

Britt's Beyond

Posted by briut - 02 Feb 2010 18:00

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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 - 02 Jul 2010 20:29

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I just spent most of the day meeting with other experts and talking about the prostate. And I'm just drained. D'ya think it could be a kapparah for what else could have been draining me regarding the prostate? Does Hashem work in hilarious ways sometimes? Oy.

Good Shabbos everyone. And to those living in this Medina shel Chessed, let's remember to give thanks this July 4 for the country that -- when all is said and done -- gives us one of the best stops Yidden have ever had in Golus.

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Re: La-Briut and Beyond!

Posted by briut - 04 Jul 2010 14:19

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News of the month. I've tried taking on the habit of shmiras einayim. It's been very enlightening. I'd say eye-opening, but that would be too punny.

Anyhow, I never worried about shemiras einayim to any significant degree. The halacha is not to stare at \_women\_. And mostly, I didn't. Not from the halacha, but they just didn't "do anything" for me! (Sorry if that's TMI.) I probably made more eye contact in conversations than most frum guys, but the temptations weren't any worse for half-dressed young ladies than for fully-robed bubbees.

As to men, well, keeping my eyes to myself is not a question of halacha. And it was always nice to give myself an occasional buzz from looking someone over. (Usually not the guys in hats etc, but there are plenty of joggers around etc.)

So now, I'm giving it a try. Avoid women... even though I didn't think I was staring in the past. And avoid men... because each dose of lust that's not going to be "used" later for some kind of acting out is simply being mean to myself. (I.e., se\*ually frustrating or something.)

Basically, it means staring at the ground and having no contact with anyone over about the age of 10. Or household pets, I guess. (A tougher challenge, I'd argue, than for all you guys whose interests are limited to the womenfolk. You've got half the world to look in the eye!)

Anyhow, I've learned a lot about keeping lust under check. About following halacha even when I can justify that it has no application to me. And about how I am now more sensitive than before to that store clerk who's still saving up for the rest of her outfit . It's not an arousal kind of sensitive, it's just more... sensitive.

(And I'm ashamed to share, and scared it's triggering speech, but when I don't have the images I filled up on during the day, there's nothing left when I'm with my wife than... HER. Which she can definitely pick up on. Which is a good thing all around. I guess.)

I don't know what all this shmiras einayim means yet. And frankly I still haven't lost the desire to give myself a "dose" of good looking somebody from time to time. But shmiras einayim is

definitely having some kind of impact on me, somehow. FYI.

Any thoughts to share??

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Re: La-Briut and Beyond!

Posted by 1daat - 04 Jul 2010 23:06

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So this morning I find myself davening to the breakfast deity. Major avodah zorah. At Shmah I think.

So V'ahaftoh and Lo sasuru go together. The mitzvos are not to follow the heart, and the eyes. AND to love Hashem. They must go together.

So when I keep my eyes on the road I do the Lo Sasuru mitzvoh. V'ahavtoh, maybe a command ("You are to/shall) or future tense (you will [come to]) or both. (maybe a dikduk maven can straighten me out here). But this comes from "H, yes? But the hishtadlus of Lo Sasuru opens the vessel maybe for V'ahavtoh.

Do I have this even close to right, guys?

Lately, open vessel shmessel, not much ahavah stirring around. Just comes in little moments, and then it's back to avodah, inbetween davening to the fridge during shacharis, that is.

Off topic: everywhere I read, there's Briut. And your posts are either very funny, very personal, and always helpful. I don't know how you do it, but I just wanted to thank you for all give (back) to us. Y'shcoiach.

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Re: La-Briut and Beyond!

Posted by briut - 05 Jul 2010 14:35

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[1daat wrote on 04 Jul 2010 23:06:](#)

So V'ahaftoh and Lo sasuru go together. The mitzvos are not to follow the heart, and the eyes. AND to love Hashem. They must go together. will [come to] or both.

[...] Do I have this even close to right, guys?

