

Britt's Beyond

Posted by briut - 02 Feb 2010 18:00

Dear Friends: Sorry I've been off in my own mind these last couple of days and not posting.

I've had a very very emotionally busy couple of days as I approach the end of a 20-day kaballa to be clean. Here's an update, and I'm hoping for your insights/comments.

That kaballa ends this evening. I've learned a lot. I want to express my thanks to all of you for jumping in to post, even in the face of some pretty long rambling posts without clear message. It means a lot.

And to the author of many insightful PMs, your direct, almost brutal comments scared away a lot of delusional thinking and brought me a tremendous sense of clarity. Saying thank you doesn't even come close to my gratitude for your time. I'd love to hear from the decades of accumulated wisdom here on the forum.

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Re: La-Briut and Beyond!

Posted by briut - 25 May 2010 16:18

[DovInIsrael wrote on 25 May 2010 14:30:](#)

you are doing great! hang in there...

Well, thanks for the vote of confidence, Dovii.

Day 79, and before that I had my first run which went to 69 (with a one day superfall inbetween). So I've got almost 150 clean days behind me since I've arrived. I suppose I should celebrate the victories rather than obsess over the lingering challenges.

I wasn't planning this when my fingers hit this keyboard, but maybe I should count my blessings quite literally.

- A wife who loves me, knows I'm on GYE, supports my work, and even tries to keep things going [in the bedroom] a little more than usual (reward? incentive? bribe? who knows? who cares?).

- Work projects coming in the door a little faster than before (again: reward, incentive, etc from Above? who knows why, but thanks to Hashem!)

- nice kids. great Rav. helpful neighbors. food on the table. schools that are 'working' for each kid, this year, finally. smart therapist (I shouldn't be ashamed to admit to having one, certainly not here).

I'd love to also list my frustrations and pains in this post. (A story that I think involves Reb Zusha, watching the guy shlag kapporos. The guy read his notebook of where HE didn't meet Hashem's expectations that year, and another of where HASHEM didn't meet HIS expectations. He threw both notebooks above his head and determined the slate was even, therefore clean.)

But it's better not to energize the negative like that. Besides, why should you care?

Back to work.

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Re: La-Briut and Beyond!

Posted by DovInIsrael - 25 May 2010 16:50

bruit -

a few thoughts....

1. a successful business associate once told :

90% of the people you talk to dont care how you are doing -

the other 10% are happy to hear you have problems - because it makes them feel better

B"H for the GYE community where you meet real people - who do care and are interested in you

2. Hashem leads us on the path we choose to go...

focus on the negative..."This is just TERRIBLE",etc

and Hashem will turn around and tell you - you think THAT was TERRIBLE, try this...

however if we focus on the positive..."WOW, Hashem you've provided me with such bounty and goodness"etc.

Hashem might turn around and say, you think THAT was WONDERFUL.... try this...

Bottom line... Life happens...and the greatest treasure we have is how we respond to it!

with smiles and bracha

D.ii

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Re: La-Briut and Beyond!

Posted by allaloneontop - 25 May 2010 20:33

Bri,

I feel bad...I should not criticize a ki hu zeh.

You are amazing...please know that I feel that!

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Re: La-Briut and Beyond!

Posted by briut - 25 May 2010 23:45

Dang! I HATE having to see this in myself, and I HATE having to confess it. But, anonymity allows for brutal honesty, I suppose. Here goes:

I've been having withdrawal symptoms lately. General physical symptoms; 'specific' physical ; emotional 'stuff' like irritation (RID) etc. Occasional temptations to... what did I see it called here... self-medicate. The whole nine yards.

But that ain't the confession. The confession is:

These symptoms blew up just two days after I allowed some shmutzy images into my head for "just" 2-3 minutes, in a move of macho bravado to see if My domination over such stuff was complete. And, I'VE GOT TO CONFESS THAT THERE MUST BE SOME KIND OF CONNECTION between the symptoms and the walk on the wild side.

In other words, no matter how strong I feel to fight back, my favorite (in the past) images will still get me stirring. Maybe delayed by a couple of days, maybe not enough to do anything stupid, but I AM NOT IMMUNE TO REACTING IN UNHEALTHY WAYS.

I wish SO SINCERELY that I could disconnect my little test on Sunday from the way I've been feeling on Tuesday. And they may indeed be coincidental. But the smart money is resting on there being a connection between looking on Sun and walking around Tues thinking about the

same 'something' but with shaking hands and stretched briefs. I wish I could stay floating on de'nial. But there's that quiet voice telling me my allergy to shmutz is now at the point where I'll never be able to go back.

