

Accepting imperfectio

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I had a few experiences last week which changed my view of the struggle.

One night, I had a nocturnal emission. I cannot remember the last time that that happened. I was very angry. I was more than 90 days clean. The past few days, I had been doing well with thoughts. I had a trigger at work - no fault of mine, but I had kept her out of my mind as well as I could. In fact, I even remember my dream - it was not at all sexual! I think that it was just too hot in the room! How could Hashem do such a thing to me!! I have been trying so hard!

Eventually, I calmed down. It's nothing to worry about. I AM NOT PERFECT. FORGET ABOUT PERFECTION. I have been trying hard, maybe I could try harder, maybe not. But whichever way, I am not perfectly pure and holy. It doesn't matter. I just need to do my bit. This is how Hashem accepts me. I should just accept my own imperfection.

So I got up, went to the mikve, davened to Hashem that I should be a bit more pure, and got on with my day.

The second event was at work. A very provocatively dressed young lady came. I was feverishly thinking of a way which I would be the one to deal with her. I managed to overcome my impulse, and did nothing. In the end, I was asked to deal with her. Inside, I was happy. I dealt with her, not looking much, but it was still a very triggering experience. The truth is, I could have easily avoided this had I wanted to. Afterwards, I was racked by guilt. Why did I not avoid dealing with her? Or maybe no, I was just at work, doing my duties. I did not run to the lust. So was I guilty or not? I was torn? Was this a fall?

In the end, I decided that all of this was totally irrelevant. This girl was poison for me. For the me this is only pain. Whether or not I was justified, is not the issue. I am imperfect, I have this problem, and for pure pain avoidance, I need to avoid these situations. Otherwise there will be days of tortuous conflict as I have to push her out of my mind. No gain, only pain. (As it happens, I used Dov's segulah of davening for her - she must be very unhappy to dress in this way. I davened that she should be happy so she doesn't feel a need to dress this way. This made it easier). So next time, may Hashem give me wisdom to avoid this suffering. And if there is no way to avoid it, then I must accept it as Hashem's will, and use it to turn closer to Him.

The third realisation was on Shabbos davening, when we ask "???? ???? ????? ????". I had always understood this as meaning that at the moment there are contradictions in my behaviour, that I am imperfect, and that I am asking Hashem to perfect me so that these contradictions will not exist and then I shall be able to serve Hashem truly.

Now I understood it differently. I am asking Hashem that I should not falsely believe that I am perfect when serving Him, but that I should be honest and truthful about my imperfection while I am trying to draw close to Him.

Thank you for listening!

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