

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 Dov - 24 Jun 2009 22:55

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[battleworn wrote on 21 Jun 2009 11:22:](#)

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?

To those that found that the Torah didn't work for them, I ask the following:

In those dark days did you know that:

- 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 doesn'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 infinitely 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 specifically 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"ch 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 totally 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 and every good ratzon adds up, and at the end Hashem brings the yeshu'a in the zechus of everything together?

I have a lot more to ask, but this is what came to mind now.

Dear Battleworn -

1) The answer of my heart to your question is no. I did not know these things. Furthermore, I believe that had I known them I would never have needed SA.

2) Now, let's get honest here and define "knowing these things". The emphasis is on the quality of the knowledge. Yes, I was aware of them, and yes, if you'd have asked me I'd have answered that I believe they are true. But guess what?

I would have been lying. Wasn't I *supposed* to? You are not supposed to believe kefirah, and it's even worse to say it, no?

Did I put on talis and tefilin? Of course. But I also masturbated, went to establishments on ill-repute and trashed the life of my wife and my kids putting them in the backseat to lust. I was clearly worshipping lust with Hashem. I guess it was sheetuf. But I'm not saying a chidush here.

The chofetz chayim writes, that a person doing an aveira is also doing a shtikel kefirah (in Hashem, the Torah, whatever) along with it, because: how could he do *a thing* Hashem doesn't

want him to do? he must lack something in the emunah...no?

How do I *know* this? the answer is that through working the steps I have come to a certain amount of (growing) true emuna in just these things.

How do I *know* I have this emuna? because **I see that I do not need to act out** because I feel Hashem answering me and caring for me, living with me. All as a result of the steps. Do you think I am just being gullible?

**So you ask if I knew these things, but I think you really must mean: where you aware of these concepts?** The reason I say that is: Do you think that the concepts - any of them - are things you or I could have been told about to have any real effect on our lives? That's it? "Oh, I never knew hashem was on my side, thanks for the information!" That is not how it worked for me, at all. **I had to learn that each of these things are reality, not just be aware of them. I believe most yidden around me may just be aware of them and that is enough for them. As Chuck C said: "A belief in G-d is good, but it is not enough for alcoholics. An Alkie needs to live in the constant awareness of the living presence of the Creator." Sounds suspiciously like deveikus, but what do I know about such things really.**

I couldn't get it through the normal channels of yiddishkeit. It (yiddishkeit's *values*) apparently *had* to be presented to me as i stared down the barrel of the gun of lust! **Now let me ask you: How lucky can a man be?!**

Does this answer your questions to your satisfaction? Is it helpful? All the best!

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Re: Some thoughts on "Torah and the 12 steps"  
Posted by battleworn - 25 Jun 2009 08:59

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Reb Dov, thank you so much for replying.

So you ask if I knew these things, but I think you really must mean: where you aware of these concepts?

No I didn't mean that. But from experience, I know that there is a way to get people to really know these things. There are people in the world that have the power to get these things through to others. That's how I recovered. (But I'm not an addict, I'm an ex-addict) I personally watched an Odom Godol change someones life in about 40 minutes. This bochur had abandoned his Yiddishkeit and was not keeping anything. The Odom Gadol spoke to him for 40 minutes and the guy made an about face. Two weeks later he was in Yeshiva for the new zman.

But I would also like to know if you were aware of all of them. And if not, which ones?

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Re: Some thoughts on "Torah and the 12 steps"  
Posted by the.guard - 25 Jun 2009 09:07

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What an answer! Battle, do you see what greatness a Yid can achieve when Hashem blesses them with NO CHOICE?? I am in AWE. This is what I was saying to you before Battle, that all the knowledge in the world won't help an addict. It needs to be FELT in the HEART. Unfortunately, it takes "staring down the barrel of the gun of lust" to be ready to TRULY internalize these yesodos. And at that point, we can even get them from goyim. We have no where to go but UP. Maybe we should have a Jewish program one day. That would also work if it used the same Ikronos of the 12-Step groups. But what can we do that it doesn't exist yet? Not everyone who hits bottom can go to this "gadol" you mention and get the inspiration they need to recover from lust addiction. This Bochur made an about face because he was missing some understanding, some Yedia, some inspiration. But a lust addict like Dov needs 11 years of constant interaction with other addicts, meetings, phone calls, etc... A **disease** can't be healed with one meeting, no matter WHAT this gadol will tell him. At least I believe so. But if we had a Jewish PROGRAM like the 12-Steps, maybe...

