



# Alcohol epidemic in our community

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**Dovid Lichtenstein:** Filling the hole in the heart with alcohol won't make the problem go away. Cutting the wires of the fire alarm won't help.

## בראשית רבה פרשת נח פרשה לו אות ד

ויתגל בתוך אהלו, ר"י אמר רבי חנין בשם רבי שמואל בר יצחק ויגל אין כתיב כאן, אלא ויתגל גרם גלות לו ולדורות, עשרת השבטים לא גלו אלא בשביל יין הה"ד (עמוס ו) השותים במזרקי יין, וכתוב (ישעיה ה) הוי משכימי בבקר שכר ירדופו וגו', שבט יהודה ובנימין לא גלו אלא בשביל היין שנאמר (ישעיהו כח) גם אלה ביין שגו ובשכר תעו.

## רמב"ם סוף הלכות טומאת צרעת

הצרעת הוא שם האמור בשותפות כולל עניינים הרבה שאין דומין זה לזה, שהרי לובן עור האדם קרוי צרעת, ונפילת קצת שיער הראש או הזקן קרוי צרעת, ושינוי עין הבגדים או הבתים קרוי צרעת, וזה השינוי האמור בבגדים ובבתים שקראתו תורה צרעת בשותפות השם אינו ממנהגו של עולם אלא אות ופלא היה בישראל כדי להזהירן מלשון הרע, שהמספר בלשון הרע משתנות קירות ביתו, אם חזר בו יטהר הבית, אם עמד ברשעו עד שהותץ הבית משתנין כלי העור שבביתו שהוא יושב ושוב עליהן, אם חזר בו יטהרו, ואם עמד ברשעו עד שישרפו משתנין הבגדים שעליו, אם חזר בו יטהרו ואם עמד ברשעו עד שישרפו משתנה עורו ויצטרע ויהיה מובדל ומפורסם לבדו עד שלא יתעסק בשיחת הרשעים שהוא הליצנות ולשון הרע.

## רמב"ם ריש הלכות תעניות

מצות עשה מן התורה לזעוק ולהריע בחצוצרות על כל צרה שתבא על הצבור, שנאמר על הצר הצורר אתכם והרעותם בחצוצרות, כלומר כל דבר שייצר לכם כגון בצורת ודבר וארבה וכיוצא בהן זעקו עליהן והריעו. ודבר זה מדרכי התשובה הוא, שבזמן שתבוא צרה ויזעקו עליה ויריעו ידעו הכל שבגלל מעשיהם הרעים הורע להן ככתוב עונותיכם הטו וגו', וזה הוא שיגרום להם להסיר הצרה מעליהם. אבל אם לא יזעקו ולא יריעו אלא יאמרו דבר זה ממנהג העולם אירע לנו וצרה זו נקרה נקרית, הרי זו דרך אכזריות וגורמת להם להדבק במעשיהם

הרעים, ותוסיף הצרה צרות אחרות, הוא שכתוב בתורה והלכתם עמי בקרי והלכתי עמכם בחמת קרי, כלומר כשאביא עליכם צרה כדי שתשובו אם תאמרו שהוא קרי אוסיף לכם חמת אותו קרי.

## תשובות והנהגות חלק ב סימן תי

### סימן תי

**שאלה:** נשאלתי אם מותר להצביע לבחירות בפה יוהנסבורג באולם המחובר לבית אלילים שלהם.

**אין** ליכנס לבית אלילים, ומפורש בש"ע יו"ד (ק"נ) שמצוה להתרחק מדרך אלילים ד' אמות, והיינו אפילו דרך אלילים ולא רק בבית עצמו, ולכאורה כאן האולם מחובר והיה ראוי להחמיר, אבל כפי מה שמציין השואל משמש האולם גם לכל מיני וועידות וכינוסים שאין להם שום קשר עם אליל שלהם, וגם נכנסים בפתח אחר מהפתח שנכנסים בו לטומאה, נראה שבזה אין להחמיר בדיעבד, שכבר מאוחר מדי מכדי להשפיע לשנות. אבל לעשות שם לכתחילה מסיבה כשחופף לטומאה נראה להחמיר, ואולי גם מחזק בזה בית ע"ז שנמצא במקום חשוב, אבל בנידון דידן דאי אפשר ולא קא מכויץ לא מצאתי שום מקום לאסור להשתתף בבחירות לפי מה שהבנתי שהפתח לבית ע"ז עצמו אינו הפתח לאולם, וביסוד הדין שמצוה להתרחק, עיין היטב בדברינו בח"א (סימן תס"ג).

**אמנם** גם אם הם נכנסים לטומאתם דרך אותו פתח, כיון שלכתחילה מיוחד ומיועד לאולם לא נקרא פתח ע"ז, שהרי משתמשים בו גם כפתח לאולם לכל מיני וועידות, וכאן דלא ניחא ליה וניכר כן שהרי בא לשם רק ביום הבחירות וכיום זה משמש כפתח לאולם לבחירות נראה שאין לאסור, מיהו נראה שכדאי להשפיע על השלטונות ולהסביר להם שאין אנו נכנסים דרך טומאה, אבל בנדון דידן שכבר מאוחר מכדי לשנות מותר לבחור באולם שניכר היום שאינו נכנס אלא למטרה זאת ואין לאסור, כנלע"ד.

Too see the Mamarei Chazal on the Issurim of drinking [click here](#)

## רמב"ם הלכות איסורי ביאה סוף פרק כב

אין לך דבר בכל התורה כולה שהוא קשה לרוב העם לפרוש אלא מן העריות והביאות האסורות, אמרו חכמים בשעה שנצטוו ישראל על העריות בכו וקבלו מצוה זו בתרעומות ובכיה שנאמר בוכה למשפחותיו על עסקי משפחות. ואמרו חכמים גזל ועריות נפשו של אדם מתאוה להן ומחמדתן, ואין אתה מוצא קהל בכל זמן וזמן שאין בהן פרוצין בעריות וביאות אסורות, ועוד אמרו חכמים רוב בגזל מיעוט בעריות והכל באבק לשון הרע. לפיכך ראוי לו לאדם לכופף יצרו בדבר זה ולהרגיל עצמו בקדושה יתירה ובמחשבה טהורה ובדעה נכונה כדי להנצל מהן, ויזהר מן הייחוד שהוא הגורם הגדול, גדולי החכמים היו אומרים לתלמידיהם הזהרו בי מפני בתי הזהרו בי מפני כלתי, כדי ללמד לתלמידיהם שלא יתביישו מדבר זה ויתרחקו מן הייחוד. וכן ינהוג להתרחק מן השחוק ומן השכרות ומדברי עגבים שאלו גורמין גדולים והם מעלות של עריות, ולא ישב בלא אשה שמנהג זה גורם לטהרה יתירה, גדולה מכל זאת אמרו יפנה עצמו ומחשבתו לדברי תורה וירחיב דעתו בחכמה שאין מחשבת עריות מתגברת אלא בלב פנוי מן החכמה, ובחכמה הוא אומר אילת אהבים ויעלת חן דדיה ירווך בכל עת באהבתה תשגה תמיד.

**To see excerpts from Rabbi Kaganoff's book click here**

## Selected emails from our listeners

Rabbi Lichtenstein,

Thank you for the wonderful program which brings up touchy issues about our community that no one wants to handle as they are too "hot" to handle.

Regarding your program on alcohol abuse in our community:

You focused on the long term consequences of drinking. There are also short term issues that need to be dealt with (especially of young men in Yeshiva in E"Y).

I am a physician at Hadassah Mount Scopus (Har Hatzofim). I was on call on Friday night before Purim approximately three years ago (it was probably March 14 2014, Purim in Yerushalayim was on Sunday night-Monday).

In middle of the night - about 11 o'clock or midnight the police brought in a drunk Yeshiva boy (to the best of my recollection he was on his way home from a meal and had an altercation with someone, but I might be mistaken). The fellow was obviously drunk, and was put in a bed in the emergency department. He became very belligerent and wild, breaking some of the medical equipment worth thousands of shekels and then proceeded to strip naked, run out to the middle of the emergency department (right in front of the nurses station) and started screaming "F\*\*k me! F\*\*k me!" over and over again. It took us some time to calm him down and put him back in his bed, and security personnel watched over him for the rest of the night.

In the morning I had a chat with him. He was a normative Yeshiva fellow, had absolutely no recollection of the night before and was absolutely horrified and exceedingly ashamed when I recounted the events of the previous night. He did not believe me at first, I presume that he had no choice but to accept my word, as he had no clean clothes (he had vomited all over them) and woke up to find himself in a hospital.

The immense chilul Hashem that was done is beyond words. The majority of the staff in the hospital are non religious, and to see a frum "Yeshiva boy" - "Bachur Yeshiva" - drunk out of his mind, stark naked in middle of the emergency room screaming "F\*\*\* me" does not need any other words to portray the magnitude of the issue. Who in their right mind would want their children or family member to be a Yeshiva student if this is how Yeshiva students act? Not to mention the damage of equipment that the student was responsible for!

I would like to point out that the bachur was **\*\*not\*\*** from Mir, he was from a different black-hat Yeshiva in Yerushalayim.

Please be aware - when your children are away, learning in Yeshiva - they still need supervision and guidance. The fact that Purim was three days away is no reason to get drunk. Anyone who might act like this should run away from alcohol - including on



Purim - and not touch a drop to the immensity of his terrible sins (Chilul Hashem!!) that he might do when inebriated.

I would appreciate if you do discuss these issues - maybe you would like to make a program specifically dealing with these issues before Purim? I know that my Father (Dr. David Simons from Monsey) also has some stories about drinking on Purim that he would be willing to share with you.

Best wishes,

Dr. Moshe Simons

### **Selected audio from our listeners**

Addiction and large families- The Lubavitcher Rebbe's view *[click here](#)*

Addiction and large families- More respect for Rabbonim *[click here](#)*

Addiction- When is it a disease? *[click here](#)*

Addiction- When is it a disease (2)? *[click here](#)*

Alcohol and the Torah *[click here](#)*

Addiction- why is it more common these days *[click here](#)*

## תלמוד בבלי מסכת ברכות דף כט עמוד ב

לא תרוי ולא תחטי.

## תלמוד בבלי מסכת עירובין דף סה עמוד א

אמר רבי חנין: לא נברא יין אלא לנחם אבלים ולשלם שכר לרשעים, שנאמר תנו שכר לאובד וגו'.

