A fall and a new beginning
Posted by Binyomin5766 - 24 Sep 2009 02:09

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Well, over the course of the last two days, I had a "slow motion" fall. I began acting out on Monday evening, viewing things on the net that perhaps wouldn't have qualified as a fall, but definitely began the process. Through the day on Tuesday, my thought/fantasy life began getting out of control. Last night (Tuesday) I began acting out by going to definitively inappropriate sites and topped it all off by m****. So, after a little over nine months clean, I have fallen off the wagon. So, now what?

What went wrong? Some things were in my control and some were not. First issue I should have worked on more: guarding my eyes in public places. Second: getting a handle on my thought/fantasy life (i.e. dispose of the fantasy unless I'm going to fantasize about having all the time I want to learn Torah). Third: finding a way to block inappropriate sites on my work computer (perhaps I should just put K-9 on my computer and let Rabbeinu Guard control the password. They are pretty quick to wipe and reload computers at my office so they would be able to get rid of it if they so desired. Question: can they get rid of K-9 that way if they need to?). And out of my control? A one month business trip. All I can do about that is try to prepare better.

I have the further issue, that some here will likely remember, that my wife and children are struggling with their Yiddishkeit in a big way. I have a strong tendency toward depression, anyway, and this particular struggle is a strong push toward depression. For me, depression is a contributing factor, although it is frequently difficult for me to tell which comes first: the depression or the acting out.

At this point I have to confess, last night I really didn't want to come back here ever again. How could I let myself do this? How can I humiliate myself by coming here and admitting what I have done? In the end, though, this place is ***LIFE***. Where I went last night is nothing less than death itself, and I want to ***LIVE***! Even now, my eyes are welling up to think of it. But even now, the Y"H is actively on the offensive. I can feel the desire as a physical ache. Part of me (the animal soul) wants so badly to give in, but part of me can't go back to living that way: the hiding, the secrets, the lies....

What now? What is my strategy? my approach? Some things won't change, because they shouldn't. I will keep trying to increase my Torah learning to the new level I'm aiming for: one aliya of the Parsha of the week with Rashi, and one Gemara shiur mornings Monday through Friday (the latter after my business trip ends). I will keep trying to work through Mesillas Yesharim (I never make it very far, and I have started over many times. There is just so much

even in Rabbi Luzatto's intro, though, it really isn't a waste). What needs to change, though? I think I have to dive in deeper to the effort this time. I think it is time for me to begin some kind of a 12 steps program. I hope that I might be able to join one of the phone groups here. My job can be pretty demanding in terms of the hours and/or location, but I can make a phone call almost anywhere. I need to make some changes in how I am guarding my eyes, but I'm not sure what that will be quite yet (perhaps one of the tzedakah type vows may be effective here). The fantasy life thing will be quite difficult. At times I find myself fantasizing about my wife (especially in the few days before mikvah time), and that unfortunately only encourages the broader habit. I will have to find some other things to occupy my mind; that will be challenge. The computer issue I discussed above, and depending on the answers I get, it is likely that I will load k-9 on this machine.

At any rate, I am getting quite tired. I have just pulled my third twelve hour day in a row, and tomorrow is likely to be longer. I bid all of you a good night as now begin day 1.

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Re: A fall and a new beginning
Posted by stevec613 - 24 Sep 2009 11:28

Don't focus on the fall. Focus on the victory. You have only had one fall in 9 months. That's amazing. You deserve a huge pat on the back. Focus on your success and build on it.

I am only starting my journey and I am jealous of your success.

SC

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Re: A fall and a new beginning
Posted by Kedusha - 24 Sep 2009 14:15

Dear Ben,

The y"h just couldn't stand the thought of your coming into Yom Kippur with so many months under your belt. So, he managed to trip you up. But, if you prepare yourself for the next few days, you can have the most meaningful Yom Kippur in a very long time, and you'll come out completely cleansed and ready for the Simcha of Sukkos.

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Re: A fall and a new beginning
Posted by bardichev - 24 Sep 2009 15:15

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THE BIGGER U ARE

THE HARDER YOU FALL

THE HARDER YOU FALL.. THE HIGHER YOU BOUNCE BACKKKKKK

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Re: A fall and a new beginning
Posted by Binyomin5766 - 24 Sep 2009 16:06

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Thank you all!

I am trying to focus on the victory; of course everyone here knows how difficult that can be.

Kedusha, you are so right on this. I've already noted a change in the intensity of my davening, my eyes tearing up at different points. I am hopeful for great intensity on Yom Kippur.

Bardichev, what can I say? LOL

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Re: A fall and a new beginning
Posted by bardichev - 24 Sep 2009 16:27

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Bardichev, what can I say? LOL

ITS WHAT MY ZAIDEH WOULD HAVE SAID

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Re: A fall and a new beginning
Posted by Binyomin5766 - 24 Sep 2009 17:31

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That's a little scary.... :o

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Re: A fall and a new beginning
Posted by Binyomin5766 - 25 Sep 2009 19:51

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Baruch Hashem, I am going into Shabbos clean. For personal reasons, I am counting by the Jewish calendar, so day 1 clean was the 6th of Tishrei. Providing I make it to candlelighting, that will be two days, and hopefully I will be back on the chart for Moetzie Shabbos.

