

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,

yon

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Re: down on judaism, down on life
Posted by obormottel - 16 Nov 2011 18:07

[alexeliezer wrote on 16 Nov 2011 16:11:](#)

Really, now. You can't hide. The long arm of Chabad henchmen will find you anywhere for

dissing the way of chassidus.

To all those advocating against a beard, I want to tell a story from Chofetz Chaim, who said that if someone thinks they are improving their chances of success in life by removing the beard, it's the same as thinking you're helping a speeding locomotive by pushing it from behind. We can probably start a separate thread on a beard, and quote Minchas Elozor and others, similar to another useless thread about going to mikva. But as currently I have steam coming out of my ears from all these "suggestions" I better not tell anyone here that NOT having a beard is a leniency, not the other way around.

Anyways, back to our friend Yoni:

There is nothing surprising that a novice to something (anything) is more fervent about it than an old-timer. There is the excitement of initiation, there is a conviction that you finally found IT, there is total negation of anything that comes out in opposition to our new-found way of life.

Just look at this forum: Newbies can't get enough of it, and they got advice for everybody, and then with time , the excitement wears off.

So while I totally understand where Yoni is coming from, and how difficult it is to totally change your way of life, and grow facial hair, and stop hanging out with people who you knew were your best friends, I am a little worried about something that I don't see anyone else pick up on:

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

every time i've gotten excited for a big change in my life (highschool, college, judaism), i've been set up for incredible disappointment down the road. and once yeshiva's over, then i get to deal with all of this on top of the so-called "real world" problems. today is the first day of the rest of my life indeed.

I am worried that dear Yoni expects the initial excitement to linger throughout the experience, and when this proves false, he feels that he was wrong to be excited about it in the first place.

When I was in Yeshiva (and yes, it was Chabad yeshiva for BTs, where they talked a lot about yetzer horo), my mashpia had noticed that my initial excitement about learning Toiro in a yeshiva environment turned to gloom. So he told me what I just re-told you about neophytes being more zealous etc, and finished off like this:

All good things in life come with hard work, and very few things make you as happy down the road as when you first started. You have to work on making your own happiness, and you have to bring your own excitement into life. If you can't figure out how to do it in yeshiva, he said, I am worried what's gonna be when you get married.

The initial romance will disappear with time (and if you think it won't, you need to get real), and then it will be up to you to make it exciting and romantic etc.

Too bad, I didn't listen, huh? Instead, I turned to porn and other things to keep the "excitement" up.

I am afraid that Yoni's "incredible disappointment down the road" is due to unrealistic expectations that once you find happiness, all you have to do is kick back and enjoy it for the rest of your life. Fortunately (and why it is fortunate is a topic on its own) G-d Al-mighty set up the world in a different way. Happiness needs to be tended to in order to linger. Only hard, often dull, work makes it stay. But if you keep in mind that it's about the journey, not the destination, then the work itself brings you happiness.

We say in tehillim: G-d's laws are mesukim midvash, sweeter than honey. Honey is sweet, alright, so that by comparing it to mishptei Hashem you can know what sweetness is. But while G-d's Tora is true, eternal sweetness, the one of honey is passing. That makes our choice real (we are not comparing sweet Tora to bitter things in life) but it also makes our choice easy (because we know how good sweetness is by trying honey first).

Im l'oivrei Retzoinoi kach, l'oivdei Retzoinoi al achas kamo v'kamo. If having a non-Jewish girlfriend is sweet, then how great will it be to have a Jewish wife? A hundred-fold? Eternally? But you must keep in mind, that you make your own honey, Yoni Dear, and that takes time and work and effort and certain level of difficulties, which G-d Al-mighty helps you through if you let Him.

I'm a little surprised at the oilom here. When it comes to not lusting, and not touching yourself, everyone knows to take it one day at a time, to daven for help, and to stay strong.

When it came to our brother's challenge with Toiro and Mitzvois, alovusudden everyone's advise is " Take it easy, you're too hard on yourself, just take off that beard and everything will be fine".

When will we learn that principles of recovery through 12 steps are applicable to all areas of life?