## תלמוד בבלי מסכת יומא דף עו עמוד ב

ואמאי קרי ליה יין ואמאי קרי ליה תירוש? יין - שמביא יללה לעולם, תירוש - שכל המתגרה בו נעשה רש. ופרש"י שמביא יללה - על ידי היין רב הניאוף ופורענות באה לעולם, יין לשון תאניה ויללה.

## תלמוד בבלי מסכת סנהדרין דף ע עמוד א- עמוד ב

אמר רב חנן: לא נברא יין בעולם אלא לנחם אבלים ולשלם שכר לרשעים, שנאמר תנו שכר לאובד ויין למרי נפש. אמר רבי יצחק: מאי דכתיב אל תרא יין כי יתאדם - אל תרא יין שמאדים פניהם של רשעים בעולם הזה, ומלבין פניהם לעולם הבא. רבא אמר: אל תרא יין כי יתאדם - אל תרא יין שאחריתו דם. רב כהנא רמי: כתיב תירש וקרינן תירוש, זכה - נעשה ראש, לא זכה - נעשה רש. רבא רמי: כתיב ישמח וקרינן ישמח, זכה - משמחו, לא זכה - משממהו. והיינו דאמר רבא: חמרא וריחני פקחין. אמר רב עמרם בריה דרבי שמעון בר אבא אמר רבי חנינא: מאי דכתיב למי אוי למי אבוי למי מדנים למי שיח למי פצעים חנם למי חכללות עינים (וגו') למאחרים על היין לבאים לחקר ממסך וכו'. ויחל נח איש האדמה ויטע כרם אמר רב חסדא אמר רב עוקבא, ואמרי לה מר עוקבא אמר רבי זכאי: אמר לו הקדוש ברוך הוא לנח: נח, לא היה לך ללמוד מאדם הראשון, שלא גרם לו אלא יין. כמאן דאמר אותו אילן שאכל ממנו אדם הראשון גפן היה. דתניא, רבי מאיר אומר: אותו אילן שאכל אדם הראשון ממנו גפן היה, שאין לך דבר שמביא יללה לאדם אלא יין.

## רמב"ם הלכות דעות פרק ה הלכה ג

כשהחכם שותה יין אינו שותה אלא כדי לשרות אכילה שבמעיו, וכל המשתכר הרי זה חוטא ומגונה ומפסיד חכמתו, ואם נשתכר בפני עמי הארץ הרי זה חילל את השם.

## רמב"ם פ"ו מהלכות יו"ט ה"כ

כשאדם אוכל ושותה ושמח ברגל לא ימשך ביין ובשחוק ובקלות ראש ויאמר שכל מי שיוסיף בזה ירבה במצות שמחה, שהשכרות והשחוק הרבה וקלות הראש אינה שמחה אלא הוללות וסכלות ולא נצטוינו על ההוללות והסכלות אלא על השמחה שיש בה עבודת יוצר הכל וכו', ואי אפשר לעבוד את השם לא מתוך שחוק ולא מתוך קלות ראש ולא מתוך שכרות.

## מורה נבוכים חלק ג פרק ח

ואמנם היין דינו כדין המזון בכונה, אך הקיבוץ על השתייה המשכרת ראוי שיהיה אצלך יותר חרפה מהתקבץ אנשים ערומים מגולי הערוה נפנים ומתריזים ביום בבית אחד, וביאור זה כי היציאה ענין הכרחי אין לאדם תחבולה לדחותו, והשכרות הוא ממעשה האיש הרע בבחירתו, וגנות גלות הערוה מפורסם לא מושכל, והפסד השכל והגוף מרוחק לשכל, ולזה צריך למי שרוצה להיות אדם שירחיק זה ולא ידבר בו, ואמנם המשגל איני צריך לאמר בו יותר ממה שאמרתיו בפירוש אבות וכו'.

### דעת זקנים מבעלי התוספות פרשת שמיני (י, ט)

יין ושכר אל תשת. לפי שע"י שתיות יותר מדאי בושות וחרפות באות עליו. וגם הקדוש ברוך הוא צווח למי אוי למי אבוי וגו' למאחרים על היין. ועוד כתיב אל תרא יין כי יתאדם פי' אל תחמוד יין כי אחריתו דם. ועוד כתיב כי יתן בכוס עינו בכיס כתיב כלומר השכור נותן עינו בכוס והמוכרו נותן עינו בכיס יתהלך במישרים כל' לסוף ימכור כל אשר לו ויהיה הולך בביתו במישור כי לא יהיה בו דבר שיכשל בו אחריתו כנחש ישך שכשם שנתקללה האדמה בשביל הנחש כך נתקלל שלישי דהיינו חם על ידי יין ששתה נח. וי"א אחריתו כנחש ישך קרי ביה בנחש שעל ידי יין ששתה אדם הראשון בברכת נישואין שלו כדפרי' לעיל נשתכר ועבר על צוויי של מקום ולבסוף נתקלל בנשיכת נחש שנאמר ואתה תשופנו עקב ולפי שנקנסה מיתה על האדם בשביל אותו יין נהגו העולם כשהמברך בצבור אומר סברי מרנן והם עונין לחיים וכן מצינו בשלהי במה אשה. מעשה ברבי עקיבא שעשה משתה לבנו ועל כל כוס וכוס אמר חמרא וחיי לפום רבנן ולפום תלמידיהון. ועיניך יראו זרות שע"י היין האדם מתיר עצמו לעבירה ולאשה זרה ולנבול פה. ולא עוד אלא שעובד ע"ז שנאמ' לא יהיה בך אל זר דכתיב וישב העם לאכול ושתה ויקומו לצחק לעבוד העגל. ולבך ידבר תהפוכות שגורם לארבעה דברים ע"ז וגלוי עריות ושפיכות דמים ולשון הרע ועוד אמר שלמה אל תהי בסובאי יין וגו' כבן סורר ומורה שנהרג על היין. ועוד אמרו ז"ל בעירובין פרק הדר אמר ר' חייא בר אשי אמר רב כל שדעתו מיושבת עליו ביינו יש בו מדעת שבעים זקנים שכן יין נתן בשבעים. ואמר רבי חנינא כל המתפתה ביינו פי' שאע"פ ששותה הוא מתרצה לעולם יש בו מדעת קונו שנאמר וירח ה' את ריח הניחוח וגו' וריח כשתיה. ועוד אמרו רז"ל יין נתן בשבעים וסוד נתן בשבעים נכנס יין יצא סוד. וגם עשרת השבטים גלו ע"י יין שנאמר השותים במזרקי יין וגו' וכתיב בתריה לכן עתה יגלו בראש גולים וכן אתה מוצא ביונדב בן רכב שצוה את בניו אל תשתו יין כששמע ירמיה מתנבא על חרבן כדי שיתאבלו על ירושלים ושלא יבנו בתים אלא ישבו באהלי' והכתוב משבחן כדכתיב הוקם דברי יונדב בן רכב אמר הקדוש ברוך הוא הואיל וכך היין גורם דין הוא שאצוה כהני שלא ישתו יין בבואם לשמש לפני. ועוד כשאדם מרבה לשתות יין יוצא מדעתו וכתיב כי שפתי כהן ישמרו דעת. ועוד אז"ל שכור אל יורה שנא' יין ושכר אל תשת וסמך ליה ולהורות את בני ישראל וכן איתמר בעירובין פ' הדר. מעשה ברבן גמליאל שהיה מהלך בדרך וגו' ואמר רבי אלעאי בשלשה דברים אדם ניכר בכוסו בכיסו ובכעסו. ועוד יין נקרא בלשון ארמי חמר לומר שנכנס ברמ"ח איברים ד"א יין ושכר אל תשת לא נהיה כשאר אבליים שנותנין להם יין כדאמרינן בעירובין אמר רב חנן לא נברא

יין אלא לנחם אבל'י ולשלם שכר לרשעי' שנא' תנו שכר לאובד ויין למרי נפש:

### רבינו בחיי ויקרא פרשת שמיני (י, ט)

וידוע כי היין בטבעו מוליד שלשה דברים: שינה, וגסות הרוח, ובלבול השכל, ושלשתם נרמזו בפרשה זו. מוליד שינה, זה דבר מפורסם כי משתית היין יעלה אל הראש עשן חם ולח, מתילדת השינה ממנו, וזהו: "בבאכם אל אהל מועד", לרמז על איסור השינה באהל, זה שכתוב ביעקב: (בראשית כח, טז) "וייקץ יעקב משנתו וגו' ואנכי לא ידעתי", כלומר שאם ידעתי לא ישנתי גם לא אשכב, וזהו שכתוב: (שמואל - א ג, ג) "ונר אלהים טרם יכבה ושמואל שוכב בהיכל ה'", שעורו: טרם יכבה בהיכל ה' ושמואל שוכב במקומו, וטעם האתנחתא שבמלת "שוכב" מורה כן. גם לא הישיבה כי אם בעמידה, שנאמר: (דברים יח, ז) "ושרת בשם ה' אלהיו ככל אחיו הלויים העומדים", וכתוב: (דברים יח, ה) "לעמוד לשרת בשם ה'". מוליד גסות הרוח, לפי שהוא מחמם כחות הלב ויגיע לו מזה גסות הלב, וזהו שאמר: "ולהבדיל בין הקדש ובין החול", כי עם גובה הלב הכל שוה אצלו, לא יבדיל בין קדש לחול ובין טמא לטהור. מוליד בלבול השכל, לפי שהעשן העולה למוח הנה הוא מחיצה מבדלת בין השכל ובין שאר כחות הגוף, כענן הנטוי ברקיע שהיא מחיצה מבדלת בין אור השמש והעולם הזה, כן פעולות האדם נחשכות ואינו יכול להבחין ביניהם, וזהו שאמר: "ולהורות את בני ישראל", לפי שהוראה במצותיה של תורה צריכה שכל זך ודעת צלולה. והנה שלמה ע"ה גנה רבוי השתיה מהיין ואמר: (משלי כג, לא) "אל תרא יין כי יתאדם", פירשו רז"ל: (ויקרא רבה יב, א) "כי יתאדם" יתאוה לדם, "כי יתן בכוס עינו", מלשון: (במדבר יא, ז) "ועינו כעין הבדולח", "בכוס", "בכיס" כתיב, כי כשהוא נמשך אחר הכוס יבא לידי חסרון כיס. "יתהלך במישרים" (משלי שם), סופו למכור כל כלי ביתו ולא ישאר לו כלום עד שלא יהיה בביתו שום חפץ שיבשל בו, זהו "יתהלך במישרים" סוף שיהיה ביתו ריקן מן הכל (שם לב). "אחריתו כנחש ישך", כשם שהנחש פתה חוה בטעם יופי הפרי, שנאמר: (בראשית ג, ו) "כי טוב העץ למאכל וכי תאווה הוא לעינים ונחמד העץ להשכיל", ואחר כך הביאם למיתה כך היין מפתה למי שנמשך ביופי מראהו וטעמו ובסוף יביאהו לידי מיתה, ודרשו רז"ל: (תנחומא שמיני, ה) מה נחש נתקללה אדמה בעבורו, שנאמר: (בראשית ג, יז) "ארורה האדמה בעבורך", אף היין נתקלל שלישי העולם בעבורו, שנאמר: (בראשית ט, כד) "וייקץ נח מיינו", וכתוב: "ארור כנען".

