

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 - 21 Jul 2010 17:42

I'm up to the challenge. I have nothing to lose and everything to gain.

The goal is eventually to have an interactive website in which travelers list cities and times where they will be going and prospective students list their locations and the two can contact one another. But lets take one thing at a time and see if with the help of some kiruv organizations I can help find you some study partners.

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Re: Shmiras Einayim while travelling
Posted by kosher - 20 Aug 2010 16:03

[kosher wrote on 12 Jul 2010 07:25:](#)

I am working on a trip to Southwestern Utah, not to 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?

In case anyone is following...

I went to Las Vegas. The airport and the surrounding area ("The Strip") are pretty bad. But all airports are pretty bad, once you get outside the the airport area it is not much worse than any big city. The two shuls I davened in were very nice. The selection of kosher food at the local supermarket was good enough to make me almost hyperventilate from excitement (after a week on the road...) All in all, it seemed worthwhile.

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