

Addiction to Zenus verse Alchohol

Posted by waydown - 02 Jul 2015 15:02

I have seen many compare our nesyaonos to alchohol addiction. To be fair there are many lessons to be taken from an AA club but I don't think its exactly analgous. Here is why;

1) The first and foremost reason is, almost everyone is created with an inner sexual urge. If we wouldn't have it we wouldn't mate. And in fact after the first churban the chachomim tried to get rid of the yetzer hara of gilul aris and the species on this world were not matting. And so they only shechtid the yetzer hara for incest and thats why its so taboo. Most people don't have a desire for their sister even if she is very attractive. Contrastly, while there are people who nebach are addicted to alchohol its not in your typical guys DNA that he must have alchohol. But everybody must have sexual desires.

2) This is a similar point to my prior one, but with a differnet spin. There are sociological differences. We all bump into attractive women and live in a culture where its the honored and looked up upon. Furthermore, in a more physical level we all have to do the mitzva of tashmish so we are not removed from it. Whats more is once that mitzva is performed the next day or so there is just a natrual stronger itch and our hormones feel and desire for more.

My main point is alchohol one can say Ok abstain from alchohol completely and finished. Whereas in the area of kedusha you can't say abstain from anything dabbling with our inner desires. We must dabble with it on a daily basis. And yes of course one is a mitzva and one is not. But its all from the same testorines and hormones bottom line.

Perhaps its more anlagous to a diet. We all must dabble with food. We all must eat. Its nearly impossible to never cheat on a diet. So too only big tzadikim were never motzei zera levtala throughout their entire life time. Perhaps it deosn't necessarily have to be 90 totally clean days (especailly if you did it every day). Although those that do have 90 totally free days. Ashrechaim!!! Rather the approach should be like a diet. A 90 day diet where modertaion is the key and if you slip every now and then you still will loose wieght!

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Re: Addiction to Zenus verse Alchohol

Posted by Bigmoish - 02 Jul 2015 16:56

Yes, there are differences and it is extremely difficult to avoid lust altogether.

However, many have found that the tools used to combat alcohol addiction have helped them

deal with sex/lust addiction as well.

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Re: Addiction to Zenus verse Alchohol
Posted by waydown - 02 Jul 2015 17:12

Moish,

How about the tools used to help people diet? Or those useful as well. And should the approach be Ok I will never ever do that again like alchohl where I think the idea is total abstaining? Or perhaps we can approach it like a diet. So I have a goal I want to loose 20 pounds over the next 90 days. Does that mean I will never touch a good piece of cake by a kiddush? No but I still must reach lots of moderation. Similarly in the past 90 days say I was nichsal 85 times. So now i set a goal over the next 90 days I want to keep that at 50 times rather than 85. is that a workable approach?

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Re: Addiction to Zenus verse Alchohol
Posted by workingjew - 02 Jul 2015 17:37

Hello waydown,

Eating cake usually doesnt have any issur associated with it and it is generally not something that gives us a crazy dopanine rush. Watching P* and/or M* is like taking a hit of heroine which is never mutar. When one is with wife, it should be an act of giving (which is very enjoyable to us because we also end up climaxing) which is due to our sexual desire for our wife and not just a desire to release (selfish completely). The lust is something which is very hard to say ok sometimes and not ok other times. If one is lusting (getting a gishmak inside, selfish, heroine-like) he has very little chance of breaking free from this challenge/urge and will always be subserviant to it, albeit to different extents and calling it different names.

Having said all above, I believe that the Torah perspective is that it is commendable that a person is working on themselves and trying to at least reduce frequency of how often they are involved in issurim. Just keep in mind that reduction is not going to let you break free, it will turn

into a once in a while heroine hit as opposed to daily hit... both imprisoning the Chashuve Yid.

I listened to an awesome lecture here on GYE by Jesse (guardyoureyes.com/kosher-isle/shiurim/item/it-s-all-in-our-head). It is a lecture designed for newcomers to SA and he goes discusses the idea of whether it really has to be all or nothing (

Warning: Spoiler!