### אלשיך על ויקרא פרשת שמיני (י, ט)

וידבר ה' אל אהרן לאמר. יין ושכר אל תשת אתה ובניך אתך בבאכם אל אהל מועד ולא תמתו חקת עולם לדרתכם. ולהבדיל בין הקדש ובין החל ובין הטמא ובין הטהור. ולהורת את בני ישראל את כל החקים אשר דבר ה' אליהם ביד משה. (ח - יא):

ראוי לשית לב. א. אל אומרו אתך, שהוא מלה זרה מיותרת, ואדרבא יראה שלא נאסרו רק בהיות בניו אתו, עם שאינו כן. ב. באומרו חוקת עולם לדורותיכם, כי אחר שהיא מצוה כוללת לכל דורותם למה פרט אותם לבדם תחילה ואחר כך כלל את כלם, ולמה לא קיצר מתחלה ואמר כל כהן לא ישתה יין ושכר בבאו כו' חקת עולם. ג.

כי אומרו ולהורות את בני ישראל, כי הלא זה כולל לכל השבטים. אם כן למה נאמר בכהנים בלבד:

(ט) אמנם הנה יש מרבתינו ז"ל אומרים (ויקרא רבה כ ט) כי נדב ואביהוא שתויי יין נכנסו ונענשו. נמצא כי מה שאין בניו אלו עם אביהם כי מתו היה מן היין. וגם שיש חולקים בדבר, אינו אלא שלא מתו בשביל זה שלא נכנסו שתויי יין, אך לא יכחישו שיש בעון זה כדי להמית אותם. ואמר יין ושכר אל תשת, ובזה תהיה אתה ויהיו בניך אתך. כלומר שאם לא כן לא יהיו אתך, כאשר השנים על ידי כן אינם אתך. ואחר שרמז לו ענין זה מהנוגע אליו, אמר כי אין האזהרה צריכה אליהם מלשאר כהנים, כי אם גם חוקת עולם היא לדורות, וזהו חוקת עולם כו':

(י) ושמה תאמר האם האזהרה למען ידקדקו בדבר בל יבלבלם היין, אם כן גם לכל איש ישראל ראוי להזהיר על דבר המשפט. ואם כן למה תזהיר את הכהנים מלשאר ישראל, האם יותר השכרות מצוי בכהנים מלכל ישראל, או שייך ידליקם מלכל המון ישראל. לזה אמר אל תתמהו על החפץ, כי הלא אתם יש לכם שלשה דברים שבשבילם אתם צריכים אזהרה על היין: א. בבאכם כו', שלא תכנסו אל מקום השראת שכינה בקלות ראש; ב. להבדיל בין הקדש ובין החול; ג. בין הטמא ובין הטהור. שמעמד שלשתן הם בייחוד אל הכהנים, כלומר על כן ייחדתי פרשת האזהרה לכם:

(יא) אך לא יבצר שגם לישראל יש אזהרה זו, כי הלא גם ולהורות את בני ישראל צריך אזהרה מן היין. אשר זה כולל לכל דיין ככהן כלוי כישראל, כי גם בכל אני בא להזהיר. אלא שמה שייחדתי לך עיקר אזהרה הוא משני טעמים. א. אשר רמזנו באומרו אתך, לרמוז לו על מה שהיה לו כי על כן מתו בניו. ב. כי בכך יש שלשה דברים, אך לשאר ישראל אחת היא. על כן אמרתי הדבר לך, לא שהם בלתי צריכים אזהרה זו כמוך:

### **רבינו בחיי פרשת נשא פרק ו פסוק ב**

איש או אשה כי יפליא לנדור נדר נזיר. נסמכה פרשה זו של נזירות לפרשת סוטה לומר: שכל הרואה סוטה בקלקולה יזיר עצמו מן היין, כך דרשו רז"ל (סוטה ב א), וכן הוא אומר: (הושע ד, יא) "זנות יין ותירוש יקח לב". וע"ד הפשט: הוזהר הנזיר מן היין כי כל הנמשך אחריו נמשך אחר התאוות והוא מביא לידי חטאים ומכשולים רבים וכו'. להזיר לה'. כי כוונתו בנזירות לה' הוא, לפי שהיין מפסיד השכל ואי אפשר שתהיה עבודת האדם שלמה.

### **רשב"א מאמר על ישמעאל**

כל זאת, יש מהם שטעמם נגלה לבעלי העינים, ונאות. ואני כבר הקדמתי לך למעלה, כי סבת רוב ספורי התורה לתועלות ידועות. ומהם, שיזכור ענין מפני שאנו צריכים לו במקום אחד, לידע ממנו ענין יחייב הרחקה מן ההרחקות, או יחייב עשית ענין מן הענינים. כספור ענין לוט עם בנותיו, להרחיק שתיית היין הרבה, מי שמכיר בטבעו שתבלבל דעתו בו עד שישתכר, כי הנה שתייתו סבבה הקלקלה הזאת ללוט, עם היות כונת הזנות לצורך גדול, לקיום העולם, לפי דעתם.<sup>236</sup> ומפני שלא ראתה התורה

למנוע שתיית היין, ולא יוכל<sup>237</sup> לתת שעור לשתייתו, עד שתתיר התורה, בדרך משל, שתיית הרביעית, ותאסור יותר משתיית הרביעית, וכיוצא בזה, ספר הכתוב התקלות הנולדות ממנו, לתועלת גדולה, שיהא זהיר ונזהר ממנו כל איש, כפי אשר יכיר כל אחד בטבעו.<sup>238</sup>

### **ספר החינוך פרשת כי תצא מצוה תקמט- כלאי הכרם**

משרשי המצוה. הקדמה. ידוע הדבר בכל מצוות התורה כי כל דבר לפי הכשולן שמצוי בו יותר ירחיקנו האל ממנו, ואין ספק כי נטיעת הכרם סבה ליין שבו כמה מכשולות לבני אדם הפיל רבים חללים בחמדם אותו כי יתאדם מעורר יצר לב האדם רע ומדיח יצר טוב וכל עצתו אכול ושתה ולשכב להיות נרדם, וכענין שכתוב [חבקוק ב', ה'] ואף כי היין בוגד, ואשר יזיר ממנו יקרא קדוש בכתוב [במדבר ו', ח'], ואולם התירו לנו השם ברוך הוא בשביל קצת תועלת שנמצא במיעוטו אל הגופים, ואחר שלא הותר רק לצורך גדול חייבנו הכתוב שאם גם בתחלת נטיעתו או זריעתו יהיה בענינו צד עון וחטא שלא לקיימו ולא נהנה בו כלל, אבל ישרף הכל ויאבד מן העולם, הלא די ברוב המכשולות היוצאין ממנו אחר גמר בישולו, לא טוב להיות עוד גם התחלתו בעבירה אבל תוקד הכל הפרי והקש והעצים וכל אשר בו.

### **בית יוסף אורח חיים סימן תרצה**

כתוב בארחות חיים (הל' פורים אות לח) חייב אינש לבסומי בפוריא לא שישתכר שהשיכרות איסור גמור ואין לך עבירה גדולה מזו שהוא גורם לגילוי עריות ושפיכות דמים וכמה עבירות זולתן אך שישתה יותר מלימודו מעט.

# Addictions: Halocho and Hashkofo

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## Interview with Binah Magazine

### Understanding Root Causes

There is scarcely a rabbi in any Jewish community who has not encountered internet addiction in his congregation, although some are more advanced than others in their experience and expertise in dealing with it. Rabbi Yehoshua Kaganoff of Passaic, New Jersey, whose *semicha* was signed by Rav Yoseph Breuer and Rav Shimon Schwab, *zt'l*, and, *lehavdil*, the Novominsker Rebbe, *shlita*, is a *posek* of over thirty years standing, and regularly deals with addicts who turn to him for help. He also received specific training in addiction from Dr. Abraham J. Twerski.

Rabbi Kaganoff shared with me an impressive body of research from the Centers for Disease Control in Atlanta, Georgia (pgs 367 and 390 of this volume), as well as large portions of his correspondence with Dr. James W. Hopper of Harvard Medical School's Department of Psychiatry (see pgs 21-22 of this volume). The research indicates a strong correlation between ten categories of child abuse and the development of addiction. All of these categories can adversely affect the developing brain in ways that result in emotional, social, and cognitive impairments, increasing the risk for a variety of problems, including substance abuse, depression, and suicide.

“Actual, measurable physiological changes occur in the brain, which is proven by MRI brain scans,” he informs me. “Practically speaking, what it means is that it's not bad *middos* or *taivos* (desires) that fuel an illicit addiction. These people are *cholim*, sick, and if left untreated, they can deteriorate into a situation of extreme *sakanah*, danger! Therefore, it behooves us to reassess our responses and attitudes in the arena of mental health and to understand what fosters good mental health and what is contraindicated. Only

by so doing, will we be able to receive truly proper Torah guidance as to the proper prevention, and to receive the appropriate care after adverse experiences have occurred.

**Why should mental health be treated any differently than our physical health?!"**

He is very distressed by, and critical of, well-meaning but ill-informed *rabbanim* who try to motivate addicts with *mussar* and talk of *teshuva*. "You wouldn't tell a person with a heart condition to 'just lower your blood pressure!' You understand that he's sick, and needs treatment and/or medication.

