

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 ur-a-jew - 04 Aug 2010 22:18

I don't know that I'm one to talk since I am a relative "newbie" here, but the way I think to go here and to help stop the white-knuckling is to refocus your attention.

Instead of focusing on how hard it is to perform without lust, try focusing on developing an insatiable attraction for your wife.

The two ways that I know to do this are 1) through tefilah. Before you walk into the door just ask G-d that he develop in you a desire for your wife so that you can serve Him without getting distracted by the forbidden pleasures of the world (repeat it whenever necessary); and 2) by give, give, giving to your wife. Give in the traditional sense of helping around the house, helping with the kids and give emotional support, tell your wife in every which way how grateful you are for everything she does for you, in how amazing she is, how attracted you are to her (even if you are not yet but she certainly would like to hear that you are). I find the more that I give to my wife, the more enjoyment I get out of it and the more enamored I get from her.

Is it fool-proof certainly not. I've been trying to do it for years and I've still acted out. I do

however see a difference on the recovery end. That is because I feel a strong attraction to my wife and am able to develop a real relationship, when I combine that with the 12-Steps tools and everything else offered by this site, I feel I'm having a much easier time on the recovery end. Only time will tell, but I strongly suggest you try.

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Re: La-Briut and Beyond!
Posted by briut - 05 Aug 2010 00:59

ur-a-Jew: I know you're right, of course. But part of me is just bone tired of doing this for most of my life, including a coupla decades of marriage.

-- Express love for someone you want to love (and lust after), and perhaps don't just feel it today, or yesterday, or last year, or

-- Work to be someone I'm not, and when I'm tempted to give up then just try harder.

-- Put my "self" on hold or in the corner or whatever, so that I can focus on the "other."

No, I'm not sure another round of "focus on desired goals, and forget about current reality" is gonna cut it. Current reality is... I want something particular, and I'm not allowing myself to have it. And it's DIFFICULT. That's the truth.

MOSHUL:

I was a vegetarian for many years. Every so often, I'd get a craving for a grilled rib steak. I'd try not to think about it. Didn't work. Then I'd try to have something else with strong taste, like Indian eggplant. Nope. Then I'd try a soy steak. Fuggetaboutit. Maybe something 'bad' like a cigarette and a drink? Fun, but no.

Finally, I just went to the nearest kosher butcher (over an hour away) and bought the flakin' rib steak and ate it and... I was satisfied. Only needed 1-2 per year. Perhaps the vegetarians were aghast (if they knew), but my soul was happy.

I promise not to make any off-color references to a desire to eat meat....

Oy. Why can't a few days off be more like a rib steak to a vegetarian?

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Re: La-Briut and Beyond!

Posted by 1daat - 05 Aug 2010 04:12

The yetz would never whisper into a frum Yid's ear, "Go eat a cheeseburger from Fatburger". No, he says, "It's ok, reason this out for yourself. G-d gave you sechel to think for yourself, to arrive at the mussar for yourself, so that you are at peace with it. Think, feel. Come let us reason together."

For me it's not that I think I will really end up at a "thought through" conclusion that would be heretical or chillul. I'm not going to end up at Fatburger. And I'm not going to end up justifying a fall on any rational basis. I'm an addict, and sometimes the yetzer gets the best of me. But I'm not going to "think things through" and end up thinking that it's ok to fall. Not complicated. It's not ok to fall. I don't want to fall. I fall. And Hashem in His munificence loves me and understands and brings me GYE and His own Mercy. Fell shmell, pick myself up, learn a lesson, and move on. But I'm know, deep down, that plug in the jug ("No") has to be the end of my "thought process". I know this before I even get started with the thinking through.

But...let's not pretend: Lust tastes delicious, all the more so when we can't/won't have it (It's like bedding someone who looked great with their clothes on. After the fact, maybe they should have kept their clothes on.)...Why did I DO that??!! Oy!

