

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 1daat - 12 Jul 2010 08:19

"A day off isn't going to nullify the 180 I've spent clean, and isn't going to lead me off a cliff to 1000 more."

Nope, and probably won't. I agree. Only other consequence I can think of is how you'll feel after, and how you'll feel standing before Hashem for Shacharis.

But beyond that, we're all free to exercise the b'chira. So I guess it's up to go or no-go. And I guess whether it's a go or a no-go depends on what you really want--at this point. And, at this point in time, before the compulsion takes over and it's toilet time, you know what to do, whatever it is you want to do most.

But to put The Choice on the intensity is ducking out of the fact that, at this point, before it's too

late, you can still choose, based on what you really want most--the 10 seconds of ecstasy and release plus regret, or letting the problem go just for today.

Either way, I ain't goin anywhere.

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Re: La-Briut and Beyond!
Posted by briut - 12 Jul 2010 18:29

[1daat wrote on 12 Jul 2010 08:19:](#)

... you can still choose, based on what you really want most--the 10 seconds of ecstasy and release plus regret, or letting the problem go....

Thanks for this dialogue. It's enormously helpful.

Of course, for me I don't think it's exactly the 10 sec of ecstasy followed by regret. It's the 48 hours of "let's squeeze it all in today" followed by "well, THAT was pointless!" But I've only really experienced that "pointless" concept once in my life, which was the one-day superfall I had a coupla months after signing up here. (From which I feel I learned a lot, and didn't feel guilty hardly at all.)

I honestly think I'm gonna have to go there a couple more times before the "that was pointless" lesson really hits home.

Until then, it's some stupid siren call of the Yetzer that has a hold on me I can't understand. Once I understand that it's really pointless, I really think I'll be okay. And as to guilt, I don't really feel much guilt over my fantasies and acting out -- I've always seen it as a successful attempt to minimize what would otherwise be a Much Bigger Thing. So you should keep the 'guilt' word to yourself, I'm afraid.

Which means that every day I put off that superfall, I'm actually further away from being both

clean and sane. So somehow in my twisted logic, I'm thinking that real progress will be to drop this work for a day and see that the "other side" ain't what it was and certainly ain't what I now idealize it was.

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Re: La-Briut and Beyond!

Posted by Jooboy - 12 Jul 2010 18:59

Just keep in mind that our sobriety is not of our own doing - it comes from GOD. Chazal tell us the facts of life - that "Ilmulay H"kbhu ozro ayno yachol lo" "If GOD would not help him he would not be able to overcome him(Y'H)". The nature of the Y"H is so overwhelmingly powerful that without direct intervention by GOD we would be in the hands of the Y"H every time. Only by choosing the right actions do we merit GOD to help us succeed. It is never of our own doing and accomplishments. There are times where perhaps we are really powerless and GOD does not give us the strength to overcome temptation but we do allways have the power to ask GOD to relieve us of it.

I sense you take it as a given that you can fall and then just get back on track. If I am right about the above (who knows?) then there maybe a false assumption in the cheshbon.

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Re: La-Briut and Beyond!

Posted by 1daat - 12 Jul 2010 19:58

[quote="Briut" link=topic=1746.msg73771#msg73771 date=1278959341]

[1daat wrote on 12 Jul 2010 08:19:](#)

I honestly think I'm gonna have to go there a couple more times before the "that was pointless" lesson really hits home.

In recovery lingo there is much conversation about what they call "relapses", what we call "falls". I'm concerned I may be getting into ideas that may not be appropriate for this site. If so, there must be some way it can be deleted by admin. so I'll go ahead.

There is something to be said for the value of the fall, I think. After the falls, I know there were many times I ran back to program like the good little boy I've always been. That didn't help at all. It was more of the same.

But sometimes after falling the experience brought me closer to deciding for MYSELF that I **wanted** to be clean. Me, not for some imaginary "other" that I was being good to. Not the program, not GYE, not my family. And I'm not sure I could have gotten sick and tired of falling, ME sick and tired of falling, until I was sick and tired.

At some point these kind of falls stopped having any use. For me they just became more yak yak to shuck and jive myself. And coming to GYE was total Hashgacha pratis. I think I was more ready than I'd been ever before. I now know that I can get gripped at any second. I can feel that rush when I'm out in the summer world. I could get out of control in a second. So for me, GYE is my lifeline. But that's me. And maybe tons of guys here, too.

But maybe that's just not you. Maybe you just need to do what you need to do because your derech isn't anybody else's. I am at this moment very concerned about what I've just said here. But it's my experience. And who is really to say or know the ways of Hashem's derech.

I am hoping "H brings what is just exactly right for you to stay clean. I have to fess up that part of my hoping is selfish indeed, because you were the first person to connect with me when I first came online, and we have kept in touch. And you matter to me. A lot. But this borders on guilting, so I'll stop.

