

On the way to 90 (and Beyond)

Posted by Binyomin5766 - 31 Dec 2008 13:57

Well, I've been clean for 10 days now. Getting through the nights is the most difficult because that is when I've been most likely to fall. On the other hand, my state of mind and the content of my thoughts during the day are the fuel for the fire. If I can control my mind during the day, controlling my body at night is that much easier. Some days have been more difficult, and my coworkers aren't exactly concerned about purity or modesty or any other such thing. G-d willing, I'll make it through today and then get a bit of a break. I have company paid holidays tomorrow and Friday (and at least some of my family will be with me each day). Shabbos has always been easier for me, so it's possible that things will be smoother for four days. I just have to get through today!

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Re: On the way to 90 (and Beyond)

Posted by the.guard - 13 May 2009 23:09

Ben means "son". ***Banim atem Lahashem Elokeichem - you are sons to Hashem your G-d.***

You are a true son of Hashem.

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Re: On the way to 90 (and Beyond)

Posted by Binyomin5766 - 08 Jun 2009 15:41

My word it has been quite a while since I've updated everyone. B"H, I'm still holding clean and I'm rapidly approaching the six month mark. Seven months ago, I would not have believed this was possible. Thankfully, most of my struggles have been fairly small in scale, insofar as the lust and other related temptations are concerned. A day rarely goes by that I don't face some kind of a test, but I find my thought process in response is mostly to the effect of "I can't do this." This board is getting very busy, which to me is both good and bad. Good because it is great to see so many people fighting the Y"H and making real changes in their life. Bad because it is so busy it is difficult to keep track of what is happening in whose life now. I have always preferred going to smaller congregations for this reason; too many people and I get lost.

The main reason I haven't been posting so much is due to the continuing struggles with my family. It is a very complicated and emotionally draining time for me. I rarely experience a Shabbos without some kind of conflict with my wife, and it all centers around observance. The underlying problem is, of course, very deep, but I probably shouldn't go into that here. All that to say, I unfortunately find that I have very little energy to post, to give chizuk, and all these things that I would really like to do. Right now, I'm just glad I can give a positive report on my progress; given the nature of my familial issues, in the past I would have acted out a lot.

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Re: On the way to 90 (and Beyond)

Posted by the.guard - 09 Jun 2009 17:40

Ben, you've always been such an inspiration to us. You have come so so far in life, it is truly amazing. Stick always on the side of G-d, and you will come out on top, no matter what the conflict is. I am sure that in the merit of the effort you are putting into Shmiras Habris, the channels of blessing will open up to you in their entirety. But the "time-line" is not always what we think... Our souls have so much to go through to become the people we need to become. G-d is leading you by the hand. Follow Him without question and he will take care of EVERYTHING.

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Re: On the way to 90 (and Beyond)

Posted by Binyomin5766 - 17 Jun 2009 13:57

Guard, thank you so much for the chizuk!

I just looked at my calendar and confirmed: my first clean day was completed on the 25th of Kislev and today is the 25th of Sivan. I have now been holding clean for six months! Every now and again, I have to really struggle with fantasizing things in my mind and as a result I have to fight a strong desire to act out with "M" or on the net. Thankfully, with Hashem's help, I have been able to resist and eventually push the fantasies away. I am married and my fantasies tend to crop up on a cyclical basis, for a few days once a month. Well, I need not say much more on that. I am guessing that most of us who are married have struggled with that one....

At any rate, when I get home from work tonight, I am planning on drinking a L'Chaim; probably 5pm EDT or so if anyone cares to remember with me.

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Re: On the way to 90 (and Beyond)
Posted by Efshar Letaken - 17 Jun 2009 21:00

I'm Sure bardichev wouldn't mind one more shot!

If he's still on his feet by 5pm. lol

E.L.

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Re: On the way to 90 (and Beyond)
Posted by the.guard - 18 Jun 2009 07:40

MAZAL TOV DEAREST BEN, ON REACHING 6 MONTHS CLEAN!!

I UPDATED YOUR CHART TO LEVEL 8. AMAZING!

LE'CHAYIM EVERYONE!

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Re: On the way to 90 (and Beyond)
Posted by battleworn - 21 Jun 2009 08:11

Mazel Tov Ben! Do you remember how you were feeling six months ago? It's just amazing how Hashem lifts us out of the darkness....

