

Same me, new life

Posted by mevakeshBT - 13 Sep 2014 10:24

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Shalom.

It's good to have joined the site and get a sense of the common struggle. I have been plagued with this addiction from as early as I can remember. I'm into the beginning of my first 90 days now. The challenge of guarding my eyes is the foremost obstacle from my yetzer hara. This is where the front line of the battle is for me. I'm looking forward to growing spiritually and sobriety will definitely help boost that. And growing spiritually will likewise help with my sobriety - it's a win-win, although it may not seem like it in the midst of the struggle. But with struggles is the opportunity for learning and wisdom. Here's to the journey!

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Re: Same me, new life

Posted by mevakeshBT - 29 Sep 2014 14:14

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hey Dov,

have no worries, you can ask me anything.

I am confused though...

I am an addict and it hasn't been just a poor moral choice. I have let it mess up my life a lot and I have a bunch of other proofs I will leave out.

As you said, then the problem is a mental and spiritual one - agreed. Then why isn't the solution a religious one? I turned to religion as a means to get more spirituality in my life. I thought spiritually was the whole purpose of religion and when I have spirituality in my life this helps me stay sober. What have I got wrong?

I genuinely don't understand. Aren't the 12 steps all found within Judaism? Is religion on its own not able to help an addict? Speaking for myself religion was the thing that turned the tables and motivated me to go sober. I don't find 12 step spirituality enough, I need more. I find in religion the 12 steps and much more to keep me on the right path.

All questions asked with humility and in a humble tone. And please note I wasn't brought up religious and have never been part of a religious community so I probably have a very skewed view for now.

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Re: Same me, new life

Posted by lavi - 29 Sep 2014 18:24

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[mevakeshBT wrote:](#)

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dear friend, i'll leave it to others to respond, to what you wrote, at length.

i would also prefer that religion would provide for me everything.

and in a deeper way, maybe one can find in chazal sources for everything.

however, i know first hand, that very religious and intelligent rabbis will refer people with addictions to addiction experts, because they admit that they don't have the tools to deal with these things. also they admit that they don't always know how to find in the torah the answer to everything, even though technically speaking its there.

another approach could be that the torah left certain fields for people to occupy, without getting

the religiousness involved,

take for example a doctor, the torah says that there is permission for the doctor to heal, even though technically speaking, who is he to get involved. true there is much debate among rishonim about who, what and when is a doctor allowed to heal, but all agree that there is permission.

i personally discussed with harav volbe zatzal, the valid use of psychology, even though it touches on ones spiritual being.

that being said, i personally did use certain torah tools along with others to cope, but i know that it wouldn't work for some.

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Re: Same me, new life

Posted by Dov - 30 Sep 2014 02:00

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Hi MevakeshBT!

Nice letter thanks, very clear. Every time I post, it is not to expound my beliefs, but rather to respond to the poster's comment sincerely and honestly, so here goes:

If what you have found is indeed working for you, then I beg you to keep using it exactly as you have been and not to alter an iota because of what you 'learn' elsewhere (certainly from me). Do what works, brother, and you won't go wrong!

Lavi wrote a great response with an attitude you may wish to have to what I wrote about. I did not know you were as unaffiliated with the frum world as you now explained. You are different than most of the people I contact here on GYE. Typically it is a guy who has always been frum - or at least for a few years or so - who is frustrated to find that he is trying not to sin, but keeps on doing so. Most of them were actually feeding their addiction by the way they were applying Torah ideals, themselves. Torah will *not* help them and is not *meant* to help them - and that goes for the overwhelming majority of the frum addicts I have met (and I have met hundreds in person). There are, of course, exceptions...but I have only met one or two.

You use the term 'addict', though. Why? Why not just say you are a person who habitually masturbated, or whatever you did in the past? I think that's OK and it isn't an addict the way I use the term. Why use the term at all just cuz GYE people tend to throw it at everybody who struggles with things like masturbation? And finally along that vein, let me ask if you are actually 100% comfortable attending an AA meeting and introducing yourself there as "Hi, I'm (your name) and I'm an addict, too"? Compulsive gamblers, heroin users, sex addicts like me, coke addicts, and other non-alcoholics go to open AA meetings all the time! I have been at quite a few, when no SA meeting is available where I am on vacation or wherever. If you are fine with that - and prove it to yourself by actually doing that - then I understand what you mean when you consider yourself an addict. If you would/do not, then I really think you mean something else than I do. (Of course, there are various excuses people provide for why an AA meeting would be improper for them...but I assume you are past all those minutiae, and you seem truly sincere.)

You seem to be a man who was doing self-destructive things as a secular person, and when you found Judaism and it's innate, beautiful spirituality, you actually got clean from your drug as a result. Am I correct?

If so, why would you consider altering anything just to fit into another recovery model? I misspoke, and would never want anything else for you than success. Just because it is life-or-death for *others* does not make it right for *you*.

