Hashem. The real work that we have to do in order to bring the divine presence into the world is between us and our fellows.

If our house is right - if we are good with our spouses and our fellows, then certainly the divine presence will be able to dwell with us. May we be Zocheh to take to heart the lessons of the Mitzvos Bein Adam L'Chaveiro so that Moshiach and the divine presence will soon be with us.

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Re: A message for a recovering addict from the Parsha

Posted by doingtshuva - 15 Feb 2015 10:02

Very nice,

If I may, I would like to add a Vort that came up to me this Shabose during Krias HaTorah.

The Torah is talking about a person that borrows an item from a friend, and the Torah is telling us that he is reliable for every damage that is caused to the item, even for an Ones. But if the owner was together with borrower, then the borrower will only be in charged to pay for a damaged that was caused through a Pishea.

I thought that we can compare it to our struggle. Hashem gave us a life, but at the end after 120 we will have to give it back, so a person should be considered like a borrower with all the Haluches of a borrower.

So if we are living with Hashem, asking him for his help,giving over our will to him. Then we are with the owner of our Nishume all the time, so then we should only be Chaiv on Pishea, and Puter on the Ones.

Have a great week.

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Re: A message for a recovering addict from the Parsha

Posted by doingtshuva - 22 Feb 2015 10:50

Mazel Tov - you reached 90 what a milestone

yidintrouble

Current streak: 91 days

Whats with the Vort on the Parshas Truma?

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Re: A message for a recovering addict from the Parsha
Posted by yidintrouble - 22 Feb 2015 14:18

The ideas for this week are largely plagiarized as I am short on time to rewrite the ideas into my own words. Ultimately the parallel lesson that we get from the program is twofold. 1) What we put in is what we will be able to take out and 2) A giver will also be a taker when giving in the proper way. Think about how you are using giving to help yourself grow!

Quoting from the Weekly Parshah email from Rabbi Frand:

Rabbeinu Ephraim Expands On The Idea of "Zahav, Kesef, Nechoshes"

I would like to begin with a short "vort" from Rabbeinu Ephraim. Rabbeinu Ephraim was one of the early Talmudic commentators. Tosfos quotes him many times in Shas. Rabbeinu Ephraim makes the following comment: The Torah lists the materials used in the construction of the Mishkan. The first time the materials are listed, the Torah enumerates them in descending order: Gold, silver, and copper. Rabbeinu Ephraim says that "gold, silver, and copper" is a reference to three types of individuals who donate to charitable causes. Zahav (zayin-hay-beis) is an acronym for "Zeh Hanosen Bari" – this is the one who gives charity when healthy. This is the highest level of charity giving. Kesef (kaf-samech-peh) is an acronym for "K'shera-ah Sakanah Poseach" – this is the one who gives charity when he sees danger approaching. A person who does not "open up his wallet" until he perceives danger on the horizon is demonstrating a lower level of generosity. Finally, Nechoshes (nun-ches-s hin-taf) is an acronym for "Nadar Choleh Sheyomar Tenu) -- someone who is already sick and perhaps even on his death bed before he is prepared to give charitably so that he will recover from his illness. This is the lowest level of charitable giving.

“Speak to the Jewish people and have them TAKE for Me (G-d) an offering” – Exodus, 25:2

The great Winston Churchill said that “We make a LIVING by what we get. We make a LIFE by what we give.”

THE LOVE WE TAKE

Both of these ideas mirror a fundamental principle regarding Tzedaka² gleaned from this week's Torah Portion. G-d instructs the Jews to TAKE a donation for the building of the Tabernacle. Since it is clear that He is directing the Jews to GIVE a donation, why does the Torah use the strange word choice of "TAKE"? By employing this terminology, the Torah is offering us an important insight: that when we give to someone else, we are also "taking" on behalf of ourselves.

