

Becoming Whole

Posted by Moshe271 - 22 Oct 2015 09:10

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I've been in recovery for just over a year in SA. I was referred to the program by my therapist. I'd been seeing a therapist with my wife in order to fix our broken shalom bayis, which I was convinced was all a mess because of her faults and deficiencies. (??? ????? ????? ?????! All she had to do was listen to me and do what I say!) At the time I really thought this was the truth. But secretly, I was living a life of fantasy, pornography, and masturbation. Masturbation using magazines started when I was about 9 years old. It stopped for about 2 years right after marriage (I thought I finally had overcome the yetzer), but then began once more with a fury once we got our first PC. It continued unabated and got worse over the next 11 years. I would spend hours ostensibly working/learning while surfing for pictures and movies - essentially running away from my problems and giving myself the pleasure I felt I needed to behave normally with my wife and family. After a year of therapy, I began to feel that it was a matter of time before I would act out my fantasies in real life, with real people. And this was very frightening. I realized that sooner or later I was going to destroy my life and lose everything dear to me. I didn't become frum just to throw everything away. That's when I told my therapist. And that's when I began SA. It has been extremely difficult at times, but the SA program has given me tools, support, and most of all, the freedom to talk about my addiction and become a whole person. There are people in this world who know the real me, and this has helped me accept who I am, accept that I am addicted to lust, and stand before HaKadosh Baruch Hu and surrender it all to Him. I'm now 11 months clean according to SA's definition, and I have 4 months of strong sobriety from internet porn. That's the only way to go - to surrender even the smallest craving to sexualize people/pictures/circumstances. It not always easy, but I have support. And this is why I've come to GYE - to widen my support network and to become part of a community of people committed to breaking the addiction to porn. And the effort has been so rewarding!! I used to spar with my wife over everything, and she was always annoyed at the meetings I went to. Just a few months ago, we celebrated 20 years together, and we both are looking forward to another 20! That's a miracle. Yesterday was the first time in months that my wife complained and criticized me. And it was all because I've been in a mild disconnect from life - a low point on the edge of sobriety. And I accept her, her feelings, and without overly apologizing or compensating, I will simply try to be there a bit more, so she realizes it's okay to be herself with me and that she's always been okay, and that it was me who was sick, and it is me who made a mess of our family all these years. And this is actually empowering! Because I can now do something about it - I can surrender myself to Hashem again (just as I did years ago when I became frum), but this time, I'm ready to surrender all of me, not just the good parts.

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Re: Becoming Whole

Posted by markz - 02 Nov 2015 12:37

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Moshe, I don't know if you met one of our gedolim, without further ado here goes

[Dov wrote:](#)

[lookingforhelp wrote:](#)

Hey Dov

However you didn't do the full job yet!

How are we (I) really able to handle all those nice looking women at work. And it's interesting that  
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It's interesting that the jewish women look way more hot then the non jewish ladies!!!

Not to make it personal, but just to illustrate a point, I will tell you the biggest difference between me and you. read your post. You ask how to handle nice-looking women. You still think you can handle them. You see them and think about them, and think about fighting your desire for them, and think about them some more, and think again even more about how you can fight your desire to connect to them in thought, vision, fantasy, and maybe eventually one day something a bit more.

I do not try to handle them because I have admitted to myself that I am powerless over lust and cannot manage my own life using lust at all. So I do not fight them, do not think about them and only those ladies are always walking in and out of the mens section!! (I wonder why? how to wrestle with them. It's a different attitude because I have different beliefs than you do. Your frumkeit makes you attach them to you even more. You do not let them go.

I surrender, you struggle.

If you really let them go, then you could do the decent thing and see them as frail people - just as you and I are. People who have needs and need tefilos. Life is hard, and everyone has tzaros. Fantasy erases all that because it tells us to see them as sex toys for us..."ein isha ella l'noy!" And our struggle for 'madreigos' is really just arrogance. That arrogance converts these real women into objects - a cheftza to struggle with...or maybe even into 'disgusting shikshas' to disdain. As if disdain will keep us from drooling about their perfect figure and beautiful faces? A lie. Quite the reverse. Our 'disgust' is feigned. Pretending we are 'disgusted' by them and that they are 'evil', actually just ends up providing us with more license to lust after them even more

for they are not really real people in the full sense any more. Heh. it always backfires. While in truth, we - you - *worship them* for their beauty and sweet feminine power. If not, why all the struggle with them? What's the draw? Why do we keep coming back to their 'ugliness' for more, like a dog returning to his vomit?...i guess they are not vomit to me, in reality, are they. Keep

Acceptance of reality is often a lonely, scary thing. We even misuse Torah in order to avoid it.

It hurts to admit you - we - worship - yes, worship - them. trying.

