

Staying strong when you're on top

Posted by siyatta - 18 Jul 2024 13:42

Im at a good place now. With the help of GYE, HHM and others I managed to hit 70 days today. As an aside, to my friends, who are struggling in the early stages, I know what it's like I've been there (for very long periods of time) and felt like I'll never get out, but trust me, with the tools out there it's possible to move forward.

Now for my question, I personally feel like I would never slip back to my old behaviors. In my mind it's muktzah machamas miyus. That's not to say I don't have natural male taavos, it just means that as far as I'm concerned acting out isn't ba bachesbon. I can kvetch about my taavos, call a mentor or just get busy with life to distract myself, whatever it takes, but acting out isn't one of the options in my mind any more.

The problem is that I know it's not true and the yetzer harah is waiting in the lurch to pounce me when he can. I've hit the coveted 90 days before only to be swallowed up by this monster and then felt completely helpless which brought me right back where I started. So here I am wondering, what do I need to be doing now? What's the avodah to be fortifying myself for the long term?

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Re: Staying strong when you're on top

Posted by redfaced - 18 Jul 2024 14:53

[siyatta wrote on 18 Jul 2024 13:42:](#)

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The GOOD NEWS, is that I know it's not true and the yetzer harah is waiting in the lurch to pounce me when he can. I've hit the coveted 90 days before only to be swallowed up by this monster and then felt completely helpless which brought me right back where I started. So here I am wondering, what do I need to be doing now? What's the avodah to be fortifying myself for the long term?

This is the answer,

Since you know it's not true, you know what to do.

You can't ever let your guard down, as the YH is always waiting.

Yet, the stronger you get the better off you'll be when he does pounce

CONSTANT VIGILANCE!!!!

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Re: Staying strong when you're on top
Posted by BenHashemBH - 18 Jul 2024 15:13

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I can relate to what you wrote. For me (so far) I think among what has helped most is:

#1 Maintaining the gains I fought very hard for. Don't compromise on your commitments.

#2 Continuing the fight, but with a different (less intense) strategy.

In your example of muktzah machamas miyus, this is what sefer HaTanya called 'moldy bread'. Someone who is hungry (has a YH) can eventually be hungry enough to eat even moldy bread that he normally would throw out. The tzaddik is someone who has slaughtered his YH and every sin is like moldy bread all the time, it disgusts him. There is no amount of hunger that could allow him to take a bite; he is instinctively repulsed.

We are not on this level. We very much have a YH, and there probably is some intensity of hunger that would push us to eat moldy bread.

Thank you Hashem that right now you see the tumah as moldy miyus bread.

#1 Make sure you don't get too hungry - take care of yourself and nurture yourself with healthy things.

#2 Expand on the miyus. What about bread that just fell on the floor (avadeh, for less than 3 seconds)? Refine your thoughts and actions, what you see and what you do. Don't become complacent. The YH is always there, but keep him under control by continuing to chip away at him. Not the full-on fighting match like before, but a constant stream of knocking him so he stays down.

This keeps me busy and keeps me growing. If I'm focused on the miyus of floor bread, then kol shekein moldy bread will IYH stay out of the question.

Don't let your past worry you too much, only use it as added motivation. You are not that same person who had a hiccup last time. Your accomplishment is monumental and worthy of

celebration. Keep pushing forward!

Hatzlacha

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Re: Staying strong when you're on top
Posted by chosemyshem - 18 Jul 2024 16:37

[redfaced wrote on 18 Jul 2024 14:53:](#)

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CONSTANT VIGILANCE!!!!

Definitely not qualified to answer the Q. But as Dov says, "If you're always thinking about shemiras habris, then you're always thinking about your penis."

Of course, don't let your guard down and take the first sip. But, without ever having lived that stage of being clean, it doesn't seem like you should be living the same vigilance as you were when you first got sober. That being said, a few months of being clean is ~~perhaps~~ still a CONSTANT VIGILANCE stage. But after that I hope it should transition to living a clean life (like BenHashemBH eloquently laid out).

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Re: Staying strong when you're on top
Posted by redfaced - 18 Jul 2024 17:46

[chosemyshe wrote on 18 Jul 2024 16:37:](#)

[redfaced wrote on 18 Jul 2024 14:53:](#)

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Constant vigilance and constantly thinking about shmiras habris is not the same thing. And I would venture to say that The Dov Rule is only for an addict

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Re: Staying strong when you're on top
Posted by BenHashemBH - 18 Jul 2024 18:00

I think there is a difference between vigilance and obsession.

There is also a difference between "don't look" and ""keep your eyes clean".

Trying not to think about P will end you up thinking about P. Instead, think about something else so the P never gets or keeps space in your head.

[gye365s wrote on 20 May 2024 00:50:](#)

Please forgive me if I unintentionally misrepresent any of the information as I attempt to summarize it.

Rav Greenwald with hadracha from the Steipler Gaon on unwanted thoughts:

Sometimes thoughts are brought out by the environment, like something you read. Other times they arise suddenly and without apparent triggers. Either way the result is usually sorrow and despair.

So how do we deal with them?

There is only one solution: to take one's mind off them completely. It is entirely counterproductive to wage war against them or try to push them away by force. All this does is strengthen them and cause them to linger.

Rav Yisrael Salanter says that it is human nature that the more you try to push it away the stronger the opposition in his soul becomes. Fighting them is the surest way to increase them. The way to fight unwanted thoughts is to immediately turn one's attention to a different subject.

Chazal say that two voices cannot be heard at once. The mind cannot concentrate on two things at the same time, so replacement is the best way to banish unwanted thoughts.

The Bnei Yissachar writes that unwanted thoughts that are involuntary are not a chet, as long as the person does not then dwell on them.

If a person feels bad about the particular timing of an unwanted thought, he should not take it as a sign that he is not doing something improper in his behavior. The Baal HaTanya writes that we possess both a nefesh elokis as well as a nefesh habehamis which compete for your attention. The latter is responsible for the unwanted thoughts. Imagine you encountered a crazy person. The best strategy is not to engage with them, rather to try and ignore them. The same approach works.

No matter when the thoughts occur, do not be alarmed or fuss over them at all. Focus back on

the current avodah and the thought will vanish on their own. [This may be tricky, given the subject, but the idea would be to have ready the appropriate mindset and thoughts for intimacy and summon them to the front of your mind immediately and repeat as needed to banish the unwanted thoughts and b'ezras Hashem, in time to make it so the thoughts stop invading your mind].

The Steipler writes that a person who is nervous about the unwanted thoughts creates a self-fulfilling prophecy. The Steipler found this to be true in every case he counseled. Any special attention only leads to more confusion. Do not dwell on them.

You should be behatzlacha.

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Re: Staying strong when you're on top
Posted by vehkam - 18 Jul 2024 18:48

[siyatta wrote on 18 Jul 2024 13:42:](#)

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wondering, what do I need to be doing now? What's the avodah to be fortifying myself for the long term?

a few minutes a day of positive focus will help fortify you for the longer term

e.g. vayimaen videos, reading TBOTG, posting here

if works well when it is a daily commitment and high on your list of priorities.

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