

pinky fingers and murder

Posted by Eye.nonymous - 06 Aug 2009 05:00

Why is it that Chazal discuss looking at a woman's pinky finger for pleasure in harsher terms than they discuss murder?

I don't think there's such a statement "whoever murders will not merit to see the schinah" or, "whoever murders will not escape the fires of gehennom."

Yet, we do find such statements about seeing forbidden things--even so much as a pinky finger.

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Re: pinky fingers and murder

Posted by kutan - 06 Aug 2009 12:10

My guess is, to make an impression on us.

Don't need to extol the vices of murder etc. Surely one could fill up a book of the evils it does in this world and the next.

But why?

Looking at a pinky etc on the other hand... has been known to be a problem for a large group of

So need to drive the message home...

kutan

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Re: pinky fingers and murder
Posted by Kedusha - 06 Aug 2009 14:31

I agree. Because the temptation of Histaklus is great, and the opportunities are plentiful, Chazal spoke in harsh terms to serve as a deterrent.

Personally, when I've fallen in this area and felt horrible, it wasn't out of fear of future punishment. Indeed, there is no punishment, in this world or the next, that can equal the pain of a Ben Torah who falls in this area. That's why I need to stay clean. Who would intentionally turn his Olam Hazeh into a living hell (pardon the expression)?

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Re: pinky fingers and murder
Posted by the.guard - 06 Aug 2009 15:54

Did they really say that? I thought they just said that looking at the little pinky is like looking at the worst place, and whoever does will not be saved from the din of Gehhinom... But worse than murder? Where? I am not a talmid chacham, so forgive me.

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Re: pinky fingers and murder
Posted by Kedusha - 06 Aug 2009 16:12

R. Guard,

) would believe that it's worse than murder. Eye.nonymous is making an observation that Chazal appear to use harsher terms by this Aveira than they do regarding murder.

Of course Chazal say harsh things about one who murders as well, although I don't have any sources or exact quotes handy.

With regard to the little finger, it's only if he 1.) stares and 2.) in order to derive pleasure.

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Re: pinky fingers and murder
Posted by the.guard - 06 Aug 2009 16:42

Yup Kedusha, it's all in the mind. See [this FAQ page](#).

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Re: pinky fingers and murder
Posted by Eye.nonymous - 06 Aug 2009 19:36

Kutan,

Was "on the other hand" a pun?

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Re: pinky fingers and murder
Posted by Eye.nonymous - 06 Aug 2009 19:40

No, I wasn't quoting exactly.

I just meant that chazal use harsher terms to describe looking at a pinky than they do to describe murder. Therefore, I deduced, it seems like looking at a pinky is worse than murder.

I think they say that one who looks at a pinky will not see the schinah.

After 120, are they going to usher someone who looked at a pinky to the schinah and say "by the way, that passage was just meant as a deterrent"?

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Re: pinky fingers and murder
Posted by the.guard - 06 Aug 2009 20:01

The Zohar says that whatever a person is drawn to in this world, they will be drawn to in the next...

Everything Chazal say has to be understood in the proper context... We can't always understand the context, so we can't take everything literally. The bottom line is, Teshuvah helps for everything!

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Re: pinky fingers and murder
Posted by Eye.nonymous - 06 Aug 2009 20:17

whatever a person is drawn to in this world, he'll be drawn to in the next world.

In other words... Olam HaBa is a come-as-you-are party.

THAT ONE I heard a very nice explanation:

If they're drawn to physicality, there ISN'T any in the next world. They just keep darting around from one end of the world to the other hopelessly looking for it. (Sort of like when you can't find the car keys.) I think this is how Rav Dessler explains the Kaf HaKelah.

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Re: pinky fingers and murder

Posted by Kedusha - 06 Aug 2009 20:46

[Eye.nonymous wrote on 06 Aug 2009 19:40:](#)

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All punishment is meant as a deterrent for the future, and as a Tikun for the past. But proper Teshuva can make the Tikun unnecessary.

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Re: pinky fingers and murder

Posted by kutan - 06 Aug 2009 21:06

Didn't intend to make a pun.

I learned a long time ago that if I try to make jokes, people just say huh, and I feel stupid....

I act as myself and it (sometimes) makes people smile.

I think that tying in that Michtav Meliyahu is right on the mark. Heard this yesod many times from R' Tatz. We create our gehinim by focusing on things that don't exist up there, so we get there and its one big HUH? get me out of here.

Except that we are stuck!

As to why not murder, I think its as above... no need to harp on the evils, us Jews we just don't do it.