Nice thoughts. For my own two cents, I think you've got a nice concept going on here. I'll merely add what has crossed my own mind on this possuk. Namely, desires of the heart lead to wandering of the eyes leads to "whoring ourselves / prostituting ourselves" after them. In other words, if we can't work on the heart, then our eyes will go next and we'll be shameless whores (forgive the strong speech -- I'm just citing the posuk zonim). Our heads will go soft, so to speak.

Which means, to me, that the work has to be in the heart because once it hits the eyes, the battle is lost.

Just a thought.... I think I like yours better - it's more hopeful and sounds more possible.

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Re: La-Briut and Beyond!

Posted by 1daat - 08 Jul 2010 06:09

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oy yoy yoy yoy yoy. This is so deep. There are so many levels to what you wrote. I just read it three times. Yes, if the work isn't deep at the heart level, then we're messing around in our heads, where we're "somebodies", and we can look where we want.

For sure, when the work leaves the heart, V'ahavtoh, the toilet's on its way.

Thanks for this great chizuk. I can never be reminded enough. It's about His Love, and my little squeaky davening, that He wants me to do, to be closer, to love more fully, not just Him. To love more fully. Period.

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Re: La-Briut and Beyond!  
Posted by briut - 08 Jul 2010 16:28

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1daat: Well, I'm not sure that what I've said is really chizuk. My work here has finally hit deep into my heart. And it's rough. Really rough. Examples:

> How I would have retreated into myself, including my se\*ual desires [p&m, etc]and everything, in order to avoid the pain of trusting a real live person who isn't perfect and sometimes would surely disappoint me. Ouch.

> How I would have shopped around to find the best possible flavor of everything I need in life. One person to talk to, one person to listen to, one person to be lustful with, one person to... you get the idea. And how having so many different people might have made each corner of life better, but it destroyed any opportunity for true, multi-faceted, intimacy with a real live person. One who's not the 'best' at anything but who makes up a pretty good imperfect package. Ouch.

There's more, but I don't really want to share, because one of these days I'm probably gonna end up giving my wife my onscreen name (if she wouldn't already recognize me from the posts). She knows I love her, and knows most of what I'm thinking and posting, but even so... there has to be some privacy.

So is it chizuk or existential crisis? I'll let you decide. But for today, this work isn't leaving my feel neglected and lonely

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Re: La-Briut and Beyond!  
Posted by installed - 08 Jul 2010 20:31

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Thanks so much for sharing your thoughts with us. You seem to be a really wise person that really knows the score. You are huge part of my "success". I'm clean for 24 days (by far the longest clean streak).

Have a great shabbos and good luck!

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Re: La-Briut and Beyond!  
Posted by briut - 09 Jul 2010 16:13

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Oy. I can't get this earlier thought out of my head.

Every p\*\*n star I watch: I'm looking for the perfect turn-on.

Every se\*ual experience I find, I'm looking for the ultimate in satisfaction.

Every restaurant meal: something better than I could cook myself.

Every bargain... amazing.

Every... everything: shop around for the best and nicest and cheapest and... best.

So what if that gives me a bunch of isolated "best" experiences. (I'm pretty darned good at shopping around for them after all these years of practice.) There's a price: it keeps me from getting one particular "best" experience -- the "best" in intimacy.

I'm never close enough to anyone to take ALL the people JUST AS THEY ARE. Any imperfection is simply tossed away as I look for a better performer in that area. So I have lots of people to like or admire for some one thing, but nobody to love for their whole package.

If I can give up watching the "perfection" of the 10 min. of p\*\*n, and give up the time of acting out while fantasizing about "perfection," ... then maybe I have a shot at building perfection in

being real and allowing others to be real. And real is not completely perfect in my own eyes (what is perfect in anyone's eyes? Hashem's eyes?), but it's genuine. In a way that the screen and the imagination can never be. Even if I feel that I "can't always get what I want" from real life, I can exchange that desire for getting "what I need" in terms of real intimacy.

Freeing myself of the GYE cravings will have to involve loving others in their imperfections. Which means loving myself in my imperfections. Which means trusting Hashem that He's making me and my life circumstances in His loving care.

Oy.

