

Shmiras Einayim while travelling

Posted by kosher - 20 Jun 2010 20:11

In the course of my job I travel a considerable amount all over the world. I find that traveling is the most challenging time. I would therefore like to discuss some of the reasons while travel is so challenging and what can be done about them.

[One can debate that perhaps I should give up this job that requires so much travel and therefore is such a challenge. I am in fact looking for a job that requires less travel (any offers? :)), not just for this reason, but also to spend more time with my family. Until then, I don't know that I should deprive my family of support if there is a way to deal with the challenges. In addition, idle time is probably less healthy than traveling.]

The following are some of the challenges that I find:

1. By being physically separated from my family and community, there is a mental detachment that makes me feel less connected to my regular life and family. Some of what I use to mitigate this are:

a. Cell phone

b. DSL Phone (internationally, though when too far away the time zone is a problem).

c. Email

d. Whenever possible, I stay near a frum community and daven/learn in the local shuls. This is even when it is way further than the halachically required distance because I want to remain connected to frum society. (See more on this below)

e. I do not use a webcam, because my wife is not comfortable with me accessing uncontrolled hotel internet

f. This is not adequate, any other ideas?

2. At the end of a hard day of work I typically show up in a hotel tired, exhausted and stressed (driving on the Autobahn at 217 km/h might be fun the first time, but it is also very tiring). I need to relax and unwind. In the 4 walls of a small hotel room; there is not much relaxation easily accessible other than the obviously problematic TV, Internet, etc. Some ideas that I have had:

a. Take along a Jewish newspaper; not the greatest, "there is nothing as old as yesterday's news" and the small newsprint is not great for my tired eyes.

b. Jewish short story books. Somewhat better, a little bit heavy to shlep around on my travels and they run out quickly

c. Shopping for food. I always take along enough kosher food for my trip, but I still make a sport of seeing in how many remote places I can locate kosher supermarkets [or sections thereof]. The problem with this is that in many of the smaller communities the kosher supermarket is a section of a non-kosher supermarket and not the best place to be. (El Paso, TX, Milwaukee, WI and Hamburg, Germany have stand alone kosher supermarkets; most others do not.)

d. GYE's forums (this is in fact the main time I use the GYE site).

e. Keeping a log of my travel and the nisyonos I encounter each day. This helps me be aware of the dangers and provides some accountability.

f. GYE's Kosher isle. Good, but limited.

g. Other "kosher" internet sites, I happen to be a politics junkie and I enjoy the website Realclearpolitics.com, but this can be a dangerous slippery slope.

3. When traveling, one seems to be bombarded by inappropriate images. I'm not sure if it for security of fuel efficiency reasons, but airports seem to be a venue where people wear the minimum of clothing. And how about attractive and flirtatious flight attendants? (Though increasingly men are serving as flight attendants.)

a. In airports, I try to get into the lounge (or club); my elite status usually helps for this. It is much more private and quieter there (especially in the workstation areas).

b. On a plane, I try to take out a shmiras einayim sefer (recently, v'haeir eneinu) as soon I sit down. It functions more like a segula and helps me relax or fall asleep, I haven't actually gotten that far in this seder.

4. Travelling can be very tiring (as noted above). Time zone changes further disrupt my body patterns making it harder to concentrate on learning and productive activities and/or relax. The out of whack feeling drives a craving for comfort and pleasure. [At those times,] Lust feels like it will fill that need...

5. In a hotel setting there is almost unlimited access to the worst of the worst. TV, pay movies, pools and, uncontrolled internet.

6. Being so far from a frum community or anyone that I know, there is a feeling, "I can do whatever my Yetzer Hara desires and no one (in this world) will know about it"

I am looking forward to hearing feedback from everyone out there. I hope to post updates/specific experiences over time.

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Re: Shmiras Einayim while travelling
Posted by ur-a-jew - 22 Jun 2010 22:02

Kosher thank you for this wonderful post and the ideas. Some of my biggest nisyanos these past few years have been in hotel rooms where the tv and internet are natural forms of entertainment. It is particularly invaluable how you've identified the sources of the problems and particular ways to deal with each issue. I am not sure if its on kosherisle but a website that I have come to love since I found it earlier this year is hebrewbooks.org. They have over 40,000 searchable seforim. Even if I'm not in the mood of learning I have used the site to trace my family yichus. Another idea is an mp3 player loaded with interesting shuirim. Simpletoremember.com has wonderful shuirim on a diverse range of topics. Thank you and hatzlocha keeping safe in your travels.

