

OivedElokim-I'll never give up

Posted by OivedElokim - 21 Feb 2021 21:37

Day one.

This is my brand new thread for my brand new journey towards purity.

I will keep with me the lessons learned so far and keep my eye on the ball.

Today is the first day of the rest of my life.

A porn and masturbation free life.

A life of positivity and happiness.

A life of Torah and Avodah.

The life G-d intends for me to live.

Wish me luck.

=====

Re: OivedElokim-I'll never give up

Posted by OivedElokim - 02 Dec 2022 02:08

[??? ???? ???? ??? wrote on 01 Dec 2022 23:22:](#)

Thank you for your honesty. The first step in moving through cognitive dissonance is naming it

and you have already done that. I wish for you that you find the spiritual peace that you are looking for.

Thank you for your kind words and wishes.

All the best to you!

=====

Re: OivedElokim-I'll never give up

Posted by OivedElokim - 02 Dec 2022 02:36

[5Uu80*cdwB#^ wrote on 02 Dec 2022 00:54:](#)

Thank you for your post, OivedElokim. I am davening for your strength to keep doing what's right. Your username is very telling about who you are as a person, an OvedElokim.

As someone who didn't grow up frum and who originally explored all of the "proofs" and arguments and everything you wrote about when I was becoming frum, my advice for you is to not to be ??? your yiddishkeit on proofs. Attempts at proving the historical truth of the Torah are vulnerable to pan out false (such as the Bible codes did), which is why it's really a disservice that so much out there in the kiruv world is about "proving" the Torah. The only infallible emunah is the *a priori* acceptance of halacha. That is, the acceptance of halacha must be an assumption, not an object of proof.

Also, regarding the people whom you described as being "very happy" in their off the derech lives, that's exactly the world I came from, so I am in a position to comment. Of course it's imaginable that someone can find some level of satisfaction even without living a life of connection to the Creator of the world. For example, a non-frum volunteer in a soup kitchen could likely report satisfaction in doing that kindness despite doing it for purely secular reasons. But you need to realize that you cannot every truly know if someone is actually happy or actually depressed and faking happiness unless you're that person's psychiatrist and you refill his antidepressants and anti-anxiety medication every 3 months. Because of this, I don't believe any reports of reports about who says they're happy. Celebrities are purportedly happy and it is well known that in fact they are unbelievably miserable. You just can't know who's really happy and who's not, and everyone wants everyone else to think their so happy, especially after they make a decision like going off the derech and don't want to feel any guilt.

In conclusion, I feel a tremendous amount of empathy for you. I really am so sorry you are going through this turmoil, and I pray that you make it out much, much stronger than you entered.

Here for you,

5Uu80*cdwB#^

Thank you for your thoughtful post. I will attempt to address each point you made.

First of all, I am not ???? my Yiddishkeit on proofs, but it's a big part of the equation. If I cannot justify it in my mind, I cannot continue to do it. I don't reject Yiddishkeit's claims merely because I found a logical fallacy in a specific proof. Rather, the whole thing feels wrong to me for a myriad of reasons which I do not want to specify simply because A- I don't want to make this thread about this subject-not the point of GYE and B- I don't want to damage anyone else's faith. My intuition is a very strong force in my life and my intuition tells me that it's all baloney. That coupled with lack of proof equals lack of faith.

In regards to whether OTD people are generally happy-I honestly don't know, although I would assume that some are and some aren't, like in everything. Sweeping generalizations are very unhelpful and generally inaccurate.

I don't remember why the question of their happiness came up, but these are my thoughts on the subject:

Yes, a believer in and follower of frum Yiddishkeit can potentially have a lot of meaning, purpose and drive to live.

If you have a neat belief system that helps you cope with misfortune and challenge and allows you to feel like a good person simply by following its dictates-you will probably be very fulfilled.

However: I know of many frum people who live very dull, depressing and meaningless lives. At the moment I count myself amongst them.