I guess I should be pleased that I've become so 'edel' I'm even bothered by stuff I used to take as commonplace. And I guess I should be pleased that I'm growing closer to Hashem and His ways by avoiding certain aveiros. And I guess I should be pleased that there's an online community that understands what the flake I'm even talking about in shmiras einayim.

But somehow, I feel sad that any future dash toward the old familiar patterns might cause more pain than pleasure. Sad, and a little mournful. Yes, that's it! Mournful! I think I should plan a levaya for my lusting. With flowery hespedim! And appeals for tzedakah! And even a shiva, shloshim, 90-day count, etc! Now THAT's the kind of levaya that's gonna confuse the heck outta the Y'H. Which would be very "sweet," in and of itself!

I'd better get cracking. Hmmnn, I wonder if I'm not allowed to perform mitzvos between now and the funeral .

Anyone else ever find themselves in such a point during recovery?

PS: Dear (Not)AllAlone: criticize? did you criticize? all I saw was demonstrating some interest in my mental "stuff." Which I take as a true kindness. Case closed.

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Re: La-Briut and Beyond!

Posted by silentbattle - 26 May 2010 01:00

Sounds kinda normal..."You mean I can't indulge myself even a little?" There's a panic that's natural, I think, maybe because we've come to associate certain things with happiness...so it's a double whammy, although more than a little ironic - 1) we panic because we start to realized that we really can't do that stuff anymore, and 2) we panic because we realize that we may have changed enough that we don't need that stuff anymore.

In my mind, there's a weird thought process that sometimes sounds something like this: "Oh no, i don't need this anymore to be happy...but now that I can't do it anymore, how will I be happy?"

See the song i wrote a while ago, about how our old habits and perspectives can stay with us, even after we've outgrown them, and they've totally outlived any relevance to our lives.

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Re: La-Briut and Beyond!
Posted by briut - 26 May 2010 01:37

[silentbattle wrote on 26 May 2010 01:00:](#)

"Oh no, i don't need this anymore to be happy...but now that I can't do it anymore, how will I be happy?"

Yep, I think you've got the number, SB. I think I'll have to go back into other sources of pleasure to fill this gap (as you described it) that I'm feeling right now.

[I was about to list the choices, good and bad, and then realized that my choices would DEFINITELY identify me to anyone who knows me. So for the sake of anonymity and the honesty that allows, I'll stop.

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Re: La-Briut and Beyond!
Posted by briut - 26 May 2010 13:40

Oh, man! It's worse than I thought! Way heavier than the simple "why can't I fall just a little" issues! Aarrgh.

I thoroughly believe in Rabbi Arush's Garden of Peace book, where he talks about how p**n & m**n etc simply takes away from the marital bond. Spouses are no longer "there" for each other, because each one is partly off somewhere else enjoying fantasies. So for most people going through that book (and every married man here ought to!!), it's a question of leaving something partly satisfying and making what's "here and now" into something totally satisfying.

I'm not sure I can do that. I can give my wife everything I have in my heart that I believe I can give. But there are some corners (must I spell them out? each person will have their own, I suppose) where I just don't have it to give. At least not to her. And so even if I can stay away from those areas in real life, I'm not sure I'm capable of staying away from them in my fantasy.

There's a letter on GYE somewhere from Rosh Yeshiva in Baltimore to a gay talmid, saying that it's possible to spend the rest of your life celibate, frum, and serving klal Yisroel. The celibate part sounds so tough, and celibate even including m**n seems tougher, and celibate including even "lusting in your heart" (Jimmie Carter) seems darned near crazy impossible.

I start to wonder how these questions would apply if the topic were something other than s*x. Never eat again, but here's a nice feeding tube with stuff healthy enough to keep you perfect 'til 120?? Never walk again, but these prosthetics will let you run a marathon?? I don't know, in my view there's really no way to substitute another topic for these questions, because s*x drives are so fundamental (yesodadige).

The idea of such a change of "heart" (from holding onto some fantasy into giving up everything except reality) sounds very challenging for me. And I'm afraid I've finally hit this brick wall head-on.

It's not about my bris, it's not about my brain, it's about my heart. And I ain't signed up yet for no kinda 90-day chart yet on the work of my heart, buddy.

There's a line sticking in my head, from some AA book quoted here somewhere. Don't know the exact loshon. "The man I once was, drank. The man I once was, will drink again. I am no longer that man."

Do I really want, in my heart of hearts, to become "no longer that man." That man who wants

some of that fantasy from time to time. Hmmnn.

HELP!

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Re: La-Briut and Beyond!

Posted by Chazak Amenu - 26 May 2010 15:10

You know what that sort of reminds me of? well i will take the liberty to tell you, my grandmother is w=always talking about how she will die any day and all that stuff (she suffers from depression but has been saying things like that for a very long time) but when she gets sick which she has been a lot recently with cancer and stuff she always fights really hard and makes it! so i think the same applies to you when it really comes to push and shove in your heart you so i DO think in your heart of hearts you don't want to become that man!