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Re: Some thoughts on "Torah and the 12 steps"  
Posted by battleworn - 25 Jun 2009 13:09

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~~Rabeinu Guard, I hereby give up trying to get through to you.~~ This post was a reaction to R' Guard's reply to my email. I deeply regret the tone, as it implies that he was guilty for not understanding me. As I explained in the other thread, this was simply not the case

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Re: Some thoughts on "Torah and the 12 steps"  
Posted by the.guard - 25 Jun 2009 13:57

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Ok, now we can for sure change your name from Battleworn to BattleNEVERWorn ;D

What did you think of my reply #156 on [this page](#)? I sent it to you by e-mail as well, but I wrote it a bit more detailed there...

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Re: Some thoughts on "Torah and the 12 steps"  
Posted by battleworn - 25 Jun 2009 14:13

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I can't concentrate on that right now, because it's not important to me. I did NOT ask Torah Bagoyim al Taamin. Quite the opposite, I said that if it bothers YOU, we can discuss it a different time [because it's not relevant to the discussion]. ~~But you didn't read my email seriously, so you got that and a lot of other things mixed up.~~ [ I'm sure he read it very carefully. I also regret the harsh tone]

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Re: Some thoughts on "Torah and the 12 steps"  
Posted by the.guard - 25 Jun 2009 14:27

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I **did** read your e-mail seriously, and although you consider this "not relevant to the discussion", I consider it the **very answer** to your entire approach, so if you won't take the time to "concentrate on it", then we can't very well continue this discussion, can we?

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Re: Some thoughts on "Torah and the 12 steps"  
Posted by battleworn - 25 Jun 2009 14:43

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I already said that in any case we can't

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Re: Some thoughts on "Torah and the 12 steps"  
Posted by Dov - 25 Jun 2009 23:01

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[battleworn wrote on 25 Jun 2009 08:59:](#)

Reb Dov, thank you so much for replying.

So you ask if I knew these things, but I think you really must mean: where you aware of these concepts?

No I didn't mean that. But from experience, I know that there is a way to get people to really know these things. There are people in the world that have the power to get these things through to others. That's how I recovered. (But I'm not an addict, I'm an ex-addict) I personally watched an Odom Godol change someones life in about 40 minutes. This bochur had abandoned his Yiddishkeit and was not keeping anything. The Odom Gadol spoke to him for 40 minutes and the guy made an about face. Two weeks later he was in Yeshiva for the new zman.

But I would also like to know if you were aware of all of them. And if not, which ones?

Dear Battleworn,

1- I think I should let you know the respect I have for you to make a point of saying you are an **ex-addict**. I have heard others say this in meetings. I don't believe it's the approach for me and apparently others feel the same, but it is apparently working for you and alei vehatzlach!

2- Perhaps there *are* people who can even convince *addicts* of the many basic concepts that a healthy jewish mind is made of that were listed. I looked precisely for that in therapy (four+



shrinks - enough to change a two lightbulbs!), rabonnim (a minyan), and the ARIZ"l's mikvah (perhaps the bravest of my efforts!), and **let's not forget the Creator Himself**: I asked Him a *lot* of times to help me out. Why didn't He listen? Is it just another "Holocaust kashyeh"? i think not. Hashem only comes in where people let Him in, and I had no room for Him in my life. **All I wanted was to be able to still act out** and yet get better at the same time. (Kinda like we'all did at Sinai w/that eigel statue - we wanted to keep the luchos, too!) Until my own personal "luchos" broke, before my very eyes. You know, i have *completely* forgotten where i was going with this...

