

Religious pain

Posted by bright - 28 May 2025 03:20

Between Therapists and Rabbanim: The Missing Middle We Desperately Need

There's a pain that doesn't always have words.

A type of hurt that hides under the surface, even in the most beautiful places.

People sometimes talk about religious trauma.

But what I went through wasn't really about religion itself.

It was about emotional wounds twisting the religion into a prison.

What I went through isn't just about one person's pain — it's about what I see as an unfortunate gap in our system.

And more importantly, it's about what we can start doing to fix it. Let me share my story with you.

I grew up as a serious bochur.

I pushed myself hard.

I learned day and night.

I was a masmid.

I was successful in yeshiva.

People respected me.

I was looked at as someone who was "doing everything right."

But on the inside?

I never felt like I was good enough.

Let me explain.

Before I got married I had already spent years in therapy. I had worked through a lot - including the terribly trauma I had experienced. I made real progress. I grew. I healed. But there was an aspect to my emotional wounds that I didn't even begin to understand. Although I was accomplishing and successful, no matter how much I learned, how much I accomplished

there was a quiet voice always telling me:

“You’re a disappointment.”

“You’re faking it.”

“You’re not really wanted by Hashem.”

Every word of Torah I learned, every tefillah I said, every bracha I made —

I wasn’t doing it because I wanted to.

I was doing it because if I didn’t, I was worthless.

Not just “bad,” not just “slacking” — worthless.

If I skipped a bracha — I was garbage.

If I zoned out during Shemoneh Esrei — Hashem hated me.

I was a faker, a hypocrite, a walking Chillul Hashem.

Judaism wasn’t inspiring.

Judaism was oxygen — but oxygen mixed with poison.

Shabbos was terror.

Every halacha, every minute, was a test I was set up to fail.

One wrong move, and I was trash forever.

Learning wasn't something I loved — it was a burden I was chained to.

If I stopped learning, I was screaming inside:

“You're disgusting. You don't deserve anything good. Hashem hates you.”

I remember learning a schmooze about bitul Torah.

A healthy person might hear, “Try to make your time more meaningful.”

I heard, “You're a rasha who is killing yourself spiritually with every second you're not learning.”

The worst part?

Inside of me, buried under all the fake smiles, there was a rage building.

I would never have admitted it.

I didn't even let myself know it was there.

But deep inside, there was a part of me that hated God.

Hated Him for what He was doing to me.

For setting up a world where no matter how hard I tried, I would always lose.

For making me live in terror.

or killing me slowly, invisibly, with expectations I could never meet. And hating God made me hate myself even more.

Because who hates God? Only a monster.

Only a piece of garbage.

Only someone beyond hope.

And although I had already spent years in therapy, and had worked through my abuse and much more,

There was an aspect to my emotional wounds that I didn't even begin to understand.

I had plumbed the depths of my psyche. I worked through years of suffering with the help of top therapists and explored numerous innovative modalities. Yet I still had not touched the religious part of the pain.

I hadn't even realized it was there.

At the time when everything broke open again,

I was married.

I had beautiful children.

I was learning full-time in a prestigious kollel —

doing well, respected, trusted, admired.

On the outside, my life was a success story.

Inside, I didn't even realize there was still a volcano waiting to erupt.

But then a life-shattering event tore through everything I thought I had built.

It ripped away the thin layer of safety I had been standing on.

And underneath it, all the old wounds, all the buried rage, came flooding back.

Except now it wasn't just emotional pain.

It was spiritual pain.

It was a soul-deep scream.

I couldn't hide from it anymore.

I was furious.

I was broken.

And the truth is — I didn't want to stay anymore.

If I hadn't had a family depending on me,

I would have left Yiddishkeit completely.

Without hesitation.

Without looking back.

I wasn't held by love.

I wasn't held by faith.

I was held by responsibility.

By the brutal knowledge that if I left, I would destroy more than myself.

The pain was so deep.

Way beyond anything I had ever thought I could survive.

I was trapped in a religion I hated.

Trapped in a relationship with God that felt more like a prison sentence than a covenant.

And every step of the way, every prayer, every halacha, every mitzvah —
instead of drawing me closer to Hashem, only made me feel more rage.

I saw Him in everything that went wrong —
every little frustration, every delay, every disappointment.

It all felt like proof that Hashem was out to get me.

I could have written a reverse hashgacha pratis sefer —
not about miracles, but about all the ways I thought Hashem was trying to destroy me.