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Re: Shmiras Einayim while travelling
Posted by Jooboy - 23 Jun 2010 00:56

1) My traveling is local but I find that just taking off my glasses is an amazing tool. Usually my problems vanish in a matter of seconds or get greatly reduced. It seemed extreme the first time someone told me about it but I prefer being comfortable than having to use a whole lot of other tools to overcome my lust.

2) SA convention CD's are AMAZING!!!! I borrowed a stack of them from my SA group and put them on my iPod. You hear amazing stuff from people all over the world and how they are get sober, healthy and free.

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Re: Shmiras Einayim while travelling
Posted by YosefAvinu - 23 Jun 2010 11:55

Hello,

This certainly hasgacha pratit of hashem. I am currently travelling for work, and I have been strgggling. since May, I have had to travel 3 times, for a significant amount of time. This is after

many years of not travelling without my family. I am currently in a meeting, but I am just "listening" and typing away.

The travels have been a mixed bag. On the one hand, I feel Hashem has mercy on a frum yid when he has to travel for parnasa. It is like galus. He is lonely, feels different, struggling to keep the mitzvo in non ideal situations, like kosher, davening alone, trying to study and of course the shmirat eynayim. The chovot levavot says that a person must do as much of his avodath Hashem in secret as is possible, clearly one needs to daven with the tzibur and attend some shiurim and so on, but he shouldn't try not to appear more frum than those around him. (So he should surround himself with really frum people). so when we travel by "necessity", and still keep the mitzvos, when no one can see us, and suffer "hardships" leshem shamayim (such as eating kosher pot noodles and matza or tinned fruit), it helps us. My longest clean period in the last 20 years has been davka in this period.

But the nisyonos!! Yesterday, I slipped - I watched TV. I got back late from the meeting, which included a dinner in non-kosher restaurant (I ate some pot noodles and biscuits in my hotel before hand, so I wouldn't be hungry), I drank orange juice from glass at the restaurant (it is not le'hachila but it is kosher). anyway, I got back late. I called my wife but she was tired (she is alone with the kids). I was too tired to study (though I could have read my chovot levavot or studied tehillim as I am close to the arctic, so the sun hadn't set yet). So I decided to see some TV for a few minutes, which became an hour or so. I saw "regular" TV shows but still the images and ideas were simply too much for me. I felt guilty. I have similar problems with TV on other trips. Other problems is that I have female colleagues, so excessive chatting with them is also problematic.

What helps me

1) Being and looking like an observant Jew does help create barriers. Well it makes the female colleagues less comfortable. It makes me worry about Hilu Hashem and also a bit of pride in not wanting to show myself to be less frum by my actions (the yetzer hara helping me out in the latter)

2) Eating kosher, also creates barriers, I have my own microwaveable meals (double wrapped) with plastic cutlery or drinking pure orange juice from a glass (a chad paami/one time cup is best), if I have to go for business dinners. Also, sometimes I might decline dinners simply because it's too much trouble, so less time to spend with the female colleagues.

3) I carry a book of Tehillim with me in my jacket, really as a segula, I sometimes read it when I am delayed or

on a flight. It guards my eyes when I read it and being in my pocket reminds me of Hashem. I double wrap it, my pocket is one wrap and one wrap on the book itself.

4) I think about how when one travels, by air for example, one is in need of additional shmirah from hashem.

5) I do the daf yomi, so I carry a few printed dafs in a folder with me, with point-by-point summary from dafyomi.co.il. Naturally, it is harder to keep up when travelling but this gives me a target and so occupies some of my time.

6) I try to complete sefer tehillim every month. So I need to read a certain quota (printed in some books of tehillim) every day. This also gives me something to do, especially when I am behind like now. I also believe there is a segula.

All this is helpful but I need some ideas of what to do when I am alone in my hotel. Going out at night is not an option, tv is not an option, and if I feel too tired to study,...

I have got to go. sorry for the disjointed post.

Bye for now

Other Some of my business colleagues are female,

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Re: Shmiras Einayim while travelling
Posted by YosefAvinu - 23 Jun 2010 12:02

I said "but he shouldn't try NOT to appear more from than those around him. (So he should

I should have said "but he shouldn't try to appear more from than those around him. (So he should surround himself with really from people)"

got to run!! 8)

B'hatzlacha

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Re: Shmiras Einayim while travelling
Posted by kosher - 25 Jun 2010 03:45

Thank you very much for replies and help. I trully appreciate them and find them beneficial.

ur-a-jew:

I actually use Hebrewbooks.org extensively when I travel, most often when my children call me up to learn with me/do homework. Rather than carry along a heavy stack of seforim, I just download the relevant sefer as needed. I have not been able to make much use of it when I am utterly exhausted and not up to learning. How do you use it trace yichus? Is this something everyone could do?