So my experience tells me to start with admitting they are people as frail as I am, that if I had been brought up with their nature and families, I might have become even worse than they are, and mayb, just maybe, I will be able to pray for their benefit. To really *care* for them instead of *use* them. To do what Hashem does - He shows His love for them (and everything in the briyah) and cares for them with His hashpo'oh every second. They have a mission in life. Each Jew and *even each goy* has a purpose in His plan. And if I find myself unable to just let her go, then I know one thing: I have elevated her to some degree of superhuman status. i worship her feminine power and it is time to bring her down to my own level. Frail, needy, real. Not lower than me - just equal. A fellow human being. I do that by praying honestly for her health, her family, her future and for her to come to have the right relationship Hashem wants her to have with HimHashem as you wish Hashem...just as He wants to have a certain relationship with you.

So simply put, it is really not about self control, but about actually believing differently than we do right now. And the first thing to do to practice that is to ignore these women. Stop practicing the drooling, the second looks and the obsessive thinking about them. Let them go. Accept that she - and certainly her body - has absolutely nothing to do with you. If you cannot accept that, you will know it, because you will keep right on fantasizing about her image and obsessing about her image.

The thing to do then is to let go of her 'object-ness' by praying for her. Not by self-reighteously praying for her to "do teshuvah and stop being such a slut"...heheh, that would just be furthering our arrogance and making her into veiter just an object. Once she is a bit less of a person, we lust a bit more with them. So we start by praying from the depths of your heart for her health and future, children, and relationship with hashem. Then you ask for each of these same things for your own wife just the same, and for your children, and for yourself.

If the first path of ignoring and surrendering what's not ours does not work for us, then we obviously are sicker and need more work so we move to the second path: sincere prayer for them.

If the prayer is sincere, the lust slips right off us and we can then move on with living without them in our lives and minds.

But if we find ourselves again and again fantasizing and obsessing, we just do it all over again. No problem. If it keeps up and does not work, then it means one thing: we still want them too much to let them go.

Saying that now, before trying the above, is meaningless. That just means we do not want to work at all. But if you really try to let the two paths above and it is still not working, then it simply means I still want her in my life - I am not really willing to surrender her.

If that is made clear, could you go on to admit just that? Or will you need to invent a philosophical or religious issue to excuse you...such as 'the yetzer hora makes me do it' (blaming G-d), or 'they just dress to pritzusdik' (blaming them), etc, etc.?

Good questions!

I hope this helps,

Hatzlacha

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Re: Becoming Whole

Posted by eslaasos - 02 Nov 2015 16:32

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[Moshe271 wrote:](#)

I'm reaching out. There's a girl in the office who is so friendly, and her outfits are usually tight with a low neckline. I have such a problem with this. All I see is someone saying "I want you." and I want her back. It's a mirage, but it doesn't feel that way. I imagine she will give me all the love and nurturing I crave. I cannot be in the same room with this girl without getting a turn on, feeling the blood drain from my head, and getting dizzy. I know myself well enough to know I would never actually touch her, but it definitely will lead to fantasies and mast\*\*\*ation. This is why I'm writing about it - to expose this urge to the light and let it wither.

Hashem, You love me. I know You do. I love You too. I don't love this woman. I am an addict, and I want to fantasize about her and run away from all my problems. I am prepared to surrender this urge to You. Please, please take it away from me. Protect me in Your love; keep me sober and clean just for today. Thank You. That's much better. I'll be in touch.

Kol hakovod for expressing it so well.

How long has she been working in your office?

My own personal experience is that over time as you get to know people, they change from being golden pedestals of fantasy into regular human beings. I have someone in my office for 8 years who I would consider a friend (in the workplace sense at least) and has a terrible neckline.

It's actually not a neckline anymore but a ... let's call it a chestline.

It still takes effort on a regular basis to keep my eyes where they belong just because it's all so out there, and I still have to be careful not to shmooze too much, but I no longer see her as an object of lust. She is a person with issues, a family, strengths and weaknesses just like everyone else.

I'm not recommending getting to know her better, that would be counter-productive, and possibly ossur as well. It's just a mindset you can have as a goal when engaged in necessary interactions.

Hatzlacha!

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Re: Becoming Whole  
Posted by Moshe271 - 03 Nov 2015 15:35

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Your posts have been extremely helpful. Thank you both.

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Re: Becoming Whole  
Posted by Moshe271 - 06 Nov 2015 08:27

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Markz,

I just reread Dov's post. This is very, very powerful advice. It describes me perfectly. I see women as objects to enjoy for my pleasure. It's very hard for me to see them as human beings with frailties just like me. I'm not will to surrender them so fast. I like the fantasies. I like imagined intensity of a tryst with each woman I fantasize about. I used to have problems with praying for the objects of my lust, because it got me thinking about them even more, even though I was trying to pray for them in the right way (not out of arrogance). Now, I realize that the point of prayer is to humanize them. Pray for them, then for my wife and kids, and then for me. We're all on the same level; we all need Hashem in our lives (yes, even goyim). I will try and think about this every day before running out into the big wide world.

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Re: Becoming Whole

Posted by ColinColin - 06 Nov 2015 15:50

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I just read Dov's post.

It is very helpful, thank you.

I have to often put women on a pedestal too.

Thought of them as a perfect being.

