

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 - 10 Aug 2010 01:45

[Briut wrote on 09 Aug 2010 16:03:](#)

So, I would take that statement as true for all of us. So, your thoughts in distinguishing my thread from others here might be based on ...? ? (Please comment if you wish.)

An example of the distinction is...

[Briut wrote on 09 Aug 2010 16:03:](#)

Certainly the degree of white knuckle is FAR better than six months ago, but it's not gone. Better to wait until the muscle doesn't function well anymore (let's NOT extend that analogy to bris-related topics here...) or better to take a break for some physical therapy and return without the muscle pain? And in my case, the soreness isn't really directed at me -- it's the wife and kids who need to live with my RID, my grumpiness, my other 'issues' as I work all this stuff out.

1) You hold the tension. To fall or not to fall. back and forth. Maintaining being clean. It's a cliffhanger. That you can hold the both of those, to find your own integrity (as I see it), seems unique to you/your thread.

2) I can't remember what 2) was.

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Re: La-Briut and Beyond!
Posted by briut - 10 Aug 2010 21:18

Well, my wife is away again overnight (tonight). I figure if I can focus on how I want to "send off" the kid to E'Y, I can stay clean.

Not necessarily clean and happy about it, but clean. Are we having fun yet? Will we ever be having fun? Is fun even the point? Oy!

I figured that putting this down in writing in my thread will also help me to stay clean. I don't think I'll need to put out any SOS messages, though.

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Re: La-Briut and Beyond!
Posted by Eye.nonymous - 11 Aug 2010 13:04

Hello. Just wanted to check in here in your thread. It looks pretty leibadik here, sorry I haven't checked in earlier!

Just a thought--if you feel like you're white-knuckling, you're probably focusing too much on staying clean or not.

There's something going on beneath the surface. Something that makes you want to escape; want to act out.

Look for that. Deal with that. It'll put lots of distance between you and acting out.

--Eye.

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Re: La-Briut and Beyond!

Posted by an honest mouse - 11 Aug 2010 21:37

hi briut, please dont hate me but i feel like butting in over here.

i have been doing what i think you're doing, hanging on whilst a certain event is going on and focusing on staying clean 'just till that event is over'. In my own personal experience, as soon as the event is over i feel, maybe slightly subcontiously, like i have an excuse to act out and i always would, for a couple of weeks usually...

What i focused on, was abstention, not changing myself or rewiring myself to react and behave differently. what i am slowly but surely starting to realise, is that making a *deep* change is totally integral to recovery and i was focusing way too much on the surface.

It's like the chazal in pirkei avos, '*kol ahavo hateluyo b'dovor, botloh hadovor botloh hoahavho*' if our love of the freedom that recovery offers is dependant on something temporary, it will only last as long as the thing does, as soon as its gone, so are we. we hvae to make ourselves dependant on something bigger and outside of ourselevs. Steve on the call yesterday (which ive

just joined and LOVE btw) said that you could understand the 2nd step 'a power greater than ourselves' to mean the chevra that we are recovering with, like on the call. only a power *greater than ourselves* can restore us to sanity.

lastly, rabbi twerski often quotes an alcoholic who was sober for 22 years who said, 'the person i once was would drink again - im not the person i once was'.

sorry to post a massive long, preachy post - i just want to be there and offer some advice to someone who has done so for me...

p.s hatslocho with your kid's move to eretz yisroel, i hope everything goes smoothly and they are matsliach- you should have lots of nachas!

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Re: La-Briut and Beyond!
Posted by briut - 11 Aug 2010 23:58

[Eye.nonymous wrote on 11 Aug 2010 13:04:](#)

Just a thought--if you feel like you're white-knuckling, you're probably focusing too much on staying clean or not. There's something going on beneath the surface. Something that makes you want to escape; want to act out.

