

down on judaism, down on life

Posted by yoni - 15 Nov 2011 14:18

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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 yoni - 22 Nov 2011 05:19

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re obormottel:

we're referring to different sicha. it discusses how the fact that moshe was afraid after he killed the egyptian was indicative of a lack of total emunah, hence he had to flee from pharaoh etc etc.

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Re: down on judaism, down on life

Posted by obormottel - 22 Nov 2011 17:10

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Thanks so much for taking the time to reply. I've not learned this sicha (yet), so if you can tell me the volume I'll look it up right away, b"n.

The point, though, is still the same: Young Moshe was not **born** with perfect faith; perhaps he even exhibited a lack of faith (on Moshe Rabbeinu's level) early on in life as you're describing. But he most certainly didn't complain to G-d until his faith was absolute.

No one can claim to have accomplished anything until the day they die. (mishna in Avos: Don't believe in yourself until the day you die). But we can certainly claim to have tried our darndest. Not me, not you are expected to report perfect faith on Monday morning after an inspiring Shabbos. But we can certainly say that an inspiring experience (book reading, talking to a friend, taking a class) has gotten us closer to Hashem. To make this closeness linger, one has to continue reading, learning, and hanging out with the right people. Otherwise, the most inspiring experience will be drowned out by the mundane, by the world itself.

Judaism has all these tools available: there is a requirement for daily Tora study, there is a forceful call to acquire a friend (Avos p.1), there is a need for regular prayer to stay in touch with the spiritual, etc.

Same as in trying to break out of a bad habit, where you need all that to succeed. Consistency and patience are lauded for bringing about any kind of success in life. Someone who can not stay the course (today beard yes, tomorrow no; today tzitzis, tomorrow tcheiles, the day after nothing) will surely fail. On this forum they tell you: winning means staying in the game. If you quit early, you will never know if you might have won.

I'd love to stay in touch with you when you go to yeshiva, if only to see your progress. I'm sure you have a lot to show for yourself.

As far as it relates to this forum, how is your struggle going with masturbation etc? Are you on the 90-day chart?

It helped me a great deal, I am now over 100 days away from the last time I watched "adult content" and touched myself to the tune of it.

How's by you?

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Re: down on judaism, down on life

Posted by the.guard - 23 Nov 2011 11:31

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Yoni, re-the treasure at the end of the forest... Whether we serve Hashem lisheim Shamayim or not, we all know that at the end of the day - the Torah and Mitzvos were given for our benefit... **So yes, that is a treasure.** Hashem doesn't ask us to serve Him while thinking the Torah and mitzvos are only for HIM and not for us. As the pasuk says... Ma Hashem Sho'el me'imcha ki im Le..... (a whole list of things)... le'Tov Lach. "For your good. "

If we realize it's all "for your good" it makes it much easier.

But that takes Emunah.

So instead of us blaming Hashem for making it hard, we need to ask Him to give us more Emunah .

It's not nearly as hard when the Emunah is in place.

One more point I just want to mention, is that the Torah was given to a "nation". As long as the Jews were lesss than 600,000, they didn't get the Torah. The reason for this is, that Judaism is meant to be practiced within a community setting. Hashem knows how it's almost impossible to keep the mitzvos if we're alone in a spiritual wasteland. It's no wonder it's so difficult for you to keep the Torah and Mitzvos in China, all alone, among goyim. You will see that once you're back in the U.S, and you seek out a Jewish community that you're comfortable in, it will get **a lot** easier...

Hatzlacha!

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Re: down on judaism, down on life

Posted by Hashem Yaasfeni - 23 Nov 2011 16:02

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

Hey Alex,

we are all brothers here but actually I am mad at your shtechs and so I have my kalashnikov aimed at you. (only a Russian rifle will work in this case)

I am aiming in your general direction but what can i do I am guarding my eyes so I cant see you too well...

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Re: down on judaism, down on life  
Posted by alexeliezer - 23 Nov 2011 16:34

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Love you too!

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Re: down on judaism, down on life  
Posted by obormottel - 23 Nov 2011 18:40

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One of the things I am slowly learning lately is not to address anyone in particular but rather

There is no doubt that there are more than dozen explanations, all backed up with psukim and maamorei Chazal, as to why Hashem created the world and gave us Toiro and Mitzvois.

Whether it is for Hashem's pleasure (nachas ruach lefonai sh'omarti v'naase retzoini), or for Hashem's desire to express Himself as a King (Ono emloich, Ein Melech bloi Am), or for our perfection (loi nitnu hamitzvois elo l'tzaref bohem ess habrios), the bottom line in all (most?) hashkofois is the same: we must **do** in order to get Hashem's intent fulfilled.

Theorizing doesn't get us closer to Hashem's final goal, but **action** does.

So whatever explanation Yoni chooses, the main thing is to do the actions of being a Jew: Shabbos, Kashrus, Tfilin.

This actions will strengthen the Emuna, and Emuna will give meaning to the actions.

But don't stop doing!

Yoni, let us know how your last days in China are happening...

Good luck.

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Re: down on judaism, down on life

Posted by aaron - 24 Nov 2011 18:36

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Shalom aleichem holy brother,

my heart cries out for you. i must say your struggle speaks to me as well. not in the immediate sense. I too am a BT. i know what you are going through and it surely seems rough. UAJ had some great advise, but i can't underestimate the importance of having a rav who understands your background.

for myself, i came to find a giant of torah who has his head on straight. he addressed many of the issues you brought up.

- non-jewish music - see rambam fourth perek of pirkei avos who says nJ music can be better than jewish depending on the emotion it builds

- R solevetchik was offended at the idea of having to check for invisible bugs and considered it an affront to mesorah ( to quote him "are you saying my grandmother didn't keep kosher?" ) so bedieved you can rely on that

each of these issues you listed i've had addressed (beard aside) and i would reccomend finding someone who gets YOU .

for some reading that speaks more to the soul, i might reccomend to you some R jonothan sacks. i've read his parsha stuff - covenant and conversation and letter in the scroll - both highly reccomended. seek out chevra. try not to be alone so much.

stay strong. we believe in you. i feel your pain. thakns so much for sharing.

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