It seems, for me, that "No", is just not an acceptable answer...just now. So give me a little time to torture myself with knowing that I'm not going to end up where my thinking seems to lead me. Just give me a little time. Somewhere in myself I know that Hashem is my everything, and that I won't rest until I can love Him b'chol meodecha. But right now that rib steak is all I can smell. (course eating a kosher steak isn't an aveira). So it's rib eye or kedusha. And the yetzer would never tell me to eat a cheeseburger. No, he tells me to take my time, it's asking a lot of a person to accept a "No", and you've got to find a way to come to terms with this physical need, nay, this biological imperative. Look", he says, "if it takes a fall for you to come to terms with this, Hashem would understand. What's a little fall a couple times a year? Not to worry. It's ok".

Now THAT's my kind of guy. So yetz, ya wanna leyn a little tonight?

I just re-read this. What on earth was I trying to say? I'm not going to erase it for integrity's sake. But Whaaaaat????

Love you. love following your honesty and remarkable openness that so helps me, yes, "think things through".A Shandeh!

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Re: La-Briut and Beyond!
Posted by ur-a-jew - 05 Aug 2010 14:52

[Briut wrote on 05 Aug 2010 00:59:](#)

MOSHUL:

I was a vegetarian for many years. Every so often, I'd get a craving for a grilled rib steak. I'd try not to think about it. Didn't work. Then I'd try to have something else with strong taste, like Indian eggplant. Nope. Then I'd try a soy steak. Fuggetaboutit. Maybe something 'bad' like a cigarette and a drink? Fun, but no.

Finally, I just went to the nearest kosher butcher (over an hour away) and bought the flakin' rib steak and ate it and... I was satisfied. Only needed 1-2 per year. Perhaps the vegetarians were aghast (if they knew), but my soul was happy.

Forgive me if I don't get the moshul (and if I'm being a nudnick who is just not getting it just tell me and I'll keep quiet). The choice is not between rib-steak or salad. The choice is between Kosher rib steak or Treif rib steak. And frankly, while the treif steak looks really good in the picture if you'll put your heart into making the kosher steak, it tastes far better. Think of the effort in making your kosher steak as similar to the one hour drive to get the rib-steak.

Now I appreciate and love your brutal honesty and openness but I think I'm reading mixed messages. On the one hand you seem to say that you can't go the kosher way at all (perhaps

because it requires too great a leap of faith or, because it may not give instant gratification).
See here:

[Briut wrote on 29 Jul 2010 14:49:](#)

Beyond all these prattim, though, I think that overall it's tough to think of "performing" without lust (as the first posts described). Exchanging the movies playing in my head for a real-life woman waiting for me to connect to her... it's a pretty big gap. I've heard Guard say not to rush that point, that it can take time (even years), but I'm not sure how to give up the lustfulness with the wife NOW and wait for the higher love to kick in LATER.

I'm starting to think that it would be wrong to give up a lot more lust than I feel an available higher love to take its place. One baby step at a time. Don't send lust packing until the replacement is ready to move in. Which means holding onto some memories, pictures, furtive glances at shul, whatever... until I'm ready to just let it go because its replacement has already arrived.

Anyone have thoughts on how to give up the 'lusting' without feeling half-dead inside, particularly when the higher-love that might replace it isn't yet full-grown? Thanks.

On the other hand you also seem to say that you have no problem with the kosher way for the most part, you just want some trief every so often. See here:

[Briut wrote on 05 Aug 2010 00:59:](#)

Oy. Why can't a few days off be more like a rib steak to a vegetarian?

I think you need to clarify in your own mind what the true issue is (or perhaps maybe it's both,

i.e., even though you can give up the lust right now, you are too scared to let go completely out of fear that in six months from now when you're really desperate for it, you won't be able to use it anymore).

Just some thoughts from reading your latest posts.

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Re: La-Briut and Beyond!