Oh yeah, the awareness thing. Well, it took the recovery of some of my sanity to get back to faith in Hashem's personal interest in me, and many of the other beautiful things that were listed.

But Battleworn, you are leaving something out - the "knowing it" approach is a bit simplistic for another reason: I and anyone else i know sober and in recovery is *still growing* in these awarenesses, every day. *Not* because I read (and learn be'iyun) the RMBM explaining to me that i am halachikly *required* to, *nor* because Rav Dessler explains why it is really *logical* that I should. It is only through experience and struggle in avodas Hashem **with sanity** that Hashem gives these gifts, in my experience.

Now, it may very well be different for non-addicts. I'll end with a story:

Never mind, just read the heilige Divrei Chayim (in vayeitzei?) on the Ba'al Shem Tov's wonderful explanation of the posuk "Kayl nekamos Hashem". Good Shabbos, amigo!!

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Re: Some thoughts on "Torah and the 12 steps"  
Posted by battleworn - 26 Jun 2009 09:46

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Perhaps there are people who can even convince addicts of the many basic concepts that a healthy jewish mind is made of that were listed. I looked precisely for that in therapy (four+ shrinks - enough to change a two lightbulbs!), rabonnim (a minyan), and the ARIZ"l's mikvah (perhaps the bravest of my efforts!), and let's not forget the Creator Himself: I asked Him a lot of times to help me out. Why didn't He listen? Is it just another "Holocaust kashyeh"? i think not.

I think the answer is quite simple. Klal Yisroel has known for thousands of years, that a time is going to come when things will be so dark that we simply will not be able to find the tools to deal with it. It's a rule of nature that light only comes after dark.

The light of the Geulah is going to be an all-encompassing light that is so powerful and clear that there won't be any confusion at all in the world. Everyone will see Hashems glory perfectly clearly etc.

According to the rules of nature that Hashem established ?? ??? ??? ?????, the only way that, that great all-encompassing light can be revealed is with first having a great all-encompassing dark fill the world. So the fact that people search and search is really no chidush to me. The chidush is when we don't give up. And mind you, that's a great big chidush.

Hashem only comes in where people let Him in, and I had no room for Him in my life. All I wanted was to be able to still act out and yet get better at the same time. (Kinda like we'all did at Sinai w/that eigel statue - we wanted to keep the luchos, too!) Until my own personal "luchos" broke, before my very eyes. You know, i have completely forgotten where i was going with this...

Oh yeah, the awareness thing. Well, it took the recovery of some of my sanity to get back to faith in Hashem's personal interest in me, and many of the other beautiful things that were listed.

But Battleworn, you are leaving something out - the "knowing it" approach is a bit simplistic for another reason: I and anyone else i know sober and in recovery is still growing in these awarenesses, every day. Not because I read (and learn be'iyun) the RMBM explaining to me that i am halachikly required to, nor because Rav Dessler explains why it is really logical that I should. It is only through experience and struggle in avodas Hashem with sanity that Hashem gives these gifts, in my experience.

All this, has also been my experience. All I'm adding is that there are people in the world that, can get all this through to people, without having to slow down at all in Avodas Hashem. Instead we take our tremendous, above average, spiritual energy that has until now been hijacked by the y'h and diverted to lust; and redirect it towards it's natural direction of Avodas Hashem.

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Re: Some thoughts on "Torah and the 12 steps"  
Posted by battleworn - 26 Jun 2009 12:03

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I just realized that I may have been misunderstood, when I mentioned the story about the bochur. I did not mean to imply, that in 40 min. of speaking to the right person, an addict's problems will be taken care of. Even in the case of the bochur; if there would have been follow up, he would be so much better off now (2 years later) than he is.

And a lust addict is a whole lot more complicated. My point in bringing the story was just to give a simple illustration how there are ways to get these yesodos through to people (provided that they're interested). If you need an example of a lust addict, you'll have to take me and some of the other fellows on the forum.

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