A gevaldige Shabbos to everyone. - Briut

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Re: La-Briut and Beyond!  
Posted by briut - 11 Jul 2010 03:51

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Even after re-reading all the pain and FEAR that brought me to a kaballa to stay clean until Rosh Chodesh... I'm still sorta counting the hours until Rosh Chodesh arrives. And for right now, I don't want to renew it immediately.

(There. I said it.)

I want a couple of days off for a big big fall, to empty out all the sharp feelings I've been having in the way my experience tells me a little fall might bring some temporary peace.

I should know better. But for many reasons now, there are many stressors and the like going on. My bucket of stress is overflowing. And one of the better (or at least better-feeling!) tricks for emptying out that bucket is... just what every guy on this forum knows. Knows well.

One old-timer on this forum recently said, so nu, so fall already. I don't know if he was serious, or sarcastic, or just tired of hearing a whiner calling for help by claiming the sky is falling. I don't think a quick fall would ruin my mindset, though.

Hmmnnn. Anyone want to slap me around a little (original comment edited out) and slap some sense into me? Anyone home??

PS: I'm still dealing with the message of that last message from Fri pm. This is very very heavy work I'm facing. Oy. Anyone with insights on that stuff, too??

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Re: La-Briut and Beyond!  
Posted by Jooboy - 11 Jul 2010 04:04

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Briut,

Sounds like pretty classic addiction symptoms. We know that it is bad for us, we know we don't want to do it, we know we will regret it afterward and.....we still feel the compulsion to do it.

What you described in your post sounds like someone who has terrible pain from a broken bone but they don't want to have to interrupt their daily routine to go to the doctor so they just load up on pain killers and magic!! no more pain, so they go about their day and they don't feel anything, but of course the injury is getting worse with every step. At some point the drug stops to work so well and then the pain is REALLY bad and the damage is even worse than it was at the start.

Right now you want those drugs to stop the pain, but what we really need is to deal with what is going on underneath it all. On that I don't have much advice other than whatever it is GOD can deal with it and that is why we have much of the pain in this life that we all experience. To force us to turn to Him. The quicker we do that the quicker our problems can get resolved.

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Re: La-Briut and Beyond!

Posted by briut - 11 Jul 2010 19:27

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[Jooboy wrote on 11 Jul 2010 04:04:](#)

...sounds like someone who has terrible pain from a broken bone but they don't want to have to interrupt their daily routine to go to the doctor so they just load up on pain killers and magic!! no more pain, so they go about their day and they don't feel anything, but of course the injury is getting worse with every step. At some point the drug stops to work so well and then the pain is REALLY bad and the damage is even worse than it was at the start.

That's a very thoughtful position, and I really (!) appreciate your jumping in. I guess my quick reaction is... well, you're close.

But it feels more like I'm spending many days "white knuckled."

I'd imagine I'm learning to drive the Indy 500. Each round through the 'staying GYE clean' track seems to teach me a lot about what the work is all about and how to take the next lap. But doing the work while white-knuckled is sorta hard. In fact, it's so scary that it's sorta hard to concentrate on the road.

What's so awful about a little pit stop. You think a real race driver is gonna hit the pits (ahem) and decide to stay there? No, a racer is there to race. But until there's some endurance for a 500 mile race, a student's gonna need a break. Lose the white knuckles, refresh the basic physics of racing, and get back in there with some fresh perspective.

Sometimes I don't understand this whole 'addict' mentality of helplessness. I might be helpless, certainly in some ultimate sense vis a vis Hashem, but it doesn't mean I can't recharge and get back in the race. On my own. Reliably. ...Does it?

Rosh Chodesh is hours away. I will IYH have made my kaballah. Renewing it is a fresh new question. And I just don't know. Break or continue, break or continue? Jooboy? Help?? Anyone... jump in?

Thanks. =Briut

Day 105, I think, aka Day 174-1

[with the tires a little hot and bald and the tank a little low].

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Re: La-Briut and Beyond!

Posted by Jooboy - 11 Jul 2010 21:45

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Briut,

In my experience pain/pressure has been an absolutely necessary component of my getting better. Knowledge of right and wrong was never my issue. I intellectually know that GOD can do anything including give me the ability to stop lusting. But....I never had enough fire under my burners to get me to it. Pain has accompanied every major spurt of growth in addiction recovery.