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Hatzlocho!

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Re: Addiction to Zenus verse Alchohol
Posted by waydown - 02 Jul 2015 17:57

Working jew,

Thanks for that perspective. A few small pointers.

We all know its assur and so we have to find etzias how to get rid of it. the question is how best to approach it intially.

I have heard this torah before that sex is an act of giving and not fulfilling lust etc.. And I agree. i never approach my wif ethat altitude please fulfill my lust and that you are just a piece of meat. But at the same time come on lets get real. We are all human. I defintely look forward to sex as a kosher way to fulifill my desires while also making sure that my wife is respected and treated with dignity. I think anyone who denies that and tells me its all about giving others and nothing

about oneself can sell me the brooklyn bridge. i just don't believe that. To me thats rubbish. Perhaps thats the ulitmate goal for a very big tzadik but I don't think hashem expects that of us all.

You say its like dupe once you get addicthed again you can't stop. But guess what you don't need to dabble with dope to live with on a dialy basis. However sex is something one does often. So now I circle back to my main point. We are all human and interact with those desires daily. Yes as I clearly point out we are human and at the end of the day intercourse fulfills our deires too. Isn't it a bit naive to think I dabble with this all the time but i will never be nichshoel when its assur? So perhpas the idea should be you know tfor a fact that you will dabble with these addictions. It will be nearly imposible once its in your face to always push it away. However you can set a goal that I will minimize it. Why isn't 90 days of less issurim a nice start?

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Re: Addiction to Zenus verse Alchohol
Posted by TalmidChaim - 02 Jul 2015 18:05

Addiction is likened to an allergy in recovery thought. So the point is that even a little bit will send the addict into a binge. Now it's the difference, say, between Weight Watchers, a diet, and Over-Eaters Anonymous, a recovery program. Not everyone who needs to diet is an addict, nor is every person trying to control lust an addict. But where there is addiction, moderation is simply not a solution.

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Re: Addiction to Zenus verse Alchohol
Posted by waydown - 02 Jul 2015 18:42

So where there is addiction should one abstain from martial relations as well? After all it all comes from the same hormones. Once I satsify my body even in a muter way I will get hooked.

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Re: Addiction to Zenus verse Alchohol
Posted by workingjew - 02 Jul 2015 19:32

Waydown,

That is great question and I am certainly not really qualified to answer it. I have my opinions though based on the little that I have learned in my own journey...

If one is imagining other women and doing it only for his own sole "fix", it might be best to abstain.

Its not easy and you gotta do the best you can while trying to raise that bar and being honest of what really is the best that you can (without going insane).

Hatzlocho!

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Re: Addiction to Zenus verse Alchohol
Posted by cordnoy - 02 Jul 2015 20:04

Some do say to abstain.

One who engages in these activities less frequently is doing well but that is not a great tool for ultimate recovery. ...especially with the odaat motto.

Regarding your main question, why focus on the differences? Focus on where they are the same. Read the big book and see what you can gain.

And if you don't wanna. ...then dont.

Bhatzlachah

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Re: Addiction to Zenus verse Alchohol
Posted by gibbor120 - 02 Jul 2015 20:14

You are thinking too much. People in recovery do sometimes find that a period of abstinence from their wives is necessary. (I recently saw that even scientifically, relations with the wife is not the same on a pysiological level as masturbation, hormones released etc., which may be related to the reason that "the more you feed it, the more you need it" principle does not apply to healthy relations with one's wife, but that is not really my main point.)

Instead of focusing your energy on why falling once in a while is ok, put your efforts into recovery. You are clearly afraid to totally give it up, as are most of us. Recovery works on the "naaseh v'nishma" principle. Do what others have done that works, whether you understand it or not. Usually, once in recovery, you don't care why it works any more, you are just happy that it does.