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Re: On the way to 90 (and Beyond)

Posted by Binyomin5766 - 21 Jun 2009 23:59

My friend, battleworn, sometimes I am still deep in the darkness. I have found though that the darkness is different than what it used to be. Six months ago (and before) so much of the darkness was self-imposed, a direct result of my addiction. How difficult it is to rise up when one is emitting the darkness onesself! I return to the event that finally shook me enough to take action and take it seriously beyond anything I had done before. It was Shabbos Parshas Vayeishev, which this year fell on the Shabbos immediately prior to Channukah. Nobody in this town really knew me then, so there was no way anyone could have known, but I was called up for the fourth aliyah. The aliyah of Onan. I know the aliyah is primarily about Yehudah and Tamar, but to me it will always be the aliyah of Onan. I am not exactly fluent in Hebrew (or rather I should say not fluent at all), but I knew the history of Onan was in that parshah. As soon as I returned to my seat and checked my Chumash, I found my suspicion was true. I have rarely felt that kind of fear in my life. Oh, I have felt the fear of nearly being hit by a car or a panic attack from the sudden barking of a vicious dog on the other side of a fence. This was different; I would call it existential fear (those of you who have ever read 20th century continental philosophy will perhaps understand what I mean). To explain: most fear has a specific object to which one can point, a car or a dog, for instance. One cannot point at G-d, though, as if He were a specific object. He is beyond our so-called objectivity, limited as we are. In one school of existential philosophy, they spoke of something called Angst, which roughly translates as dread. For these people, fear had an object and dread or Angst did not. This is what I experienced: for the first time in my life I knew what it was to fear Hashem, truly and deeply. I know that many say that fear really means awe, but I am not sure that is really the case. At any rate, that moitzei Shabbos, I acted out for the last time, and I felt sick. The next evening, I lit the first candle on the Channukiah and I began to have a new light in my life. It was just a few days later that I began posting on this forum.

So I had learned yiras Shemayim. I still needed to learn ahavas Hashem. I have has no such dramatic experience in this arena (as yet). It is just the day by day effort of committing myself to Torah study, trying to keep Hashem foremost in my thoughts, doing mitzvos, etc. Looking back, I realize that gaining yiras Shemayim was actually a great gift from Hashem, who actually does love me. In fact He loves me enough to give me a big enough smack to get my attention.

Many things in my life are not yet resolved, and at this point seem far from it. I still have deep concerns about the Yiddishkeit of the rest of my family and what will become of us. I honestly don't know if my marriage will survive in the long haul. My wife has said how deeply she loves me, but she is not at all attached to Torah and Mitzvos. If I (and the beis din) knew the doubts my wife had about observance, I doubt my conversion would have happened three years ago.

The fact is though, that it happened. I am fully committed to Yiddishkeit and to klal Yisroel. I cannot and will not turn back. It has led me to confront the deepest, darkest part of myself and brought the light of Torah into my neshamah. That light will also come into my family life. May it be that the light of Hashem and His Torah will draw my wife and children, and not drive them away. May it also be, that I should be a light to draw them closer, and not such a jerk that I drive them away. I have spent some time reading the Garden of Peace, so I hope that the latter won't be a problem, but continuing review of that book certainly won't hurt. It is difficult to be alone in my family, insofar as Torah is concerned. They observe a minimum of kashrus, Shabbos, and taharas hamishpacha, but only so I can actually live with them. G-d willing, things will change for the better and soon.

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Re: On the way to 90 (and Beyond)
Posted by battleworn - 22 Jun 2009 00:30

G-d willing, things will change for the better and soon.
AMEIN!!!

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Re: On the way to 90 (and Beyond)
Posted by the.guard - 22 Jun 2009 08:36

What a courageous knight in Hashem's army!

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Re: On the way to 90 (and Beyond)
Posted by Binyomin5766 - 13 Jul 2009 17:55

I've been fighting quietly in the background for several weeks now, and I am happy to report that with Hashem's help I have remained clean all this time. This is 29 weeks straight now, Baruch Hashem! If all goes well, later this week I will be at 7 months clean.

