

Chooseurnames 90 day trip

Posted by Chooseurname - 11 Oct 2023 20:09

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Hello,

I was not going to try for 90 days now. Over yamim noraim I was mekabel just an hour a day to be careful - a machsom l'aynayim. I thought that was where I was holding and it was something I could build real growth on. However, when I heard over yom tov what happened in E"Y I decided I could do more klal yisroel. So here I go for 90 days whatever it takes.

I'm going to try hard to check in daily as I think it'll be really helpful.

It's a good time to start because with all the yom tov I kinda shook loose of some unhelpful habits. On the other hand, I'm glued to my computer following the news so not so great. I wish I could backdate this streak to before Rosh Hashana but alas it was interrupted...

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Re: Chooseurnames 90 day trip

Posted by thompson - 08 Aug 2024 20:15

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[chosemyschem wrote on 08 Aug 2024 19:20:](#)

A corrupt conversation between Body and Soul

Body: What are the scariest words in the Torah?

Soul: Good question. Some may say "yadaychim damim maleiu". Some might reference this week's Haftarah: "gam ki sarbu b'tfilah aineni shomaya" or other pesukim there.

Body: I think it is "b'chol eis yihyu bgadecha levonim."

B'chol eis?? All the time?!

G-d, I'm trying to be a good Jew but I can't take a break sometime? Must I always be on,

always be making the right decision? Can't I have just some time for myself??

Soul: But does G-d take a break from giving you breath? Does he leave you alone for a bit so he can relax?

Body: Ah. Way to crank up the pressure. Okay. I'll try my hardest to force myself to always do good, to always make the right decision.

Body: But one second. I've been trying to do that for a long time and it doesn't seem to work?

Soul: No worries. G-d doesn't ask the impossible. Just give it your best and smartest shot and you'll get there one day.

This whole conversation is, of course, a horrific churban.

I truly feel that the posuk of b'chol eis is the scariest posuk in the Torah. And that feeling is maybe the paradigmatic example of the churban beis hamikdash.

Derecheha darchei noam. Chiko mamtakim v'kulo machmadim. Yashkeinu minishekas pihu ki tovim dodecha miyayin.

A life of non-stop avodas hashem should be a delight. Not a pressure, not a payment we begrudgingly shell out to G-d in exchange for another day of life. Not something right-but-painful that we force ourselves to do.

How many of us have tried to go to sleep but somehow stayed up till dawn clicking, clicking, clicking, impossibly drawn after something so fake, so meaningless, and so empty? How many of us have ever meant to go to sleep but somehow stayed up till dawn lost in a sugya??

Torah, mitzvos, our relationship with Hashem. These things of endless depth and beauty should be so much more attractive than the nothingness we fill our lives with.

But we don't feel that. We feel the opposite of how we should feel.

And all we can do about our backwards life is bend down and progress like slugs. [Which is what we are supposed to be doing in our current state and for 353 days of the year we should be delighted about.] But we could've been born with wings.

We could've been born with Abaya and Rava being more fascinating than politics, sports, hock, lashon hara, or women (choose your preferred flavor of narishkeit). Instead of every day being a painful journey of one foot forward, two steps back, we could be purely motivated to become as close to Hashem as possible. Instead of pain we could have had delight.

Ignoring the pain this distance causes Hashem (the highest level of mourning), the physical tzoros that brings (the lowest level), and the lowly state klal yisroel as a whole has descended to. The churban of the individual is so complete and so pervasive that we don't even realize how destroyed we are.

Please do me a favor. Don't say Hashem wanted us down here in the mud. Because while that's true, how can we not cry while we choke on dirt?

The problem I have with this conversation is that I feel the body gave in too soon.

After the soul argued that, "*does G-d take a break from giving you breath? Does he leave you alone for a bit so he can relax?*" my initial reaction was, well he's unlimited, He has no need to relax. He doesn't have a creature that's more powerful than Him trying to trip Him up. He wanted to create us. So He did. He wants us around, so He sustains us. It takes nothing from Him.

Don't get me wrong, I appreciate that He created me (Although our sages tell us we'd be better off without it.), but I don't see any comparrrison.

Happy Morose Churbaning.