Jooboy:

Is there an easy way to get ahold of the SA convention CDs? (I personally am not part of any SA group).

I would like to add to my post part of an email that R' Guard sent to me when I was in China some time ago. It was an excellent chizuk and should be very beneficial:

"Such times are truly a test, and through them you can reach tremendous growth. Hashem is with you in China, just as He is always. Remember what Dov always says, "no situation can be bad enough that a little lusting won't make it even worse"... The things we are looking for in lust are really a subconscious need for love, warmth, comfort, security, etc... And we need to keep reminding ourselves that we WON'T find it in lust! Our minds make us think that we will, this is

the chemical make up of our nature, but it is an illusion. As a matter of fact, the more we pursue the lust, the LESS security, warmth and comfort we will find. Once we open the door to these behaviors, we become slaves to our basest desires and we become filled with insecurity and a deep subconscious fear that we will be out of control. And this leads only to a vicious cycle of needing more lust to calm those fears, and it never ends. Instead, we need to remember that all that we are looking for in the lust can be found only in Hashem. With Him lies true love, pleasure, security, warmth and all that we seek in lust but will never find. You may have seen things already that you wish you hadn't, but what you saw doesn't define you. Like Chazal say, Im Paga Becha Menuval Zeh... You aren't the Menuval, He is. But he wants you to think that YOU are dirty, so he can get you to fall."

The only real and meaningful question for you to ask yourself now is, what is Hashem's will for me TODAY.

Ask Hashem to give you sobriety an sanity just for today.

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Re: Shmiras Einayim while travelling
Posted by ur-a-jew - 27 Jun 2010 04:49

[kosher wrote on 25 Jun 2010 03:45:](#)

How do you use it trace yichus? Is this something everyone could do?

Well I guess it depends how unique the family name is or what you know about your family already. But many seforim have a wealth of information for example on a particular city, who helped published the sefer, haskamos, etc. By searching family names or city's you can come up with leads and other valuable information. Some seforim also include sefrei yuchsin which you can try to link to. There were other seforim that were written by my wife's ancestors that were out of print but which I was able to locate on hebrewbooks.org.

Another website you may want to try is geni.com. The site is free although they also try to sell

you a subscription plan (but you don't really need it). Once you get your tree going you can try to connect into other existing trees. I was able to trace certain branches of my family back over 500 years.

In addition to the SA tapes, another idea is to go to actual SA meetings. Many people are uncomfortable going to meetings near their home town since they are worried about meeting someone they know, a concern that may not be present when traveling out of time. The SA website (www.sa.org) has links to meetings all over the world.

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Re: Shmiras Einayim while travelling
Posted by kosher - 01 Jul 2010 00:24

Thank you very much for your thoughts.

Well I'm back on the road again. This is a quick overnight to a city with a small but significant Jewish population, so it should not be a very big deal, but here are tonight's debates (at least so far).

Unfortunately the stand alone kosher supermarket this town used to have is no longer in business. "Mega-chain" grocery has a really nice kosher selection, including a kosher deli and pizza department so I went there. Obviously the tznius in "Mega-chain" grocery is not going to be up to appropriate standards. I diverted my eyes from anything inappropriate (and the Pizza

), but was it worth it? (I could have microwaved some "Amazing Meals™", but I'm getting sick of them and it's nice to get a break and get out.)

More significant of a debate; the hotel here has an exercise room. It is important for my physical health (and probably would help keep my mind clear and well function) that I should get exercise. The problem is that exercise rooms (and their frequently nearby pools) can have improperly dressed women. The reality is that I am [unfortunately] aware that this is rarely the case and I think it would not be a big deal to at least check out the situation and then deal accordingly. However I am inclined to pass on this for a different reason. Despite the challenges of travel (as outlined above), it has been well over year since I have turned on TV in a hotel (and certainly any thing worse). The one area where I have "slipped" is allowing myself to walk past swimming pools without adequate justification. Perhaps I can justify this case, but I suspect it would be feeding into bad habits and I am better off just passing on it (and staying fat and lethargic).

Any thoughts?

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Re: Shmiras Einayim while travelling
Posted by the.guard - 01 Jul 2010 10:46

I know someone who made a shavuah never to peer into swimming pools. You might try it for a week and see how it goes...