And I had no one to turn to.

Not because I didn't try.

I spoke to rabbanim — open-minded, compassionate, very chashuv rabbanim.

I reached out to organizations — big, respected ones.

They listened. They cared. But no one knew how to help.

There was no one who really dealt with this kind of pain, an emotional issue with Hashem Himself.

No one was able to get to the root of what I was going through.

And I started to feel completely hopeless.

Like maybe no one ever could help.

I didn't believe therapy could help me.

I had already tried.

So many times.

But thankfully I did.

Because this therapist was different.

He challenged me.

He pointed out how extreme my beliefs about Hashem were —

how black-and-white, how childish, how full of fear and self-hatred. And even more importantly, he introduced me to a unique Rav who is able to portray Yiddeshkeit in a beautiful, yet simple way.

At first, I doubted him completely.

He wasn't just challenging a few ideas.

He was shaking my entire identity.

Of course Hashem demands perfection.

Of course if you sin, you're a rasha.

Of course Hashem criticizes you if you fail.

But he didn't just argue with me.

He gently pushed me toward a different perspective, one that changed my life.

Through conversations, through reading, through listening —

I was exposed to a totally different picture of Hashem.

Not a distant, perfectionistic, judge.

Not a punisher or a relentless impossible--to-please master.

but an unconditional source of love.

and i began to learn how to build an entirely different kind of relationship with him and with His

Torah. A genuine connection, not one built on a divine score card, red tallies and brownie points.

These new ways of thinking and living certainly weren't easy to accept.

They didn't match what I had internalized from my years in yeshiva. (Though I now fully understand that they are in perfect harmony)

It didn't match what the fear in me believed

I fought it.

It sounded too soft, too fluffy, too fake. But over time, I realized:

The God I had hated wasn't real.

He was a projection of my pain — not the truth of Torah.

And the real Hashem — the One who had been hidden behind all that fear —

was waiting for me with love. With more love than I loved myself. Love not for some perfect version of me, but for the real broken, fighting one.

I had to rebuild everything.

My entire Yiddishkeit.

But as difficult as this was, it was the most rewarding thing I experienced. I became alive! I started understanding concepts I had always struggled with. My neurons started firing on all cylinders and I made connections and understood new deep meanings in everything I learned and did.

I stopped learning because I had to.

I started learning because I wanted to.

Because I wanted to understand and connect.

And even though I still sometimes struggle with fear and guilt —
now I know how to handle it.

The rule is that Hashem loves me.

No one dies from a question —
as long as there's a healthy foundation of emunah.

I realized how deep and beautiful the Torah really was. Simcha jumps out at me from every area of religious life. Today, my Yiddishkeit is different.

When I daven, I think:

Hashem just wants to spend time with me.

He wants a small, quiet meeting — just me and Him.

Even if I can't concentrate.

Even if my mind drifts.

He just wants me to show up.

He treasures my effort.

He treasures the fact that I'm there.

Not my performance.

Me.

Before I bench, I don't think, "I have to."

I think:

Hashem moved the entire world to get me this piece of bread.

He loves me that much.

Before every mitzvah, I try to find one point of meaning —
one spark of connection.

And slowly, I also started seeing Hashem inside the world.

When I feel a moment of love —
that's not random.
That's Hashem sending His love to me.

When I experience compassion —
that's a small reflection of Hashem's own compassion toward me.

When someone does a kindness —
that's a little glimpse of Hashem's kindness shining into the world.

The more I open my eyes,
the more I see that Hashem isn't hiding.

He's everywhere.

In the good.

In the beauty.

In the acts of love and mercy that fill this world when we're willing to look for them.

Maybe it sounds fluffy.

Maybe it sounds too soft for some people.

But this is the truth.

This is what saved me.

Not through fear.

Not through guilt.

But through love.

Real love.

Hashem's love.

And for the first time in my life,

I'm not just surviving.

I'm alive.

This is the part nobody talks about.

There are thousands of people carrying this kind of pain —

people who feel trapped inside a broken relationship with Hashem.

But there seems to be nowhere to turn.

Therapists, even the best ones, often don't have the background to fix religious wounds.

And even when they do, the pain is so tangled up with Torah and mitzvos that it's hard for a person to trust them fully — especially someone coming from years in yeshiva.

Rebbeim, on the other hand, may know Torah deeply —

but most aren't trained in emotional trauma.

