

Shoin do

Posted by siyatta - 25 Dec 2023 21:28

I've been trying to stop forever but it never lasted very long. It's almost like it's easy to maisiach daas from the problem when there is no urge but the minute the urge comes back it's c'maat impossible to withstand and then comes the guilt and everything that comes with the failure.

I'm trying to finish with this machala once and for all and I'm hoping that having a support system is part of the solution. I've read a bit about 12 step programs and I hear that they're very effective (at least for alcohol addiction) but I don't know if all the steps are necessary or if the ikar is just having the support of others and feeling like I'm not alone in this. My goal is to do one of these streaks but it seems unreasonable if i can't go a week.

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Re: Shoin do

Posted by siyatta - 28 Dec 2023 16:20

Wow! Thank you for sharing. I would love to see that inside. Do you happen to have the mareh makom for R' Wolbe?

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Re: Shoin do

Posted by davidt - 28 Dec 2023 17:04

[siyatta wrote on 28 Dec 2023 16:20:](#)

Wow! Thank you for sharing. I would love to see that inside. Do you happen to have the mareh makom for R' Wolbe?

(AleI Schur, Vol. 1, p. 155)

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Re: Shoin do

Posted by yitzchokm - 28 Dec 2023 17:49

[davidt wrote on 28 Dec 2023 15:14:](#)

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a person has to always combat the Y"H and always do teshuva for the past and he can't use
this argument of onas as a way of rationalizing his behavior. I pointed out an exception where
someone was abused as a child and did things that were improper as a child and davidt also
pointed out children who were exposed as a child that they are considered an onas. The actions
of a child aren't considered deliberate.

Very often when people join GYE they feel that they are an onas. It is very normal for someone
to feel that way when he sincerely tried everything and he really doesn't want to do it and yet he
can't succeed. After being on GYE for a while, using all the tools on GYE and investing in this
fight many such people have broken free.

For addicts it might be true that at some point they had no bechira but it would often be because
of previous behavior where they did have bechira. I was never an addict but there are many
slogans in AA that help in overcoming addiction, even after a person has reached a level where
he has no bechira. The same is true for many people who already fell many times who aren't
addicted.

As bright wrote, once a person starts fighting the Y"H, the question of whether he has bechira
over his falls while he is fighting is irrelevant. I am adding that a person fighting is supposed to
use the guilt and shame from his falls as a catalyst for growth and not as a means to beat

himself up and give up. Saying that he has no bechira will impede growth. I myself used to think that I was forced to sin and GYE proved me wrong. Today I am a free man. The day will come when you will have succeeded in overcoming your struggles and the argument of not having bechira will be proven wrong.

The Battle of the Generation has a lot to say about bechira. I suggest that you read it regularly.

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Re: Shoin do

Posted by true_self - 28 Dec 2023 18:41

[yitzchokm wrote on 28 Dec 2023 17:49:](#)

[davidt wrote on 28 Dec 2023 15:14:](#)

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Powerlessness doesn't mean loss of *bechirah*.

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If a person killed someone under the influence of drugs will we say that he can not be held accountable because he had no bechirah when he pressed the trigger? I think every sane judge will convict him for first degree murder.

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Re: Shoin do

Posted by davidt - 28 Dec 2023 18:55

Rav Eliyahu Dessler z"l writes that while most of our actions are the result of our past experiences, actions and decisions (i.e. past acts of bechira), and therefore do not qualify currently as bechira, yet every person has a nekudas habechira (a point or area of bechira) where he does experience conflict between the yeitzer hara and the yeitzer hatov.

He compares this to two countries in battle. There is a limited area that constitutes the front - where the battle takes place. The majority of the territory of each country is behind the front, and is not, at that point, involved in the battle. Likewise, the "battle" within each person. Some aveiros are below a person's nekudas habechira (i.e., currently not within the sphere of influence of the yeitzer hara) so that he would not even consider doing them.

Other aveiros are above the person's nekudas habechira so that he wouldn't consider not doing them. The battle is limited to the area where the power of the yeitzer hara and that of the yeitzer hatov are comparable (i.e., the nekudas habechira).

Rav Dessler illustrates this concept with the example of a person who is a long-time member of a gang heavily involved with crime. He may no longer have the bechira to actually stop being involved in criminal activity. He may currently be considered "compelled" to rob a bank. Yet, he may have the bechira not to shoot the bank guard. This, then, is his current nekudas habechira.

RESPONSIBILITY AND REWARD FOR BEHAVIOR

Rav Dessler makes it clear that a person can only be held responsible for behavior over which he has bechira (e.g., a tinok shenishba is obviously not punished for aveiros he is totally unaware of). Likewise, the converse. True reward is only for good behavior over which there is conflict/bechira. (Of course, Hashem does reward good behavior done in non-bechira situations, but it is a much lower form of reward).