This can happen for many different reasons, which are maybe beyond the scope of our discussion, certainly this post.

So happiness isn't automatic, whether you're frum or not or Catholic or atheist. No religion or philosophy has made everyone who adhered to it happy. So ultimately the question of whether frum people are happier than non-frum ones is irrelevant. It's possible to be miserable or happy in both of those lifestyles.

My issue however, is that frum life and belief cannot provide meaning and purpose to my life because I don't buy it anymore.

If there was a magic way to regain my faith and put this genie back in the bottle, I would do it in a heartbeat.

But it doesn't look like I'll have that opportunity, and it's absolutely devastating.

Thank you again for sharing your thoughts and experience.

I hope that the mods are ok with the content of this post. If not I can delete it. If you want to discuss these issues with me directly feel free to PM me.

With a heavy heart,

OivedElokim

=====
=====

Re: OivedElokim-I'll never give up
Posted by OivedElokim - 02 Dec 2022 02:48

[frank.lee wrote on 02 Dec 2022 02:05:](#)

Hi OivedElokim!! I admire your tenacity and courage in making this effort to think through your beliefs. I actually just heard from one of the generation's lights, lamenting the fact that parts of the system don't encourage critical thinking, in what we are learning and doing.

I digress to another point you mentioned recently, about commitment and your feelings of being incapable of keeping them. Unrelated to religious practice and thought, may I suggest you take a small commitment upon yourself, to do every day for a week? It can build you up into a much more robust and healthy person, with far reaching consequences. Simply said, start with something small, when you see you are successful for the week or two, amp it up a bit.

About your questions on faith and truth, do you feel that your other issues could possibly sway your thinking? I have been there myself at times, starting to convince myself that a certain opinion is correct because of intellectual reasons, but it was really my hormones talking.

Thank you for your gracious words. It means a lot to me.

Regarding learning to keep commitments-

I've read about that method before, have tried to put it into practice with little success. But my main response to your comment on the subject is that I don't have the headspace to work on myself in that way right now. I'm too consumed with considering my current state of mind and weighing my options of how to move forward. It's a deeply painful and stressful place to be in. I don't wish it on anyone. So the self-help hacks will have to wait for now...

Regarding the possible motivations behind my doubts: I actually discussed this with my therapist today and have thought a lot about it on my own.

The basic conclusion I've reached is that almost no position anyone takes comes from a purely intellectual place. We always have emotional reasons for our intellectual positions. That doesn't invalidate my questions though. I am positive that they come from a place of ruthless intellectual honesty. I don't mean to brag-just to describe myself. I am a horrible liar both to others and to myself, and have a very acute awareness of myself. My emotional issues with the frum lifestyle and that of the specific community I am a part of definitely play some role here, but they aren't the primary driver. I am very happy to accept all the restrictions of this lifestyle if I am 100% convinced that it is the right way to live. I don't know if that answers your question or not. Let me know what you think.

Thank you again for engaging with me. Wishing you all the best!

OivedElokim

=====
=====

Re: OivedElokim-I'll never give up
Posted by Realestatemogul - 02 Dec 2022 02:49

Hey Oived!

First of all, you are awesome!!! I got chizzuk just from seeing your honesty on an all Jewish forum. Kudos to you!

The reality is that we are here to support each other no matter what! You could be completely irreligious and WE ALL would still want to help you have a normal and healthy life.

I want to share one thing personal that you may find interesting. In matter of fact, I only realized this changed because of your post!

Most of my life, I had very rough times in my life and I would ponder whether I would be happier not to be alive. I don't think I was every anywhere remotely near suicidal, but I still wondered about the "easy solution." The interesting thing was that every time I considered that possibility, I always decided I could just go off the derech and then I would probably be happy to be alive. #MINDBLOW

Anyway, fast forward and have been clean like over 700 days or s/t BH!!! Well, guess what I haven't had those thoughts in a while at all!