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Re: Chooseurnames 90 day trip  
Posted by chosemyshem - 08 Aug 2024 21:30

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[thompson wrote on 08 Aug 2024 20:15:](#)

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Excellent question that deserves more thought than I gave it. That dialogue is definitely rough, and what's written below is not particularly clear.

But. Hashem didn't do anything difficult by making me. It didn't cost him anything. zeh nehna

v'za lo chasar.

But that doesn't mean he had to create me.

When I breathe, Hashem is actively choosing for me to be able to do that. Shouldn't I be grateful?

If Bill Gates dropped 8 million dollars on me so I could retire and pursue my dream of a seven year around the world beer tasting yacht tour, he wouldn't notice the money was gone for a second. But I'd be eternally grateful. I'havdil (kal v'chomer? whatever the right jewish word is) I should be grateful for the privilege of life.

It gets deeper though. I don't know why Billy is dropping that dough on me. But when Hashem gives me a breath it's because he loves me and wants to give it to me. Love engenders love returned. I should experience that breath as a loving gift and return the love.

The Body in the dialogue didn't get that. The Body enjoys his life, and would like it to continue. He doesn't understand relationships with Hashem. He understands gratitude to some extent. Although he may not be particularly moved by gratitude beyond a token amount, when the Soul makes it clear how much he should feel grateful for that motivates him somewhat begrudgingly.

But his main motivation may be that he understands intellectually that Hashem is continually sustaining him, and would like that not to stop. He understands that the requirements of mitzvos are 24/7 (as a quick look in shulchan aruch makes clear). He views mitzvos as the token payments for that life, and is willing to do them in order for his life to continue. So when the Soul makes it clear that life isn't guaranteed to continue the Body is forced into working harder to pay the Life bill.

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Re: Chooseurnames 90 day trip  
Posted by chaimoigen - 09 Aug 2024 00:03

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Thompson, you changed the conversation to focus on the imponderable, which is the part of the conversation that is less relevant to the practical, I think. Although you can talk about whatever you want, of course.

Shem,

great, excruciating point.

I'll share my thoughts.

I don't know about others. But at the risk of sounding arrogant, I have actually had many times that I stayed up lost in the Sugya. Those were/are the best nights of my life.

Falling asleep in the embrace of Eiruvim or Nidda or Chezkas Habattim, with drool on my desk, these have been the sweetest nights of my existence.

I've had times where the words of Tehillim or Tefilla suddenly open, incandescent and alive. Times when Shabbos or Yom Tov are aglow with an otherworldly sense of Kedusha. Times on Yom Kippur night that were rapturous.

**I don't think the problem is with G-d's gift of life.**

**The problem is with us. We ruin ourselves.**

We get lost.

We waste the gift of life, by exchanging the currency of our interest, enthusiasm, pleasure and passions.

We develop the taste for: Sports, politics, video games, movies, endless scrolling, dumb news, empty literature, foolish and foul music, lusting over not-so-naked or naked curvy corpse-flesh.

The demon lurking in the shadows at the corner of the study laughs to see us burn the currency of our interest and delight for empty shards of broken pottery.

We **burn out and corrupt, we pollute** the **pleasure receptors** in our **living**, and then we want to know why our Yiddishkeit is a difficult drag.

It's much like how we can engage in behavior that eventually trains ourselves to ignore the warm, loving woman waiting in the bed upstairs while we betray her for the ghost of a two dimensional false fantasy image that gives us nothing but empty self loathing back. And then we wonder why our marriages aren't working, why she doesn't initiate, why it's not satisfying....

Laugh, Lilith- how much have you taken from us? What have we paid you? - for what?!?!

Yeah, I cry over the nauseating Churban.

I think it is we who have made it.

Yeah, living in a world of Churban sets the stage for all this.

We live in a world of Hollywood, Washington, the city street, and the damned phones and tablets and computers and whatever. But the edge and joy of life has been ruined by the false version of life and living we have adopted.

See the Ramban on Vichai Bahem. ??? ????? ?????? ??? ?????????? ???.... ????? ????? ?????... ????? ???????

That's why I choose the Shem of Chaim Oigen.

Because i am learning to look for and see what life is really all about.

And it can be beautiful, if we don't cast shadows all over it.

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Re: Chooseurnames 90 day trip

Posted by Muttel - 09 Aug 2024 08:06

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[chaimoigen wrote on 09 Aug 2024 00:03:](#)

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Masterpiece, thank you!! No one says it like you, R' Chaim, straight and complete....