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Re: La-Briut and Beyond!
Posted by briut - 12 Jul 2010 21:39

1daat: yep, it seems I DO base today's cheshbon on the idea that I could fall for a day and "get back in the (gye) game" without much difficulty. That the habit of controlling my eyes (a strange

journey) could stay at its same level after a brief break. That one little "what was that all about, anyhow" wouldn't mess up the rest of my work. Not any harder to get back on the horse, not much guilt in taking a break.

I think the addiction model would say, "don't do it." It's that "first drink" to an alcoholic. But for me, it's the extra-long white knuckles time that seems the bigger risk. Each time of the roller coaster would seem to impose less white knuckle and more successful time on the ride. Get off the roller coaster, lose the nausea and white knuckles, and get back on. Each round could mean even MORE success, not ch'v being stuck in the quagmire without a lifeline.

I don't know enough 12-step stuff to know why a sip of kiddush is impossible, or even a once yearly drunken blast on your birthday. I only know that they say it's gotta be 'never.' And I don't know why.

Yep, I'd love to hear from lots of personal experiences here, but I'm afraid my thread is way too off-the-beaten-path to attract visitors. :-

Thanks again.

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Re: La-Briut and Beyond!
Posted by 1daat - 13 Jul 2010 02:15

Could that be framed as "off the beaten derech"? But "H makes of each one of us a unique derech. And with some rare exceptions, as you know, Tshuvah is made for us, not for the tzaddik gamoor. It's not my place to argue, try to persuade, try to chizuk you. Seems to me this is between you and "H. I can only tell you that whatever you decide, I am absolutely certain everyone's in your corner.

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Re: La-Briut and Beyond!
Posted by ZemirosShabbos - 13 Jul 2010 03:48

hi briut

i am no one to speak. i respect you immensely, both for your incredible journey that you chronicled here and for your incredible honesty and withering self-examination. far be it from me to offer you 'guidance' or musar. but you seem to want feedback so here are my two cents.

i think i understand the logic in your argument about the relief a temporary break in your gye work might provide. however, we are tasked to do one thing in this world. one simple thing. to submit to the ratzon hashem. and so if the logic is telling you one thing and the ratzon hashem is saying another, something tells me that we have to recognize the limits of our intellect and say to hashem "you know better and i submit to you". Sefarim say that Adam Harishon had some really convincing arguments about why he should eat from the eitz hadaas. he would be able to serve hashem in the face of greater obstacles than the state he was in before he ate. and that was entirely true. and it was totally wrong. because hashem told him not to do so.

and you can take it up with the Boss. tell him how you feel it is logical and all and how hard it is, how you ache from the stress. judging from what you have written about in the past i'd guess He would send you a response via UPS Next Day Air.

and do not forget us little 'uns here on the forum who look up to you. what a tremendous chizuk and what a massive kiddush hashem it would be to look at how you face this down and just keep on trucking. of course you have to do it for yourself, not for us but this cheshbon might provide a little boost.

hope this might help in some way. whatever happens you are a real warrior and hashem values what you managed to pull off until now on its own merit.

hang tight and let Hashem fight

zemiros

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Re: La-Briut and Beyond!

Posted by briut - 13 Jul 2010 11:27

ZemirosShabbos: What a beautiful zemer. Let me comment. (And pls no offense to the others who've commented and who I also appreciate, esp 1daat's last post).

You've hit a real nerve in me re: choosing between our ratzon and ratzon Hashem. I wish I had no limits in meeting His will. I do. And He knows. And I try to expand those limits. But when

'expand' turns to crash, or at least SEEMS to get close to crash, I have to remember to daven really hard before second-guessing what I'm capable of doing. (Example: witness my being on GYE: who'd have figured He was saying it was time for Him to say 'yes' to me in cleaning up these areas? Wow.)

I had a brief insight yesterday (Rosh Chodesh m'Av): Imagine that the nine-second war (Vilna Gaon?) is over, and then in the blink of an eye Moshiach is visible to the entire world. Boom. The question: What happens next?

In my case, I turn and look at my wife and kids. My eyes well up with tears, and I say what I know we're all thinking. "Wow. We MADE IT." Here we are. We're not only privileged to see the start of the geulah, but we've made it as frum Yidden. Not perfect, but still avdei Hashem mamash. And our imperfections are sorta frozen with us, because with Hashem and Moshiach giving the Yetzer Hara a retirement party, there's no more teiveh for chet and hence no way to do complete teshuva (hilchos teshuva omitted here for brevity's sake).

This is my long rambling intro to the simple point: is THIS next sin something that I want on that cheshbon even into Moshiach-zeit? I must indeed be very very careful (Elmer Fudd) of making a conscious step that's not in His (613? 48?) ways. Sometimes the answer will be, "yep, go ahead and fall, don't exceed your limits and try to be too much of a tzaddik." Other times, the answer will be, "let go and let G-d."

The key is having "the wisdom to know the difference."

Not that we're tzadikim who always do the right thing, but we've got to know our limits and not expect Hashem to suddenly give us miraculous powers to stand down sin and remain undamaged. As for the answer, well I don't have an answer yet. Or, as Jack Benny replied when asked at gunpoint, "your money or your life," -- "I'm thinking, I'm thinking."