If a person once had bechira over an aveira but, due to having become habituated to it, no longer has bechira to avoid it, he is then punished for having allowed himself to fall from the previous level when he still had bechira. The same is true for reward.

It is for this reason, says Rav Dessler, that Lot merited being saved from the destruction of S'dom for not betraying Avraham to Pharaoh (Rashi, Bereishis, 19:29), rather than for the seemingly much greater achievement of risking his life to protect strangers in S'dom. His mesiras nefesh for hachnosas orchim was a result of his training in the house of Avraham, and not a product of bechira, and therefore did not merit special reward.

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Re: Shoin do

Posted by Gevura Shebyesod - 28 Dec 2023 18:57

[true_self wrote on 28 Dec 2023 18:41:](#)

[yitzchokm wrote on 28 Dec 2023 17:49:](#)

[davidt wrote on 28 Dec 2023 15:14:](#)

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I think you are actually agreeing, not disagreeing. Maybe he didn't have bechira not to kill once he was high, but he had bechira not to take the drugs in the first place.

similarly, the addiction may not be able to hold himself back from indulging, but he has the choice to go join AA (or GYE).

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Re: Shoin do

Posted by frank.lee - 28 Dec 2023 19:34

Hi DavidT, thanks for bringing this down. One of the key hashkafa sources on the topic!

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Re: Shoin do

Posted by Bennyh - 28 Dec 2023 20:29

[yitzchokm wrote on 28 Dec 2023 17:49:](#)

[davidt wrote on 28 Dec 2023 15:14:](#)

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Very well said, R' Yitzchok! I'm very uncomfortable philosophically with these two sources on bechira as I can see how they can be very easily manipulated and misunderstood, and I'm not familiar and enough with other sources who might agree/disagree and which position is considered the haskafic "consensus" (because hashkafa is not a shmorgasbord where you can pluck any idea out of any sefer and just run with it). Either way, I'm woefully inequipped to even opine on this topic, so this is probably too much said...

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Re: Shoin do

Posted by bright - 28 Dec 2023 20:50

[davidt wrote on 28 Dec 2023 15:14:](#)

Rav Shlomo Wolbe zt"l writes:

The great Jewish philosophers established bechira as the cornerstone for the whole Torah....
But from this resulted a common misperception among the masses; that all people actively
choose their every act and every decision.

This is on page 156

This is a grievous error. At times a person is faced with such a difficult nisayon (test) that it is
indeed impossible for him to overcome and he won't be held responsible for this because he
was an anus.

This is not there as far as I can see. Please correct me if Im wrong.

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Re: Shoin do

Posted by davidt - 28 Dec 2023 21:00

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[davidt wrote on 28 Dec 2023 15:14:](#)

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This is not there as far as I can see. Please correct me if Im wrong.

You're right. The quote finishes with these words... ???? ???? ?????

The rest of the words (from: At times a person is faced) are based on ???? ?????? ??? ??

I fixed the original post

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Re: Shoin do

Posted by yitzchokm - 28 Dec 2023 22:41

[true_self wrote on 28 Dec 2023 18:41:](#)

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Regarding the Tzidkas Hatzadik I don't see any practical applications. Regarding a murderer, other than a chersh, shotah v'katan and someone who didn't get a hasra'ah everyone is held accountable. The reason may be as Rav Tzadok writes, that humans can never determine that someone was an onas. Ein ladayan elah ma she'einov ro'os. Regarding heavenly punishment it may be different.

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Re: Shoin do

Posted by yitzchokm - 29 Dec 2023 00:08

I think there is only one practical lesson that can be learned from the Tzidkas Hatzadik and that is that even if a person will come up to shamayim after he dies and it will be revealed to him that he was forced to sin he will still not get away with not trying. A person has to fight and give it everything he has even if he will never succeed, no different than the person who fought and overcame all his struggles. This is a very high calling but there is good news. Almost everyone will succeed if they give it everything they have.

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Re: Shoin do

Posted by bright - 29 Dec 2023 00:19

R wolbes point actually is the other way. That there are many good things we do because of chinuch, outside influence etc. that we are not considered using our koach habechira.

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Re: Shoin do

Posted by ainshumyeiush - 29 Dec 2023 05:02

I feel somewhat inadequate in posting about this whole discussion about bechira, however, im just wondering, who cares? What if i don't have bechira? I should let myself be miserable? I

should keep doing the behaviors that drain my time and energy?

or say i had bechira every single time i acted out, i should feel guilty for what i did when i was still a clueless kid? (im not saying to not feel guilty, i mean focusing on it in a non productive matter)

ive had a few conversations with my rosh yeshiva about bechira and Hashems master plan, and from what i understood him to say, was basically to not worry about it and keep doing what i have to do. As the saying goes, heaven helps those who help themselves. Or as Napoleon put it, "G-d fights on the side with the best artillery"

but thank you everyone who weighed in, i definitely gained from your insights

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