I was prompted to post because of today's chizuk email, and the news that many were

struggling in the past couple of days. I wonder at things like this and the dynamics that lie beyond mere rational thought and the input of the physical senses. Yesterday afternoon, I was faced with a temptation from a very unexpected quarter. I won't go further than to say that I was perhaps more shocked than tempted. I had to refocus myself a number of times through the course of the remaining day to keep the test out of my thoughts. Once again the very basic advice to call out to Hashem and proclaim one's helplessness in the face of the struggle has proven to be the best of advice.

For those of you following the family side of my struggle, things have been calmer of late. A lot of the pressure my family has been putting on me to leave the frum community we are living in for one (where we lived a year ago) with little Jewish community at all has been letting up. One reason is that it is starting to look like we may be able to get my daughter into a very nice school in the fall (Please G-d!!!!). Another is that I have been working hard this summer to take the family on fun outings in the area (something we rarely did where we used to live). Probably the final and biggest hurdle is shul. While I am reasonably happy with my current shul, none of the rest of the family has been happy with any of the shuls in town. We have been to four out of seven. Of the remaining three, there are difficulties with all. One is too far away; my wife has knee problems and physically can't make the walk. One is Sephardi, and we're still learning our own Nusach; creating confusion in that way would be counter productive, I think. The last one is the "rich shul" and we definitely don't fit there. I could easily go to two out of the four we have tried, and one of the remaining two I would be happy to go to if my family wanted it. Sadly they don't like any of them. We came out of a Chabad house in our old town, and it is difficult to get the same feel in a frum community. There are a few Chabadniks in this town, but not enough for a regular minyan. Of course, even if there were enough, the resulting shul would not likely look like a Chabad house, but more like a standard chassidische shtiebl. I'm OK with that, but again, I don't think the rest of my family has arrived yet. In the meantime, I continue on, exercising my patience, hoping and davening for the day my family is fully united in Yiddishkeit. This is Ben, signing off....

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Re: On the way to 90 (and Beyond)
Posted by battleworn - 13 Jul 2009 19:39

AAH! Ben, it's so good to hear from you. Hashem should make the good news get better, and solve all your problems.

CHAZAK VE'EMATZ!!!

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Re: On the way to 90 (and Beyond)

Posted by Binyomin5766 - 02 Sep 2009 00:08

Well, it's been, what? Forever? since I last posted my status here. Baruch Hashem I am still clean, though I have not calculated my day or month count for a while now.

Life has been really crazy with a big project going on now at work. As a result of this project, I am now facing what may be the biggest test since I began this journey. Yesterday I began a business trip which will last until October 1st. That's right, I will be away from home and my wife and children for a whole month. In the past, many of my efforts to be clean ended during business trips. My last business trip of more than a few days was over a year ago, well before I began the current clean streak. While I have been using the chizuk emails to strengthen me for the fight, I strongly suspect that I will need the extra support of being actively involved here on the board in order to make it over the hurdle. So, even though I will be working twelve hour (or more) days during this trip, I am going to make the extra effort to post an update daily.

Yesterday, I had little to no struggle with temptation. However, having a migraine headache (from all the travel and a day's worth of poor to no eating) is a strong prevention from acting out in any way. In the past few weeks, as I sit here and evaluate my behavior, I have been too careless with guarding my eyes. My business had been taking me a lot into NYC for a couple weeks, and I find going there to be an assault on my eyes. I still struggle with this, and when I am surrounded with immodesty, I find it particularly difficult to avert my eyes in a timely fashion. Put another way, I allow my gaze to linger too long. My current work location doesn't seem to have nearly so great a volume of immodest sights. My concern here is that through loneliness, lack of contact with my wife, etc., that I will experience very strong temptations to act out either via the internet or masturbation or both.

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Re: On the way to 90 (and Beyond)

Posted by SoHard,YetSoRewarding - 02 Sep 2009 02:26

Heilige Ben,

I'm only a newbie here, so you probably don't know me. I started reading your thread before and am simply amazed at your fortitude and resolve. I'm longing for the day where I'll look back and satisfactorily say, "Wow, 8 1/2 months clean!" You really are an inspiration to me in my quest to conquer the Y"H.

Only thing I can tell you about this business trip, and when a temptation hits you, is tell yourself, "Am I really willing to do this? Am I really willing to practically flush 8+ months of relentless fighting down the drain? And will I feel good afterwards?"

I have faith in you.

All the best.

Shmilu

(formerly known as SoDifficult)

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