When we resort to a "pit stop" to let our "drug" (whatever it may be - porn, masturbation, street lust etc.) give us a break from the pain we short circuit the process. The pressure gets deflated and we delay taking the necessary steps of recovery until it builds again. I've seen this pattern before in what we call the "chronic slippers".

One guy I used to be in touch with daily no longer takes my phone calls and as far as I know has taken a wholesale break from recovery doing lots of very destructive behaviors. This is after he already lost his family to this addiction!!! Hashem Yerachem

I'm not saying this happens to every chronic slipper but there is no way of knowing which ones it does happen to.

Those are my thoughts, hope there is something there useful to you.

Hatzlacha

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Re: La-Briut and Beyond!  
Posted by 1daat - 11 Jul 2010 23:23

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Briut, Briut. I know from white knuckles. I understand the "best" problem for myself. And the pressure of the kettle that needs to have the spout opened.

I'd like to share some of my own stuff with you and hope it's on point.

I think "best" and "pressure" have a connection:

What is need for best? My brother and sister, they were "best". Me, I was the mistake, the also-ran. What love and attention there was seemed more about their obligation to love their child. It seldom reached the deep little me, hiding out in my little cave, my private world, where I had my little make-believe playmate and my doggie.

How I wanted to belong and to matter, to know how much my love mattered to them, that I mattered to them. Being taken along while parent's shop, being teased and frightened endlessly by my sibs--this was not "mattering". So I started going through the hoops to matter. And what mattered most in my family? To have the best, to look the best, to be the best athlete, to get the best grades, to belong to the best...yada yada. So I became driven to be the best. And at best, I was mediocre. Oy, more not belonging. More disgraceful and shameful and humiliated little mediocre. Didn't seem to matter...grades, sports, tolerated by the in group at school, playing piano, sports. Sports. Did I mention sports? THIS IS NOT LASHON HORA ON MYSELF. It is what I remember of my emotional childhood.

So here's an inner dichotomy for ya...a kid who feels like the worst, trying to perform/have/be the best for nothing more complicated than love, in a world that seemed like it withheld love. Thus goeth the hamster wheel.

Life for me has been in large part about frustration at never being able to succeed, and being forever anxious that my inferiority is going to show, that I'm going to get hurt, teased, shamed. (despite that in the eyes of the world I'm probably seen as a "success". Never mind.) So what do I figure out to do? Ahhh, the secret world where nobody can get at me. And when this little boy discovers my older brother's p\*\*n stash, I say to myself, "Who needs them? I've got the love I've always wanted right here in my own hands. Any time I want. Goodbye world, as long as I can hide this.

Now a year or two earlier I had an experience that was to shape the underpinnings of my life forever. I was playing (by myself) in our front yard. And behind me was a bright rainbow-like essence that was familiar and filled me entirely with peace. I didn't even turn around. I just remember knowing this was the G-d I'd always known, but this was a BIG "Hello" from him. It lasted maybe thirty seconds, and it was no big deal because I was used to hanging around with Him in my little private world. But it was the incontrovertible knowing for me that Hashem is real.

So back to discovering my brothers p\*\*n stash. I noticed that every time I did "it", I left my best friend, "H. And I felt guilty, but I couldn't figure out why I felt guilty since my family obviously condoned "it" because nothing was ever said about my brothe's stash that was left out in the open. My friends certainly didn't talk about feeling guilty. Today we all of us here understand that guilt. But it was a mystery to me for a very long time. Years and years of therapy with different therapists and none of them could give me a satisfying answer.

Frustration starts to build. What am I frustrated about? I want the love, the intensity, the rush that I knew intimately as a little guy, hanging out with Hashem, right there in my little private world, right there along with my imaginary playmate (Poobah, by name, if you MUST know) and my doggie. But I had come to rely on my own devices, having dismissed "H as always there anyway, and since we knew each other pretty well, I figured he's just take me back whenever. I guess you could say I was a spoiled little brat when it came to Hashem. I'll do what I want, cause I know You'll always be there anyway. Ta Tah. So off I go seeking my own rush. We all know where that goes. I'll spare you the details.