Posted by briut - 06 Aug 2010 01:40

Man, it's such a (rhymes w/ witch) when someone turns my own words back on me. And that you've taken the time to do it, and invest the caring, etc. Wow. Thanks.

And yeah, ultimately I do think of a rib steak to a vegetarian something like some other aveirah to a Yid. Do I mean a cheeseburger or, er, some other meaty thing to [eat], and does it even matter? Yeah, this dor seems to care about kosher meat, but maybe it'll turn out to be all about shatnez and the rest was just window dressing. We'll never know. We just have to do the best we can.

I know a couple, frum & BT, who went OUT to dinner in an UNSUPERVISED restaurant once per month. Baked fish, cold salad, just like their 'old' days of learning to be frum. Was it a perfect compromise - NO. Does it mean they deserve to burn (gehinnom) - probably NO.

I'm still trying to figure out how it would be so awful to take a couple of days off. Before, I couldn't really take a couple of days off in that OTHER direction (staying clean), and now I've got maybe six months or more of clean. But if I'm doing it with white knuckles and not with love/dveikus, I wonder how much it's really worth. I think Dov was saying to me (was he kidding? I think, no), "okay, so go ahead and fall already." And if I'm going to use that break time to reconnect, dump the white knuckles, and start on stronger footing, I'm starting to talk myself into doing it.

I'm not saying I'm on my way to doing that!! I'm just saying that I'm STARTING to talk myself into it. And so far, I'm clean.

Thanks for listening to the ranting. It gets rant-ier when my wife unexpectedly turns ossur to me way before her calendar predicted. So it's pretty rant-filled right now. Oy.

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Re: La-Briut and Beyond!

Posted by ur-a-jew - 06 Aug 2010 02:16

I have more to say but for now. "But if I'm doing it with white knuckles and not with love/dveikus, I wonder how much its really worth." How much is it worth???? A lot of Rib Steaks upstairs no question about that. And ultimately it will get you some nice kosher rib steaks down here too. So until you let go of that roller coaster and really enjoy the ride just keep on holding on tight.

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Re: La-Briut and Beyond!

Posted by briut - 06 Aug 2010 19:05

[ur-a-jew wrote on 06 Aug 2010 02:16:](#)

So until you let go of that roller coaster and really enjoy the ride just keep on holding on tight. Yeah, the chicken-vs-egg issue of how to enjoy the roller coaster while still white-knuckled and vice versa. I really grapple with the question of what the fastest route is to unimpeded pleasure on a roller coaster -- just let go (and let G-d, as it were?) or to take measured steps in one direction with an occasional break as needed so it's never too rough to handle.

But I suppose I'll keep grappling. The day count is surely over 150 nonstop by now. ARE WE HAVING FUN YET?

PS: Work has been pouring pouring in, after a long drought. I think the shower of gashmius has got to be connected somehow. Yirah and ahavah, both (i.e., I'm scared to go off the wagon because the work might stop, but I'm full of love that He's showering me with such gifts chinam).

Good Shabbos, all.

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Re: La-Briut and Beyond!

Posted by cleareyes613@gmail.com - 06 Aug 2010 22:55

Good shabbos Briut.

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Re: La-Briut and Beyond!

Posted by Dov - 08 Aug 2010 02:26

Shavuah Tov!![ur-a-jew wrote on 05 Aug 2010 14:52:](#)

[Briut wrote on 05 Aug 2010 00:59:](#)

MOSHUL:

I was a vegetarian for many years. Every so often, I'd get a craving for a grilled rib steak. I'd try not to think about it. Didn't work....Finally, I just went to the nearest kosher butcher (over an hour away) and bought the flakin' rib steak and ate it and... I was satisfied. Only needed 1-2 per year. Perhaps the vegetarians were aghast (if they knew), but my soul was happy.

I think you need to clarify in your own mind what the true issue is...

Wow. Your chavirim actually read, think, and care enough to respond in a helpful kind of way. Us recovery people are a very lucky lot.