That if I was in a relationship with such a woman, then everything I perceive as "broken" in my life would somehow be "fixed."

It shows how low my self esteem is.

And how distorted my self esteem, is, because I and all of us have done amazing things in our lives for sure.

Just by being on here we are taking a massive step forward to improving ourselves and hence a Tikkun Ha Olam at the same time.

Shabbat Shalom.

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Re: Becoming Whole

Posted by Moshe271 - 22 Nov 2015 14:38

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Reposted from Serenity's thread: I

I am coming up on 1 yr in SA, but still slip here and there with pictures of underdressed women on the internet and lusting over women on the street and at work. This is a struggle, and I feel on the inside that the obsession ~~is~~ **isn't** really gone. That Hashem has removed the obsession from the more insidious forms of acting out, but that I haven't surrendered some of the "lighter" stuff. I mean, if I've come this far, shouldn't I just beg Hakadosh Baruch Hu to finish off the

obsession to the point where I'm living within the boundaries of halachah? I believe this will become my goal for the coming tekufa. If life has gotten so good for me in just one year of recovery, incomplete as it is, I cannot even imagine how good things might become if I really surrender my lust to Hashem. This is hard. I still crave the sense of love/acceptance/worth that fantasy and lust seem to offer.

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Re: Becoming Whole

Posted by Moshe271 - 29 Nov 2015 15:18

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**Difficult days:** I went to take a nap on Shabbos and ended up fantasizing on an off for about 2 hours. I was willing to surrender touching myself and did nothing physical to increase sensitivity. But I didn't want to surrender the fantasies. It changed my mood. I got annoyed at the kids, and made stupid jokes. At Mincha, I spent some time talking to Hashem about this, and also found a chaver at Maariv to talk to. Went to a meeting motzai Shabbos. At work, I suddenly found myself wanting to surf in stealth mode. I got up and went outside and made some calls, and will be checking in with a chaver in another ten minutes. In the past hour, I accepted on myself no surfing except for work-related and SA related matters. I've kept to that. But, I'm feel like sexual desire is lying just under the surface. It doesn't help that my wife's mikvah night is coming up. I've been trying to keep connected through Intergroup service, phone calls, and davening to Hashem to save me. I think it's working.

Giving it more thought, this who episode was precipitated by finishing a big work project on Friday. I've been working for months on this project and finally sent it on to the next step. It's a thrilling experience, and the addict within me is saying, "Go party!! You deserve a little nookie!" I really do believe I deserve something, but I dread the thought of indulging in *that*. It'll kill me. It'll rob me of everything good in life.

Since my last post, I've been trying to see women differently. I pray for Hashem to take my lustful eyes away and for me to see women for who they are, like Dov says. They're human beings just like me. They have hopes and desires; they have problems. I'm powerless over the lustful gaze. I cannot appreciate female beauty without going out of my mind. But does this mean I'm powerless over the presence of women, or seeing them? For a week or two, I realized I could "see" women without lusting after them. (The first time in many, many years.) But now, after Shabbos, I find myself incapable of doing that. A woman walks on the bus, and even if I don't look at her, I imagine what it is that I'm missing! The very form of a woman gets me juiced. So, I see there are rhythms to this insanity. I cannot fight it, though. I can only surrender it. The brief ability to not eroticize every woman was the product, I believe, of continual surrender.



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Re: Becoming Whole  
Posted by markz - 29 Nov 2015 16:04

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Re: Becoming Whole  
Posted by Moshe271 - 30 Nov 2015 08:49

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That's a very big thank you! Thanks!

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Re: Becoming Whole  
Posted by Moshe271 - 30 Nov 2015 09:10

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Last night was ??? ?????, and the feeling I have is: *whew, I made it!* The last tekufa was difficult in terms of fighting back lust, especially because I really felt close to my wife and appreciative of her the past week. I've wanted to just give her a hug and haven't been able to, because she was a niddah. In the past, this has never been an issue. Instead, yemei niddah were usually full of strife, as she felt (rightly so) that I was only interested in her when she was available. That has changed. Last night, I knew I was too passionate, and this is usually a turn-off for my wife, because it comes from lust, and there was little I could do about that. I felt nearly drunk with anticipation. I felt ashamed of this, too. So, when I was alone I prayed. I prayed for the power to surrender all this lust and to be able to *give* to my wife, instead of take from her. I felt my erection disappear. That's the sign I hit humility. The night wasn't perfect, but I was able to slow down a bit and focus on wife. It was good.

But now I have a different problem. The cat's out of the bag! I woke up this morning out of an erotic dream that had nothing to do with my wife. And I can't stop thinking about last night. To relive the whole blessed experience again and again. I'm powerless over these thoughts. And it's hard to be in a perpetual state of surrender. All I can do is write about it and get it into the open, to call chaverim and to share it with them, to break its grip on my mind by facing them squarely in the eye and saying - I accept that this is happening to me, after all, I'm a sexaholic.

But I'm willing to give them away. I don't want them anymore, and I ask You, Hashem, to take them from me, just for today.

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