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Re: Shmiras Einayim while travelling
Posted by Jooboy - 01 Jul 2010 14:34
was really good

I don't travel much but a lot of my fellowship buddies use the SA phone meetings when traveling and they can't get to a live meeting.

There is a list of them here: <http://www.denversa.org/Misc/phnflyer.pdf>

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Re: Shmiras Einayim while travelling
Posted by kosher - 01 Jul 2010 18:43

[guardureyes wrote on 01 Jul 2010 10:46:](#)

I know someone who made a shavuah never to peer into swimming pools. You might try it for a week and see how it goes...

I assume you mean a shavuah with a [very] uncomfortable escape clause, such as a giving a large donation to GYE (no that won't work, its a very big z'chus and it will feel better than it hurts) maybe 100 push ups (that's better I'll get my much needed excercise in as well). (I'm sure you discuss this somewhere on the site, but I don't have time to look right now. The sefer Divrei Yehoshua (2-7), based on the Menoras Hameor talks about this.)

I tried that kind of approach when trying to stop smoking many years ago. I found it worked well for short term special event situations, but was not ideal (at least for me) for the long term. I am not sure how that situation compares to here. (The accountability/sponsor systetm was actually very helpful for me to stop smoking). I'm not sure how this compares.

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Re: Shmiras Einayim while travelling
Posted by the.guard - 03 Jul 2010 21:08

A Shavua in this kind of situation is ideal, since it's a rare occurrence and not hard to avoid. Also, the test is not longer than a minute a time, and it's easy to avoid falling if you know you'll have to do 100 pushups or whatever, in a time that's not convenient for you.

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Re: Shmiras Einayim while travelling
Posted by kosher - 08 Jul 2010 02:51

Updates:

I finally had IT at my company install a filter in the travel laptop I take with me. I hadn't done it until now because technically they are supposed to review my activity on the computer when I get back, so there isn't much temptation. I decided that it doesn't hurt to have added protection and I had the filter added.

I am working on a two day trip to VA-NC in August. Originally, it looked like Norfolk, VA was 2 hours out of the way, so I figured I would just stay overnight near my next stop. Unfortunately, I couldn't find any hotels within 25 miles of that stop, so Norfolk was only an extra hour and I figured I might as well stay there and catch mincha/maariv/shachris and maybe even some kosher environment. Using Microsoft Streets & Trips (I find they are better than the Internet, which in any case should be avoided if possible), I found a Raddison Hotel right near the shul in Norfolk. Unfortunately, when I went to reserve a room in the hotel, the hotel shows pictures of their [unoccupied] swimming pool. That picture alone (combined with the 100 degree heat here in NY) had a triggering effect on me. Not for anything extreme, but it seems harder than ever to avoid walking past the pool. I think I may try the swish technique (www.guardureyes.com/GUE/misc/swish_pattern.txt). Any other ideas would be welcome.

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Re: Shmiras Einayim while travelling
Posted by kosher - 12 Jul 2010 07:25

I am working on a trip to Southwestern Utah, not too far from Las Vegas. My initial inclination was to stay in Las Vegas overnight where I can catch a minyan and for Mincha-Maariv and shachris and it would be a somewhat "kosher" environment. My second thought is that Las Vegas is known as "Sin City" and that does not sound like somewhere that I want to be.

Does anyone have experience and can give an opinion on this dilemma?

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Re: Shmiras Einayim while travelling
Posted by ur-a-jew - 20 Jul 2010 17:36

I just watched the project inspire video and I've heard an inspirational idea which the projectinspire website may have some more details on in the near future.

So here's the idea, its in the prototype stages but I'll throw it out there so others here can use their heads to help develop it. Use your travel downtime for kiruv. Imagine what a turnaround it would be if instead of sitting in a hotel room watching porn we sat in that same room and instead taught someone Torah or about the beauty of Yiddishkeit.

If you saw the video it's similar to the traveling chasidim idea, i.e., traveling torah teachers. When we know we'll be going to an area, you can find a local website where you can put a post "looking for a few good jews who want to know about torah" with some contact info, or contact that local rabbi or chabad shliach telling him you will be in the area do you know anyone who would be interested in learning some torah, follow-up with people who attended a seed program during the summer. All you need is a sefer and good east coast kosher danish and you'll be ready for kiruv. The point is there are jews in every nook and cranney that we travel to and, if we put our heads together there is a way to reach them.

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