Muttel

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Re: Chooseurnames 90 day trip  
Posted by chosemyshem - 09 Aug 2024 15:57

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Powerful R' CO. Very powerful.

Unrelatedly.

I was meditating on what it means to be a turkey-slug king and it came to me that it's takah a very apt metaphor for life.

We say the yetzer hara is a melech zaken uchsil. A king who is old and foolish.

And so this is a real boich sevara, but maybe we can say that the posuk is describing the process of falling into the traps of the YH. First you're a king. Then you fall a little and slow down. Stop growing and start degenerating - aging and becoming weaker. Till finally you're a fool, who can't tell wrong from right and is utterly lost. But even as the old fool, we retain our innate malchus - even in the worst lowliness we retain our identity as a melech but it's just buried under the oldness and the foolishness.

And to get back we need to progress backwards through this process. Now we're a foolish turkey. Then we get some brains but we're an old slow slug, barely able to crawl through a clean day. Just doing the minimum is difficult and painful. Until finally with Hashem's help we eventually reclaim the malchus. But even after regaining the malchus we haven't lost the experience of being a turkey - for better or worse at all times we remain

The Turkey-Slug King

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Re: Chooseurnames 90 day trip  
Posted by chosemyshem - 11 Aug 2024 17:52

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Had an interesting experience Friday afternoon (idk why my Friday afternoons have been so interesting the last couple weeks.)

Ended up having the house to myself for a few minutes before shabbos. A thought popped into my head to act out. I pushed it out, but it popped back in.

I felt like I could've white knuckled through, but I had the yishuv hadas to deal with it better. I paused, acknowledged and accepted the urge, davened for help, decided I didn't have to give in, and felt the joy in not giving in.

I felt amazing. It felt like I was going into shabbos with real purity.

I left the house to walk to shul (about a ten minute walk) and was mamash singing as I went. I was almost at shul and I was looking at the clouds (very pretty stormclouds going on) when a woman in a tight bright dress walks out of her house and bends down.

I didn't take a second look (and barely a first look except for the motion that caught my eye). I turned back to the clouds. But instead of feeling pure and good, I felt uncomfortable and squished. Once I got out of the vicinity, I felt better and mostly back to that pure feeling.

It was interesting to me how overcoming one urge felt "pure" and overcoming a different one felt uncomfortable. Life is weird. Open to hearing pshat if anyone's got it.

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Re: Chooseurnames 90 day trip  
Posted by vehkam - 11 Aug 2024 18:26

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In the first situation you were able to avoid seeing anything at all

In the second situation You were uncomfortable because you saw some thing that you know you don't want to see.

It would be helpful to celebrate the second situation as a win as well.

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Re: Chooseurnames 90 day trip  
Posted by BenHashemBH - 11 Aug 2024 18:31

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I agree with Vekham.

Also:

The first one was internal and probably developed.

The second was external and popped up in an instant.

KOMT

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Re: Chooseurnames 90 day trip  
Posted by chaimoigen - 11 Aug 2024 18:48

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Perhaps, In the second instance, you came abruptly in direct contact with the fact that exposure is unavoidable, and a part of you wanted to welcome it. That's an uncomfortable feeling, especially coming off the high of the purity of the first experience.

As Vehkam said, celebrate both.

I am touched and gratified that you appreciate (and added to!) the point I was making about the Turkey-Slug King and his Malchus.

Keep going!

we are,

Looking towards Chayim

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Re: Chooseurnames 90 day trip  
Posted by horizon - 11 Aug 2024 22:35

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My thought process:

in the second there was a real person that you were tempted to objectify. That might be a belittling feeling.

Do celebrate both, and keep turkey slug king trucking!!

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Re: Chooseurnames 90 day trip  
Posted by proudyungerman - 12 Aug 2024 03:32

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[chosemyschem wrote on 11 Aug 2024 17:52:](#)

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My friend, this coming Shabbos please celebrate this progress appropriately.

**Warning: Spoiler!**

I am very happy for you!

KOMTKS!!!

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Re: Chooseurnames 90 day trip

Posted by chosemyshem - 12 Aug 2024 18:40

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Some thought provoking responses.