Anyhow, thanks so much for triggering these thoughts. Truly. I'll sing a little zemer this Shabbos b'n with you in mind.

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Re: La-Briut and Beyond!

Posted by ZemirosShabbos - 13 Jul 2010 19:37

hi briut,

i hope you are doing ok in this post-rosh chodesh world, chances are you will recognize the

i did not really grasp what you were saying, i did not follow the line of thought so when you have a chance can you enlighten us?

thanks

zemiros

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people and places from the pre-rosh chodesh days

Re: La-Briut and Beyond!

Posted by briut - 14 Jul 2010 00:09

Thanks, ZS. I went back and tried a couple of edits to my earlier rambling over-wordy attempts at communication.

Is this better? If not, I'll try again. Unless it's purely for my own benefit and no one's really interested, in which case I'll stop because I know what I mean....

Thanks.

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Re: La-Briut and Beyond!

Posted by ZemirosShabbos - 14 Jul 2010 04:41

ok Briut, i am reading you loud and clear now. thanks.

i think many people, including me, think that if were up to us we would 'schedule' moshiach to come in about 3.5 years. enough time to learn a couple of mesechtas, fix the %&*&# lust addiction, lose 20lb., patch up relationships with friends and family and then be ready for moshiach with our best suit and tie and a huge smile.

something tells me that he is not going to give us that advance notice. so i understand what you mean when you say that we will be frozen with our current state when moshiach comes. and if you would somehow know that moshiach is coming tomorrow (or today) the question you are grappling with would be moot.

this question touches on a few heavy-duty issues of how to approach this lust beast.

if we focus on today then why worry if i will be able to handle the stress of cutting off my favorite stress-reliever, it's only for today. what you are questioning is when do we actually get to hold that great lust free-for-all after the proverbial 'today'.

another approach i have seen mentioned on the forum, which is an issue of some contention, is to condone the 'gradual' approach. if you did P/M 4 times a day and you got it down to once in 2 days then you are doing great. others would never condone that 'once in 2 days' because what is needed is abstinence. send me a PM if you want the name of the forum member whom i have seen arguing for the gradual method. i think that the Guard does not approve of it.

so i am partner to the dilemma you face, in theory. the safe way would be to not permit anything as an aveira lishmah. ultimately you would grow immensely from dealing with the stress and rising above it. of course talk is cheap and it is easy for me to sit and give this advice. you are in the trenches at the moment and it is up to you to do what you can and no one here can judge you or anyone else.

i wish you continued hatzlacha on your amazing climb

zemiros

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Re: La-Briut and Beyond!

Posted by briut - 14 Jul 2010 20:15

Unlike my normal rambling, I think I can put today's thinking in very basic terms. I feel a choice between:

1) take a balanced, gradual approach to life rather than my usual, life on the edge of the cliff approach. This suggests that I simply allow a fall every once in a while when the white-knuckled-ness gets too rough.

or,

2) choose the mitzvah over the cheit (sin) in every case in life, and then daven that the One who gave the mitzvah will give the strength to overcome cheit. (Or maybe he "wants" my white knuckles?)

One way keeps me from nervous breakdowns, the other from leaving His straight and narrow path. I don't see any other options. Oy.

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Re: La-Briut and Beyond!

Posted by ZemirosShabbos - 14 Jul 2010 20:26

Hi Briut,

i have a question and please take this only as a hopefully helpful suggestion. i know you have a Rav whom you trust entirely, does he know of your work on GYE and did you consider presenting this very question to him?

If he is not an option I would think you might be able to ask Dov, Guard, Elya, Dovid Chaim or any of the other 'senior staff'.

just my two cents

zemiros

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Re: La-Briut and Beyond!
Posted by briut - 15 Jul 2010 00:37

[ZemirosShabbos wrote on 14 Jul 2010 20:26:](#)

i know you have a Rav whom you trust entirely, does he know of your work on GYE and did you consider presenting this very question to him?

Ouch. Caught in a lie. Honestly I haven't felt the need to discuss this with my Rav in a couple of years (it was a rough patch in the marriage; this stuff seemed only tangentially related; at least at the time; hmmm).

I can come up with a million excuses not to bother him (he's got way too many things staring him in the face this month; I'm even taking my mundane shailles elsewhere). But that's all it is: excuses. So, arrgh, do I have the to pose such a question, which feels like a Sophie's Choice of aveira or breakdown?

Give me a day before I give you the only answer with any integrity -- which is... I've got to do it. Just give me a day to find my . Ouch.

PS: One thought. Remember the line from tachanun as we fall on our face: Dovid haM has a choice between a short siege or a longer drought. He picks the drought because he knows prayer & mitzvos can change the decree. And yep, Hashem forgave faster than the siege might have lasted. I think there's a nimshal hiding here: in a battle between aveira and breakdown, He can save us from the breakdown but He can't/won't stop us from our own sin. (Of course, what did Dovid haM know from breakdowns, but that's a whole other Kapittel.) Oy.

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