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Re: A fall and a new beginning
Posted by Kedusha - 25 Sep 2009 20:03

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Ben wrote on 25 Sep 2009 19:51**:**

Baruch Hashem, I am going into Shabbos clean. For personal reasons, I am counting by the Jewish calendar, so day 1 clean was the 6th of Tishrei. Providing I make it to candlelighting, that will be two days, and hopefully I will be back on the chart for Moetzie Shabbos.

It's so wonderful to go into Shabbos clean ("Mitoch Mi'ut Avonos"). Then . . . to go into Yom Kippur clean . . . imagine how clean we can be after Yom Kippur is over!

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Re: A fall and a new beginning
Posted by Binyomin5766 - 25 Sep 2009 20:07

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Amen v'Amen! Even with the fall, I am still much better off than I was a year ago!

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Re: A fall and a new beginning
Posted by BentleyJunkie - 25 Sep 2009 23:21

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Ben,

I'm very sorry about this fall.

But now is the time to pick yourself up and show HKBH what your made of!

Have you tried the 12 Steps? Why not join Boruch's Back to Basics 12 Step Weekly Conference Call? It's a great intro to the 12 Steps!

I joined right after I had a fall that utterly shocked and surprised me...And it's helped me immensely and I know it'll help you too!

This is the time to show H' that there is nothing that you wouldn't try if it could lead to sobriety. The 12 Steps have a great track record in doing just that.

Good Shabbos!

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Re: A fall and a new beginning
Posted by the.guard - 26 Sep 2009 17:33

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Everything is orchestrated from above. Had you not fallen, you would come into Yom-Kippur feeling good about your success. But Hashem needs Teshuvah and broken hearts on Yom-Kippur. Perhaps that is why he brought you to fall, to allow you to do a real teshuvah on Yom-Kippur, for now - and for the past. This is just a step in your journey. Learn from the fall, like you are doing, and make better fences and strengthen yourself more. In this way you will be uplifting the fall to Kedusha.

You have a great soul, Ben. Very great.

A Gmar Chasima Tova,

Hashem loves you more than you can imagine!

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Re: A fall and a new beginning
Posted by Noorah BAmram - 27 Sep 2009 01:24

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I'm humbeled by your greatness and you humility. I'm moved to tears by your courage to pick up and move on. U r the rebbe for all of us, especially for me -noorah- not to get complaicent and let down our "guard", no how much time we have clean.

With fiery love and tremendous respect

Chazal VAmatz O' Rebbe of Balei Tshuva
Noorah

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Re: A fall and a new beginning
Posted by Binyomin5766 - 27 Sep 2009 04:38

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Postal, I just emailed Boruch to get a little more info on the group. I'm thinking at this point of going for the Thursday night group. Sunday mornings, I go to minyan with my son and then we go out to the kosher Dunkin Donuts afterwords; that's a little too important to give up!

Rabbeinu Guard, you make a really important point. Better to fall now when it can motivate the Teshuva that should be happening. A little brokenness can go a long way.

Noorah, how can I respond to what you have written? I wish I was more like the person you describe. Maybe someday...

At any rate, Shabbos went fairly well. There were a few points of struggle, some immodesty that I ran across, and a few instances of seeing even modestly dressed women and my imagination was ready to run wild. This is really the core issue for me. These eyes have seen way too much over the years, my biggest problem rests squarely between my ears. Seeing doesn't help matters, certainly, but it serves to trigger the far larger cache of images that is already stored (and so difficult to delete. Ah, to be able to reboot!).

If I don't have a chance to post again prior to Yom Kippur, you should all be sealed for a good year, have an easy fast and deeply meaningful davening.

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Re: A fall and a new beginning
Posted by Ano Nymous - 27 Sep 2009 07:47

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Hey Ben,

You really have to focus on how amazing you are DOING and not on the one instance of insanity. It happened to me too, and you can't let it derail you. I used to do it every day, and now I'm close to a year with only a couple "slips" since I started on November 20th, 2008. You have to look at it the same way. I know this is going to be the most meaningful yom kippur of my life, because when I talk about getting better I will actually believe that I can do it, instead of just reading the words in the machzor. What I learned from my slips (the main thing anyway) is that I MUST have a connection to the group, and this forum is a great way to do it. In the end, passive sobriety just doesn't work, because inevitably one slips back into the old patterns of thinking. I just thought of a great analogy. After I had braces, I got retainers. In the beginning, I wore them every night. Then I slowly cut back until eventually I wasn't wearing them at all anymore. Retainers keep your teeth in their correct positions. Right after the braces are taken off is when it it most important that you wear them. If you don't, the teeth will go right back to where they were before you had the braces. After wearing them for a long period of time, your teeth will not move very much even if you don't wear them, but they will move a BIT. I feel like the original 90 day journey is like wearing the retainers right after you get your braces taken off. If you don't keep the retainers on, your thought patterns can very easily fall back to where they were before. But after 7 months of wearing them, even when you leave them off for one night your teeth hardly move. It only becomes an issue if you say to yourself "I didn't wear them last night, so why wear them tonight?". When you do this your teeth can slowly move back to their original (incorrect) positions. So, Ben, you wore the retainers for 7 months in a row! Why get down just because you left them off for one night? Put them back on and keep on going, and the one fall will fade very quickly. I know this analogy could have been written out much better, but I just don't have the time or the energy right now to formulate my thoughts coherently. I hope this is helpful to you Ben, and to anyone else who has experienced a fall after a long clean period.

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