

Reaching Out for Help on Shabbos

Posted by Kedusha - 12 Nov 2010 15:45

Disclaimer: Nothing posted on this thread, or anywhere else on the forum, should be relied upon for Halacha l'Maseh. As to whether a Sheilah should be asked, see replies # 110 & 112.

[Note that the first few pages of this thread relate to an earlier version of this poll. Many of the issues raised have been addressed in the way the question is currently worded].

What do you say, Chevra? This is a question that has been on my mind for quite some time.

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Re: Reaching Out for Help on Shabbos

Posted by frumfiend - 14 Nov 2010 23:34

im a bit confused is this a reall halachic discussion where the issue of shinuy and grama plays a role. Or is this a hashkafic disscussion of weghting the severity of the addiction against shabbos. The purpose of this could be to flesh out all the issues in order to ask a shaala.

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Re: Reaching Out for Help on Shabbos

Posted by Dov - 14 Nov 2010 23:55

[bardichev wrote on 14 Nov 2010 22:09:](#)

lock this topic

AMEN!

...and I was just about to vote! Hmmm!

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Re: Reaching Out for Help on Shabbos
Posted by Kedusha - 15 Nov 2010 00:17

I posed the question to an Adam Gadol, who is a big supporter of GYE. The Adam Gadol did not want to Paskin the Sheilah, but said that I'm free to ask someone else. One concern he expressed is whether this problem/addiction is viewed by Halacha as an illness (being that there is an element of Bechira involved, which is hard to deny, [although there is also the well-known element of powerlessness]). He even had difficulty accepting that it was a true addiction - after all, a person will not go into convulsions from withdrawal the way he may from drug addiction [although, there can be lesser withdrawal symptoms, as we all know]. I asked, "What about gambling?" and the Adam Gadol had the same difficulty accepting that gambling was a true addiction. [However, I think it's well accepted in the psychological community that people can, indeed, become addicted to gambling, and sexual addiction is becoming far more understood than it was in the past].

In any event, here at GYE, it's pretty much a Davar Pashut that we're dealing with an addiction. However, the question still remains if, al pi Halacha, it is considered an illness. If not, then my comparison to depression or anxiety (see reply #19) is not correct.

I then presented another Svara - that better make the phone call (with a Shinuy) than be Nichshal, because the former is a lesser aveira than the latter. The Adam Gadol responded that this might, indeed, be correct, and would depend on whether a person is allowed to violate an issur d'Rabbanan in order to save himself from an Issur d'Oraysa. But, still no definite answer was forthcoming.

Since, even if I were to get a Psak, it would not be binding on anyone but myself, I'll just let the) and allow everyone to ask his own Sheilah.

Boruch Hashem, I think many people, men especially, seem to do all right on Shabbos. Halevai

that it should carry into the entire week!

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Re: Reaching Out for Help on Shabbos

Posted by Dov - 15 Nov 2010 00:55

[Kedusha wrote on 14 Nov 2010 22:59:](#)

Hang on my friend, I'm hoping to be able to convey some real Daas Torah soon!

This is ridiculous. Da'as Torah? On an addiction that the rov may or may not *really* understand? Who says he *understands* it? Is he an addict? If not, then as far as I am concerned most of what he knows is hearsay. The Rabbonim consistently defer to doctors to define whether a condition or procedure is, in fact, sakonas nefoshos. And being mechalek between an alcoholic, a heroin addict, and a sex, lust, or food addict is, in my annoyed opinion, capricious and simplistic.

As far as I have seen, the seriousness and deadliness of *every* addiction is exactly the same - and yet every addict is different. The deadliness of an addiction is that it ruins the addict's life because he/she *needs it yet cannot stop*. It is only a matter of time until every aspect of his life is wrecked. Then all bets are off. The Shabbos that their spouse walks out on them for the porn that finally led them to a tryst, and it occurs to them that their children are ruined, and they find out that they are fired yet again for porn at work - ask them and their rov right **then** if they should have made that call on Shabbos.

I feel strongly that hope for recovery boils down to this: either he believes that the the very first drink is the main precipitating factor in his ultimate and total destruction, or he does not. If he does not believe that, then he will drink, because failing one time is really not **that** big a deal. It's not sakonas nefoshos....right.

What they are powerless *over* is irrelevant. It is the powerlessness that ruins their lives, not the heroin, the sex, or the 'Oh-Henry bar'. The guy who OD's on heroin is doomed to do so anyway. I am not impressed by heroin, personally.