Even when they recognize pain, they don't always have the tools to address what's really going on underneath.

This isn't a criticism of rabbanim.

And it's not a criticism of therapists.

It's just a reality:

There's a gap between the two.

And for someone stuck in the middle —

emotionally hurting, spiritually drowning —

that gap can feel like a black hole.

Even when someone in this situation asks an emunah question, the answer they need isn't just intellectual.

Because usually, what's underneath the question isn't just doubt —

it's fear. Shame. A belief in a terrifying, angry, impossible-to-please God.

Its not enough to answer, "Why did Hashem bring tzadikim through the camps?" with "svivav nissru meod"

The real question he is asking is:

"How can I possibly love a God who kills even His best children?"

"How will I ever be enough for Him?"

If no one helps the person rebuild their whole picture of Hashem,
then no brilliant answer will help.

This kind of healing takes time, Torah, and deep emotional insight.

And the people who can truly offer that —

who understand the Torah world and the emotional world —

are few and far between, and are so busy they don't have the time for the back and forth that is needed.

We need people who can bridge the two worlds —

people fluent in Torah and fluent in emotional healing.

People who understand what a sugya feels like,

and what trauma feels like.

Not instead of rabbanim. Not instead of therapists.

But a new middle.

Someone who knows the Torah — and also knows the wound.

There cannot be a one-size-fits-all approach either as different individuals have different needs and different emotional challenges.

I don't know exactly how and what needs to change.

But I do know this: awareness is the first step.

I've spoken to well-known organizations and rabbanim.

But even they didn't have a concrete thing to do.

That's why I'm writing this.

Because until we start talking about it —
until we recognize this silent struggle —
nothing can change.

But something has to.

P.S. A special hakaras hatov to Rabbi Dovid Aaron who shared with me so much of his time, clarity, and insight which helped me get to where I am today.

If you're struggling with this kind of pain, or if you're trying to help someone who is —
and you want to talk, share, or explore ideas —
you can reach out at haragra14@gmail.com.

You're not alone.

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Re: Religious pain

Posted by yitzchokm - 30 May 2025 20:05

There are people, who regardless of religious affiliation, constantly criticize a certain child without showing him love, warmth and support. I am not pointing at specific people but just pointing out that there are people who act this way towards a specific child and this can sometimes be the cause for this type of misconception about Yiddishkeit. At other times, this misconception can come internally from the way we feel about ourselves and not from what others are telling us. There may be other reasons for this misconception like trauma and abuse. For those of us in chinuch or raising children it is important that we show love, warmth and support to all of our students and children. This can help the students and children properly understand Hashem. I don't work in chinuch, and discipline and love need the proper balance so take this with a grain of salt.

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Re: Religious pain

Posted by bright - 30 May 2025 21:29

[chaimoigen wrote on 30 May 2025 18:35:](#)

I appreciate everything that was written by both the Captain and Bright.

These lessons are so important, and they're crucial for a healthy relationship with the Rebono Shel Olam. Very powerful, thank you!

Just want to add in a comment that doesn't really have much to do with the actual Hashkafic issues.

I personally also grew up in a home with a strong Litvish traditions, and went to a respected "old school" Yeshiva. I heard the same Shmoozin that's you're describing (including the negativity)

Yet BH, somehow I never interpreted the messages I heard there in the way that you did. Through the kindness of Hashem, I was able to learn from my Rabbeim the message that there's both Ahava and Yirah and even a healthy balance between them. I learned in yeshiva that Hashem loves us, wants us to be happy, and isn't out to get us. Avinu Malkeinu on Rosh Hashana was in the context of "?? ????? ????? ????? ?? ?? ?????", and I always felt the promise of Hashems love more than I felt the fear of His discipline. And this is despite the fact that neither I or my Rabbeim or Yeshiva were Chassidish. In fact, I know a lot of "Litvishe Talmidei Chachomim" who daven with warmth and heartz, do Chessed, and actually aren't cold fish, and believe there's more to Yiddishkeit than learning and avoiding Gehenom.

And I have also spoken with and know great people who were raised Chassidish who have unfortunately lived in abject terror of various Inyanim detailed in the Zohar Hakadosh to the extent that they weren't able to live normally, who blamed the Chassidishe system for their problems. And I also know a lot of happy, well adjusted Chassidim who are filled with healthy Simchas Hachaim.

