

down on judaism, down on life

Posted by yoni - 15 Nov 2011 14:18

sigh, so every now and then i get this feeling. B"H i haven't had them so much this semester, but this past month has just worn me down. every now and then, i start to realize how much i've given up to be jewish, and how much i'm going have to keep giving up.

and i'm not just talking about porn and masturbation, although the struggle with that is a constant reminder of everything else i've given up.

i'm talking about being able to go to a restaurant with my friends and family. being able to hang out on a friday night, going to concerts, going to the beach with friends, wearing what i want, not having a beard, not having to spend half an hour checking my lettuce for practically invisible bugs, being able to listen to whatever music i wanted, being able to shake hands with whomever i wanted, not having to devote hours of my day to davening, eating, drinking, doing whatever i want...

having lost my best friends because i was too religious for them...

giving up my wonderful, loving, non-jewish girlfriend who cared so much about me and whom i cared for...

and suffering the bleak and crushing loneliness that this life has ultimately brought me.

sure there have been good times – it's always fun to hang out with college kids at a shabbas meal, or to dance on purim, but the joys pale in comparison to what i've lost.

it was bad enough in the US. and now i'm hear in china, literally the only frum jew in my half of the city.

nu, so how am i supposed to feel? it won't get better. the more i learn, the stricter judaism becomes. apparently, i shouldn't be wearing cologne. no more fresh squeezed lemon in my water on shabbas. oh and as for my original plan of checking out some of china's amazing

historical sites and making the most of this once in a lifetime opportunity, well it's a pity most of them were made by idol worshippers. little by little, one by one, things add up until i want to tear my hair out.

is it then such a surprise that i now spend 5-6 hours a day on my computer watching television, mindlessly clicking the refresh button on the GYE website, even though i know it won't update for another 24 hours, nibbling on the ridiculously overpriced, imported chips i have to buy, b/c the ones in china ain't kosher, just to try and numb myself to the world and forget everything? is it such a surprise that i have no desire to learn torah, to daven, to put on tefillin, etc etc?

i keep telling myself that these feelings will go away with time. well here we are, three years since i started making serious commitments to judaism, and my life sucks. and it feels like it's going to stay that way. wherever i go, whatever i do, this will always be with me. seriously, why bother?

i'm just so fed up with all this, what am i supposed to do, what am i supposed to think?

thanks,

yoni

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Re: down on judaism, down on life
Posted by ur-a-jew - 15 Nov 2011 15:12

Yoni, I appreciate your frustration. If judaism is viewed as a bundle of restrictions than its hard not to get frustrated. I think you should use this opportunity to ask yourself, why am I Jewish? The purpose is not to get out of doing what Judaism requires because you may not understand why, but rather to come to a deeper understanding of what Judaism is all about and to thereby remove the "yoke" that you now feel.

I have a Rebbe who gives a mashal. Look at an Olympic skater, their whole life is skating. When their friends are out partying, they can't join them because they have to practice. When they see someone eating a delicious fast food dinner they can't partake in it because their weight matters when they will perform that jump on the ice. Do they feel deprived? No. Why? because they have a goal. They are going for the gold. And their entire being is focused on achieving that goal. Jews also have a goal. If you recognize that goal you won't feel deprived because you realize you have something more important in life to accomplish. When the possuk says the

Torah's ways are pleasant, its not simply a romantic aspiration, it is the complete truth.

So take some time and ask yourself do I know why I am Jewish, do I know what I'm training for, what is the gold that I'm going for?

Continued hatzlacha, and smile you're way ahead of many since you're taking the time to figure out these things.

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Re: down on judaism, down on life

Posted by ZemirosShabbos - 15 Nov 2011 15:54

yonis, i feel for you. sounds like a tough situation, and i would probably feel the same way if i were in your shoes. kol hakavod for keeping at it and not throwing in the towel.