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Re: pinky fingers and murder
Posted by Dov - 06 Aug 2009 23:04

[Kedusha wrote on 06 Aug 2009 20:46:](#)

[Eye.nonymous wrote on 06 Aug 2009 19:40:](#)

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Just to throw my two cents in, heiligehe:

Chazal use stronger than expected terms for lots of things which people tend to take less seriously than they should. Like: (Gm' Brachos) where it says that if a man rests or eats and misses nighttime kriyas shema within the *derabannan* timeframe of pre-chatzos (or neglects *any other* derabannan) he is chayav misah bidey shomayim (we do not typically approach it as we would any other chiyuv misah, especially as regular aseih's de'oraisa are *not* chayav misah for p'shiyah, of course). Or when they say, asur lehistakel bifnei rasha (do they mean by "asur" - it's not brought in Shulchan Aruch - perhaps they mean that it's very ill-advised, and perhaps only asur for "anshei ma'aseh"?), or when the Mechaber writes about one who talks during chazoras hashas that "gadol avono minesoh" (as Kayin said re: killing his brother). Why doesn't he say that for someone who skipe benching, for example, or regarding a yid who c"v eats treif? Similarly, for example, my minhag (Munkatch) is to skip tachanun the day *before* and *after* any derabannan day (like Tu be Av!) to strengthen a derabannan... **because** it is a derabannan. You are hitting on big stuff here. It deserves a big post. Sorry...

Which leads to an opening: The Sha'arei Teshuvah writes that since we tend to take derabannans less seriously than we should and delay (sometimes permanently) doing teshuvah for them or do it half-heartedly, our chachamim are megaleh what the stakes really *are*, here. He explains that there are 24 things we **cannot do teshuvah on** - but hey! What about Ein dovor...*Nothing* stands before/against teshuva, right? He answers that it is *precisely because* we do not tend to take these things seriously that we will *absolutley never* be able to do teshuva for them.

So, the chazal are referring to the state of humanity and not to the quality of the aveiros, at all. It's not that *these aveiros are so bad* that one cannot be forgiven for them, rather it's *because we are so messed up that we can't typically do teshuva for those types of aveiros*.

If we rise above "normal" and learn to take them seriously, then we will surely be able to do teshuvah even on these things. This seems plain to me.

Perhaps this is very similar to an addiction that involves aveiros (sound familiar?). The addict doesn't keep doing it only because "na'aseh lo ke'heter", as he knows in his heart. Rather, the pursuit of lust (or *from* it) becomes our main occupation and focus in life. *That's* the real problem. He percieves at some point that he is road-kill. Just ask an alkie. I, Dov, really like

wine (sorry berdichever, Woodford is just too much 4me) because it makes dinner taste a lot better. An alkie, by contrast, doesn't really understand this. "Dinner? What dinner? Food? Do ;D) Wine is a reason to *live*, not just for fun!" Seriously. I have heard alkie friends (and drug addicts I meet at my job) tell me this - and I felt the same exact way about lust in the old days. I suspect you can relate, too.

Just as chazal say "for xyz one *cannot do teshuvah*", I say "I (an addict) really *can't* stop lusting you mean on the way down, or on the way back up?" (and *can't* stop acting out". Meaning that given normal rules, my chances are really, really bad. So bad, that **giving up** r"I makes absolute sense to any bar da'as. Like (lehavdil) accepting-that-Torah-is-min-hashamayim-at-an-Arachim-weekend kind of sense. The sheer evidence of my powerlessness was just, plain, **overwhelming**. So do we just give up?? We **know** we can't make it....so? What next?

Now, the Torah says that I **must not believe all the evidence** and fight for my life anyway!! U'bacharta ba'chayim applies to me too! And that response is *completely* lema'alah min hateva!! Meaning, "Ilmalei it was not written in the Torah we would not be able to say it ourselves!", as chazal say regarding many things that by all rights should'nt be so - but are! We are one of those "things".

Is this helpful to anyone else but me?

So yes, punishments may be for a deterrent", but what we really need is "detergent" for our heads and bodies. For my head I'll keep using the steps and go where they lead me. For my body, I'll start by going to the mikkie tomorrow, iy"H!

Love!!!

Dov

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Re: pinky fingers and murder
Posted by Kedusha - 07 Aug 2009 03:05

Thank you Dov for that beautiful and informative post!

Another example is that the Shulchan Aruch (Even HaEzer Siman 23) says that Zerah Levatalah is the worst Averiah. The Beis Shmuel there proves that this is not really so (although the Igros Moshe, Orach Chaim 4:116, notes that the Beis Shmuel's proof is not ironclad). In any

case, we know intuitively that there are worse Aveiros than Zera Levatalah - such as Avodah Zarah, Gilui Arayos, and Shefichas Damim, which are Yei haraig v'Al Yaavor, whereas Zera Levatalah is not.

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Re: pinky fingers and murder

Posted by Dov - 09 Aug 2009 20:53

The point, is, as Reb Yakov made clear in a post about defining addiction: If it is messing up my life, I'd better take it seriously. The first question is: what is messing up my life? what is the problem? **Not** what is wrong **with me** that makes me do xyz or feel bad, or whatever, rather: **what is the problem behavior**. Then get it out to another person, don't be alone (cuz we are).

Hatzlocha!

Dov

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not!