

Had a fall after more than 90 days clean
Posted by shmuel83 - 02 Sep 2020 04:57

So the inevitable happened, and I fell... after I had been doing really well guarding my eyes (I managed to stay clean for well over 90 days), I stumbled on an inappropriate website while using an unfiltered device.

This has taught me a few things:

- We cannot defeat the yetzer hara now. Forget it, it can't be done. B"H when Moshiach comes, he will remove it from the world, but until that time comes, we just have to learn not to engage with it. As we say each day when reciting the Shema, we must learn to not follow after our heart and after our eyes by which we go astray. If Hashem commanded us to do it, then we are capable of doing it.
- Filters do work. I installed some accountability software on my main computer and I found it did help me to stay on track.
- The environment is a huge source of temptation. I found it much easier to stay clean while I was working from home, though I did have some lustful thoughts as I am single and live alone. But because I had fewer distractions around me, I found I was less prone to entertain those thoughts.
- My biggest challenge has been reducing the time I spend on secular entertainment (music, TV, sport), as this can also lead to sin if allowed unchecked. I used to listen to music a lot to unwind, and I still do sometimes, but now I am trying to replace the time I used to spend on entertainment with Torah study (listening to kosher speakers only, like Rabbi Yosef Mizrachi, Rabbi Yaron Reuven, Rabbi Alon Anava) and davening. Strong *mussar* (for those who are not so addicted) is like an antibiotic for the yetzer hara.
- Being at home has actually helped me to daven with more intention, even if it is usually in my own language. Making time to talk to Hashem has helped me a lot, as has reciting tehillim.
- When I was trying to get to 90 days, I updated my count on GYE regularly, and the rewards for reaching each level really helped me to keep going. Each time I made it to a new level, I felt really great and it inspired me to continue. I did fall a few times trying to get to 90 days, and I donated \$50 to GYE each time. This was another motivator for me to stay away from things that might lead me to sin.

In a way the experience of falling has given me a reality check as I now understand that I cannot defeat the yetzer hara on my own, but rather I must establish and maintain systems that reduce the risk that I will fall. This is the battle of our generation and we cannot win it unless we equip ourselves with the weapons that we know are proven to work in the fight against the yetzer hara. But it can be done.

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Re: Had a fall after more than 90 days clean
Posted by Meyer M. - 03 Sep 2020 00:32

First of all, congrats on the streak!

?Question: you said you stumbled across an inappropriate image, is that all or did you pursue it instead of closing it? It says on the rules for the 90 days that if you stumble across and close it, you slipped and it happens.

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Re: Had a fall after more than 90 days clean
Posted by shmuel83 - 03 Sep 2020 03:46

I have 'slipped' before, and closed the window when I stumbled across something inappropriate, I don't count this as falling.

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Do not dust yourself off, put the episode behind you and keep on fighting!
Re: Had a fall after more than 90 days clean
Posted by shmuel83 - 06 Sep 2020 02:57

Feeling a bit low today, perhaps due to withdrawals from when I acted out last week? The weather is getting warmer here which means I'm having to work harder to avert my gaze when shopping at the mall. I went in to buy my groceries this morning and went out quickly. I usually go shopping in the morning before it gets too crowded and I try not to waste too much time. Who could have imagined that such a simple thing could present such a test? I want to use the remaining time before Rosh Hashanah to work on myself.

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Re: Had a fall after more than 90 days clean
Posted by Meyer M. - 08 Sep 2020 03:43

[shmuel83 wrote on 06 Sep 2020 02:57:](#)

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attitude, attitude, attitude and keep on trucking, you got this!

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Re: Had a fall after more than 90 days clean
Posted by shmuel83 - 10 Sep 2020 03:33

I think I need to spend more time reviewing the laws about guarding one's eyes.

The laws of Shmirat Einayim were summarised in yesterday's GYE Broadcast #620 - they came from Shulchan Aruch Even HaEzer, Chapter 21, Law 1. Should I review them every day? Are there any other sources you can recommend?