Yoni, take your challenge on day at a time. You have twenty six days left. Keep just one more Shabbos, keep your beard on for another day, don;t watch porn for another day, have one more kosher meal. And then do it again.

Daven for help. Ask G-d for guidance. Talk to your Father in Heaven and ask Him for encouragement.

Life is G-d's greatest gift for us, and He didn't send us here to suffer. It takes an effort to be

happy and fulfilled, for sure. The only thing that doesn't take any effort is masturbation. But that's partly what's wrong with it, right?

Stay strong, brother Yoni, and stay in touch, even when you go to Yeshiva.

We love you and G-d loves you. You just have to work on your relationship with Him, just like you will have to work on your relationship with your wife, and just like you had to work on your relationships with friends and girlfriends.

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Re: down on judaism, down on life
Posted by strugglingandstrivngBT - 16 Nov 2011 18:29

I personally started geting in the Chabad pool and didnt like how the water made me feel. BH I found a derech that works for me (my rebbe is still a Chabad Rabbi) and I have a feeling that most rabbis in a Chabad circle can help your problems. I found them to be helpful to me. I personally didnt like things that arent assur being considered such and felt too much stress because of them, along with some personal gripes with certain ideas I couldnt live up to or accept. If it works for you though bhatzlacha! I wish you all the best, but make sure your rabbi has experience with baali teshuva because not all know how to guide them correctly (ie too fast too slow, too extreme, not allowing to use past experience).

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Re: down on judaism, down on life
Posted by the.guard - 16 Nov 2011 19:10

Yoni,

Imagine the president of the U.S was visiting China, and he came to the town you were in, and you came to watch his entourage passing through with thousands of others, and suddenly they stopped in front of you, and he came out of the car and wanted to be with you - since you were the only American in the whole area there... And he starts walking with you... and he asks if can carry his briefcase...

The crowd starts to cheer as you take it from him... all the media have their lenses on you... you've never felt so special in your life...

But the breifcase is heavy. And your arm starts to hurt a bit. And you're thirsty... And it's a tiring walk to your place...

So you say to the president, (to quote someone) "seriously, why bother? i'm just so fed up with all this", and you throw down the heavy suitcase and stomp off.

Right.

Well that's really how it is now... Only it's not the president. It's the Almighty G-d who created the entire heaven and Earth. And he wants to be with YOU more than any of the millions of people in China because he gave YOU His Torah and you are keeping it with real messiras nefesh. And yes, it's heavy... it's hard... it's a long walk... But you are WALKING WITH THE KING OF KINGS and holding HIS BAGGAGE!!

;D ;D So break out in a BIG SMILE and do a little dance. You have given up so much for the King. And He is so proud of you! And you are SO UNIQUE in G-d forsaken China that when He looks down at that Huge country each day, his focus falls on YOU!

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Re: down on judaism, down on life
Posted by kidushashem - 16 Nov 2011 22:05

I just want to agree with what many have said: get yourself a Rabbi who understands you. A Rabbi who you trust. A Rabbi who you can feel comfortable being open with and challenging in a respectful way. You'll suddenly feel like a huge weight has been lifted off of you.

He'll be able to tell you what to keep doing and what to stop doing. You'd be surprised what a Rabbi who knows you will tell you to do... I know someone who was all stressed out about Judaism after the initial Honeymoon wore off. His Rabbi told him to drop many, many things, some of them very basic.

I think you also need to see some light in your Judaism and make it spiritual for yourself. Find something in Yiddishkeit that you enjoy doing and makes you happy. Do you like Davening?

Maybe you connect especially well with Kiddush on Friday night? Whatever it is, take a moment to appreciate it and make it a part of your life.

Do you like one Torah topic more than another? Treat yourself and enjoy. There's a time for a hard work and a time for relaxation. You need a good balance.

Love,

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Re: down on Judaism, down on life
Posted by Hashem Yaasfeni - 16 Nov 2011 22:10

Nu so wahts with the time on these posts. are we set to British time..? (not that theres anything wrong with the Brits, except when they were occupying our land)

Yeah so Chabad, Chashmad,...or should I say Lubavitch, shmavitch the main thing is we are all brothers struggling and helping keep each other going.