I'm just asking you to think carefully, about what really is telling you it would be happier on the other side. And I completely respect your decision, but either way I recommend not watching porn - it is quite destructive....

))

=====

Re: OivedElokim-I'll never give up
Posted by OivedElokim - 02 Dec 2022 02:56

[Realestatemogul wrote on 02 Dec 2022 02:49:](#)

Hey Oived!

First of all, you are awesome!!! I got chizzuk just from seeing your honesty on an all Jewish forum. Kudos to you!

The reality is that we are here to support each other no matter what! You could be completely irreligious and WE ALL would still want to help you have a normal and healthy life.

I want to share one thing personal that you may find interesting. In matter of fact, I only realized this changed because of your post!

Most of my life, I had very rough times in my life and I would ponder whether I would be happier not to be alive. I don't think I was every anywhere remotely near suicidal, but I still wondered about the "easy solution." The interesting thing was that every time I considered that possibility, I always decided I could just go off the derech and then I would probably be happy to be alive.
#MINDBLOW

Anyway, fast forward and have been clean like over 700 days or s/t BH!!! Well, guess what I haven't had those thoughts in a while at all!

I'm just asking you to think carefully, about what really is telling you it would be happier on the other side. And I completely respect your decision, but either way I recommend not watching porn - it is quite destructive....

))

Thank you for your kind words and for sharing your experience.

It's funny that you mention suicide, as it has crossed my mind as a possible "solution" to this issue. I am not suicidal right now although I've been close to it in the past.

I don't think I'll be happy whether I remain frum or not. I will either force myself to live a double life-??? ??? ????? ???.

My other option is leaving behind my family, friends and community and everything I've known and loved to assimilate into a world I do not know and will probably never fully feel comfortable in. It's a lose lose situation.

In regard to not watching porn for secular reasons-I agree in principle that it is destructive regardless, but it take away the urgency of the matter in a big way. So I'm not planning on continuing forever, I just don't feel the need to stop right now.

In terms of my ultimate decision-I'm not making any rash moves. I have and will continue to carefully examine my thoughts and feelings, and my potential options going forward. I'm not doing anything impulsively at all.

=====

Re: OivedElokim-I'll never give up
Posted by frank.lee - 02 Dec 2022 09:39

I am sure you are searching for the truth, but maybe reading online material by those who think they are very smart but are not erudite or unbiased is not the best way to go.

Ask a real talmid chacham. In Judaism, we are open to probing questions on all issues. Not always can this work in a school setting, and not everyone has the knowledge, but you are always free to ask.

Send me any questions you have, happy to see if I can clear anything up for you. There are so many seforim, starting from the Gemara, which take apart and question any possible contradiction. There are so many great questions which I, or any real talmid chacham much greater than me, can easily answer you.

What you need to do first is wrote out exactly what is your benchmark. Do you need ALL your questions answered, otherwise you feel you should leave it all? Is it enough for proof beyond reasonable doubt? What if you find/feel that you are convinced that 80% chance it is correct? What if you see intellectual proof but still do not feel emotionally ok with yiddishkeit?

You can also check out the videos of Tuvia Singer. I know many people who became Jewish because of his intellectual proofs and clarity on all parts. He also is an emotional person who can understand what you are going through.

Sometimes when you work out other issues, suddenly you have no questions anymore, and vice versa. There was a fine fellow who one day publicly dropped his religious observance. Maybe he decided that he had great questions on everything. But he also just happened to spend some quality time with a fun non-jewish person of the opposite gender and apparently a failure with his taivos.

Think about it - our nation was blessed with great thinkers who kept the Torah and Halacha. Did they not think of your brilliant questions (or those on these blogs) or did they ignore their gnawing doubts, or did they knowingly live a life of fraud?

Keep seeking the truth! May you find peace and the truth and may you find all the answers/questions.

