19. Why religion wasn't enough
Posted by mnman415 - 09 Nov 2010 03:44

_____

Although all truths can be found in the Torah, we had lost our vision. Even though we may have been learning Torah and Mussar, we were wearing "broken eye glasses." And so, before we can turn once again to the Torah for guidance, we need to first learn what it means to be a human being, as we discussed above. We need to learn Alef-Beis again before we can return to learning Mussar Sefarim.

The 12 Steps & 12 Traditions (p.p. 31-32) discusses why even religious people who always believed they had faith in G-d, and had asked G-d for help countless times in the past, were still unable to break free from the grip of the addiction:

This answer has to do with the quality of faith rather than its quantity. This has been our blind spot. We supposed we had humility when really we hadn't. We supposed we had been serious about religious practices when, upon honest appraisal, we found we had been only superficial. Or, going to the other extreme, we had wallowed in emotionalism and had mistaken it for true religious feeling. In both cases, we had been asking something for nothing. The fact was, we really hadn't cleaned house so that the grace of G-d could enter us and expel the obsession. In no deep or meaningful sense had we ever taken stock of ourselves, made amends to those we had harmed, or freely given to any other human being without any demand for reward. We had not even prayed rightly. We had always said, "Grant me my wishes" instead of "Thy will be done." At no time had we asked what G-d's will was for us; instead we had been telling Him what it ought to be. The love of G-d and man we understood not at all. Therefore we remained self-deceived, and so incapable of receiving enough grace to restore us to sanity. Belief (in G-d) meant reliance. In A.A, we saw the fruits of this belief: men and women spared from alcohol's final catastrophe. We saw them meet and transcend their other pains and trials. We saw them calmly accept impossible situations, seeking neither to run nor to recriminate. This was not only faith; it was faith that worked under all conditions.

- 16 -

As one addict explains the term "Cleaning House" that is used often in AA:

It is important to realize that our real problem is the pain in our lives that makes us vulnerable to addiction. Addiction is the self-medication for the problem, and not the problem itself. This pain is caused by a "wall" in our relationship with Hashem and in our relationships with many other people in our lives. To remove that pain, we have to remove the walls. The walls are not as we had always thought, i.e. the things Hashem has done to us, or the things that others have done to us, but in reality, the walls are made up of our character defects that we have injected into those relationships. And the only way to stop the pain, is to make a true cheshbon hanefesh (personal accounting) on those character defects, accept that we need Hashem to remove the defects from us, and ask Him to do so. Then, and only then, can we begin to repair our character defects with honesty, so that they no longer act as a wall in those relationships. (Making amends does not mean making do with apologies and payment of debts - it means repairing and fixing the relationships).

(And as a side note, the AAs found that addicts are often so much in denial and are such manipulators, that if their cheshbon hanefesh stayed inside their own minds and was not shared with others, they almost never kept to their commitments and eventually lost their sobriety).

==
====

Re: 19. Why religion wasn't enough
Posted by mnman415 - 09 Nov 2010 03:46
_____

so in the last step we said the if using your desires for hashem doesnt work then we need to go back to the basics. its not that the torah isnt enough. but rather we arnt at that level yet. we need to learn the aleph bais before learning hardcore seforim

there is more that i am leaving out that can be found in the 1st post on this thread.

==
====