"The evidence is overwhelming that when it comes to addiction, **mussar and even therapies that are rational and cognitive-based do not work**. That's why the Twelve-Step tenet of relinquishing control to a Higher Power is so crucial. First, You have to stop the addictive acting out ("the using"), and allow the mind to clear, before you can begin the process of restructuring the impaired brain patterns."

*In the stark words of an addict in well-established recovery, "The standard teshuva thing did me no good at all, simply because it's not structured for crazy people."*

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## An Internet SA's Letter to Rabbi Menahel

After a recent gathering in a prominent yeshiva high school, convened to educate the community regarding the perils of the internet, a member of the parent body penned a letter to the principal, which is excerpted below:

*Dear Rabbi X,*

*I want to share something of my own story with you, in the hopes that it will, in turn, help you guide the students of the yeshiva. I have been addicted to pornography for my entire adult life. The addiction really took off in college and I thought that becoming a Ba'al Teshuva and going to yeshiva would be the solution. It wasn't. I thought getting married would be the solution. It wasn't. I thought that Kollel and additional years in yeshiva would be the solution. It wasn't. At a certain point, I gave up on looking for a solution and lived with my double life – outwardly a Ben Torah, husband, and father; inwardly, a lust addict*

*Coincidentally, I noticed a close friend who had lost some weight. When I approvingly commented, he replied that he had started going to meetings of Overeaters Anonymous. He had struggled with his weight his entire life and had done every diet, seen various nutritionists, etc. Then he found OA and started losing weight.*

*He asked me if I'd like to come along to a meeting to see what it's all about. I was happy to do so. I wanted to support him and I was curious. I was blown away – they had a speaker, a non-Jewish woman who told her story of recovery from food addiction. This woman clearly had something – some aspect of chiyus, some aspect of spirituality that I had never seen*

*before. And before my eyes, my friend's body was shrinking and his neshama was growing. He was really shteiging and I knew, inside, that I was dead.*

*There was a frum guy at the meeting, someone I felt I could trust. I told him: I might have a problem with food, but I have bigger problems than a second or third piece of cake at the Shabbos table. He put me in touch with one of the longstanding frum members of SA (the branch of "Anonymous" dealing with this addiction) and that week I went to my first meeting.*

*One of the things that struck me deeply about SA was the fact that here were these gentiles who had a very deep and real relationship with G-d. They talked about how they prayed to G-d when they were walking down the street and saw a woman who triggered their addiction. They prayed to turn their will and their life over to the care of G-d. They prayed to G-d to take away the character defects that prevented them from being good people who give to their peers instead of taking from them. And they prayed to G-d to save them from their addiction, one day at a time. One of their pithy sayings was, "Without G-d, I can't. Without me, G-d won't."*

*Frequently throughout the year, the group has a weekend convention – lots of meetings, speakers, etc. I think it is fair to say that Orthodox Jews are overrepresented at the conventions. There is kosher food, there is a minyan. The gentiles know we can't use the microphones or give donations on Shabbos. As one member joked to me: "When I first drove up to the hotel, I thought I must be in the wrong place...it looked like a rabbis' convention."*

*And occasionally the frum addicts get together for a Shabbaton. "It is a deeply moving experience." There were some very heimishe people at the meeting – and some of the men had been to gehinom and back. I heard a chasidishe lady share her guilt (perhaps her enabling the husband caused their son's problems). I heard her husband share about how he lives with and takes responsibility for the fact that there is little trust in the marriage. And yet this marriage and others like it survive and go forward.*

*I saw a room full of frum people talk from the heart about the pain this disease has caused them, and the hope they have as they see Hashem perform miracles for them every day as the husbands remain sober. When this meeting ended, everyone closed the meeting by proclaiming, "Shema Yisroel, Hashem Elokainu, Hashem Echad". Through my tears I thought, "Moshiach surely has to come at this very moment."*

**The Internet is the symptom of the disease, not the cause.**

*The cause of the disease is that many, many Jews today -- myself very much included -- don't have a real, living, day-in, day-out relationship with Hashem. We might have religion, but we don't have G-d. Into that vacuum – as the speaker this year rightly noted – steps the Internet or something else that feels like life but turns out to be death.*

*I am going to tell you something that you might resist hearing, but I think it is important to say it straight. If you have a student in the school that is addicted, I do not believe the yeshiva has the resources to help that student. Mussar, as we relate to it today, does not have the resources to help that student. I believe that student needs some form of twelve step recovery and therapy. (And the students who aren't yet*



*addicts are at risk of addiction unless their Judaism includes the beginnings of a real relationship with Hashem.)*

*I knew a lot of very deep Gra's, Maharals, Rav Tzadok's, etc on this inyan. I could have written a sefer on it. The problem is that I am an addict and addict's ears are stuffed shut with selfishness. I could not hear one of the basic messages of Yiddishkeit, namely that this is not your world to take what you can, rather it is Hashem's world to contribute what Hashem has asked you to contribute.*

*Strange as it might sound, I could only begin to hear this in meetings of SA. It is almost as if the twelve step literature translates for me, into addict language, the fundamentals of spirituality. With that foundation, I can then progress to Torah and Mitzvos. (Rabbi Twerski has written that the reason Mussar doesn't work in our times is that we rarely grasp Mussar with the life and death intensity of an addict who has hit bottom and has no choice but to find G-d or die.)*

*Until I had a certain basic purification of the middos in SA, the most elementary and simple concepts of the Torah couldn't be chal (take hold) on me. I could quote sophisticated lomdos and deep machshava; I kept Chalav Yisroel and wore a black hat. And yet: I was addicted to lust. The Torah is only chal on a mentsch. And before SA, I was very far from being a mentsch.*

*A friend of mine in the (SA) program told me that he once went to the mashgiach of Ohr Sameach in Monsey. " I have this problem (eyes to the floor)...ummm, well, you see..." Apparently the Mashgiach opened his desk drawer and pulled out the "White Book" – the fundamental text of SA and encouraged him to go to the meetings.*

*Beyond what you have done already in terms of raising awareness of the internet problem in a thoughtful way, you need to start thinking about what to do with addicted students in the yeshiva. I can promise you from personal experience that mussar from the best, most sensitive mashgichim in the world is like water off a duck's back. It is not chal.*

*My guess is that these boys need a support group for themselves – for frum teenagers. Maybe some of the frum SA's in town would be willing to help, if it could be done in such a way that wouldn't compromise their anonymity. But I'm not sure – solutions are beyond my expertise. But what I am pretty sure of, is that there are kids at Yeshiva who are addicts and need help (and there are plenty of fathers in the school who are addicts who need help as well). And I'm pretty sure that there are going to be more and more such kids (and fathers) every day. My guess is that the frum people who show up now at SA are the tip of the iceberg.*

*I would also give some thought to how computers are accessed at Yeshiva among the rebbeim. I've been at SA meetings with rebbeim from other yeshivos. I would question the safety of any situation where a man has access to a computer in an office where the door can close, regardless of filters. If it hasn't happened yet at Yeshiva, in my opinion, it is only a matter of time, if people have the opportunity.*

*I would reach out to Rabbi Avraham Twerski. He is surprisingly accessible and he is the Rav HaMachshir for 12 step recovery in the Torah world. I would also recommend to you two books: *The White Book of SA* and Patrick Carnes' *Out of the Shadows*. In the next week or so I'll get you a copy of the Patrick Carnes' book. If you want a copy of the White Book as well, let Rabbi Kaganoff know and I'll get you one. My understanding is that*



*there are other rabbonim in town, who have read the Carnes' book and I have sent it to my own rabbonim who have read it. It is the primer on sexual addiction.*

*As I said at the beginning of my letter, I'm a big admirer of you and the Yeshiva. I hope this letter is received in the spirit it was written, as encouragement for you to go another step in your leadership on the issue of the internet. May H' continue to give you and the yeshiva the siyatta d'shmayah to transmit the Torah to this troubled generation.*

*Yours,*

*A grateful, recovering sexaholic and grateful parent*

*[Editor's note: As a result of the below letter, an Asifa (gathering) for Rabbonim was convened (summer '11) in Lakewood. Rabbi Dr. Avrohom J. Twerski presented some basic information concerning addictions to this Asifa. This same summer the "Chosson Rebbes" of BMG were also addressed on this same topic by another mental health professional.]*

**S-ANON's LETTER TO RAV MATISYOHU, Shlit'a**

לכבוד הרה"ג סולומון, שליט"א

The משגיח said in the biannual כינוס לנשים (appx 7 years ago); "הכל בחזקת סומין עד שמאיר הקב"ה את עיניהם"; This concept has been a tremendous source of חיזוק that helps me deal with my נסיונות. But I would also like to apply this concept to the fact that הקב"ה is blinding many Rabbonim in the areas of mental and emotional health. I would like to be a שליח of ה' to help open the eyes of the Rabbonim ("עיני העדה"), so that no one else should suffer the way we did - seemingly unnecessarily.

This letter is not in any way referring to the way the משגיח deals with mental and emotional health, rather, it is a plea to the משגיח to speak to the Rabbonim - if not all over, then at least in Lakewood. The point of my letter is to ask the משגיח to make the Rabbonim aware that they should treat a mental or emotional illness the same way they would treat a physical illness.

Imagine a woman would come to a Rav saying that her husband has יענע מחלה at the beginning stages. Would the Rav give the wife suggestions/advice about how she can cure the illness? Or would the Rav send them straight to a doctor? If the Rav would try to help them cure the illness on their own, the disease would just spread, and the husband would deteriorate.

Well, that's what happened to me! We caught my husband's addiction in the beginning stages. To make a long story short, I was dealing with Rabbi X (Lakewood), Rabbi Y (Another major Chareidi community), and Rebbetzin Z for 7 years, and I was terribly misguided (we thought my husband could fight his הרע). His addiction kept getting worse, and I kept on telling and writing to the Rabbonim that my husband was deteriorating in front of my eyes. We did not realize that an addiction is a real disease, and the only way to help addictions is through therapy and a 12-step program (*heard from R' Abraham J. Twerski and R' Yehoshua Kaganoff*). Not only did the rabbinical advice not help, but it enabled my husband to continue in his addiction for many more years, and caused a lot of damage to our entire family. I have 4 children קע"ה who were definitely affected.