=====

Re: OivedElokim-I'll never give up
Posted by Realestatemogul - 05 Dec 2022 19:02

Hey Oived,

Just one point about what you said, I don't think it is a lose-lose. I think that regardless of whether you decide to remain frum or not it is still a win-win to live a healthy and well-balanced happy life. There are many people on this forum who can explain alot better than me what I am trying to say, but I am 100% sure that it is possible to have happiness in this world. (I just also believe I'll be happy in the next world.) That is the whole point of life to be happy. Now granted, many time in my life I am sad, down, upset, etc. BUT overall I think I am generally happy and content with my life. However, when I was stuck in a cycle of watching porn and masterbating I overall was sad, angry, depressed and I couldn't pull myself out. That is what addiction does and how it makes us feel. That has nothing to do with religion is just how G-d created the world.

As you said, you are making calculated decisions and thinking through things. I hope that hashem gives you clarity and you have people to trust to get guidance from.

All the best!

=====

Re: OivedElokim-I'll never give up
Posted by committed_togrowth - 06 Dec 2022 03:17

Hi Oived,

I am a little late to seeing these posts, I hope you are doing okay. I think there are two things I would say. First, it is so normal and healthy to go through cycles out doubt. Grappling with faith is an essential part of life. I think sometimes we are pushed to find a new approach to life, one that will lead to a real evolution in who we are as a person, and in order to get us to find that new approach our old approach and understanding is taken away from us. I heard a saying once that really resonated with me. In order to cross from one shore to another, you first have to lose sight of the first shore.

The second thing is, remember that our minds like to extrapolate a moment, day, month, or year

of our lives and make the assumption that the current experience now defines our entire life trajectory. We forget that experiences and states of mind are transient. Sometimes you may be taken very far from who you really are. You may feel a stranger to yourself and your life. But when you're in that murkiness, don't fear or panic. With time you always come back to yourself. Sending prayer and well wishes.

=====

Re: OivedElokim-I'll never give up
Posted by OivedElokim - 07 Dec 2022 23:51

[Realestatemogul wrote on 05 Dec 2022 19:02:](#)

Hey Oived,

Just one point about what you said, I don't think it is a lose-lose. I think that regardless of whether you decide to remain frum or not it is still a win-win to live a healthy and well-balanced happy life. There are many people on this forum who can explain a lot better than me what I am trying to say, but I am 100% sure that it is possible to have happiness in this world. (I just also believe I'll be happy in the next world.) That is the whole point of life to be happy. Now granted, many times in my life I am sad, down, upset, etc. BUT overall I think I am generally happy and content with my life. However, when I was stuck in a cycle of watching porn and masturbating I overall was sad, angry, depressed and I couldn't pull myself out. That is what addiction does and how it makes us feel. That has nothing to do with religion is just how G-d created the world.

As you said, you are making calculated decisions and thinking through things. I hope that Hashem gives you clarity and you have people to trust to get guidance from.

All the best!

Thank you for your encouraging words. The lose-lose situation I refer to is leaving my native community and reinventing myself completely or living a lifestyle I don't believe in. I don't think either of those are a recipe for a serene and content life. Maybe I'm wrong....

All the best,

OivedElokim

=====
=====

Re: OivedElokim-I'll never give up

Posted by OivedElokim - 07 Dec 2022 23:56

[committed_togrowth wrote on 06 Dec 2022 03:17:](#)

Hi Oived,

I am a little late to seeing these posts, I hope you are doing okay. I think there are two things I would say. First, it is so normal and healthy to go through cycles out doubt. Grappling with faith is an essential part of life. I think sometimes we are pushed to find a new approach to life, one that will lead to a real evolution in who we are as a person, and in order to get us to find that new approach our old approach and understanding is taken away from us. I heard a saying once that really resonated with me. In order to cross from one shore to another, you first have to lose sight of the first shore.

The second thing is, remember that our minds like to extrapolate a moment, day, month, or year of our lives and make the assumption that the current experience now defines our entire life trajectory. We forget that experiences and states of mind are transient. Sometimes you may be taken very far from who you really are. You may feel a stranger to yourself and your life. But when you're in that murkiness, don't fear or panic. With time you always come back to yourself. Sending prayer and well wishes.