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Re: Addiction to Zenus verse Alchohol
Posted by belmont4175 - 02 Jul 2015 20:36

[gibbor120 wrote:](#)

(I recently saw that even scientifically, relations with the wife is not the same on a physiological level as masturbation, hormones released etc., which may be related to the reason that "the more you feed it, the more you need it" principle does not apply to healthy relations with one's wife, but that is not really my main point.)

Hey this seems somewhat true!!!

However the Gemarah does'nt note this when they say ??? ??? ?? ???? ????? ??? ?????? ???, but you might have another source please tell us.

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Re: Addiction to Zenus verse Alchohol
Posted by unanumun - 02 Jul 2015 20:40

[waydown wrote:](#)

1) The first and foremost reason is, almost everyone is created with an inner sexual urge.
But everybody must have sexual desires.

2) ... We all bump into attractive women and live in a culture where its the honored and looked up upon. Furthermore, in a more physical level we all have to do the mitzva of tashmish so we are not removed from it. Whats more is once that mitzva is performed the next day or so there is just a natrual stronger itch and our hormones feel and desire for more.

Indeed while going the process of reprogramming my mind, I found it more difficult to work on not lusting while my wife was muttar then it was when she was assur and I was able to focus my energies on completely abstaining from lust and sex.

However, as has been pointed out many times on these forums, there is a difference between lust and love. If engaging in intimacy with one's wife with more of a focus on giving and not just satisfying our own "needs", then slowly there can be a change in the outlook, and the intimacy does not have to lead to continued lusting afterwards.

In addition, while it is true that we all have an internal sex drive, most people that have come to GYE suffering from addiction (or bad habits) have testified that the main issue was not the drive that got them into trouble. It was the underlying issues that push us to use the drive as a means of escape. Some people use drugs, alcohol, eating or lust to escape from those issues. But probably the way of working on all addictions is by dealing with the underlying issues so whether the addiction is coming from a dna issue or an external one, the way to recovery can be the same, despite the differences in the actual means of escape.

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Re: Addiction to Zenus verse Alchohol
Posted by unanumun - 02 Jul 2015 20:50

[belmont4175 wrote:](#)

[gibbor120 wrote:](#)

(I recently saw that even scientifically, relations with the wife is not the same on a pysiological level as masturbation, hormones released etc., which may be related to the reason that "the more you feed it, the more you need it" principle does not apply to healthy relations with one's wife, but that is not really my main point.)

Hey this seems somewhat true!!!

However the Gemarah does'nt note this when they say ??? ??? ?? ????? ?????? ??? ??????? ???, but you might have another source please tell us.

there is a concept in chazal that one's wife protects him from sin. I saw in the sefer ????? ????? that if one's intimacy takes on the proper form (basically the giving and not taking concept) then it protects him from sin. However if it is just a lustful act, then indeed it will not help him and I guess we would say ?????? ???.

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Re: Addiction to Zenus verse Alcohol
Posted by doingtshuva - 02 Jul 2015 20:55

Waydown

There is a shiur from R' Twersky available here on GYE, and he says that one can totally abstain from alcohol and from gambling, but not from sex. Therefore sex addiction is similar to food addiction.

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Re: Addiction to Zenus verse Alchohol

Posted by TalmidChaim - 02 Jul 2015 20:59

One of the most difficult things for addicts new to recovery to understand is the difference between lust and sex. It took me a while to begin to understand this.

Notice that I said, "lust," not sex; they're different. Lust is an entirely selfish enterprise. With lust, the goal is to satisfy the self and that's it. Sex -- and this is where addicts are totally dumbfounded, to the point where they (we) use the words, "lust" and "sex" synonymously -- is not only about you. It is possible to have sex and not do it lustfully. I found this idea totally unfathomable, the sure sign of an addict, I guess.

Now your question is great, and very common. Whereas an alcoholic can completely abstain from the object of his addiction, lust addicts are addicted to a relative intangible. It's not sex, per se, that we have a problem with, but the lust, indulgent side of it. But many addicts have rewired their outlooks to the point where they're able to have sex without lust, which, in my opinion, is the optimal state of recovery. But as you've seen, multiple opinions abound here, and there's no absolute dogma here.

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