Imagine Yoni, being in China 6 years ago in your situation with no GYE to help you out...

hang in there, one day at a time..

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Re: down on Judaism, down on life
Posted by Gevura Shebyesod - 16 Nov 2011 22:20

Guard I love that Moshol!

Yoni, I'll just add my voice to the choir here. I can imagine how tough it is to be all alone, trying to stick to all these new things that seem so limiting, with nobody to share with.

Hang in there, a couple of more weeks and you will be back in "civilization", hopefully with new real-life friends and mentors to share the load with.

Meanwhile try to find the things that make you feel positive and fulfilled, and concentrate on those.

Keep On Monstuh' Trucking!!! (Do they have monster trucks in China?)

Gevura!

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Re: down on judaism, down on life
Posted by the.guard - 19 Nov 2011 16:40

www.guardureyes.com/GUE/tips/baalhasulam.asp

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Re: down on judaism, down on life
Posted by Snow - 19 Nov 2011 16:57

whoa. I have no idea how you became frum or which community you are hanging with but.....if you feel this way about Judaism, then I'd encourage you to try another approach. Really - the Torah is SWEET. and while we all have bumps in the road....to feel that Judaism stole your life is huge.

Please....there really are 70 faces to Torah. It is not just a saying. And while we all seem to believe that the approach we have chosen is the right one, when push comes to shove it is important to remember.....there are different approaches. maybe you'd benefit if you tried a different approach within the Torah world.

[yoni wrote on 19 Nov 2011 13:07:](#)

so i think this officially qualified as the worst shabbas of my life:

friday night i had a complete meltdown. someone told a joke and i started laughing uncontrollably, and the next thing i knew i was on the floor bawling hysterically in front of a crowd of people, telling them how much i hate my life. right now i actually remember most of what i said, it was a just a blur. people kept telling me the same nonsense: things will get better, life gets better...

i spent the whole shabbas watching the clock tick, waiting to go home. i feel so completely numb right now.

judaism stole my whole life. things were going good for me, and judaism just sucked me in and stole everything. i've got no idea what to do.

the bitterly funny thing is, i can't go back. i can't not be jewish, and even if i could totally fry out and pretend like i wasn't, i'd always feel guilty (which i do anyway, but w/e). so now i'm stuck in this life, but i'm miserable.

my rabbi told me, and i've heard from others, that Hashem loves our struggles. why is He so twisted that He has to torture us though? why is nothing ever good enough for Him, you just have to keep suffering, to constantly and unendingly deal with life pummeling you in the face. how is it ever supposed to better?

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Re: down on judaism, down on life
Posted by kidushashem - 19 Nov 2011 18:59

[yoni wrote on 19 Nov 2011 17:15:](#)

it's all the same.

no new approach can ever give me back what i've lost.

correct. But a new approach can show you that you didn't lose anything.

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Re: down on judaism, down on life
Posted by the.guard - 20 Nov 2011 19:16

Yoni, if I told you that at the end of a thick forest there was a treasure buried that no one knows about, but you have to go through the dark, thorny, cold forest for a few days to get there, would you be upset at me? No! You'd plow through the forest with joy, knowing what awaits you at the end!

So why are you so upset at G-d? Do you believe that there's a treasure awaiting you at the end? If you do, accept the pains of Yiddishkeit with joy!

And if you'll ask, but WHY did he make a forest in the first place? That we can't answer. But just as you wouldn't be upset at me if I revealed the secret of the hidden treasure to you, in spite of the difficult journey across the forest, so too, you should accept the pains of the journey to the next world - the palace - with joy!