In fact, Jewish wisdom teaches that givers ultimately gain MORE from giving than their recipients gain from receiving! True, we are ideally supposed to give based on pure and altruistic motives. But for the times that we can't seem to summon up the purest intentions, it's helpful to be aware of the rewards so that we'll continue doing the right thing (in keeping with the Torah principle "Lo Lishmah, Bo Lishmah": do the right thing even when you're "not purely motivated", and eventually the "pure motivations will come").

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Re: A message for a recovering addict from the Parsha
Posted by yidintrouble - 29 May 2015 02:38

I just want to share an idea that I had while reading Megillas Rus over Shavuos.

We all focus on the Tikkun Layl Shavuos which we are told is a tikkun for Bnei Yisroel not waking up early in the morning to accept the Torah. What I find odd though is that we quickly forget how Bnei Yisroel is also criticized for how quickly and eagerly they left Har Sinai, like children leaving the schoolhouse. Why haven't we also established a 'Tikkun Motzei Shavuos'? My answer to this is that I actually believe that we have established such a tikkun, and the tikkun is the reading of Megillas Rus. In reading the story of Rus we see that although she was given the option to take the easy way out and return to her family and wealth, she chose to follow her mother in law, choosing a path of hardship, loneliness and poverty. Who could imagine making such a choice? Rus did not grow up Jewish, and Yiddishkeit brought her no tangible gains to speak of. We can only infer that the material benefits that were lacking in Rus's life were dwarfed by the spiritual benefits that she did gain. We can infer that her Yiddishkeit was so precious to her that she was willing to forfeit wealth and comfort for poverty and hardship in order to stay connected to Yiddishkeit. How could it be that Rus was willing to make such a sacrifice for the rest of her life, while Bnei Yisroel would not cling to the Kedushah of Har Sinai for even 1 day longer? These ideas remind me of myself before recovery. How could I have given in to addiction when I had a wife and children? How could I have denied being an addict for so many years? How could I have lived such an unmanageable life? I answer myself

that I failed to show appreciation for what I had in my life. Often I failed to do so because I was fortunate to have been given so many Brachos without actually having to work for them. Perhaps this was a flaw of Bnei Yisroel as well. Perhaps Hashem made things too easy for them by practically giving them the Torah on a silver platter without forcing them to work for it. If we want to have an easy life all we need to do is show gratitude for the many Brachos that we have and we will see how things just fall into place. The measure we put in is the measure we get back. If we invest in the Brachos that are in our lives we will see those Brachos multiply and invest back into us, and hopefully these will be the blessings of a joyous and serene life.

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Re: A message for a recovering addict from the Parsha
Posted by yidintrouble - 31 May 2015 15:36

Parshas Nasso relates the Korbanos of the heads of the Shevatim, each one brought the exact same Korban. The obvious question here is why does the Torah need to repeat the same Korban over and over again? Chazal tell us that each one had different reasons and calculations as to why they brought their own Korban. The fact that the thoughts behind each Korban were different was reason enough for the Torah to recognize each one individually. In theory this answer sounds very nice but in practice I found myself losing focus as I was going through this portion of the Parsha in shul. I asked myself why it was SO IMPORTANT to list each one separately, and then it occurred to me that when I participate in a meeting I have the same exact disease as everyone else in the room, and I practice the same exact 12 steps as everyone else in the room, yet I enjoy listening to everyone in the room share their experience strength and hope with me. Even though everyone in the room is in the exact same situation they all have their own unique thoughts and intentions. Now I can look back on the Parsha and appreciate a valuable lesson from the Torah. It is so valuable to recognize individual effort, especially when the individual efforts are toward a common goal. I would not have my sobriety today without the support that I get from the fellowship, everyone that goes to a meeting or dials in to a phone conference should make sure that they share some of their experience, strength and hope, because while it might appear as though everything about us is the same, we do not have the same thoughts and intentions, and the individual efforts are indeed very valuable.

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Re: A message for a recovering addict from the Parsha
Posted by Palti-Yossef - 31 May 2015 20:01

Thanks for this postand this entire thread of yours !

Hoping to see new chidushim of you soon !

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