My point is that traumatic negative and false impressions about Hashem and Yiddishkeit aren't a product of the "Litvish system", and the solution isn't "chassidus"- **it's far more nuanced than that**. Most people who develop a negative and harmful belief system do so out of a combination of many factors...

about "American pizza-fressers"

I dont think anyone here was trying to insinuate that it is, but there's a certain attitude out there that likes to blame the Yeshivos, so I just wanted to chime in with my two cents to protest it.

End rant.

I feel better.

Totally true. And it's amazing how far the yeshiva world has come with regards to sensitivity to mental health and caring about the individual. Many of the issues people have can definitely be attributed to self perception. As we spoke about:) That being said it's also important for rebbeim to understand that what r ploni said last generation may be harmful to some of the students in this dor.

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Re: Religious pain

Posted by altehmirrerr - 01 Jun 2025 02:54

Just wanna share a altehmirrers blik, as we are serious litvishe chevra who take learning very seriously, from my personal view point there is no problem bietzem with the hashkfa that we got....., and i agree fully with @cm, the only heora i would have is that the system works very well for healthy bochurim.

The problem is when there is a "sick" boy, **and the deeper problem is identifying the "sick" boy**, when a bochur is not healthy and for whatever reason didn't internalize the aleph beis of yiddishkeit (in his home, and in cheder), and doesn't feel that connection to hashem, then he is missing the solid foundation needed to be able to build further in the correct healthy way, think about it if a bochur is gezunt in his yiddishkeit and in his nefesh then when he hears about torah torah torah it will penetrate in a way that is real, and when he hears about yirah it will also be honestly real, bec. he already has the basics that hashem is our loving father and cares about us od ein shiur, it will be mitoich ahava....., but when the bochur is totally not gezunt than all he's hearing is that the only thing is yirah..., torah...., without it feeling real at all without being able to connect with it for real, and in my humble opinion there are too many such bochurim....., but yes as @cm brought out by the chassidishe velt there are issues as well...., bottom line is that we have to work on the basics, no jumping.

Kol tuv, and hatzlocha raba from the varmeh geshmokeh mir.

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Re: Religious pain

Posted by bright - 01 Jun 2025 03:17

I'm positive that it's not just the Bochum that are "sick". There are many Bochurim that struggle with some form of anxiety, self esteem or apathy with regards to yideshkeit in some form. I am sure you didn't mean it to sound this way, but I want to be clear. It's not the bochur who is sick in the head and has to go find help. Every person has to go help themselves, this is true, but the oness is on the teacher to teach in a way the student will accept or at least in a way that will "do no harm".

I want to bring out my point with two stories one from this generation and one from the last. In Shanghai when the mir was there there was a student who unfortunately passed away. R chatzkel gave a fiery shmuezz berating the Olam for not caring about their dead friend, but caring more about the fact that that they couldn't wear shoes. This generation anyone who gave a talk like that should be arrested. When you have traumatized students who just lost their friend to scream at them is tantamount to psychological murder. Yet that was a different generation and for them that helped them grow, and it was something that a great man and a sensitive man such as r chatzkel very was OK with doing. Last generation was extremely tough and resilient. What they achieved with their unwavering strength is the reason we have the flourishing of klal yisroel we merit in this generation.

The second story happened to me personally. I was personally by a talk where a respected mechanech got up and started screaming about how if you are a Baal habus you have no hope. Never mind that among those who were listening were bachurim who would in all likelihood end up working. This person took a message from the previous generation extolling the virtues of learning full-time to an America that did not respect Torah and abused it to give over a talk that

probably caused some in the crowd who went to work to not be able to respect themselves. These are both extreme examples and they're not what's happening usually. I just wanted to bring out what I am talking about and to show that this is not just a fringe thing that affects the most emotionally sick in our society. Anyone without a rock hard skin can be really hurt. This is not the point that I came to bring out with my original post at all. But once it came up, I felt obligated to bring out this point if it could be helpful to the amazing teachers of the next generation. Thanks for listening.

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Re: Religious pain

Posted by alex94 - 01 Jun 2025 10:21

My 2 cents:

Chinuch is a responsibility shared by parents and mosdos.

When both are somewhat healthy - decent chances of thriving.

When one (especially the home) is very unhealthy, there are very slim chances the other can pick up the slack.

@bright im so happy you found what you needed to be able to connect to Hashem. It is literally the most important thing in the life of a Yid. It is an all encompassing journey that even the best therapy or the best Rebbi alone cannot entirely address.