And yet, every addict is completely different! For some addicts who ask me is they must make the call on Shabbos, I'd honestly say, "It'd probably be better if you just masturbated or went and had more nameless sex in a public bathroom. You are not done experimenting and you are doomed to persist until you have had enough. Stop pretending that you are trying to recover and then maybe - just maybe - you'll actually give up and get better." Should this guy make a call on Shabbos? Absolutely not!

For another addict, who really *is* trying (he is finally tired of acting out *while* hiding behind his 'username' and whining about his horrible addiction and has actually had enough of 'working the steps' [for the fourth time!] in a faceless phone group), it is probably worth it to make that call on Shabbos. He really *is* in trouble! For the *first* guy, acting out is probably the very *best* thing he can do for his sobriety!

Therefore, I would trust the 'daas' of my roman catholic sponsor *far* more than any rov in the universe, when it comes to what I need to do. No rov saved my life when I came to *him* for help. No shrink did, either. None of them knew what to do, period. So why would I go to them for this, pray-tell?

I know that to some, this makes me sound not frum. I do not agree, but if it *is* true, then let *Hashem* judge that with His Rachamim and help me! I am sad to lose the respect of some folks. The people who see the main issue in addiction as essentially mitzvah/vs aveiro (being good vs being bad) will surely not agree with me, and G-d bless them. If they are addicts like I am, I wish them luck in coming to terms with the insanity of their problem *and* at making heads or tails out of the 12 steps. Their approach just didn't work for me and for many thousands of other addicts. It probably works for some, though, so more power to them.

This is why I came to GYE and I will continue to spew the program that works for me here, until I am outed. It is better to be open, no?

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Re: Reaching Out for Help on Shabbos
Posted by Kedusha - 15 Nov 2010 04:42

Dear Dov,

I'm delighted that you posted - I knew that a locked thread wouldn't hold you back! And what a

A few points, the first of which agrees with what you're saying, and the second and third which may come to the same result from a different angle.

great post that is!

1.) "Leiv Yodeah Maras Nafsho" - if a person knows that he needs to make the call, I'm not sure what the Sheilah is. After all, he never asks a Rav if he can stare at porn and masturbate, so

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2.) Say I asked a Rav on Pesach - "May I eat Kitniyos for lunch? Otherwise, I'm going to eat Chametz." The Rav may respond, "But, you're not permitted to eat either!" Of course, the Rav would be correct. However, if push came to shove and, for whatever reason, I felt compelled to eat one of them, I would, obviously, choose the Kitniyos, which is, by far, less Chamur. The same is true here. Looking at porn and masturbation are both issurei d'Oraysa according to all (or, in the case of the latter, virtually all) opinions. Both are, by far, more Chamur, than using a phone with a Shinuy (the Adam Gadol acknowledged as much). The Rav may be required to rule that both are forbidden, but, if I had to make a choice, I would obviously choose the far less Chamur aveira.

I hope to never have to make this choice. However, since, c"v, losing my sobriety is not open for discussion, should push come to shove, the choice would be clear (for me, anyway).

why is he, all of a sudden, being so Makpid on asking first? :

3.) In battle, the Torah says to always leave a way out for the enemy – otherwise, the enemy will fight much harder, knowing they have no route of escape. Similarly, if an addict knows that, should push come to shove, he would have the option to call a sponsor on Shabbos, he most likely will never have to exercise that option. But take away that option from him, and the consequences can, c"v, be tragic.

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Re: Reaching Out for Help on Shabbos
Posted by Kedusha - 15 Nov 2010 04:56

With apologies to Bards, I think we can try unlocking this thread again. For one thing, it's not

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nice for the moderators to dominate the discussion!

Re: Reaching Out for Help on Shabbos
Posted by bardichev - 15 Nov 2010 05:18

We are talking in the "theoretical" sense. In order to bring up valid points

By doing so we are trampling on the same Torah that gives us the prohibition and or the guilty conscience or unmanagibilty. What ever you want to call it

Stop talk about what u can ask a rov

Ask him

And move on

It is not fair to create shialos and assume that rabbonim can't answer "hypothetical" questions

And guess what rabbonim Don't answer hypothetical questions. That's why the gadol that kedusha spoke didn't answer

If one has this question. He has who to speak to.