UAJ has some very wise words.

not knowing the exact circumstances of your situation i can only point out that you seem to need a circle of like-minded friends. friends who share your commitment and values. being part of a community, davening with a minyan, learning with a chavrusa etc. Judaism is not meant to be practiced in an isolated monastery in the Judean Desert (in most cases at least). every person is influenced by his surroundings, even the greatest of the great. it is doubly hard when you are on your own and swimming upstream. b'ezras Hashem you will move to better circumstances and be part of a happy community and you won't feel like the last of the mohicans. until then you can build yourself up as a person and it will help you face present and future challenges.

if i remember correctly you will be there for another few months. maybe look up the local Chabad, make a telephone chavrusa to learn something which interests you (halacha, nach,), write 1000 posts on GYE - there are often people who need a welcome, some chizuk, a good idea, a shoulder and an ear here and you can give and get chizuk, join Partners in Torah, maybe try traveling a little for shabbos so you can spend it with other like-minded people?

wishing you the best and hoping you find the best options for your needs

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Re: down on judaism, down on life
Posted by strugglingandstrivngBT - 15 Nov 2011 18:25

I want to point out (something that helped me and helps me) is that there is no chiyuv to have a beard, no issur to listen to music and probably not healthy to ditch friends (the girl is another question). they may or may not be good things, and you need to talk to a rabbi well versed in halacha (NOT CHUMRA. there is a big difference).

it sounds like you BT (as am I) and went very fast. maybe slow up a bit. allow yourself some leighway (spelling) and dont make it all or nothing. do what you need to and talk to a rabbi you trust asap.

I can tell you that its worth it and there is not better life than this, but it is hard. Hashem wants it to be so that you need him. that helps you. every struggle proves your sincerity to yourself. keep on going. I know you can!

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Re: down on judaism, down on life
Posted by Snow - 15 Nov 2011 18:29

Whoa. Seems like you have gone from 0 to 60 in a very short period of time.

do you have a Rav who understands BTs? this is VITAL

[yoni wrote on 15 Nov 2011 14:18:](#)

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Re: down on judaism, down on life
Posted by strugglingandstrivngBT - 15 Nov 2011 18:31

by the way, why are you china? thats definitely not helping the situation...

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Re: down on judaism, down on life
Posted by obormottel - 15 Nov 2011 18:41

Dear Yoni!

Thank you so much for sharing your frustrations.

I would like to spend some time addressing your points, each one you made is so important, but I have to do it at a later time.

For the time being, here is a local Chabad house info for you

http://www.chabadbeijing.com/templates/articlecco_cdo/aid/66487/jewish/Address-Map.htm

Being in a company of like-minded people cannot be underestimated (as I am sure you've realized on this-here forum). Get in touch with a shliach, his sole purpose there is to be there for guys like you.

Once again, I found your post very precious, and want to wish you best of luck.

Keep us in the loop!

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Re: down on judaism, down on life
Posted by Hashem Yaasfeni - 15 Nov 2011 18:53

Yo Bro we're with you. Cant be alone very NOT good for the soul.

keep us posted you have more friends than you can imagine....

all the best, speak to G-d, keep the faith and dont be so hard on yourself.

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Re: down on judaism, down on life
Posted by alexeliezer - 15 Nov 2011 19:03

Yo Yoni,

Warm greetings from the old country.

I once heard in a drosha from R' Dovid Cohen shlita that the people of the east may be the children of Keturah, Avraham's concubine/wife. So they may not be brothers, but they might be

Hashem orchestrated this nisayon for you, to help you achieve your mission in life. Everything Hashem does for us is with our best interests in mind.

cousins :D. See, now don't you feel better >
I can't imagine how such isolation from Yiddishkeit would affect me. I chose to live in a very frum neighborhood because I knew I needed the ongoing chizuk.

I'm assuming the China gig is temporary. It's nice that Big Brother lets GYE slip in.

Your life is going to be wonderful one day soon. And your olam habah immeasurable.