Look for that. Deal with that. It'll put lots of distance between you and acting out. Oy, Eye, you're so right. It's stuff with the wife. Something like this: "if I'm wanting something in the marital relationship (se*xual or otherwise) that she's not capable of giving to me, then I "should" be trying to get it on my own from another source. Otherwise, I'll be sad etc."

This is really really dangerous thinking. Because it's not just that if she can't give me "exactly" the se*xual experience I crave at "exactly" the right time etc, then I should go find it more myself. That would be bad enough. But it's also that if she can't give me this, that, or the other support

in other areas, I should be trying to fulfill myself in the way I think is right.

Which is BS, of course. R' Arush (Garden of Peace, required reading for any married man) preaches that she is "exactly" what I'm needing right now. So instead of looking for a substitute source for my desires, I need to look at why I think I'm in "need" of something that Hashem thinks I don't need.

This level of work is feeling very tiring this week, very sad, very deep, very... much like work.

So you've hit it on the head. It's not my I'm having the fight with, it's the [image I'm holding of my] wife.

I'll get through this, I know (I always seem to, B'H!), but it's just a hard week. And only a little bit easier since I think I can project all this blame onto her... how sick is that? How sick is all of this?

But in the meantime, the "stay clean 'til the kids get on their plane to E'Y" seems to be a workable plan. Til manana. Which never comes. Whew.

Thanks SO much for checking in, Eye. And everybody.

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Re: La-Briut and Beyond!

Posted by Eye.nonymous - 12 Aug 2010 13:51

[Briut wrote on 11 Aug 2010 23:58:](#)

This is really really dangerous thinking. Because it's not just that if she can't give me "exactly" the se*ual experience I crave at "exactly" the right time etc, then I should go find it more myself.

That would be bad enough. But it's also that if she can't give me this, that, or the other support in other areas, I should be trying to fulfill myself in the way I think is right.

I used to think that s*x had to be every so many times each week, and it had to be done in a certain way. And SOMETHING MUST BE WRONG WITH MY WIFE if she doesn't think so. We spent a decade working on my wife's "problem."

When I started adding up clean days, when I could go 2 weeks without s*x and without mas***, I realized S*X REALLY IS OPTIONAL. I started to realize that my wife's expectations were normal, and mine were driven by lust--even though they didn't seem absurd (after all, we were completely convinced, for 10 years, that the problem was with my wife). After all, I didn't think I was expecting anything out of the ordinary.

So, I was able to let go of my own expecatations (which were completley fantasy driven). Then, I could start being considerate of my wife's needs. AND, when my wife's needs were met, a funny thing happened. I found the whole experience a lot more pleasurable, too. The experience was different from what I imagined I wanted, but it was far more satisfying.

So, it seems to me that the really dangerous thinking is when we focus on our own wants, needs, and expectations. The remedy--try to put them aside. Look really hard to figure out what your wife's needs are. Try really hard to respect them, and to meet them.

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Re: La-Briut and Beyond!
Posted by briut - 12 Aug 2010 19:23

Thanks, Eye. And you know, any problem in the bedroom... did not start in the bedroom. And the solution to any problem in the bedroom... will never be found in the bedroom.

In other words, it always has to do with other actions, or resentments, or misinterpretations, or whatever.

My issues with my wife are not bedroom problems. (Unless a series of 19-22 day cycles are somehow a problem either of us could fix.) Anyhow, they're about the other "stuff" that I'm finding is like fingernails on blackboards. Singing off-key. Bringing divrei torah to the Shbbs table from questionable (anti-Orthodox) sources. Treating the children like mamish babies.

And yes, those things have bothered me in the past. But now, somehow, I'm feeling so much more bothered. And more trapped. (How can I tell her not to sing at a Shabbos table? She loves it.) And so I'll confess, even in the bedroom where I think there's no "problem," I'm still not connecting to her on a very deep level because a part of me is ticked at what happens at the Shabbos table with singing. So I'm sort of objectifying her.