It all boils down to Emunah and priorities. If you truly believed, you would be the happiest man

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Re: down on judaism, down on life
Posted by yoni - 21 Nov 2011 15:24
on earth. And if you don't believe enough, that's not G-d's fault, is it?

well, it kinda is G-d's fault, isn't it? I mean, He did one heck of a job concealing Himself. Not to mention that not even Moshe Rabeinu could have perfect emunah in Hashem (there's a whole sicha of the Lubavitcher Rebbe on this).

secondly, should it matter if there is a treasure or not at the end? since when is judaism about doing something solely for your own benefit in the world to come? if i approach Judaism with that attitude, then how is that any different from what i was doing before i got involved in yiddishkeit?

i gotta say guard, you've got my respect, but i was really disheartened to read this response. this seems to be a living to die approach to judaism -- even the catholics don't look at life like that anymore (mostly).

btw, i want to thank EVERYONE who posted here, i've been having a really tough week with some finals and just a general desire to get out of china. i deleted some of my other responses and posts in this thread b/c on re-reading them they seemed a bit hostile, which is not how i want to be here, so i apologize if i antagonized anyone in my posts.

ironically enough i think the best advice i got was from my non-jewish classmate who said, "dude, just go home and sleep." it's amazing how being rested can improve one's overall mood. thanks again, 21 days til i'm back in the USA.

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Re: down on judaism, down on life
Posted by Kedusha - 21 Nov 2011 16:16

Yoni,

You're right, it's not only about Olam Haba. When we keep the Torah the way we're supposed to, we are able to properly enjoy this world as well. That's because the Mitzvos of the Torah are all for our benefit.

And, yes, your friend is right. A wise person once said: there are few problems that eating a good meal and getting a good night's sleep won't help solve, or at least make us much better able to handle them! (Of course, when we're clean, it's much easier to sleep peacefully).

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Re: down on judaism, down on life
Posted by alexeliezer - 21 Nov 2011 16:21

Yoni,

A Torah life is a sweet, enjoyable, happiness-filled life.

You may not be able to experience this being a relatively new BT, not yet having built a solid Torah backbone, and being isolated from your people in China.

When the going gets this tough, we fall back on remembering that there is an Olam Habah that lasts for eternity. This is one of the many tools we use to get us through tough times, tough decisions. This doesn't mean we live for dying. But since you mentioned it, "dying" is, in our Torah reality, our true birth.

But forget that if it doesn't register well. A Torah life is a very good life. In *this* world. You will see.

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Re: down on judaism, down on life

Posted by obormottel - 21 Nov 2011 17:15

[yoni wrote on 21 Nov 2011 15:24:](#)

well, it kinda is G-d's fault, isn't it? I mean, He did one heck of a job concealing Himself. Not to mention that not even Moshe Rabeinu could have perfect emunah in Hashem (there's a whole sicha of the Lubavitcher Rebbe on this).

secondly, should it matter if there is a treasure or not at the end?

One of the things I'm trying to change about myself, is not to quote anything from memory or something I don't really understand.

So if you're referring to the sicha on Lomo hor'oiso I'am haze (Why did you wrong this people?), the point of the Rebbe is exactly the opposite of what you're attributing to him:

Only someone with true emuna, can (and is allowed) to have complaints against G-d.

I mean, this is kind of intuitive: if you don't truly believe, then whom are you complaining to? Moshe Rabbeinu believed completely that everything G-d does, He does out of love for the Jewish people, and that's why he asked: it looks like You did them wrong?! And only someone who truly holds this believe is allowed (and by Moshe's example, encouraged) to make a claim of Why are You doing this to me?! So G-d's concealing Himself is an act of true kindness, but you do need to learn a lot of Tora and especially Chassidus to see it in this light.

I would be interested to see if you had a different sicha in mind.

As for your second point, it matters to G-d that there is a treasure at the end of the forest. This treasure is called Moshiach, and acc. to Rambam and others, the Days of Moshiach are the "tachllis", the goal for which G-d created the world. It so happens that bringing Moshiach closer is in your capable hands. Who knows if the last sparks of holiness are in China and it is your brocho on the overpriced chips that will redeem them? So won't you be so kind, go hunt the

This is my tirade for today.

On a more personal level, I hear your frustrations. I think you're very precious, and find yourself

in a tight spot to bring out this preciousness.

But without a company of like-minded friends, without regular Tora study, without working on your emuna, there is a chance your G-dly spark will go dormant again.

So hang in there, only three more weeks to go, make yourself a rip-away calendar and count down to your exodus.

Or make notches in the wall above your bunk....

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