

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 - 20 Oct 2010 02:43

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Dov: well thanks for the chivalry but I know everyone loves hearing your views. Write on.

Zmirie: Yep, I'd love to be a little more clear. Thanks for asking.

At first glance, all these se\*ual issues seem to equal the problem itself. Fix the p\* and m\* issues, goes the theory, and life will be cured. And the sad truth is that... as difficult as this may seem to many of us... the real truth is even trickier.

I think whatever is making us want, crave, indulge in, chase after the stuff we do... has something deeper behind it. Maybe: the "need" to have something. The thought that getting 'a

little' will make life workable. The idea that I am entitled to it, or can't get through the day without it, or... whatever.

After a while, this work seems to boil down to what Hashem wants us to establish as the ikkar in our relationships with other people. We shouldn't connect with them as objects, but as our beloved. Not desired for mutual objectification by consent, but for something mutual and real. So somehow, the victory over the shmutz has to include the ability to look deeper.

Ultimately, it's not about giving gratification to ourselves but giving gratification to others. (Recall, the shoshonah of ahava, 'hav,' means to GIVE.) We can't keep fueling ourselves alone, and can't nourish ourselves from self-generated energy – that's like connecting the air intake of our car to its exhaust pipe. We've got to CONNECT to love, and not try to recycle our own energy with our own hand.

Ninety days to no HZ'L is one thing, but 90 to becoming a more giving person is, well, for me, trickier. It's also clearly what HKB'H wants from me. Meaning that it's possible to get there. But not easy, yet.

Zemiri, motek, does that help clarify? I'd LOVE to hear your views.

PS: Please, chevra, forgive my writing "we" when obviously I'm only qualified to talk about myself. The phrasing just seemed easier in the plural. I don't mean to presume to know anyone else's life. So please, take this with a grain of salt and accept my apologies if I projected too much of 'me' onto 'you.' Thanks.

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Re: La-Briut and Beyond!  
Posted by briut - 20 Oct 2010 02:44

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Oh, and PS: I'm still clean and still working. Free fall is gone. Details in a coupl'a days as I work through my thoughts enough to share. This chapter is feeling very, very heavy....

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Re: La-Briut and Beyond!

Posted by ur-a-jew - 20 Oct 2010 03:34

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"90 days to becoming a giving person is, well, for me, trickier". Briut you should have stuck with the we/us formula here too. Its just as tricky for everyone else. These are lifelong struggles. Anyone who thinks they could transform themselves in 90 days to become someone different is probably not being very honest with himself. The most I think we can hope for is honestly recognizing the need to change and taking some concrete steps to help put our desired way of life into practice. Glad to hear you're still clean and working. Hatzlacha.

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Re: La-Briut and Beyond!

Posted by ZemirosShabbos - 20 Oct 2010 14:34

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Briut, thanks for clarifying. excellent job. i read you loud and clear.

. and that is harder than just not doing a certain act. and if not doing P&M is hard because we are used to it and it seems so enticing then becoming a giver is even harder because of how long we have been takers and how enticing it seems. but paradoxically, if we were to be giving-oriented it would be much more enjoyable to us, more than all the "taking" we ever had.

i just heard a shiur from Rav Akiva Tatz and he was saying how people who are great givers enjoy their work so much more than people who give on a small level and that makes it necessary for them to struggle even harder to focus on giving, and not on the pleasure they receive from giving.

thanks Briut.

and did i tell you that you are an inspiration? your honesty and unflagging perseverance are super.

zemiri zmirie motek

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Re: La-Briut and Beyond!  
Posted by briut - 21 Oct 2010 02:55

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One postscript and add'l question for the chevra....

I see folks here keep talking about givers vs takers. I guess I see the 'taking' side a little differently.

You see, when I indulged in certain se\*ual thoughts/acts, I NEVER saw it as taking anything FROM anyone else. Verkehrt! I'm taking care of things myself, all by myself, without asking anyone for anything.

So IN THE PAST, I would have had a difficult time calling that "selfish." In fact, I'm even doing them the COURTESY of leaving them out of fulfilling "my" "needs." Perhaps I'm not really GIVING, but I sure as heck ain't takin' nothin' from nobody.