Which is NOT the goal of "cherishing our spouse as a window into Hashem's decisions of what we each need."

So that's why I say it's all one great big OY OY OY. And it's because I KNOW BETTER. REALLY I DO. But I've gotten stuck in this resentment chain against my own wife and I'm struggling to find a way out. And why the struggle if I already know better -- THAT, my dear Eye, is the 64K shekel question.

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Re: La-Briut and Beyond!

Posted by silentbattle - 12 Aug 2010 19:40

Wow...that sounds like you've got a lot to deal with, all at once. Which means that you must be a pretty incredible person.

I'm attaching a smile to this post. Put it on sometime today, alright?

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Re: La-Briut and Beyond!

Posted by 1daat - 13 Aug 2010 00:44

Why on *earth* would Hashem put you in the position of having to hear a woman's voice singing. And at the Shabbos tisch no less! And it's your *wife*[i] doing the singing!

Have a good Shabbos.

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Re: La-Briut and Beyond!

Posted by briut - 13 Aug 2010 04:42

[silentbattle wrote on 12 Aug 2010 19:40:](#)

Wow...that sounds like you've got a lot to deal with, all at once.

SB: I'm hoping that I'm just missing a big dose of irony and sarcasm in your otherwise-wonderful comment. Because I would respond: "THIS? THIS LITTLE PECKELE? A LOT TO DEAL WITH, ALL AT ONCE??" This is NOTHING. I could start the "count my blessings" game and keep going until the morning!

[healthy smart kids; wife who says 'I love you' every day; current on the mortgage; Hashem standing right over us, all the time; a safe & reliable car (just don't ask about the other car); great kehilla & learning & everything yiddishkeitish; like I said, I could go 'til morning...]

Fer sure it sounds terrible to be trapped at a shabbos table with off-key wives and smelly divrei "torah." But you know, she might find it pretty terrible to be married to a guy who seems to like P&M&??? as much as he likes her. We all got our stuff to haul.

As for me, my own little peckele doesn't feel like a burden. Which is my point in replying to you, my dear SB: I HOPE YOUR CHOSEN TEACHER IS SHOWING YOU THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN PROBLEMS, AND 'P'ROBLEMS. BECAUSE IF YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT

PROBLEMS WITH A CAPITAL P, WELL, I'D SAY THAT I AIN'T GOT ANY OF 'EM. PERIOD.

Talk to some folks with a couple of decades of marriage under their belt and see if this post even qualifies as a problem. Except to a whiner like me, that is.

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Re: La-Briut and Beyond!

Posted by Eye.nonymous - 14 Aug 2010 19:26

Shavua Tov Briut,

How was your Shabbos?

I've been thinking about your problems.

I've noticed with myself that a lot of my frustration comes when I try to control something that is beyond my control; what my wife does, the way my children behave, etc.

The frustration really is, I'm angry with myself! Why can't I get my kids to behave! Why can't I figure out how to get my wife to listen to me.

But, once I realized these things are out of my control, the whole burden just goes away.

I can't say it all goes away, though. But, it definitely gets much more tolerable. And, I can't say I don't try to do anything about it anymore. But, I'm much more relaxed about it because it's really not up to me. I feel that I have much less at stake.

So, my guess is, that's the real issue.

Practically speaking, some bandaids for you, I thought of a few ideas. Do whatever you can to expose your wife to your kinda' Torah. Maybe get a magazine subscription to a Charadi women's magazine. Get a few more books lying around the house. Get your wife subscribed to some orthodox web sites. Whatever.

As far as the singing is concerned: Is the problem that your wife joins in when you're singing and you can't stand it? So, don't sing! Or, sing only one or two zemiros, strategically times--when your wife is in the kitchen or something like that.

I had a problem like that once, someone singing along who couldn't carry a tune. I was particularly frustrated because I had to change key every three or four notes to keep up with them. Eventually I tried to concentrate only on my own singing. I kept the tune as if I were singing by myself and simply ignored the other person.

