

Why doesn't Torah/Mussar Work? My Correspondence on Lakewood Scoop

Posted by KiviYVY - 01 Apr 2011 15:25

[I thought y'all might be interested in some correspondence of mine on [\[url=http://www.thelakewoodscoop.com/news/2011/03/gye-admin-we-never-had-such-volume-of-requests-for-help.html#comments\]](http://www.thelakewoodscoop.com/news/2011/03/gye-admin-we-never-had-such-volume-of-requests-for-help.html#comments) Lakewood Scoop's recent coverage of GYE [\[url\]](#)]

Someone named "working ben torah" on LS asked

how did the elite among us, the bnei Torah and bnei aliya get such a thirst for such shmutz in the first place? Why wasn't their learning having a positive effect on them that this would be the last thing on their mind? I really need someone to answer this question for us please. This word 'addiction' seems to be an excuse for so many. It's a sincere question that I am asking.

I answered the following:

I hear your question and you can be sure it has bothered many. If you read some of the posts on the GYE forum (which I DON'T suggest since you B"H do not have this struggle) you will find that many of the people suffering from this tried to be Mechazek in learning, tried to be Mechazek in Mussar – they tried everything, absolutely everything. Rabbi Dr. Avraham Twerski has written many times that once an addiction forms the regular Darchai HaTeshuva do not work. My experience is that this is true even if the addiction is relatively mild. It seems to me that your Kashya is not on the GYE program, but on the Sugya of "Hamaor Shel Torah Machziro L'Mutav." Like you said, there are serious Talmidai Chachomim, even accomplished Rabbonim and Poskim, who are actively suffering from this problem. There must be a different Pshat in the Torah Machziro remedy because the facts on the ground prove that learning B'Hasmada does not do the trick.

Perhaps we need to explore the meaning of "Torah" in its broader sense – Chochmah, or Horoah (Guidance). Opening a Gemara or a Shaarai Teshuva will work for some, but others need to explore more penetrating forms of "Torah", like discovering the Chochmah in the 12 steps of recovery that has worked wonders for many suffering from addiction. Chochma B'Umos Taamin, Torah B'Umos Al Taamin? Good Kashya, Tzarich Iyun. Maybe when a Yid learns the 12 step Chochmah is becomes Torah? Ich Veis Nisht.

GYE is run Al Taharas HaKodesh. R' Guard/Yaakov is like the Mike Tress of our generation – tirelessly involved in Hatzalas Nefashos every day. Yasher Koach to GYE and to all who support them. Any Rav can tell you that supporting this cause is saving marriages, children, communities, and sometimes, nebich, even lives. May they have much Hatzlacha!

Another named "poster #1" wrote

Mesilas Yishorim, Chovos Halivovos, Derech Hashem, etc. are vital works that need to be interanlized to help us battle this terrible machala.

I responded

You're absolutely right that Sifrei Mussar contain tremendous Chochmah, and it's very likely that the answers to all problems of addiction and the early forms of it can be gleaned from them. At the same time, many people need help NOW, their families are falling apart NOW, they're losing their jobs NOW, some are contemplating suicide (R"L!!) NOW. For such people, and there are so many, they need the short version – a support group of people going through the same struggle, proven simple methods to get them back on track, perhaps the surprising Hakaras HaBorai and Tikkun HaMidos program that is at the core of the 12-Step program of AA. When they're back on track they can focus more on the Sifrei Mussar and develop the skills to mine those texts for their goldmines, but meanwhile so many people are on life support and need help NOW.

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Re: Why doesn't Torah/Mussar Work? My Correspondence on Lakewood Scoop
Posted by Kedusha - 01 Apr 2011 15:37

Yashar Koach - excellent responses!

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Re: Why doesn't Torah/Mussar Work? My Correspondence on Lakewood Scoop
Posted by chaimhelp - 03 Apr 2011 04:18

Who cares why. I dont understand lots of things. The main thing is to honestly believe that you

are in trouble.

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Re: Why doesn't Torah/Mussar Work? My Correspondence on Lakewood Scoop
Posted by DovInIsrael - 05 Apr 2011 12:14

good responses.

very easy why Torah does not help... its hard, challenging, we don't get it, we don't feel good about ourself, we don't feel worthy of it... lots of reason.

shmutz is easy... makes us feel good.. makes us feel in control...no one to listen too...no being controlled

brain candy.

go ask a child why they prefer candy to healthy food.

dov.ii

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Re: Why doesn't Torah/Mussar Work? My Correspondence on Lakewood Scoop
Posted by pinokio - 05 Apr 2011 14:53

i am writing s/thing abt. this , new insights

mekoros in Gra, Tanya, Zohar, and other things on why it doesnt help these people-in my opinion, they directly discuss this issue

cant wait to share

keep it up

tz90

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Re: Why doesn't Torah/Mussar Work? My Correspondence on Lakewood Scoop
Posted by shemirateinayim - 05 Apr 2011 15:05

[DovInIsrael wrote on 05 Apr 2011 12:14:](#)

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shmutz. The reffrence was to God's remark at the churban bayis, ????? ???? ???? ?????? ???? ,
????? ??? ?????? ??????. True and propper ameilus batorah changes a person, and purifeis his
BODY and souls, better than water can bore a hole through stoen, since torah is like fire, and
our physical body is mere flesh.

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Re: Why doesn't Torah/Mussar Work? My Correspondence on Lakewood Scoop
Posted by KiviYVY - 05 Apr 2011 17:51

[Old friend wrote on 05 Apr 2011 15:05:](#)

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our physical body is mere flesh.

So to this I think there's 2 approaches:

- 1) either the addict cannot *bring himself* to do the "true, proper ameilus batorah", or
- 2) that statement was made only for those who are not addicts. For addicts the regular Darchei
HaTeshuva are inadequate - they need to remake the Mentch through something like the 12
step program.

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Re: Why doesn't Torah/Mussar Work? My Correspondence on Lakewood Scoop
Posted by MAALIN BAKODESH - 05 Apr 2011 23:49

I would venture to say that the gemara that says "puga bu menuval mushcheihu lbais medrash
means that if u feel the taavah rising inside u the bais medras will help but once its naase loi
kheter its too late for that to work. You need the 12 steps.also there are yechidim today that

have ameilus batorah to such a degree that their yetzer is negated.

Maalin bakodesh

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