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Re: La-Briut and Beyond!

Posted by briut - 26 May 2010 21:26

Saw the therapist today. Got around to the insight that giving up things like means there's a void to fill. Actually TWO.

One is that the space that lust had claimed is now empty and needs refilling. But the other one is that the kinds of spaces, homes, delusions, boxes that kept the lust alive inside our kedushadige bodies... is yet ANOTHER space that needs to go away and get refilled.

So, whether we saw ourselves as perverts, losers, addicts, faggots, hypocrites, etc -- it was all a vessel that kept the lust and the kedusha alive in the same body. And now, if we give up the lust and live (more) in kedusha, WE'VE GOT TO ACKNOWLEDGE THAT THE OLD VESSEL HAS TO GO, ALSO.

And sometimes this could be painful, because those carefully crafted vessels were our friends.

As dirty a secret as they might have been, and as smelly, and aveira-filled, etc... they were our friends. They were MY friend.

Will I have the to send them away? And how about my buddies here: any dirty little secrets you're needing to toss away as you get more "clean" ? (Especially the secrets you'll actually MISS?)

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Re: La-Briut and Beyond!
Posted by Dov - 26 May 2010 23:10

[Briut wrote on 25 May 2010 23:45:](#)

But somehow, I feel sad that any future dash toward the old familiar patterns might cause more pain than pleasure. Sad, and a little mournful. Yes, that's it! Mournful! I think I should plan a levaya for my lusting. With flowery hespedim! And appeals for tzedakah! And even a shiva, shloshim, 90-day count, etc! Now THAT's the kind of levaya that's gonna confuse the heck outta the Y'H. Which would be very "sweet," in and of itself!

I'd better get cracking. Hmmnn, I wonder if I'm not allowed to perform mitzvos between now and the funeral .

Anyone else ever find themselves in such a point during recovery?

Yes, it's in my recovery. There was definitely a process I went through, of discovering and accepting that Lust wont work for me any more. It was sad, it was even depressing...and it was also no guarantee for quitting. Certainly not any guarantee for recovery. How convenient it would be if it would be the proverbial 'nail in lust's coffin'. Nu.

But, for me, it certainly marked the time that my dependable friend, Lust, became terminally ill. The discovery *definitely* helped me down the slow path to recovery. It's just not the guarantee that I thought it would be.

Your friend,

Dov

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Re: La-Briut and Beyond!
Posted by briut - 26 May 2010 23:20

Thanks, Dov.

I think I might actually start writing that hesped. You know, how fabulous it was to me, how much it gave, and how I don't know how I'll get along without it.

Because everyone who's ever given such a hesped (to a real life (?) person) knows that they WILL get along, they DO get along, and indeed the world is set up with a 120K mile guarantee so that we WILL get along without them.

Could be a cute exercise, though. Goodbye to the shmutz, goodbye to the vessel that was holding it in me! Hmmmnnn.

(Of course, at this moment there's almost nothing I'd rather do than return to a particular fantasy and be , well, bad....) aargh!!

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Re: La-Briut and Beyond!
Posted by Dov - 26 May 2010 23:35

Maybe if every time we became aware that we were engaging in a fantasy we agreed to belt out a few bars of "Taps" - no matter where we were - it would help. Especially if it would happen in shul during the rabbi's drosha or something...It'd be kind of like our own private little hatzola call!

Beautiful. :o

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Re: La-Briut and Beyond!

Posted by silentbattle - 27 May 2010 00:20

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Keep in mind, though, that you're not talking about never walking again. You're talking about never walking in a particular way, down a particular block. Now, that block might've been nice, but there are other blocks that you can still walk down.

When doors close, we focus on them, and that can blow them out of proportion - and they're bad enough as it is without that!

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Re: La-Briut and Beyond!

Posted by briut - 27 May 2010 01:18

Sorry, SB, but right now I feel like it DOES mean I'll never walk. Prosthetics, maybe; wheelchairs, certainly; canes, if I'm lucky. But walking -- it came with a freedom in my step and fun when I got there and lots of feel-good stuff.

I'm trying to identify a new hobby to replace my dance records. And to figure out where the fun is without the walk-a-thons.

(That Israeli book excerpt "First Day of the Rest of my Life" on the main page of the website suggests directly the focus on all the ugly, stupid, risky, dangerous, slutty things I did in the

name of lust. Focus on the painful yukky parts and not the pleasant memories that the Y'H wants us to hold onto. I'll give it a shot.)

I know I sound sorta morbid and depressed, but really I'm not. I do appreciate y'all comin' by to visit, of course.

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