I was zoche to grow up in a home with such twisted messages about Hashem, Torah, the world and life, that I knew I had to find something else. Years later, it seems that for me, emotional growth and connection with Hashem are intertwined. Even if I have the correct messages in my head, the darkness still simmers within, awaiting the integration of what I have learned.

As we approach Shavuot, we have the opportunity to ask Hashem for the clarity we need to face and grow through the challenges He sends us this year. May Hashem help me and all of us trust His process and become close to him through it.

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Re: Religious pain

Posted by bright - 01 Jun 2025 15:18

So beautiful. And so true. Every persons journey of truth brings its own unique light into the world. Can you share some of the your insights with us?

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Re: Religious pain

Posted by neshomo kedosha - 05 Jun 2025 02:39

Just read your opening post...

Wow wow wow so real thank you for sharing such deep feelings really hit deep down

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Re: Religious pain

Posted by trueme - 05 Jun 2025 03:19

Two cents.

I have what to say on the topic.

I really held back and deleted would be posts.

I said - who cares about my two cents? (Nowadays it has been revealed that we actually lose money from pennies anyways...)

So instead I fished into my pockets and took out another two cents.

Which maybe someone will find useful.

Not commenting on the pros or cons of the system.

I think that such a discussion is only helpful for those that are actually going to make real changes that work (regarding if the cons are legit) .

I think what's relevant for the individual is that nothing is random.

The system ain't random.

His upbringing ain't random.

His parents ain't random.

His wife ain't random.

His pain ain't random.

You get the drift.

Fellows got two choices.

Victim land and mope.

Or realize that Hashem put me **specifically in this (lets say dysfunctional or painful) situation because here is where I can grow best.**

Every bullet, pain, situation is targeted from the one above. The best coach we have. To make us the true version of ourselves.

And we have the power and opportunity to transcend our pain and grow.

This aint easy.

This can be hard.

We are here to become champs.

Maybe lots of us (me at times) dont wanna.

It's as if Hashem says no go son, Im not giving in to you and leaving you to be a wimp.

Your a champ!

You deserve the challenge.

Get in the ring and fight!

...And truly grow.

There is a gorgeous letter from the past Lubavitcher Rebbe where he writes a principle expressed by others but he emphasizes a powerful point. If your going through a struggle and you think you cant handle it (Aside from that Hashem doesn't give you challenges you can't handle) it's Hashem's way of hinting to you to look deeper within yourself. You dont know yourself well enough and you are on the way to discovering certain reservoirs of strength you never knew you had. I think that angle is a big chizzuk. It's not just a ?????? ?????? that - "I must be wrong, I could handle it" - it's a positive journey of self discovery where you are going to discover the greatness of self you were never aware of.

This applies to all struggles in life.

I say time to stop gripping about the system and any pain its caused - (although for cathartic venting purposes it could be useful with a good friend)

Time to start realizing we are bigger than any problem or challenge that has come our way.

We just dont know it yet.

Then again, maybe some on this site already do.

Love y'all

Trueme

P.S. I didn't mean to offend anyone going through a challenge and in pain, I just think the above is worth pondering.

If someone finds the post insensitive, my apologies.

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Re: Religious pain

Posted by sprather - 05 Jun 2025 06:33

Thank you so much for writing this; I have been feeling similarly, and reading this was really helpful. It really helps when someone else writes out your experience so clearly. I know G-d exists, and that he commandment me in his mitzvot. I even know intellectually that he loves me, but it is often so hard to really feel that. I just feel so awful whenever I fall, but the fact I know I will feel awful later doesn't stop me. I don't know how to make things better, but I pray that all of us can grow in our ahavat Hashem.

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Re: Religious pain

Posted by bright - 08 Jun 2025 13:44

Hi trueme, thank you for your post. You are right theoretically, but I believe some compassion is in order. We could say the same thing, theoretically to one who went through the holocaust. These are your circumstances, Hashem put you here stop getting angry at the Germans. Anyone who is bashing the system needs compassion, not mussar. That being said, my intent was never to bash the system, rather to point out an area there is no system in.

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Re: Religious pain

Posted by alex94 - 08 Jun 2025 15:25

[bright wrote on 08 Jun 2025 13:44:](#)

rather to point out an area there is no system in.

What I believe trueme is saying, and is understandably really hard to hear, is that there is a system.