Continued Hatzlocha!

Dov

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Re: Same me, new life

Posted by mevakeshBT - 30 Sep 2014 14:23

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Thanks Dov and Lavi.

The replies you gave were heart-warming with their acceptance and offerings of knowledge and experience.

I do say that I'm an addict at meetings. I'm on my second attempt at recovery and both times I end up with overwhelming sadness and anger so I can't function normally. So that's the chemical addiction as I see it. And also I know I will always have to be mindful of how I am because I will quickly go into a spiral if I think I'm cured and that I can handle breaking one rule. I don't believe I have free will when I am really triggered, the feeling is way too powerful.

Self-destruction has indeed been me. I should be frank and point out I didn't go straight to Judaism. I did secular personal development courses which provided a foundation and have done 12 steps for a while, but then I needed Judaism for that something extra. I also think, because I'm new to religion, this is partly why it works for me. I don't see how I could go from secular and make a big move to start praying but still act out. Wearing tefillin was not something I took on lightly. But don't get me wrong I'm still in early days and nothing is certain.

To everyone's health !

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Re: Same me, new life

Posted by godhelp - 30 Sep 2014 21:40

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[mevakeshBT wrote:](#)

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I will add my 2 cents i might be really wrong and the litvakes might attack.

What you are looking for is chasidus. in chasidus we learn what lust really is on a deeper level. what it really does and what kind of spiritual affect it has on the soul.

it can definitely help for recovery it is just really hard for reasons that are really hard to write in a small post. If you want you can start with the tanya it will be an injection to the soul. and they have today the Likutei Amarim Tanya-Chassidus Mevueres that makes it really easy to understand it is like artscroll.

Good Luck

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Re: Same me, new life  
Posted by skeptical - 30 Sep 2014 22:29

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Can you elaborate on what Chassidus/Tanya says about lust that you find helpful in recovery?

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Re: Same me, new life  
Posted by cordnoy - 01 Oct 2014 02:41

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Tanya; chassidus; deep level of lust!? no wonder the site kept crashin!!!

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Re: Same me, new life  
Posted by Dov - 29 Oct 2014 08:15

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Whoa....easy on this well-meaning guy.

Of course the only relevant question to godhelp here, is: "Are you successfully sober yourself, or not?"...but he means well because he refers to the same recovery concepts that all goyim and Jews find in successful 12-step recovery. Concepts that enable them to step out of the way and truly allow G-d into their lives. In Chabad, for example, that would be referred to as the (major) idea of 'Bitul'.

But godhelp (and everyone else) knows that there are many, many chabadniks who learn and know Tanya and are still powerless, failing and miserable sex addicts. I sponsor two of them and know *dozens* more - and love all of them. None of the ones I know ever got sober because of the chassidus they have learned, and they readily admit that. And they work recovery humbly. And they are still mashpi'im and rabbis, etc., just as they were all the years they were having sex with themselves or others.

What got them sober and *keeps* them sober is the getting out of G-d's way that they now do one day at a time, be"H. *All the Tanya in the world did not help them do it before*, and how ironic it is that they found the tools to do that by attending meetings with *goyim* - or even worse, with ***misnagdim***! I should know, for my first SA sponsor was a goy (and BTW, in 15 years of sobriety he never once brought up his or my own religion!).

And finally, one of the precious brochos that *I* only learned from the 12-step program is that even though I am sober for over 17 years one day at a time now, it is not because of Torah. Rather, it is because I allowed concepts that are in the Torah (and found elsewhere, too) into myself in a practical sense. So I will never be fooled that it was my religiosity that got me sober. No one can trick me into retroactively saying it was my frumkeit or yiddishkeit that got me sober! Boruch Hashem for that. For *that* would be the first step back into the toilet bowl for me, since it would just be a face-saving lie. And lying/faking is *far* more toxic for me than even lusting is.

So if anybody can learn these things from chassidus, then the one relevant question is this: "Is it working for you? Are you sober from it and staying sober, or not?" If so, then great! Keep doing it! But it obviously does not work many, because here we who have been learning chassidus are right here on GYE! If 'chassidus' or 'Torah' works, then how'd we get into this mess in the first place and why are we still looking for help? There is an elephant in the room, boys. And it's feet

If it is not working for us, that's OK - for you are not alone! You can join the club. SA

meetings/12 steps is not the only answer there is, but I know many, many sober sexaholics who are even frummer than you and I are, and yet are b"H sober through 12-step recovery today. Had they remained *frum-and-always-getting-holier*...they'd **still** be masturbating themselves and worse, using porn 'mit a firedikeh brenn' and later 'doing Teshuvah ila'ah', confusing themselves more and more and living in a slow hell - *as they proved for years and years*. The very same

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journey that so many of us frum, sober pervs are familiar with.