All I want to add is that while I have been pummelled many times by lust, a steak has never really hurt me. Yeah, I can see Ghandi's conscience being hurt by sneaking a steak, but if acting out my lust was strictly a conscience problem, I'd be out there using it today, for sure. It feels *great*, at least or a little while...

Lust kicks my behind and is inescapably damaging to virtually every department of my life. That's the **only** reason I ever gave it up and asked Hashem to help me out of trouble.

I enjoy Caffeine, donuts, wine, spending money, steaks, and pipe tobacco, but they do not (as yet) make my life unmanageable, so I don't have to stop any of them. If they get in my way, I just don't *do* them, mah she-ein kein with Lust. It just kicks my behind.

Is this relevant, or am I butting in where I don't belong and missing the boat here?

- Dov

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Re: La-Briut and Beyond!
Posted by briut - 08 Aug 2010 14:55

Yep, thanks again to every one for adding add'l viewpoints. Very helpful.

I think I found something to buy a little more time -- the realization that this clean streak is NOT all about me me me. It's GOT to be about something / someone else. Because if it were all up to simply how I'm feeling, I know exactly where I'd be right now and what I'd be doing....

First, I tried to see that someone as HKB'H. And I'm ashamed to admit that it doesn't work. Too abstract to really see and feel and hear. Too awful to think that He is the one giving me all this pain.

So if it's not about me me me and it's not about Him, I think I've found someone else. Namely, one of my kids is about to leave for Israel. (Forgive me if I'm fuzzy about details like age, gender, marital status etc in the name of anonymity.) And could I maybe imagine that MY being clean when they leave would be some kind of zchus zchar shmira etc etc for THEM as they start their lives over there? It's got to mean something.

If I felt it would be helpful to their success if I said Tehillim daily at 6:13 am, standing on my head, I would do it. THAT'S MY KID! What wouldn't a parent do? So if "all" I'm asking of myself is a couple more clean weeks to let the kid fly over there with a parent who's still clean as opposed to one who falls, well then I guess I gotta say yes.

And okay, here's where me me me kicks in. If I'm willing to do THAT for MY kid, is it possible that Avinu (sheba'shamayim) would be willing to do great things for ME, a kid of His? Yeah, I think I'm allowed to expect that of Him. I'M HIS KID!

So I've bought myself a couple of (1day-atta-time) weeks, I hope. Might not keep me from planning that superfall for once the kid's on the plane, but I can postpone that choice until "tomorrow" -- (the one that never comes if I stick with "today").

Am I deluding myself, or might this be a workable plan? Thoughts?

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Re: La-Briut and Beyond!

Posted by ur-a-jew - 08 Aug 2010 15:29

[Briut wrote on 08 Aug 2010 14:55:](#)

Too awful to think that He is the one giving me all this pain.

I actually thought I had posted this on Friday, but when I went back I didn't see it there. Maybe Hashem has given you pain, I say maybe because I think most of the time we give the pain to ourselves, but even if it is Hashem that is giving it to us, look what else He gave you "Work has been pouring pouring in, after a long drought." Sounds like the refuah before the makeh of "my

wife unexpectedly turns ossur to me way before her calendar predicted."

[Briut wrote on 08 Aug 2010 14:55:](#)

And okay, here's where me me me kicks in. If I'm willing to do THAT for MY kid, is it possible that Avinu (sheba'shamayim) would be willing to do great things for ME, a kid of His? Yeah, I think I'm allowed to expect that of Him. I'M HIS KID!

There is no question about this one. But if your kid told you that on the way to Israel he was stopping off in Dubai, what would you're reaction then be. Should Hashem act any different?

[Briut wrote on 08 Aug 2010 14:55:](#)

Am I deluding myself, or might this be a workable plan? Thoughts?

Sounds like a plan. When I first started my partner was very tempted to act out live. What convinced him not to, is that there always will be an opportunity tomorrow to fulfill our lust so there is no need to do it today. Today we can always stay clean because whatever we need to do can always be done on that hopefully elusive tomorrow, So live for today. And there are always reasons to live today.