On the hypothetical level its not for a forum

B

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Re: Reaching Out for Help on Shabbos
Posted by Dov - 15 Nov 2010 08:13

[bardichev wrote on 15 Nov 2010 05:18:](#)

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By doing so we are trampling on the same Torah that gives us the prohibition and or the guilty conscience or unmanagibilty. What ever you want to call it

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B

I love you, Reb b. I never answered the poll, for the reasons you said - but at *least* we can agree that the poor guy needs to go to **someone** and talk this over *in person* in order to know just what he should do. To me, that little talk is probably the best 'medicine'.

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Re: Reaching Out for Help on Shabbos
Posted by bardichev - 15 Nov 2010 13:24

Masssskim

Mwah!

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Re: Reaching Out for Help on Shabbos
Posted by Kedusha - 15 Nov 2010 15:48

A non-frum Jew once told a Rav that he had to work on one of the days of Rosh Hashana, and asked whether he should work on the first day or the second day (incidentally, the first day fell on Shabbos). The Rav responded, "you certainly cannot work on the first day." He didn't address the second day at all, because he, obviously, didn't want to condone that option either [Heard from Rav Yisroel Reisman].

I think our situation is similar, and the response should be: "You certainly should not lose your sobriety." This way, the Rav is not condoning using a phone, but he's at least acknowledging implicitly that it's, by far, the lesser of two evils.

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Re: Reaching Out for Help on Shabbos
Posted by bardichev - 15 Nov 2010 16:12

Kedusha I hubly suggest you let this topic die

If a gadol of note didn't want to get pulled in to it

Mah nomer anan

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Re: Reaching Out for Help on Shabbos
Posted by Kedusha - 15 Nov 2010 16:27

I agree that asking was a mistake (Boruch Hashem, no Psak was given). If you're headed towards a cliff, you don't ask questions, you just put on the brakes!

(As to letting the topic die, why not just let it run its course? Ending the topic prematurely can have unintended consequences. And believe me, this Gadol would not want to get involved with 99% of what is routinely discussed on the forum!)

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Re: Reaching Out for Help on Shabbos
Posted by briut - 15 Nov 2010 17:44

Kedusha, dearest: I still just don't get it. Just don't get it.

Perhaps I'd find it easier if the question were, "under what exact circumstances might it be okay to pick up the phone." Because then I could suggest a dozen things you haven't even talked about.

- 1) there's NO ONE within walking distance who could help, even as a Shabbos backup.
- 2) the danger involves a clear and immediate danger of health-related consequence
- 3) it's totally obvious that one aveirah would 'trump' another aveirah that is certain to be forthcoming (BTW, I don't buy the argument that one aveirah trumps another; in this case, you're even acknowledging machlokes poskim what is d'oreisa or sofek d'oreisa -- my guess is that when Moshiach comes we'll all find out the most important mitzvah was shatnez so "don't give me this" about higher/lower aveirahs).
- 4) there's no goy to dial or handle other melacha.
- 5) the guy on the other end of the phone is certain to be of assistance and "make" the guy not act out.
- 6) the guy will approach a Rav on each and every occasion since the facts will differ each time, and do it in advance of 'trouble,' and will listen to the Rav, and will still be guaranteed to act out unless phoning a sponsor.

Shall I go on? I certainly could. For days. But the bottom line is, I have no opinion on an answer because I don't even BEGIN to understand the QUESTION. I'm hoping you can fill us in.

(I like the example earlier: Rav, I'm THINKING about eating chometz; is it okay to have some kitnios... OY.)

So if you're gonna keep this thread going, and adding stuff that makes it even harder for me to understand how it's a sheilah and not a rationalization, then I'm gonna keep going until we get back to a simple difference of views (rabbit season / duck season). Can you clarify a little further?

Sorry if I sound harsh in this -- my intent is truly to UNDERSTAND and not to lecture. Kol tuv.

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Re: Reaching Out for Help on Shabbos
Posted by Kedusha - 15 Nov 2010 17:56

If losing our sobriety is even a possibility, we're (at least I'm) in great danger. That's why I've come to realize that, even asking this Sheilah is not healthy for me (I'm beginning to sound like) Staying clean is the only acceptable outcome, and I need to achieve it, b'Ezras Hashem, hopefully with minimal fallout in other areas.

Once acting out (whether with porn and/or masturbation) is off the table, as it must be for an addict, the question is how do I avoid it if the Nisayon is great? Speak with someone in person? Kol Hakavod. Say Tehillim? If, it works, it works. I'm not saying that the phone should actually be used, only that the option should remain on the table. Hopefully, another option will suffice. In fact, just knowing that we have this option will, hopefully, give us enough Yishuv Hada'as so as to not need to use it.

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