Not only was my entire family in major סכנה , לדורי דורות , ולנצח נצחים, I was also in physical danger (of catching STD - sexually transmitted diseases)! We are dealing with matters of פיקוח נפש!

The same way a Rav would not even attempt to cure a physical illness by giving the patient or the family members advice; he should realize that a mental/emotional disease is completely out of his range. The Rabbonim must learn to recognize the signs of mental/emotional illness, and learn to differentiate between people in need of rabbinical advice, and people in need of a doctor.

בי"ה my husband is in therapy and a 12-step program now, and is on the road to recovery, and my [child] and I are also going for therapy because of all the effects the addiction had on us. But besides for dealing with the pain of the situation, I am dealing with the pain of having suffered, seemingly, unnecessarily (I am working on myself to recognize that everything was באשערט and happened because that was רצון ה')

If even one person can learn from my mistakes and the Rabbonim's mistakes, it would give me some נחמה.

I know the Rabbonim are there to help us, and most of them are extremely well-meaning. May הקב"ה open our eyes, and help the Rabbonim to help us.

Sincerely,

*(I met with Rebbetzin Salomon in person and spoke to the Rebbetzin on the phone a few times)*

## S-ANON's LETTER TO HER RABBONIM

לכבוד Rabbi X, שליט"א (A prominent Rav in another major  
Chareidi community)

Rabbi Y, שליט"א (A prominent Rav in Lakewood)

*[editor's note – separate letters were sent by Mrs. Anonymous to each Rav without mentioning the other.]*

I am the one whose husband has an addiction to Arayos.

We have a lot of *הכרת הטוב* for all the Rav has done for us over the past 7 years. I want to stress, that I have absolutely no *טענות* on the Rav. I would just like to explain our situation, since I have more clarity and understanding now. The reason that I'm writing this letter, is only to benefit other people that might seek the Rav's advice and *הדרכה*.

Right now, our entire family (except our baby) is suffering from the effects of the addiction: I am emotionally unhealthy because I suppressed my own needs, desires, and feelings for many years, and my self-confidence decreased from the abuse I got from my husband. Our 9 1/2 yr old needs a major *ישועה*. S/He is going to therapy now, and it's a slow and painful process, and the outcome is not guaranteed. Our 6 year old is extremely difficult and also needs help. Our 7 1/2 yr old is very codependent. Although I always thought divorce would be the worst option, I am now realizing that if *חס ושלום* my husband does not recover, then divorce would be the best option. His addiction is destructive to our family. We are clearly seeing the destruction it brought on all of us. We hope and daven that we can repair the damage and only get stronger from this.

Several months ago, my husband and I both joined the SA & S-Anon (Sexaholics-Anonymous) support groups. We feel, after all these years, we have finally come to the right place. Yes, there are support groups for close relatives of addicts, because we have a sickness called "**Codependence**" or "**Co-**

**addiction**". The abridged definition of codependence: Attempting and thinking that we can **control** the addiction, taking **responsibility** for the addict, **neglecting** our own needs, doing more than our share, **suppressing** our emotions, being **unassertive**, and being a **martyr**. As the book says, codependence is "a normal reaction to an abnormal situation." I am a paradigm of codependence. Therefore, I need the support groups to help me recover.

Let me explain in more detail: For many years, I tried to control the addiction (based on the guidance I received) by: constantly trying to make things easier for him and reduce stressful situations for him, giving him unconditional love and warmth, building his self esteem and showing him respect, showing him that I wanted our intimate relationship, always being physically available for him, not letting him drive our car and chauffeuring him all day. But as I am learning, all the aforementioned things did not help at all, and instead they **enabled** him to continue his addiction. How? Because by my taking **responsibility** for his behavior, he did not have to suffer the consequences. And why didn't my efforts help? Because we are **powerless** over the addiction. There is no way an addict can overcome his addiction by himself – the only way an addict can become sober is by working a **Twelve Step Program** and joining support groups (*heard from Rabbi Abraham J. Twerski and Rabbi Yehoshua Kaganoff*). The **ד'סוד** is to realize we are powerless and only **ה'** can help us, and to take moral inventory and become honest with ourselves. One of our slogans for the Co-Addicts, is "**3 C's**: You didn't **Cause** it, You can't **Control** it, and You can't **Cure** it".

This has helped me to understand why the Rav's guidance didn't help the addiction. For example, I was advised that it would help if I would be physically available to my husband, and even initiate the relationship. But most of the addiction

specialists hold the opposite – that I should **abstain** until my husband is completely sober. An addict has to be dealt with in a tough way, and suffer consequences for his behavior. Most of the time, an addict needs to be threatened in order to pull his life together. In other words, Rabbi Kaganoff told me that if I accept my husband unconditionally, he will not feel the need to get his life together.

In any case, it's impossible to have a relationship with an addict, unless he is sober. Therefore, whatever I had been trying to work on to improve our relationship – being warm, respecting him, making him feel good, being physically available for him, and making **שלום בית** my main focus, etc.... was all for nothing. I was trying to accomplish the impossible. I was being told to create **יש מאין**. Why? Because an addict is not emotionally present, and is wrapped up in his own fantasy world, unless he is completely sober.

Although the Rav meant well, and sincerely wanted to help us improve our relationship, the Rav's advice really did the opposite. How?

Addiction means **self deception**. The addict fools himself to the point that he doesn't even realize he is lying. He has **distorted thinking**. My husband was completely **deluded**. He thought that I loved him, wanted him, desired him, and accepted him unconditionally. And the fact that I was guided to show him this, only helped him continue in his self deception and delusion. An addict must be treated with toughness, and must suffer the consequences of his behavior. Also, our therapist – T M – who is a marriage counselor that specializes in addiction is working with us to develop an **HONEST** relationship. The Rav was telling me to show my husband love, but that was not real. The only way we can have a good relationship, is if it's real and honest – meaning that we can both express our true feelings to each other.



Also, our whole intimate relationship has been so traumatic for me: I did things that were disgusting to me, against my will, and for the wrong reasons. I never got any pleasure from it. It became something that I dread, and have no interest or desire for it. I need major professional help in this area.

Our entire family was/is in a מצב of סכנת נפשות. But besides for the danger in רוחניות, I must make the Rav aware that I was also in **physical danger** – of הס ושלום getting an STD (Sexually Transmitted Disease). There are frum women in my support group - in Lakewood - who actually did catch these diseases. The danger is real! When we started dealing with professionals, I was told to get myself tested for any of these diseases. I should have been told this, right after we found out that he was picking up prostitutes, because I was living for 4 years in danger without being tested!

My main point is: The same way a Rav would not even attempt to try to cure a physically ill husband, and a Rav would not give a wife advice how to cure her husband, a Rav cannot cure or help a mental/emotional illness. I think that Rabbanim must learn to recognize the difference between a situation that requires rabbinical advice, and a situation requiring Professional help. Rabbi Abraham J. Twerski told me he wrote a book for Rabbanim.

Again, I would like to express my utmost הכרת הטוב for all the time, advice, and חיוק the Rav gave us over the past 7 years. We know the Rav only had our best interest in mind, and the Rav's help was pure הסד, and we really appreciate the Rav's sincere caring and desire to help us. This letter is only for the sake of others – that they should receive the correct guidance.

Sincerely,  
Anonymous

---



**RABBI YEHOShUA KAGANOFF**

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12 Adar I, 5771

Dear Rav L., Shlita

The accompanying letter to the editor of the Yated Ne'eman (pg 361), I believe is self explanatory. Nevertheless I would like to preface it with some words of introduction.

Although the letter specifically addresses the trauma damage suffered by victims of sexual molestation, it is equally applicable to all childhood traumas. I am attaching (pg 367) a research paper (Dong 2003) published by the USA 'Centers for Disease Control and Prevention' which describes the 10 Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), their interconnectedness and their universal capacity to cause severe enduring impairment.

Please note that of the more prominent ACEs are emotional abuse and neglect. I have attached (pg 385) an excerpt "Invalidating Family Experiences" which is from Marsha Linehan's groundbreaking research and book concerning 'Borderline Personality Disorder' and falls under the categories of emotional neglect/abuse.

For your convenience, I have also attached (pg 390) the research paper (Anda 2006 - Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) that describes the extensive damage done to the brain as a result of ACEs. In the winter of '10, a Harvard researcher provided me with this synopsis:

*On Wed, 6 Jan 2010 12:23:57 -0500 "Jim Hopper"*  
*<[hopper@nmr.mgh.harvard.edu](mailto:hopper@nmr.mgh.harvard.edu)> writes:*

## The Chosen People

(Originally appeared in "Child & Domestic Abuse" by Eidensohn & Shulem, '10)

We are the Chosen People! Our relationship with Hashem and the world about us is unique! The Torah tells us so again and again; and we affirm and reaffirm this daily in Birchos HaTorah and our Tefillos; And again on every special occasion of Shabbos, YomTov and Simchos etc

Our 'Chosenness' is the uniqueness of our Mission. As the Rambam (C5 Yesodei HaTorah) writes, "The entire household of Klal Yisroel is commanded to be a source of sanctification of God's great name in this world."

And we fervently pray and proclaim many times daily that we should merit this achievement – that we should stand out as living manifestation of Boruch Shem Kvod Malchuso and Y'hei Shmei Rabba M'vorach!

And when we adhere carefully to our mandate, and live in accordance with our Toras Chaim, then the Beauty of our lifestyle is manifest and is the envy of all nations. They stand back in awe and exclaim, "רק עם חכם ונבון הגוי הגדול הזה" (Devorim 4:6)

Consequently, it is very painful, yea extremely painful, to point out and highlight some flaws and failings of Hashem's special children - the Torah community.

I believe that I speak for all the contributors to this compendium, when I state that we are all wracked by pain as we discuss the topic of this Sefer. We are overwhelmed by the pain of intense shame and embarrassment as we criticize our Holy brothers and sisters. And yet, simultaneous to our feeling of this pain and angst, we are also overcome by yet other dimensions of pain. And as these different torments mix and blend within us, the latter aspects supersede and overtake the former. These added elements are twofold – they are the pain that we feel for the victimized individuals and families who are suffering because of our

collective neglect, and by the pain that we feel at the tarnishing of the Jewish people's very special IMAGE – that is consequently caused by the Chilul Hashem generated by a misrepresentation of Torah values.