Keep the pity party short. Focus on what good there is in your life: your health (get detailed about everything that's working so well), your brains, your bright future.

BTW, my wife asked me to wear cologne so I bought some and wear it around her.

Please keep in close touch with us here.

With an intercontinental hug and much love,

Alex

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Re: down on judaism, down on life
Posted by gibbor120 - 15 Nov 2011 21:32

Adding my voice to the choir (i hope i sing the right notes).

It does sound like the yetzer hora is trying to convince you that everything is assur, at least all the good stuff. You may need to slow down.

Are you trying to deal with your lust issue because it's assur, or because it's ruining your life? Would you really be happier giving in?

It seems that you feel a certain emptiness inside. The point of recovery (by my understanding) is to fill that emptiness. You'll get there, slowly.

I hope we have given you some chizzuk.

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Re: down on judaism, down on life
Posted by mechazek - 16 Nov 2011 12:27

yoni so refreshing to see you write so clearly about your thoughts keep on posting,talk it out.Good Luck

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Re: down on judaism, down on life
Posted by strugglingandstrivngBT - 16 Nov 2011 13:55

which/what kind of yeshiva are you going to? are they likely to tell you its just the yetzer hara or will they help you to work through the struggles? bhatzlacha!

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Re: down on judaism, down on life
Posted by gibbor120 - 16 Nov 2011 14:29

[yoni wrote on 16 Nov 2011 12:04:](#)

several of you mentioned that it seems like i'm going too fast. ok, so what do i do? am i supposed to stop keeping kosher? keeping shabbas and yom tovim? can i get back together with my gf?

see my point?

Yes, but things like having a beard, listening to certain music, even shaking hands with women in a business setting are all potentially ok (discuss with *your rav*). You might be putting too much stress on yourself to consider these all completely ?????.

As far as friends etc. Do you have any frum friends? You have lost part of your life, and that leaves an empty space. It seems to me that you need some positive stuff to fill the void.

I wish you hatzlacha. You are in a difficult situation, but I'm sure you'll pull through.

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Re: down on judaism, down on life
Posted by alexeliezer - 16 Nov 2011 16:11

When you start yeshiva, get right with a mashgiach who is very experienced with baalei teshuva. If you're still not at peace, you may want to talk to a mashgiach at a non-chasidishe yeshiva.

You can be a wonderful jew without being a chabad chosid. Chassidus includes many chumros you may not be ready for. "All" rather than "none" doesn't have to include the chumros that come along with chasidism.

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Re: down on judaism, down on life
Posted by Snow - 16 Nov 2011 16:23

Yoni - my experience has been that I need to ask much more experience people when it comes to a lot of issues. Jewish growth is one of them. Judaism has been around for thousands of years. We have a tradition that teaches us how to navigate the Torah & observing It. We often come to this issue with little experience.

A BT can easily "crash & burn" when becoming frum. You mention "i know the "it's all or nothing" view is frowned on, but i honestly don't know if i agree." what are you basing your opinion on? is there some opinion in the Torah world that says this or suggests this?

I encourage you to grow.....but grow for keeps. Not listening to non-Jewish music is a madreiga. So is dressing certain ways. But if it leads to one giving up Shabbos & Kashrus....what is it worth?

Seriously, Torah is a serious business. Sometimes our thoughts and feelings may simply not be in line with what the Jewish tradition says.

I encourage you to learn from & listen to people who are Talmidei Chachamim and know how to educate BTs. Torah is sweet & should usually feel that way. If it doesn't - look into what is wrong.

Much hatzlacha!

[yoni wrote on 16 Nov 2011 15:23:](#)

re struggling:

a chabad yeshiva. i certainly hope the latter.

re gibbor:

i'm not shaving my beard. i've invested too much time in it.

same goes for everything else you mentioned.

i know the "it's all or nothing" view is frowned on, but i honestly don't know if i agree.

i have a few frum friends from college in teh US, but none in china, and none back in my hometown.

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