Hashem's system.

And while things were and may still be painful, hurting and dark, and it feels as though we have been let down by those who we trusted, this is all part of Hashem's plan for us to grow into the light-filled, happy, successful neshamas we have the potential to be.

I think that while the importance of this point cannot be understated, there is a great need for trust between the two parties in the conversation for the message to be received at all, let alone well and effectively.

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Re: Religious pain

Posted by yitzchokm - 08 Jun 2025 17:11

As can be seen from bright's post he did grow from his situation. The point he was making was the pain and confusion he had to go through that caused him to grow. That pain and confusion is very real and philosophical reasoning doesn't take it away. In order to heal from the pain and confusion, all that is needed from us is validation; that we understand and feel his pain. So yes, we do feel your pain and it hurts that you had to undergo such difficult circumstances for so long until you were able to see the light. Your message is very true and you have the torch in your

hands to guide others going through similar circumstances.

There was an article in Mishpacha this week of a boy who all his parents told him was how he wasn't leading up to their expectations and they never showed him warmth and encouragement. The boy ended up with depression and anxiety, went OTD and eventually after he was in rehab his parents learned to act properly. Today he is frum and he is a therapist helping others in his community.

This obviously isn't your story but it has the similarity of things going wrong when Judaism looks like something very demanding without the component of a loving Father. The story in Mishpacha is the story in one way or another of thousands of children who went OTD. I think the system changed somewhat in recent years but we still have lots of children going OTD so it seems like we aren't out of the woods yet.

What you wrote can be an eye opener for parents and teachers as to how they should be relating to their children and students and it can help them check whether they are relaying the proper messages.

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Re: Religious pain

Posted by SisonYishecha - 09 Jun 2025 03:26

WOW.

Just made it here and I'm blown away by the clarity and stinging truth of what's been written thus far.

I've been klopped, bopped, smashed, and a lot more, by the system for as long as I can remember.

There has been times that my survival method was flight and I would kinda find my own corner of society, and there's been times when I hacked it and was a very active part of unzere velt.

So I can very much relate to some of what's been written.

Just to try and bridge the gap a bit between @bright and @trueme, it hit me as follows.

What we each experience on a personal level can very much be used as a growing experience.

More than that, what we experience is **meant to be a tool** for us to increase our self awareness, to discover reservoirs of strength and resilience that we never knew or imagined that we had.

In that vein, pointing fingers at any external cause, be it the system, the weather, or the POTUS, we are not only missing the lesson - but we are losing an opportunity.

A golden opportunity.

But when we look back or when we contemplate how the system is affecting others, then we are entitled to point out potential flaws, in a productive manner.

????? ?????? ??????, ??"?.

And on that note, it has long bothered me the extent that the current Yeshiva system seemingly has no awareness for the Eibeshter.

We have an abundance of Torah, Lomdus, maybe even a tad of Hashkafa.

But who speaks about Hashem?

Does your average Mesivta Bachur even know that there is a concept of having a personal keshet with our Father in heaven?

Beis Medrash Bachur?

Kollel Yungeleit?

Why is the Yeshiva Oilam seemingly so uncomfortable about discussing the

Eibeshter? About openly admitting that "I talk to Hashem on a personal level, even not during davening.

Something seems to have gotten lost along the way, and with all of our zeal for Toirah, Un Nor Toirah, I think we may have forgotten some of the most basic tenets of Yidishkeit.

Sorry if I offended anyone.

I'll stop here.

Oh, one last point that came to mind and I can't resist.

When we have awareness of a keshar with Hashem from a young age, then that keshar is unwavering even once we leave Kollel and are no longer in a matzav of ????? ???????, wouldn't that be just amazing if that could take place?

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Re: Religious pain

Posted by bright - 09 Jun 2025 04:11

Just to be clear before I begin: I'm not criticizing anyone personally, and certainly not the sincerity behind what was shared. I'm responding to the way certain ideas are often used in these conversations, sometimes with the best of intentions, but in ways that can unintentionally minimize pain. I'm sharing my own experience and reflections, not trying to argue.

[p]I want to say something a little vulnerable. Honestly, I am very intellectually oriented, and my first instinct was always to give the "right" answer, you know, the one that checks all the boxes. It's taken me years, and I'm still learning, to understand that the deepest response to pain is not always explanation, but empathy. You'll probably even see that matter of fact tone in some of my earlier posts.

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