It is this cacophony of conflicting pain that has prompted us to speak out, hopefully to raise the awareness of our people and initiate action to bring about a rectification of the situation.

In shocking disbelief we hear and read the reports about the depravity of pedophilia that is occurring in our midst. And every fiber of our beings mightily protests, "THIS CANNOT BE SO!

It is inconceivable that perpetrators of such heinous behavior could live amongst us; and could be even from our "elite"!

And so prevalent! Impossible!! Surely, it must only be an isolated incident!"

But sadly to our great dismay this is not the case.

And in our discomfort, we recall 2 other distressing facts that are also agonizingly current:

"The following are well documented problems facing the general, contemporary, secular society within which we reside: Dysfunctional Homes, Domestic Abuse and Violence, Addictions (alcohol, drugs, gambling, pornography, sex, food, shopping, etc.), Mental Illness (Depression, OCD, Anxiety Disorder, Bipolar, etc.)

**The research indicates that the rate of incidence of these phenomena in the Chareidi community is the same as the outside world.....** (*Letter to Editor – Jewish Observer, Iyar 5759*)

And also about our children:

".....the tragic phenomenon of our Yeshiva and Bais Yaakov "drop-outs". The ones on drugs and promiscuity. The ones "just" suffering from rejection and depression. Not to mention the poor self-image and self-worth felt by our "good" students. And this has become an epidemic in all of our Chareidi communities - even in the most prestigious families." (*ibid*)

In this author's perspective there are 3 major issues that need to begin being addressed by us, courageously, collectively as a community - laity and leadership alike, in order for us to begin the process of uncovering the root of these problems that are festering in our midst:

**Issue #1** –

The Chazon Ish (Igros I #31) and the Gro (Mishlei 6:4, 22:12) decry very forcefully a not uncommon occurrence, which predominates in our present topics. They point out very emphatically that most erroneous and misguided Piskei Halacha and Piskei Din Torah do not result from a lack of Torah Knowledge on the part of the Posek. Rather the error derives from his lack of an adequate grasp upon the situational particulars (the 'Metzius') of the presenting case; and/or he lacks the scientific background to understand the ramifications that the differences in these particulars make. Because the Dayan doesn't fully distinguish between the details of the event and/or miscomprehends the ramifications thereof, tremendous damage can result - damage that is irreparable beyond all hope, משפט מעוקל, מעוות לא יוכל לתקון וחסרון לא יוכל להמנות (Chazon Ish ibid).

Indeed it is not a secret that there has been widespread distrust by the Rabbinat of mental health theories, theses and personnel. This is in no small part due to the heretical attitudes and beliefs of the founders and developers of the mental health field. But what needs to be recognized and emphasized, is that with the advent of the use of very sophisticated diagnostic tools such as MRI, PET and CT, Mental Health research and conclusions have moved very far away from the era of mere conjecture and operates on the more firm principles of scientific rigor and discipline. There have been numerous new discoveries in the past 5-10 years and indeed this properly evaluated, scientific data has been accepted by some major Poskim and has begun to filter down to some Rabonim and laity as well.

What is being realized is that the situation has changed, and our earlier justified attitude to the earlier conjecturing of some Apikores is inappropriate and out of place, when applied to the modern mental health research. Rather it is more appropriate for us to heed the words of Chazal, “Chochma BaGoyim Ta’amin” - That the nations of the world **do** possess secular knowledge and information that is accurate and can be relied upon. It would be at our own peril, initially to both our physical and spiritual well-being, and eventually to our public image as an Am Chochom v’Novon, to tie the Torah to antiquated data and/or attitudes. (Of course, we need to verify the veracity of the new discoveries before we accept it; but to just dismiss it out of hand – just because it’s “Goyish” – is just not responsible!)

A Moshol or two, I believe will help illustrate this point:

- If someone from the Chareidi community is afflicted with heart disease, no one would dream of suggesting that treatment should be with the methodology of 10 years ago; and not even of 5 years ago. We insist (and rightfully so) on the latest, up-to-date, research-based treatments!
  
- No Sane person today would subject himself to ‘bloodletting’ as a therapy or treatment!

For the sake of clarity, I am recording here some brief highlights of the recent research and its conclusions that are pertinent to our present topics. (More detailed excerpts are to be found in the end notes pg 487)

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, identifies 10 categories of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs). All of these can adversely affect the developing brain in ways that result in emotional, social, and cognitive impairments, increasing the risk for substance abuse, depression, suicide, and a variety of other problems. The 10 categories are: *1-childhood sexual abuse, 2-Emotional abuse, 3-Physical abuse, 4-Emotional neglect, 5-*

*Physical neglect, 6-Battered mother, 7-Household substance abuse, 8-Mental illness in household, 9-Parental separation or divorce, and 10-A Criminal household member.*

These adverse effects upon the developing brain are biological! What that means is that actual, measurable, physiological changes occur in the brain – it is not just psychological or emotional. This is supported by fifty years of research on humans and **other mammals!**

In the words of a major researcher in Harvard University, (correspondence of January '10), “This impairment of multiple brain circuitries involved in fear, reward, and other fundamental aspects of organismic regulation significantly disrupts the biological foundations of:

- meeting basic physiological needs like food/nutrition
- regulating states of physiological arousal, emotions and impulses.....

In short, what has become abundantly clear is that physical and/or emotional abuse can very easily precipitate a scenario of Pikuach Nefesh. The Halachic ramifications of this determination will be explored further in the next section under issue #2.

And therefore it behooves us to reassess our responses and attitudes in the arena of mental health and what fosters good mental health and what is contraindicated. Only by so doing, will we be able to receive truly proper Torah Guidance as to the proper prevention beforehand, and to receive the appropriate care and corrective treatments after adverse experiences have occurred and/or the onset of symptoms.

Why should mental health be treated any different than our Physical health?



**Issue #2 - Misperceptions of Torah -**

Rav Shimon Schwab, Ztvk'l, ("Breuer's Kehilla"- Washington Heights, NY), one of my mentors, remarked to us on a number of occasions, "All of Rabonus is basically the same 50 Shaalos!" What he meant by that statement was that the vast majority of Halachic queries that come before a Rav can be reduced to 50 different basic questions – most of the content of the query is a minor nuance on the basic 50. It is only on rare occasion that a novel situation/Shaaloh arises which requires of the Rav/Posek to initiate new research and examination of the basic texts on a non run-of-the-mill topic.

In essence Rav Schwab was echoing the following, articulated by the Chazon Ish (Emuna u'Bitachon 4:7):

*"For even though the practical mitzvos in their superficial form, as they are seen among the masses, are easy to perform; they are very difficult for those who know the meticulousness of Torah law and who have the love of Halacha instilled in their hearts; for Halachos are like "mountains hanging from a single hair" .....*

The topic, about which the Chazon Ish is writing and of which Rav Schwab spoke, is even about the aspects of Mitzvo performance that are applicable, practically, on a regular, even daily, basis. We can certainly appreciate, How much more so, that this is the case, in areas of Halocho which occur irregularly!

Matters that are not in our common experience, we certainly will be handicapped by an unfamiliarity with the depth of the halachos. We may be even guilty, due to our lack of Iyun, of a childish grasp and primitive understanding of the basic concepts and texts.

And therefore we need to be on guard, not to become lazy in our Torah research! It is, oh, so easy, to fall back on the status quo and accepted platitudes. Inertia speaks very cogently - especially to a

very busy Rav or Posek. The temptation of “Why rock the boat” is very appealing?

Our spontaneous, less-than-fully-informed, perception, all too often, fits very comfortably with our and our Kehilla’s style of life. However, we need to beware; when we to lapse into these pre-conceived ill-considered mindsets and perceptions, we revert to the dangerous territory of *יראתם אותי מצות אנשים מלומדה*

The present topics are a perfect example. As expressed before, who would ever have imagined that the day would arrive that *Mishkav Zochur* would be a Halachic topic *l’Maaseh*? Or that we would need to consider, in real terms, the extent of damage caused by the various forms of molestation and abuse! We have profound difficulty analyzing these topics adequately because we had always considered them to be so alien and foreign! Our mind is even repulsed by their very mention! These are certainly not from the 50 *Shalos* referenced by Rav Schwab!

And as every *Yodea Sefer* knows, the Cognitive toil and investment needed to say a “good” *Drosho* or to explicate a difficult *Rambam* or *Tosefos* pales greatly in comparison to the meticulous focusing that is required when intent on arriving at the *Halocho l’Maaseh*. (*Asukei Shmaatseh Aliba d’Hilchoso*.) Those who are experienced know that the difference is not just quantitative, but profoundly qualitative; it is a difference of kind, not just of number!

Consequently our rabbinic leadership cannot self-assuredly rely on their *Yeshiva* training, or even on their *Smicha* training and *Shimush* to be confident that they have the full repertoire of the *Halacha* at their disposal when they come to render a Halachic opinion or *Psak* on these arcane topics. It requires much *Iyun* and reflection; and a revisiting to all the source material – Halachic, scientific, and a clear grasp of the situational dynamic.

Some examples, if you will, concerning our present topics:



I believe that it is obvious to most everyone in our circles and communities, that if someone is experiencing chest pains or symptoms of Swine flu or suspected of having been bitten by a rattlesnake, that all other halachos are suspended and overridden in order to save the person's life. (With the notable exceptions of Idolatry, adultery/incest and murder, of course.) This is a firmly established, well publicized halacha!

What is not as obvious and well-known is that Halocho and Current medical science (as discussed in issue #1) informs us that someone exposed to an event or substance that can be traumatizing, or if symptoms of traumatization develop, that this too needs to be treated the same as the chest pains etc described above. That until a proper assessment (workup) has been done, we are completely "in the dark" as to the extent of the affliction. And since a Sakonas Nefesh entity has possibly been introduced into the victim's system, Halocho requires us to conduct ourselves as if their life is endangered (Sofek Sakonas Nefoshos).

Besides the impact this has on Hilchos Shabbos, namely, that one would be permitted, nay, obligated, to violate the Shabbos to prevent or interrupt the abuse from occurring, this also changes substantially the operational applications of Loshon Horo and Moser.

Loshon Horo is not one of the three cardinal Aveiros and therefore is also suspended in cases of Pikuach Nefesh (e.g. if someone were indiscriminately igniting fires in a manner that jeopardizes people's lives - he has the Halachic designation of a "Rodef" and it is a Mitzvo to report him and the laws of Loshon Horo are suspended) the same would be true in cases of abuse.