As we all know, there's never enough. So I keep chasing the promise of things to come by my own hand. But the rushes only last for a second, as we all know too well. I can't ever seem to keep the rush at the deep place, so, of course, as we all know, it's back for more. Always trying to get the deepest place filled--the place where i could hide out, nice and safe, with my imaginary friend, my doggie, and Hashem kind of watching over everything like a good parent does when the kids are playing in the living room.

Separated from G-d, [i]playing[i] G-d, I became obsessed with filling the hole in my little heart, "The hole in my Soul", that started out longing for familial love, and became the "phenomenal urge", the deepest longing of my soul. Today we know what the reality of that urge is about. But that's post drugs, sex, and rock'n roll, B"H.

So, Back to the beginning of this megillah. Needing the best has not been for me a lack of humility and an acceptance of what reality has to offer--a very satisfying good-enoughness. Needing the best has for me always been driven by needing to seen, to be included, to be thought of as special, to matter. Humility for me, so far, has been about the shame of facing my so- called "mediocrity", my ordinariness, and feeling the human pain of that, and then when "H or the guys at GYE come along and remind me that "H made me, loves me, had me born as a Yid, the greatest evidence that I matter, when I am reminded Of who I am and what my mission is and what my avodah is, then I feel humbled that I was off into "inferiority". I feel a kind of healthy shame that I would forget and be back into handling things myself, beyond hishtadlut.

So all in all, it's the hole in the soul that's been put on hold by a being who is trying to be the best, do the best, be good, just to matter a little. FRUSTRATING. AND THE PRESSURE BUILDS. AND WE HANG ON WITH WELL INTENTIONED WILLPOWER.

Problem: "Hanging on" for me, is hishtadlut. But histadlut without "H's love and help is going to feel like I'm in this all alone, again, that nothing really is going to reach my private place like we-all-know-what.

What I've found for myself is that when I start to feel the white knuckles, when only the best will do, and when the pressure of the phenomenal urge is building, that I'm way past the efficacy of histadlut. It's either a "go or no-go" situation. If I can catch the pressure starting to build up and know that that's going to be a trigger of no return, I can turn to the chevra here, and to "H. But I've got to get out of the problem. Things have gotten beyond what I can do on my own. The only hishtadlut that's left for me in those minutes is to come here, GYE, and to just turn it over.

This, as a guy who goes by the name of Briut has said to me over and over, is to be living in the solution rather than the problem. Thinking, reasoning about letting a little steam off, etc is living in the problem. Knowing that when the pressure build-up starts that we're already in trouble, and need to get a move on. No more thinking. Move into the solution. This is what Reb Briut Hakadosh has taught me, over and over.

But if I wait too long, the toilet is coming right in my face.

My counsel, which is actually your counsel to me... stop sooner. Completely forget about your count, your kaballah, Rosh Chodesh. This is willpower trying to solve "the problem". This is the us that needs to have and be the best, by our own hand. Forget about goals, promises. Forget about everything except today, except living in the solution, in Hashem's precious hands (as you once so poignantly put it to me). Let go and have a cry and ask Him to please handle all this "having to..", all the pressure of the hamster wheel to "make it happen".

I will daven for you that He comes close, and answers with a rephua shlema, "shlema" being the operative word. Because we need it all the way down to the private world, to the etzem, We need the relief. And you know better than most that there is only One experience that can bleed off the pressure completely. When we get that huge sigh of relief.

Bitachon. Emunah. These are hard to come by when the pressure's building. But the machinations of the mind are the exercises of the ego--I can do it myself, thank you very much. Keep posting, reaching out and davening, just for today. forget about Rosh Chodesh. It will be a beautiful time..Rosh Chodesh in the three weeks. The bittersweet of Hashem's peace. Aren't we all seeking His Peace.

I guess I've gone on. That seems to happen to me when I'm talking to myself.

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Re: La-Briut and Beyond!  
Posted by 1daat - 11 Jul 2010 23:25

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Sorry about the italics. I forgot to review the post before posting.

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