**Warning: Spoiler!**

My initial thought was that in the first scenario I didn't actually need to restrict myself. I just did what was supposed to be doing then (getting ready for shabbos) instead of going to do something different.

In the second scenario I had to change what I was doing. I couldn't just keep walking, I had to restrict my field of vision - and that felt uncomfortable.

But alot of truth to the points y'all made. By the way, I did celebrate both scenarios as wins. But

only the first one left me instinctively feeling that purity.

I raised the wife-out-of-town binge on the Desparado's call yesterday, and there was some real, deep, truth in response. Unfortunately, I forgot most of it already. But I'll summarize some points I recall for anyone else in a similar situation:

- 1) The issue is not the wife going out of town, or the way I act when my wife goes out of town. That's just a slightly more severe manifestation/symptom of the issue. The issue is the way I live my life.
- 2) Preparing for something like that the way I did likely was anticipation.
- 3) Instead of, or rather in addition to, connection with chevra, it would have been more powerful to connect with my wife and share whatever I could about how I was feeling (obv. in the appropriate way).
- 4) The main thing is, I gotta fix the way I live my life so I can continue to live that life even when there's a disruption in the normal set up or routine.

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Re: Chooseurnames 90 day trip  
Posted by proudyungerman - 14 Aug 2024 16:24

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[chosemyschem wrote on 12 Aug 2024 18:40:](#)

Some thought provoking responses.

**Warning: Spoiler!**



Since when does not being invited bother me? Wha'ever  
**Warning: Spoiler!**

My friend, I am looking forward!

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Re: Chooseurnames 90 day trip  
Posted by chosemyshem - 14 Aug 2024 19:13

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All right, here's some consolation to make up for all the Tisha B'av torah.

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As I sat drowsing on a cold hard floor, bent over a tome of tragedies far and near, my mind wandered. How long? For how long, O' G-d, must we wallow in our blood in the path? How long are we to be beaten and despised in these strange lands?

And my heart cried out, "Oh my G-d, where are you"??

And from the depths of my soul a voice arose and it cried a distant echo, "I am where I have always been. But where are you, my child?"

And I fell into a deepest black.

\* \* \* \* \*

I know not how long I lay there dreaming, but I was awakened by a gentle shake. Through bleary eyes I saw a kindly old Yemenite man, with a long white beard and wisest eyes I've ever seen. When he saw I was awake, he gestured me to follow.

We passed through a small grey door down an endless stone corridor. Walking on and on for timeless ages until at last we came to a room so vast I could not see any end. The room was filled with a pool of crystal waters, illuminated gently by a skylight in the vaulted roof. Wordlessly, he gestured for me to immerse. I melted into the still blue depths and was lost. Arising, I was born anew.

From somewhere the old man had produced a robe of the whitest linen. I held out my arms and he dressed me; wrapping a matching turban on my head he led me on.

We came to the end of the corridor and he gestured me through a door.

I entered a chamber roofed with stars. There was an endless commotion. People running, shouting, furiously working on an enormous building. In the crowd I saw many faces I knew, but they did not turn to me. They seemed engrossed in their labor.

Before me was a man with a face shining with love and fear. Sitting upon a small folding chair as if it was a throne of finest gold he gestured to a pile of marble bricks beside him, each brick flickering like a flame. "Shem," he greeted me. "At last. We were waiting quite a while for you to get here. The bricks are almost done. Please," he says while lifting a brick, "Go place this on the wall".

I take the brick but cannot move. "Go", he says, "The work is almost done."

"Forgive me, my king," I stammer, and he squeezes my arm supportively. "Forgive me, but I cannot take this stone. These hands are filled with blood and with theft. These hands have been lifted in anger against another Jew. How can these hands place a stone on the Beis Hamikdash?"

I look down in shame, but the king smiles. "Listen."

I listen and I hear a whisper that roars like a lion

"??????? ?????????? ????? ?????????????? ?????????????? ??????????????????????"

And the world filled with light.

\* \* \* \* \*

I'm awake I'm awake. My head is pounding, the kids are screaming, and my wife is telling me something but I can't. They're calling me from work and i didn't finish the project and i didn't do it right and i can't. there's a heat building between my legs and i need to let it out i need a release i need to escape i need.

And the world is filled with light.

The world is filled with light.

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