And just as the prohibition of "Moser" (reporting a fellow Jew to the secular authorities) is overridden when we are dealing with a Rodef. As a result of the findings of the recent research, we now

know that an abuser is not just someone who disturbed moral sensibility, but is now Halachically regarded as a Rodef. And consequently it is a Mitzvo to report him to the police or other governmental authority! (See Teshuvos pgs 281-360 of this compendium for further detail and clarification)

Another example:

The Torah in the Parshiyos of 'Ones' and 'Mefateh' (rape and seduction) seems to treat these attacks as only tort damages!! So we have difficulty accepting the scientific notion that the sustained injury is of such substantially greater magnitude and therefore we reject the scientific research out of hand.

Perhaps we should consider that this may be another case of Nishtane HaTeva which Tosfos and M'Forshim posit in many other instances. The Chazon Ish (Noshim 27:3) lists many examples of physiological changes between what existed in the times of Chazal/Tanach and our times. A most notable parallel is the one cited above of Hakoza Hadam. "Earlier generations had excess blood that required "Letting" for good health; today it is a Sakono to undergo this procedure." (Chazon Ish ibid)

Moreover, were we to examine with a little more breadth and depth the punishment of the Me'Anes as the Torah prescribes it, we may find that the punishment fits the crime in such a way, that the situation is transformed, by prescribing a Refuah that heals the Sakonas Nefoshos, into Efshar l'Hatzilo b'Ofan Acher which negates the Sakonas Nefoshos /Rodef aspect. To wit:

Rav SR Hirsch deduces the following insight on the K'nas of the Me'Anes: By comparing the monetary systems and the cost of living as described by the Mishna, he demonstrates that the 50 Shekel of the K'nas of the M'Anes and M'fateh will provide at least 8 years income.

That is - if it is not invested as principle. Would it be invested as principle then it would provide income for an entire lifetime!

We can infer from this insight that the Torah is anticipating that the result of this attack will cause full lifelong impairment of the possibility of holding adequate gainful employment; or of marrying and being provided for by a husband. At the very least the Torah anticipates 8 years of such impairment.

And, the Me'Anes is Shoseh b'Atzitzo – he must marry (with her and her family's consent) and remain married to his victim and treat her with all the dignity and respect of the Torah and Kesuba requirements, and nurture her back to health (mental and physical) or live with the defect or any of its residual effects. In effect he must very personally oversee her healing from this devastating attack. Justice is served and support and healing are provided in one fell swoop - what better way to counteract and arrest the advance of this insidious disease that he perpetrated.

A second area of Misperceptions of Torah that needs to be revisited is in the area of Hashkafa.

Two points come to mind:

The first is that we need to correct a common misunderstanding:  
It is axiomatic that Hashkafa derives from Halacha; not the other way around.

Examples abound:

Ones and Mefateh above is just such an example. It is not “just” damages”! It is a totally incapacitating attack! Unless the justice system of the Torah is brought to bear as a consequence, it could quite possibly even be mortal. Very clearly, only once we have the full panorama of the details of the practical Halocho, then and only then, can we begin to attempt to derive the Musar Haskel that the Torah is teaching us.

Another example is that of the Ben Sorer uMoreh. Most Droschos on this topic focus on the perspective that this scenario could never happen. Because of the Halachic details, it is well-nigh impossible

to occur. However all such “lessons” learned utilizing this perspective must be held suspect because the Halocho as Paskened by the Rambam and clearly corroborated by the Sugyas HaGemoro is in contradiction to this opinion. To the contrary, the scenario of Ben Sorer uMoreh is not predicated on impossible details, but can (and did) occur.

It is illogical and dishonest to maintain that the philosophy and Hashkofo that Hashem wants us to learn from a given Mitzvo, runs contrary to the practical halachic performance.

And secondly, a most basic Hashkafic principle needs to be reasserted:

**Namely, That a given Hashkofo finds its proper application only in its appropriate situation:**

Rav Yitzchok Hutner, Zt'l , (Igros u'Kesavim # 43 commenting on Chazon Ish Orach Chaim 56) explains:

“After some serious contemplation, it becomes apparent that the world of Divine Service is divided into numerous arenas - each arena having its unique rules of operation. Moreover, the differences are so pronounced, that the rules that are appropriate for one are not applicable and even entirely inappropriate for the other.

“This premise explains and resolves the statement of the Chazon Ish, “There is substantively no difference at all, between the behavior of a retarded person and that of an unscrupulous person – not even a hairsbreadth [of difference].”

“It is clear that this statement is intended only for the arena of the Chochom’s battle for self-control over his emotion to take revenge or to act vindictively. (Chochom is defined as a person who is intellectually alert & actively involved in self-improvement & character modification as per Rambam Hilchos Deos.)

“In this arena the statement is 100% accurate because in order to exercise control over one’s lower impulses, one must be completely accepting of Divine Providence. In this context, we must completely deny the principle of the free choice of man. “Just

as the brain-damaged person behaves without personal control but acts by the laws of instinctive nature = Divine decree; so too, in this arena, the Chochom is to perceive the actions of the unscrupulous.”

“However, when we transfer to the arena of justice between man and his fellow, then the whole operating principle is that of personal responsibility which is predicated upon the free choice of man. The Tzadik, who has just been victimized by a grand larceny and who accepts Divine Providence with a full heart, knows that it is for his benefit. Nevertheless, he will not thereby exempt the larcenist from the appropriate restitution!”

“And this IS the proper, Torah, perspective.

“The fact that we see in our time, an erosion of acceptable social behavior, with concomitant lack of responsibility and accountability, is due to a confusion of the above distinction. General society has interposed the denial of free choice into the arena of justice. This is a reprehensible blunder that undermines the very fabric of society.

“Great Tzadikim (Rav Yisroel Salanter and others) have already instructed us upon this principle in a similar vein. Whereas, concerning our own personal needs, to minimize our efforts and to rely upon Heaven is the appropriate modus operandi; however in regards to the needs of our fellow, the opposite is true. In the latter, we are to have the perspective that only human efforts are what count.

“This is a paradigm of the principle with which we started. Divine service consists of many arenas. What is appropriate behavior in one arena may be totally prohibited in another.”

Unfortunately, for some inexplicable reason, many of our Torah community have stumbled into the same error as that of the secular world decried by Rav Hutner. Specifically, if we inadvertently or unthinkingly ‘blame the victim’ and/or misplace the responsibility for rectifying the aftermath upon the victim, we are, in effect, falling into the trap described by Rav Hutner. We are then reacting



and practicing in a non-Jewish and non-Torah manner! (That type of behavior is precisely the idolatry of Calvinism.)

And if this is committed by a Rov, it becomes antithetical to the essence of his "job description" as delineated by Reb Chaim Brisker. In his famous statement, Reb Chaim formulated that the primary function of a Rov is להחיות רוח שפלים ולהחיות לב נדכאים.

So we end up with a shocking anomaly. Whereas the Rov should be the foremost venue for Klal Yisroel to fulfill the adage of Chazal, "Daaga b'Lev Ish Yasicheno l'Acher, Regrettably, because of inaccurate perceptions (of both issues #1 and #2), in place of performing the great Mitzvo of "mefayso", of comforting, mollifying and appeasing the distressed person, all too frequently we unwittingly commit Onoas Dvorim instead!

A common example is concerning 'Anger at Hashem' (pg 101). The majority opinion of Rishonim (the Halocho) states that the expression of that which otherwise would be considered as blasphemous, if it is expressed out of the pain of suffering, it is completely disregarded by Hashem. It just didn't happen. No atonement or apologies, even after the angst has passed, is necessary at all! This is the basis of the famous aphorism of the Berditchever Rebbi: "You can be for God, or you can be against God; you just can't be without God!"

When we are dealing with a person who is in the throes of pain and suffering, even the minority dissenting opinion agrees that at that point in time, s/he is blameless and that is what Halachically (and therapeutically) should be conveyed to her/him. Anything said or done that would somehow make him/her feel guilty of her emotions would fall under the Halacha of Onoas Dvorim (The Torah prohibition of verbally taunting or antagonizing another, as per the last Mishna in the 4th Perek of Bovo Metziah.)"

This paradigm is certainly equally applicable to the distraught person spewing venomous Loshon Horo about a real or perceived

tormentor to his/her Rov or Rebbi. This person needs validation and calming; NOT Musar about the enormity of the Issur of Loshon Haro!

And similarly, in a Sholom Bayis situation, where a wife is filing a grievance about a reprehensible behavior on the part of her husband, she needs to be heard out and empathized with; not summarily and curtly asked, “What did you do to provoke him?”

Yet another notion that is prevalent that this author finds extremely perplexing is the position and idea that the fiscal solvency and viability of the ‘community’ and the community’s institutions are more important than the protection of the individual from abuse. I find this statement untenable.

It is rather clear and unequivocal that remaining unresponsive and thereby, jeopardizing an individual’s safety would involve the transgression of at least 2 Lo Taasehs. And when faced with the transgression of a Lo Taasah, the Shulchon Aruch states quite clearly, in more than one place, that one is obligated to surrender ALL his money and possessions rather than transgress a Lo Taaseh. Nowhere is a distinction made that a community or its institutions is exempt from this ruling. Quite to the contrary, the converse appears correct (as demonstrated in the Teshuvos section). Indeed, I would be very indebted if I could be shown the primary Halachic sources that support the above perplexing notion.

In summary: the essence of this section is reflected best by the words of Rav SR Hirsch. In his 19 letters (letter #18) he writes, “If something is ailing in Klal Yisroel, then make no mistake about it! Do not deceive yourselves! It is nothing else other, than an ailing relationship of Klal Yisroel to Torah and its proper understanding, that is being manifest!

### **Issue #3**

This brings me to the 3rd overarching issue, which in my opinion is, in more way than one, at the root and perpetuation of the topic

of this compendium and numerous other related ills in our Chareidi society! The Fuel that drives the engine, so to speak, of so many of our problems today, and is very glaringly culpable in our present topic, is superficiality.

Superficiality has become a ubiquitous presence of our mindset and activities. We as a community, by and large, have become possessed by a Façade-mentality. Externals have become our guiding lights. It is as if we are in a world of make-believe, where reality doesn't count, but where as long as we fit into a contrived superficial mold of our own making, we believe that everything is and will be OK!