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Re: La-Briut and Beyond!

Posted by Steve - 08 Aug 2010 15:56

Oh Doc B, you're on a merry-go-round.

You're making nice choices, but please realize that you are substituting one white-knuckle inspiration for another. At this point you are doing what you need to, and Kol HaKovod!! We all white knuckle it for a while. But that's not the final solution!! How the HECK do we get off of the ride??!!

We gotta get OUT OF OUR OWN HEADS, own own limited viewpoint.

I hear you are in pain. Heck, I'M IN PAIN. **WE ALL ARE IN PAIN.** And we want to SCREAM out "STOP THE WORLD, I WANNA GET OFF!!", give me that steak, and I'll be able to get back on the ride and survive a few more months.

Man, that's just planning for the next steak.

Is that what I want to focus my life around, the NEXT STEAK??!! Isn't there a whole lotta life, JOY, that i am missing?

Focusing on the pain. That's the problem. My pain is ALL ABOUT ME. Life is not going according to MY PLAN. i'm overweight, balding, not as rich as others, not as good in learning, I live with regret and disappointment, and yearn to feel pleasure and be in control of SOMETHING!!

I have found that by accepting the TRUTH that Hashem is orchestrating my life a certain way, and really having EMUNAH and BITACHON that His plan is for my benefit, it DEADENS the pain. The causes are still there, but the REACTION of being AUTOMATICALLY PAINED by it can decrease.

There are BABY STEPS that can be taken, one day at a time, to get me away from being REACTIVE to becoming RESPONSIVE. I can CHOOSE how I want to RESPOND TO THE STIMULUS of something not going the way i want it to. Do I want it to lead me to pain and RID, and thus becoming ripe for the lust urge, and have to white-knuckle it to stay clean, or do I want figure out what message HKBH has for me in each scenario, and learn to grow better from it. I change my perception of the event, I work at giving it meaning and purpose, and the result is to reduce or eliminate the PAIN I would have felt otherwise.

And I revel in the JOY of knowing I have won back my FREEDOM OF CHOICE by not engaging the YH on the battlefield at all.

There are two choices on the rollercoaster of life. Scared Witless that the Designer and Operator of the rollercoaster don't know what they're doing and could care less about me, and therefore I'll hold on tight to the bar in front of me with whiteknuckles, OR to feel safe in the knowledge that the Designer and Operator made the ride safe, and despite the scary twists n turns n dips, I can let go of that da*n bar and throw my hands in the air and scream with feeling the joy of being alive rushing past my ears!

I know which choice gives ME more happiness.

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Re: La-Briut and Beyond!
Posted by briut - 08 Aug 2010 17:57

"How many psychiatrists does it take to change a light bulb? Only one, yet the light bulb has to really want to change."

In other words, some folks sorta like the twilight, semi-dark, comfortable dimness sometimes. When it's time for them to come out into the light, they'll surely grab the working light bulb they need.

At least, that's how I've always understood the joke.

When I'm ready to cold turkey and not just diet for today, as you describe, it'll be easier. Surely your two guys are well on your way. I'm apparently still grappling. I'd say, different strokes for different folks... but you probably wouldn't appreciate the loshon, er um the phrasing.

And the tale continues.

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Re: La-Briut and Beyond!
Posted by 1daat - 09 Aug 2010 06:37

First I wanted to, again, thank you for the post on the other board--the letter to the community.

Next. We are each a separate experiment, and we're not to compare experiments. As I read your thread, I've come to realize that you are about your t'shuvah in your own way. A dabble here, a risk there, a holding the beast out on the edge. But with all that, I read a serious love of Hashem, and an insistence that your connection be real and palpable.

Is this "getting you" at all?

ps. How long can a muscle stay contracted before fatigue sets in and the muscle can no longer contract? As in "white knuckles"

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