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Re: Had a fall after more than 90 days clean
Posted by shmuel83 - 16 Sep 2020 14:17

I did my best to pick myself up by focusing on work, but I was a bit low today. I think I need to learn proper Jewish hashkafa in order to strengthen my bitachon. I am secular and I was starting to become more religious, as I had started putting on tefilin, eating kosher, praying, trying to keep Shabbat, but my spiritual level went down as a result of the corona and I started to feel myself slipping back into my old secular ways, though I did manage to stay clean for a fair while. I've been listening to Rabbi Yaron Reuven's Bitachon series online, it's really great! I am in touch with the rabbi in my community also, which is a small but close-knit one, which has given me a boost. I still feel that with a little hard work I can overcome this.

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Re: Had a fall after more than 90 days clean
Posted by Captain - 16 Sep 2020 15:15

Try the Living Emunah series of books by Rabbi David Ashear. You'll really like them! Or sign up to his daily email.

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Re: Had a fall after more than 90 days clean
Posted by Meyer M. - 21 Sep 2020 03:57

[shmuel83 wrote on 10 Sep 2020 03:33:](#)

I think I need to spend more time reviewing the laws about guarding one's eyes.

The laws of Shmirat Einayim were summarised in yesterday's GYE Broadcast #620 - they came from Shulchan Aruch Even HaEzer, Chapter 21, Law 1. Should I review them every day? Are there any other sources you can recommend?

Learning is extremely beneficial to this fight. The same way lust takes over the brain, learning eventually does the same and you end up walking home thinking about a gemara vs something you sexualize

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Re: Had a fall after more than 90 days clean
Posted by shmuel83 - 21 Sep 2020 04:08

Thank you!

I slipped shortly after Yom Tov, but managed to stop myself before I fell, thank G-d. You're spot on, if I'm engrossed in learning I find I'm much less likely to entertain lustful thoughts.

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Re: Had a fall after more than 90 days clean
Posted by Im Tevakshena Kakasef - 21 Sep 2020 08:19

Hi Shmuel,

I respect your commitment to this fight. You have a great attitude, and it will take you far.

I don't want to be argumentative, but I take issue with one little thing. Right at the start, you wrote 'the inevitable happened, and I fell.' I disagree. This is a difficult fight, but I believe its winnable. And even if not, and we must fight it for the rest of our lives, we can never believe its inevitable that we shall fall. That having been said, your first bullet point may be a clarification of what you meant, in which case this objection is largely redundant.

Once again, I really admire your commitment. Learning helps. As does just keeping busy. May Hashem give you the strength to overcome all nisayon and be close to Him.

All the best, shona tova umasuka.

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Re: Had a fall after more than 90 days clean
Posted by shmuel83 - 21 Sep 2020 14:21

Thank you so much!

Lately I have been struggling more with inappropriate thoughts. I haven't felt the desire to look at bad images as much, but I can feel the yetzer hara trying to find a way back in. I guess it is hard to erase the images that one's eyes might have seen in the past. More than anything I just have the desire to immerse myself fully in learning...

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Re: Had a fall after more than 90 days clean
Posted by Hashem Help Me - 21 Sep 2020 21:49

[shmuel83 wrote on 21 Sep 2020 14:21:](#)

Thank you so much!

Lately I have been struggling more with inappropriate thoughts. I haven't felt the desire to look at bad images as much, but I can feel the yetzer hara trying to find a way back in. I guess it is hard to erase the images that one's eyes might have seen in the past. More than anything I just have the desire to immerse myself fully in learning...

The images fade as time goes on. And yes, when we stop lusting on the computer, all of a sudden we notice everything going on in the streets....Just know that you are experiencing what everyone else has had to go through - you are normal.

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Re: Had a fall after more than 90 days clean
Posted by shmuel83 - 22 Sep 2020 08:09

Yep that's been my experience too... agree that the images do fade over time.

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Re: Had a fall after more than 90 days clean
Posted by shmuel83 - 29 Sep 2020 11:10

Today I experienced something quite different to lust - which I think may be a result of being single during corona - namely, I felt a strong desire to love and be loved, but also to be held by someone and have someone to hold. I guess until I find a shidduch, I can direct my love to Hashem, but how can I control my desire for physical contact while remaining shomer negiah (which I have been since February, obviously)?

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