And The Superficiality which plagues us is deeper than just in Mitzvo performance מצות אנשים מלומדה ! But it extends itself to the underpinnings of how we perceive ourselves and how we react internally, emotionally to stimuli (secular and religious) from the environment around us.

The "mold" has become so dominant a value in our communities that any deviation from the contrived mold is deemed totally unacceptable. Regardless of the person's torah scholarship or punctilious mitzvah observance, a person deviating, even slightly from the accepted mores, is deemed outside the pale and castigated as a non-entity. A Cherem Chomur couldn't be more punitive.

This behavior pattern is not consistent at all with the wise, all-inclusive directive of Shlomo Hamelech, "Chanoch Lenaar Al Pi Darko, Gam Ki Yazkin Lo Yosur Mimenu!" That the basis of Chinuch and Torah-living is the nurturing and nourishing of the uniqueness of individuality of the neshomo/personality that resides within each and every one of us! (Please see the commentary of the Vilna Goan on this Posuk. The Chazon Ish Emunah uBitachon C.4 #12 and Rav S.R. Hirsch in the beginning of Parshas Toldos.)



Instead, superficial external props have become our yardsticks and we spend too much energy and time on trivial matters – matters not of meaningful substance from a true Torah perspective.

And because we do not nourish a sense of unique individuality, we therefore are not able to develop a sense of connectedness - Not to Hashem; Not to His Torah; Not to His children - the Jewish community.

In my conversations with the children “drop outs”, I have found that generally they are more sensitive and honest to the hollowness of the façade-mentality performance that they are being presented with and it gnaws away at their souls. We, the adults, suppress and contain these disquieting feelings to a sufficient level that allows us at least, to “keep the show going”; Or we otherwise distract ourselves or rationalize them away. But these, of the younger generation, reject it as being dishonest and no longer want to engage in the charade. Indeed, cavalier, shallow attitudes and behaviors, besides being inconsistent with the pride we have in ourselves of being a sophisticated people, is also terribly dishonest with ourselves in regards to our performance.

And truth be told, it is this superficiality that energizes the resistance for implementing the necessary changes to address the above issues #1 & #2 of this essay.

Another folly that our façade-mentality and performance brings about is the deluded thinking that we can successfully execute a ‘perfect cover-up’. In our conditioned pattern of thought, we believe that, of course if we hide and/or ignore the evidence, then everything will be just fine. We become very frustrated and humiliated when we find out that just because we want to “Keep It Quiet”, there are others who do not want to cooperate. This is especially true in our day and age of “instant” communication and “omnipresent” technology. The parable of the Emperor’s Clothes is well known. If what we preach is not what we do, then we leave

ourselves wide open to be the subject of parody, ridicule and Chilul Hashem.

Hence, when we attempt to impart our beliefs and Hashkofos to others, if we are merely chirping lip service, then we will not be able to accomplish the desired effect. No matter how vociferous we are, it is irrelevant. The hollowness within us is transmitted more effectively.

This begins to open the door and throw some light of understanding on the paradox, “how can such depravity as pedophilia co-exist within a Chosen people? And even in those who have all the trappings of the elite of our nation?”

Indeed, it is the ‘Conspiracy of Superficiality and Complacency’ that perpetuates and compounds the cycle of abuse and geometrically increases the profundity of the consequent physical and spiritual damage to each individual victim; and to us, as a community and people - the Chosen People, the Holy Nation.

We had cited and described at the outset of this essay a plethora of social/societal ills that are festering unaddressed in our communities. Based on my experiences of more than the 2 decades that I have had the charge and privilege of dealing with these problems (‘in the trenches’, so to speak) on a very practical, daily basis, I would like to conclude with the following, which, at one and the same time, is very subtle and sophisticated and yet simple and uncomplicated.

Above we had already expressed the criticism that the superficiality has extended to even how we perceive ourselves internally. In actuality however, it is profoundly deeper!

My study of these issues has made it clear to me, that we, as a people, have become overcome, almost as if possessed, by a compulsion to maintain a facade of infallibility and perfectionism.

At all costs, as if our very life depended upon it, we need to protect our public visage, and put a 'positive spin' on any and all of our actions. Being somewhat less than perfect or slightly blemished is just simply intolerable. Never mind what we feel like inside, it's the countenance that counts! So indeed the cause/result relationship is the other way around! It isn't our superficiality of deed that is influencing and affecting our attitude; but rather it is our compulsive attitude that is informing and affecting everything else that we do.

And this would indeed be very bad news!

Rav Yisroel Salanter posited a century and a half ago that our behaviors and actions, in spite of us being Baalei Bechira, are more governed and influenced by subconscious motivators; more so than by conscious decisions. And his demonstrations of this phenomenon are more than adequate to establish that this is the reality of our human existence. This would be very distressing. So how can we ever have realistic expectations at modifying ourselves and our actions? No matter how much effort we invest consciously at rectifying our attitudes, how in the world are we going to be able to alter the buried subconscious?

Nonetheless, the words of the Chazon Ish and my experience in working with many so-afflicted people teaches me that at the same time this really is a source of good news and hope.

However, before, I present the words of the Chazon Ish, I would like to delve and explore the nature of the problem just a little bit more.

Those who have studied the source material and the subject matter of issue #1 of this essay, realize that these behaviors are none other but manifestations of the classic symptoms of a traumatized person (and people). (I.e. simple, repetitive, rigidly-structured, status quo activities with little or no depth and certainly no motivation to grow or change.)

The rest of us, who have not as yet been enlightened, are inhibited by a lack of information or an unwillingness to accept, that we, communally and individually carry the legacy of Hitler, Stalin, Nasser, Arafat et al, ymsv'z.

In reality, however, this should not be of any surprise to us – neither that we have been so affected, nor that many of us choose to deny the effects. Does not the Torah foretell: והייתם משוגע ממראה עיניך ? That we will suffer a derangement of proper thinking as a result of the Tzoros of the Tochocho!

To which Yeshaya clarifies and expounds: שכורת ולא מיין ; Our behavior patterns will parallel those of a drunkard in the inability to make wise appropriate choices and of following through on commitments.

The definition of deranged thinking (referred to by the Torah and Yeshaya) is not limited to just an extreme case of a raving, flailing madman. Putting “one’s head in the sand” and pretending that a mortal danger does not exist, or to continue self-destructive behaviors in spite of contrary evidence, more than adequately classifies as “deranged thinking”!

To return to my basis for optimism and hope; The Chazon Ish (Kovetz Igros; Torah; #2) gives a profound and startling directive to a struggling Talmid, “The main thing to keep in mind at all times is that everything is in the hands of Heaven; EVEN growth and upward movement in understanding Torah and acquisition of Yiras Shomayim IS ALSO in the hands of Heaven..... If so what is there for us mortals to do? DAVEN! Our success in ALL (literally all) of our endeavors is solely dependent on our Davening..... Moreover Hashem desires and is just waiting to hear our voices.....

So here is the very simple solution to the most complex and difficult challenges that confront us.

Our first and foremost challenge that requires our courageous attention and maximum effort is to jettison our aura of infallibility and face the reality that confronts us. We must modify our perceptions of our self and our deeds and come to accept our imperfections at a soul-depth level and not let the complacent Gemuetlichkeit defeat us.

Rav Yisroel Salanter has taught us though, that left to our own devices, this is a formidable, probably insurmountable task. But the Chazon Ish shows us the way. If we would but just honestly beseech Hashem to help us jettison the false aura that has become so entrenched in our psyche, and honestly commit to the “legwork” that needs to be done, Hashem will open the doors.....

As Rabenu Nisim expressed in his famous Viduy of Yom Kippur Koton:

“The protocol of Your heavenly court is unlike the protocols that govern human courts.

In human courts, he who denies the charges is acquitted and he who admits guilt is culpable.

However, in Your heavenly court, the opposite is true!

He who denies, woe to him! and woe to his soul!

But he who is contrite and penitent, You deal mercifully with him!”

Reb Tzadok HaCohen (Tzidkas HaTzadik #44) writes that, “he, who has been deceived and misled by the wiles of his base nature to a very extreme degree, should not despairingly resign himself that he is sullied and damaged beyond repair. To the contrary, the extreme degree of his iniquity is none other than an indicator as to the great magnitude of his capacity to be a receptacle for intense love and passion for the pursuit of absolute truth.” (He merely needs to change his focus - which Reb Tzadok proclaims, in Resisei Laylo, echoing the words of the Chazon Ish, is achieved through Tefila.)

Indeed Reb Tzadok is only paraphrasing the words of Shlomo HaMelech:

(קהלת זי"ד) that the realm of Avodas HaShem is to be likened to a pendulum. To the degree that it swings in one direction, to that exact same degree is the potential for the precisely opposite movement.

In Summation: the challenges that are confronting us, require of us to heed the words of Gedolei Avoda quoted by Rav Hutner (Pachad Yitzchok, Rosh Hashana #29 end):

"Teshuva Is Nisht Der Taitsh Besser Verren; Teshuva Is Der Taitsh Andersh Verren."

(Teshuva is NOT being better and doing better.....)

The essence of Teshuva is (transforming oneself and) becoming a different person)

It is this critical element that we need to Daven for!

May we be Zocheh to hear the cry and implement the change!

Pinchos Yehoshua HaCohain

27 Shvat, 5770

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I would ask the reader to consider the following excerpts in regards these topics:

*(Nefesh international ListServe posting Wed, 14 Dec 2005 15:49:47 -0800 (PST))*

I am surprised at some of the reactions that have been expressed. That [sexual] abuse occurs to the extent cited, that it occurs in schools, that it occurs by people in trusted positions [is an ugly open secret].

While the statistics state that one in four girls and one in six or seven boys are molested, I believe the rate for boys is underestimated. The shame for boys who are not supposed to be victims is greater, the recognition that this was abuse is sometimes more subtle and difficult to identify. (etc)

Today studies have shown that the impact, especially of long term abuse are reflected and reshape parts of the brain (etc) Studies on inpatient hospital patients diagnosed with BPD (Borderline Personality Disorder) have indicated that a vast majority have had a history of abuse.

I have found that when I work with the symptoms of abuse, those clients who have been exposed to severe neglect or emotional deprivation manifest the same