

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 ur-a-jew - 26 Aug 2010 03:45

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[Briut wrote on 26 Aug 2010 03:33:](#)

Except I'm still holding back. For some reason. That I can't put my finger on.

I think you know the reason. It's because you don't really like that life. Sure its seems alluring now, but that's because you can't have it. But you know that should you go ahead and do it, as soon as you do it you'll regret it.

My own feeling is that if this is how much you can accomplish when your staying clean for others. Think of how good you can be when you do it for yourself. And maybe if you do it for yourself it will be without the white knuckles. Briut, keep hanging in there.

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Re: La-Briut and Beyond!

Posted by ZemirosShabbos - 26 Aug 2010 15:43

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just heard a wonderful moshol from Rav Yitzchok Berkowitz from Yerushalayim.

He was talking about teshuvah and the charatah we (should) feel over past aveiros. When we think back to a juicy aveirah, how can we feel charatah if we enjoyed it and can still remember the pleasure we had?

He says it is comparable to when a small child picks up a dirty lollypop from the ground and happily licks it while the parent would never do that. Does the lolly taste any worse than a clean one? Not at all.

The same is with the aveira. We enjoy it, but at the same time we are getting dirty and/or eating dirt.

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Re: La-Briut and Beyond!

Posted by briut - 29 Aug 2010 15:19

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ZS: Nice try, bro, but I like lollipops. Forget the dirt, focus on the candy. (Especially mango dumdums; can a single flavor be ordered, or is it a package deal with the root beer like so much of life is a package deal; oy.) So just like that little kid, I'd never leave a lollipop on the ground.

Frankly, I don't see much hope in staying clean forever. Not even ODAAT. So before the white knuckling gets so bad that I fall into REALLY bad places, why not just take a dip in the pool and then dry off with a new count? At least, that's what I ask myself. But I don't do it. But I am getting pretty close with some spills I shouldn't even describe.

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Re: La-Briut and Beyond!

Posted by briut - 29 Aug 2010 15:23

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I learned a nice lesson from my kids this summer about white knuckling. We went on a big BIG roller coaster. I hate them, but love my kid. So we went together. I was trying to get my death grip on the restrainer bar when my kid turned to me....

"Abba, you can really just let go. The (m)aker of (t)he (r)ide made it extra safe. The (o)wner would never run it if folks dropped out of the car. The very fact that it's here for us means it's safe enough to let go. You don't have to hold on so tight."

What a moshul for Elul. It's safe to give up the white-knuckled feeble attempt to add to the security of the ride, because the Maker knows our limitations and the Owner keeps it safe.

Or something like that.

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Re: La-Briut and Beyond!

Posted by ZemirosShabbos - 30 Aug 2010 14:44

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wow, pretty impressive insight, how true and how simple yet profound.

i like your new tagline on posts, btw.

best wishes for clean lollies and pink knuckles.

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Re: La-Briut and Beyond!

Posted by Eye.nonymous - 30 Aug 2010 19:56

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Great roller coaster story.

--Eye.

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Re: La-Briut and Beyond!

Posted by ur-a-jew - 30 Aug 2010 20:19

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???? ??-???, ??? ????. You're kids where mechvan to a post of Steve's from a couple of weeks ago.

[Steve wrote on 30 Jul 2010 04:05:](#)

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We had a fantastic understanding on the call today. The difference between **counting the days of sobriety**, and **living one's life in recovery**.

We've all been there, in the beginning of amassing clean days, when we were "white knuckling" our way thru the days. Where does that moshul come from?

Didja ever ride or watch a rollercoaster? Are you fearless or fearful when you ride one?

What do the scared people do? They grab onto the bar in front of them for dear life, so hard their knuckles turn white. What are they afraid of? Well, they don't trust the ones who made and operate the train: "Maybe my car will fall off, maybe the seat belt will break, maybe I'll fall out, maybe the operator will be shmoozing on the cell phone and we'll crash into another train, etc."

But what do the confident people do with THEIR hands? They throw them in the air and scream with delight as they enjoy the ride!! Why aren't they afraid? Because they TRUST the designer and operator of the train that they know what they're doing: "The train is made well and safe, the speed is calculated for the centrifugal force to keep us in the seats when upside down, it's so safe I can put my hands in the air, not hold on, and enjoy the excitement and the rush of the wind by my ears!"

All of life is a rollercoaster. And Who built it? Hashem. Who runs the ride? Hashem. If we think it's all up to us, we can't accept it that we're not in control, then we hang on scared for dear life. But if we TRUST in Hashem, creator and operator of all of life, and the things which come our way, then we can relax and enjoy the ride.

Dovid Chaim put it VERY well, when he said that yaknow, we're all human, and many of us along our journey might slip and fall for a short moment. He said "I care less about the QUANTITY of days in sobriety before the fall; I care more about the QUALITY of the recovery before the fall."

Yes, it's important to build both consecutive and cumulative day counts of cleanliness and sobriety. But that's not where it should end, it's not where we're gonna find happiness. We must ask "what is the QUALITY of those days?" Am I going thru my life afraid, full of tension and RID, "white knuckling" my way from Modeh Ani until Hashkiveinu? Or am I living life with my hands in the air, enjoying my days by handling life's curveballs without the RID, a life of recovery where the Lust Urge is either on the fringe or not even on the radar, where I don't even have the DESIRE to Lust?

Kol HaKovod to all the brave men and women who have taken the bold steps to free themselves from their Lust, and valiantly push to get as many clean days under their belt as they can. Your strength and perseverance are amazing, and a testimony to the purity of your beautiful neshomos.