Thank you for sharing your thoughts here. I'd say both points you make can essentially be combined-things we think are permanent are often transient. I do recognize that reality, and I sincerely hope that this is just a phase, and I guess I can't definitively judge that at the moment.

However the way this thing built itself up over the course of many months, perhaps years, makes me think that it is a sort of paradigm shift that cannot be undone. Like I said, I wish more than anything to be proven wrong in my self-assessment. I suppose only time will tell.

Wishing you all the best, grateful for your support,

OivedElokim

=====

Re: OivedElokim-I'll never give up
Posted by Hakolhevel - 08 Dec 2022 02:44

Hey, I know I'm late to the party, havent been on much the last two weeks. I saw alot of replies, I knew something exciting must have happened. Just how exciting I did not know.

I see everyone here tredding somewhat lightly, as should be expected, its a forum after all. Please do be upset at me though, if I am not as kind.

So my dear Oived, with no judgement at all, I have a question (and it seems to be a theme for me). Aside from your therapist, have you spoken to anyone in real life about this?

What I mean is, aside from searching the internt, and watching lectures, did you speak to some of your friends and or teachers in person or over the phone regarding this issue? Did you discuss it in a clear and direct manner?

=====

Re: OivedElokim-I'll never give up
Posted by OivedElokim - 08 Dec 2022 03:54

[Hakolhevel wrote on 08 Dec 2022 02:44:](#)

Hey, I know I'm late to the party, havent been on much the last two weeks. I saw alot of replies, I knew something exciting must have happened. Just how exciting I did not know.

I see everyone here treading somewhat lightly, as should be expected, its a forum after all. Please do be upset at me though, if I am not as kind.

So my dear Oived, with no judgement at all, I have a question (and it seems to be a theme for me). Aside from your therapist, have you spoken to anyone in real life about this?

What I mean is, aside from searching the internet, and watching lectures, did you speak to some of your friends and or teachers in person or over the phone regarding this issue? Did you discuss it in a clear and direct manner?

Hey buddy, when I saw that you posted on my forum I was actually expecting a much harsher response than what I actually got, so no worries. I guess your reaction to life is all about your expectations. Ok enough philosophizing...

In answer to your question-yes. I have spoken to two mentor figures in my life, a sibling and a friend about this. The mentors were not particularly helpful (one said that all of my issues are really emotional in nature-I honestly think he doesn't have the tools to help me grapple with my issues on an intellectual level, although that may just be my own youthful arrogance talking-regardless it didn't resonate with me, and the other one just said I should keep monitoring my internal state-not sure what that'll do for me...), and as for the sibling and friend-I wasn't looking for answers from them, just empathy. I still plan to seek out more advice and help on this issue from my "real life" support system, but the GYE community is quite a good supplement to that. Thank you again for weighing in and showing-in your unique way-that you truly care. Your friendship is very valuable to me.

Wishing you all the best,

OivedElokim

=====

Re: OivedElokim-I'll never give up
Posted by Emes-a-Yid - 08 Dec 2022 04:35

Hey OivedElokim, my apologies on not reading the forum in length but wanted to just tell you.

That You should have Hatzlacha, wherever you are holding keep it up. Just reading the Header it gave me such an awesome feeling towards myself, hatzlacha in all your endeavors and your journey, and yes I don't know your full situation yet so I don't feel it's right to comment on that so

=====

=====

Re: OivedElokim-I'll never give up
Posted by frank.lee - 08 Dec 2022 12:21
soon.

If you have any questions on proof, emuna etc.feel free to pm me and I'll try to help you.

Personally I have asked many questions, always inquisitive, critically thinking... and I've read many books. I feel I have enough answers, and if I have one question of a hundred that was not answered, it is supercilious to ignore the rest and jump to a conclusion that it is all a hoax. Rather I feel comfortable that the answer is out there..

=====

=====