Good luck,

--Eye.

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Re: La-Briut and Beyond!
Posted by briut - 15 Aug 2010 22:29

Eye, I'm strengthened by both your choosing to comment and by (some of) the comments you've offered. Thanks. Truly.

Yes, it was a beautiful Shabbos. We had tried for plans to get "away" as a family. Didn't work. Kids maybe disappointed, but we all seemed happy enough. And then, we all realized that this would be the last Shabbos we were all under the same roof, for, well, who knows how long. I thought we would have a couple of weeks more, but a long at the calendar confirmed... this is/was IT!

Suddenly I realized I had to get over all my irritability/RID. Period. This was it. It's funny how a man's thinking can focus when there's a... , oh, never mind. Anyhow, we joked and laughed and shared Torah and it was nice.

Of course part of me was lying through my teeth about it because everything was annoying. This one didn't do the pre-Shabbos jobs promised. That one insisted on singing (nothing further to say). My "symbolic speech" in the kitchen as I left for shul and she was in the shower didn't work (I laid stuff by the oven to go there, and hid elsewhere the stuff to serve at room temperature -- we've played this route for xx years, is this so hard??)

But I controlled myself.

It's just that I'm afraid I have too much "controlling myself" to do right now and not enough genuing inside "joy." Which over the long haul is not sustainable.

There are a couple of obvious "it"s that the wife can't really offer and that I'm trying to stay away from fantasizing about. But it's hard sometimes. (I mean the situations....) And Eye, I think you have it exactly right:

THE DISAPPOINTMENT COMES FROM THINKING THAT I KNOW WHAT IT IS THAT'S REALLY GOOD FOR ME, THAT'S REALLY THE RESULT I WANT, IN THINKING THAT I AM THE MASTER OF MY WORLD. Because ultimately, Hashem might bring me not only "what I deserve" (oy, chas vashalom He should judge me with din!!) but what's really deeply "good." And He might bring it through a path I hadn't really considered good.

Like a singing wife.

This is an obvious truth for anyone who's Yiddishkeit is anything more than just "calling it in." But it's such a hard level to maintain, to grow from, to really live out in tachlis.

I've got another chance to live this one out. Tonight. She'll be at mikveh. Can I really love the one I'm with? Both the woman lying next to me and the "one in the mirror" (myself)?

More to say, and more I know I should edit out, but I gotta run.

Anyhow, Eye, you got me thinking again. Thanks.

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Re: La-Briut and Beyond!

Posted by Eye.nonymous - 16 Aug 2010 13:19

A couple of days ago I sat down for breakfast. I turned on the kettle, intending to use a little bit of boiled water to make myself a cup of--iced coffee. I've really started to like ice coffee lately, I find it refreshing. I was really looking forward to it.

My wife beat me to it, and made me a glass of hot coffee.

I was really disappointed. I didn't want to drink something hot on a hot morning.

I could have made a big deal out of it. I even could have politely said to my wife, "Oh, I was going to make iced coffee." She'd say, "Oh, I didn't know, sorry. Should I dump this out and make another cup?" Thank G-d, we do get along.

But, what difference does it make, I thought. Why should I hurt her feelings? Why shouldn't I just be grateful that she does love me and wants to help me? She wasn't trying to undermine my plans by making a cup of hot coffee. If it really matters to me, I can drink something cold after I finish the hot coffee.

"Oh, thanks for the coffee!"

Big deal. Big ego.

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Re: La-Briut and Beyond!

Posted by briut - 16 Aug 2010 15:59

I'm not sure if I heard this tefilla someplace else, or if it simply "came to me." But it's exactly the line I need to tell myself. Frequently. Until maybe it actually penetrates. Namely:

Ribboynu shel Oylam:

I'm not asking You to help me GET everything I WANT.

I'm asking You to help me WANT everthing I GET.

Instructions for living, eh?

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