But that's not the final destination. And you know it.

To be truly free is to be living in Recovery. Contentment, and purpose in sharing and giving strength to other strugglers. Shaking off the Lust urges, which are now light taps on the shoulders, flicking them away like a pesky fly. Lifting your hands in the air with love of life, and beseeching Hashem for more life so you could be Davuk with Him.

The 12 Steps are a Program for Recovery from addiction. It offers promises of recovery which are REAL and ATTAINABLE, but we must WORK the STEPS with willingness and effort.

Love to all of youz guyz (n' galz), and best wishes for an AWESOME Shabbos!!

Steve

While we don't have nevuah today, every so often we're lucky to have G-d speak to us pretty clearly. The message through your kids was pretty clear. I'm right here with you, don't even think of taking a fall and stop being just sober start recovering.

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Re: La-Briut and Beyond!  
Posted by briut - 01 Sep 2010 15:54

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Thanks for the comments. While it's important to know that my kid's not alone in seeing the roller coaster moshul, I will offer up some reasons I appreciate my kid's version more than even that of Steve A'mush.

1. My kid is just a kid -- he hasn't "been around the block a few times" like the old guys here. Seeing it when there's no 'hava amina' is a rich insight.
2. My kid doesn't have background in 12-steps, therapy, etc to help nurture healthy insights.
3. Well, er, he's MY kid, for goodness sake. Does it take Elul to remind us that a (f)ather loves a son more than (h)e loves someone more distant? Oy.

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Re: La-Briut and Beyond!

Posted by Yosef Hatzadik - 01 Sep 2010 15:56

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Re: La-Briut and Beyond!

Posted by briut - 01 Sep 2010 16:04

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An insightful son comes from an insightful father!  
Day 176.

Hi. Just visited the Eye.nonymous thread. It reminded me to count my own days. It's now 176.  
Which means that BE'H (!) I'll be at 180 in a few days. Twice 90.

Who would have thought....

The white knuckles are less white, and the ability to keep my "eyes on the prize" is a little stronger. Even so, I've been slipping lately into places that simply pump up my taivas and begin a vicious cycle of wanting something, then fueling the fire, then wanting even more.

So I finally see that fueling the fire with a slip is a self-destructive act. It doesn't satisfy the taiva and actually makes it stronger. And I'm not really happy about this insight, because I'm gonna miss those slips almost as much as I miss the falls. But I'm starting to see that it's simply time to move on.

My therapist said something at the end of the last session, that threw me for a total loop. He said, "no, no, I didn't ask you what you'll pick as a substitute drug for the GYE (i.e., p\*\*n, m\*\*n, etc) that you're giving up. I'm not asking about exercise, or learning, or any other hobby that might take the place of your GYE . I'm asking about how you would live WITHOUT A DRUG. Period. Life where the GYE activities are gone and NOT replaced by a substitute drug crutch."

That threw me for a loop. Life without the crutch of a drug, whether it's a drug that touches

se\*uality or physical fitness or Torah or anything else. To live free of emotional addiction. Wow.

The concept is so foreign to me, at least on its deepest levels, that I'm working hard on finding an answer. Thoughts, gentlemen?

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Re: La-Briut and Beyond!  
Posted by ur-a-jew - 01 Sep 2010 18:15

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[Briut wrote on 01 Sep 2010 16:04:](#)

So I finally see that fueling the fire with a slip is a self-destructive act. It doesn't satisfy the taiva and actually makes it stronger.

Mazel tov on coming to this realization. I place a high value on your observation given how much honest introspection and analysis were invested into reaching it.

[Briut wrote on 01 Sep 2010 16:04:](#)

I'm asking about how you would live WITHOUT A DRUG. Period. Life where the GYE activities are gone and NOT replaced by a substitute drug crutch."

I heard this week in a chovovs halevovos shuir that the Chovos Halevovos writes that the final prerequisite for doing teshiva on an averia is a very practical one.

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That is what are you going to do to prevent the averiois which you have accustomed yourself to doing. Precisely the question you've written. We are all taking this drug of lust, we want to do teshuva. To do so we have to know how we are going to get along with what we've accustomed ourselves to. Its not enough to just say I'm going to stop. We've been pursuing this drug for a while, practically speaking how will we live without this drug. If we don't work on this the Chovovs Halevovos is saying that teshuva is likely not likely going to work since we will be back doing the same things all over again.

Coming to the realization that using the drug is a "self-destructive act" puts you far on the road of the right direction. I hope to be able to catch up to you soon. Thanks for the posts.

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Re: La-Briut and Beyond!  
Posted by sci1977 - 01 Sep 2010 21:08

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KUTGW!!

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Re: La-Briut and Beyond!  
Posted by briut - 02 Sep 2010 16:59

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Crutches make it much easier to make progress without slips or falls. Doctors prescribe them regularly.

I suppose if someone doesn't really need them, then a crutch can contribute to atrophy of the limbs and other ill effects. But if the leg is really broken (or the knee tendons pulled, etc), crutches play a very positive role.

Sorry for such kefirus (assuming, of course, that I've made the nimshal clear). I'm just trying to show u-r-a-jew that I'm not quite ready to renounce all crutches (and 'drugs') for all time. Not yet.

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Re: La-Briut and Beyond!

Posted by silentbattle - 02 Sep 2010 20:20

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Wow...just dropped in here to say hello, but as always, you leave me with food for thought.

I'll add something else - sometimes, we replace our addiction with something else, without even realizing how much we're doing it...

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