

Torah, Tavlin or...

Posted by Lev tahor - 11 Nov 2008 19:58

I've been wondering this for a while - and have had different experiences myself. Torah of course is the ultimate 'Tavlin' for the Yetzer Hora. However sometimes I've found that learning certain Seder Noshim Sugyos (which of course can also crop up in other Mesechtos) which contain relatively explicit references can be triggering and set my mind wandering where it shouldn't. (Of course this happens most frequently at times that I'm on a downward trend.) Of course this is really disturbing as I feel totally hypocritical, twisting the 'Tavlin' into another trigger for my Yetzer. In that kind of situation I feel like it would be best to stick to more 'neutral' kinds of Sugyos.

On the other hand I've occasionally felt that learning these Sugyos could be a positive channeling and redirecting of my tendencies, in the direction of Tahara. (I have a vague feeling that I once came across a M'kor for such an idea - perhaps it was the Gemora about one born in "Ma'adim" who could have murderous tendencies, should become a Mohel.) If this is the case then it might be good to Davka learn these Sugyos (and obviously work very hard at fighting any destructive thoughts/images that pop into the mind).

I'd be very interested to know other people's experiences in this regard, as well as any other input or M'koros regarding this particular question.

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Re: Torah, Tavlin or...

Posted by the.guard - 11 Nov 2008 21:21

I know that in Chassidish Yeshivos they are very careful not to learn such sugyos with Bachurim. But this is a good question.

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Re: Torah, Tavlin or...

Posted by Mevakesh Hashem - 12 Nov 2008 04:27

The way I see it, if you keep these sugyos hidden from boys, it will only make them seem "bad" Chas V'Shalom.

Torah is Torah and nothing bad can happen from learning it! (So says the holy Steipler zatzal)

Chazak V'Ematz!

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Re: Torah, Tavlin or...

Posted by the.guard - 12 Nov 2008 09:18

On the one hand, Chaza"l were so makpid about triggers that they said a man should not even look at the "clothes" of a woman, even when they are not being worn. On the other hand, there are so many explicit Gemaros that talk about these things openly. Obviously Chaza"l understood that the power of the Torah would protect the person learning from hirurim.

Aderaba, Chaza"l were open with these things to show that a person needn't be celibate in order to be holy - like the Christians believe, but rather one needs to learn about these things in a **holy way** and learn how to approach these matters from a **Torahdik standpoint**.

I think I heard something to this effect once from a Shiur by R'Meyer Twerski over here:

www.torahweb.org/audioFrameset.html#audio=rtwe_091006

(I am not sure, but it's worth listening to anyway :-)

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Re: Torah, Tavlin or...

Posted by me - 12 Nov 2008 15:04

I saw in the sefer Tahoras Hakodesh, that "some people are so sensitive that they can't learn any Torah from seder Nashim." In line with this, he mentioned in another place, that if one knows that he will have a nefilah by going to a Chasanah, (were the women completely out do themselves in dress), then one should NOT go! Don't listen to the Y"H that you are fulfilling the

mitzvah of m'sameach Choson V'kallah.

Once again, each one of us must come to know ourselves and take the necessary precautions.

In a previous post, I had mentioned that I had heard that no harm will come from our children learning these topics in the Torah. Torah cannot harm. On the other hand, if not from the Torah, they will eventually learn about it from their friends and out in the street which will harm them.

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Re: Torah, Tavlin or...

Posted by kookooreekoo - 12 Nov 2008 15:54

When a person is united with Hashem then he will be guarded from the effect of any machshovos zoros. In fact the Meor Enayim writes what he has heard from his great Rabbis (The Ball Shem and The Groiser Magid) that when a person has machshovos zoros it is only because these machshovos are begging him for a tikun. As he explains that everything in this world consists of osiyus, and the machshovos as well consist of osiyus. When a person ignores them and continues to daven, learn, and serve Hashem, these Machshovos have a tikun.

If learning Torah drives you nuts, then learn something else and ask Hashem to unite you with him, ask him to show you the love and beauty in his way of life as you love that porn star. As the Meor Enayim writes elsewhere, that when a person gets hit with lust or desire for sex (including masturbation which is sex withself) it is an opportunity to get close to Hashem. Because, ahavas noshim & ahavas mishgal (love of women and/or sex) is only a moshel of the true love which is the love to Hashem.

Anyone learning the daf, who gets machshovos zoros and it bothers him, has not worked the first three steps yet.

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Re: Torah, Tavlin or...

Posted by Lev tahor - 13 Nov 2008 04:58

Today's Chizzuk made a reference to this problem and made a very good point about the importance of one's personal connection to the Torah one learns.

Learning Torah is supposed to banish the yetzer horah. When I first began struggling with pornography, I'd try to learn and hoped that it would work the way it's supposed to. Imagine my surprise when sitting in front of a Gemara became the best place to fantasize! Not only could I indulge, but I could look good doing it! I realized later that the problem wasn't with learning, it was with my connection to it. The learning didn't mean very much to me then because it wasn't consistent with my state of mind.

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