

Suicide? No, thanks.

written by Ozer Bergman
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Suicide? No, thanks. I prefer Torah.

I can't tell you any statistics about how many people do or don't ever think about committing suicide, or plan or attempt it. And anyway, it would be beside the point.

We know suicide is bad. First of all, the family, friends and even acquaintances of the suicide feel guilt, remorse etc. The dead person may think that he won't suffer anymore, but we Jews believe that suicide is a crime against God (Genesis 9:5). In one way, suicide is the worst sin. Even if a person murdered, idol-worshipped, desecrated Shabbat and ate a ham sandwich on Yom Kippur a thousand times over, he can still do *teshuvah* (return to God). But dead man does no *teshuvah*.

But life, in fact, is sometimes so truly unbearable, miserable and black and hopeless (seemingly), that suicide appears to be

better than life. Who says? King David! There were times that he felt overwhelmed that he wanted to end his life. He said to God, "If the words of Your Torah would not have comforted me when I was undergoing trouble after trouble, I would have uprooted myself from the world" (*Tanna d'bei Eliyahu Rabba* 27:13). This is learned from the verse (Psalms 119:92), "If the words of Your Torah would not have given me delight, I would have died of a broken heart."

I can't say if it's the wisdom, the faith, the encouragement or something mystical, but something about learning Torah, whatever part of her, has that effect. Do yourself—and everyone you know—a favor and learn a little bit more or better or with some more caring.