In the PRESENT, though, I see the self-centered focus on self-gratification as a failure to give, and even a failure to FEEL like giving, and even a failure to have a ready WAY to be giving when I want to.

In the vision that keeps returning to me (car lover that I am...), the relentless urge for self-gratification is nothing but hooking up my intake valve to my own exhaust pipe. Not only do I not get any fresh oxygen that way, but eventually the fumes will lose any oxygen they once had, and the fire will go out.

Giving is the only answer. (What was the question, again?) But doing it myself, all by myself, was NOT taking -- it was simply failing to GIVE. Which it turns out is really the same thing. Ouch.

I think that makes some sense...?

PS: I'm still mulling how to write down my recent incredible business trip (the second one this month) and the incredible victory I feel the RBS'O handed me. I think I've turned a BIG corner. In a good way. But I'm not ready to write it down quite yet. Stay tuned, please.

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Re: La-Briut and Beyond!

Posted by ur-a-jew - 21 Oct 2010 03:24

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I think it makes sense but I would add that at least for me I was taking because the self-gratification usually came at everyone else's expense, i.e., when I should have been home taking care of the kids I was in the office watching porn. Moreover, once I was done taking care of myself any "giving" that I did do was certainly not of the quality that I was capable of since I was still preoccupied with fantasyland.

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Re: La-Briut and Beyond!

Posted by the.guard - 23 Oct 2010 21:18

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[Briut wrote on 18 Oct 2010 02:20:](#)

And at some point, I've realized, it's not about s\*x at all but about caring and commitment and feeling that the world is a reliable place. Wouldn't it be easier if it were simply all about shmutz! ? ? !!

Very deep.

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Re: La-Briut and Beyond!  
Posted by briut - 24 Oct 2010 18:01

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[ur-a-jew wrote on 21 Oct 2010 03:24:](#)

I think it makes sense but I would add that at least for me I was taking because the self-gratification usually came at everyone else's expense, i.e., when I should have been home taking care of the kids I was in the office watching porn. Moreover, once I was done taking care of myself any "giving" that I did do was certainly not of the quality that I was capable of since I was still preoccupied with fantasyland.

Ouch. You're probably right on concerning me, too, but I wouldn't have seen it that way. After all, if my wife decided to go to bed in a flannel nightshirt rather than an alluring nightgown (typically our 'signal'), then why would it BOTHER her if I decided to leave her alone and act out instead. Heck, I would have thought back then, she should thank me for NOT bothering her. I'm only now starting to see how I did indeed deprive her -- deprive her of my longing for her. Ouch.

Thanks for the wake-up call. I hope others are hearing you, too.

And PS: Guard: so nice to have you back where you belong. Are you gonna report your successes? thanks.

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Re: La-Briut and Beyond!  
Posted by briut - 24 Oct 2010 18:03

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I had an experience so breath-taking that I'm finding it difficult to put into words.

Recently, I took my first business trip in a long time. (I wrote about it last week.) A chance to choreograph a Big Fall. Partly to "get it out of my system" (as I rationalized it); perhaps partly to

test if Hashem really wanted me away from shmutz. And sure enough, He did. Every single plan began to fall apart, through seemingly natural “coincidences,” girding me to then cancel the last remaining chance for the plans to work out. I felt His involvement very clearly, and knew He was guiding me. So, I killed the last steps in my plans, WITHOUT REGRETS. Wow.

But even more gevaldig, I went on another trip last week. And (oy) planned again for a Big Fall. I waited for Him to swoop down and interfere, but He didn't. So I continued. The plan “clicked” into place, and soon I was in the middle of [whatever it was]. Suddenly I found myself thinking, “This won't get me anywhere; I could just walk away.” AND I DID. I'll skip the triggering details, but walking away right then was 1000% miraculous.

The gevaldig part of the second trip is that I felt Him give ME the strength to walk away. Not to daven that HE do it, but to walk away completely on my own. He actually took His own divine strength and gave it over to me to use. As a gift, chinam. I cried tears of joy.

You see, before this GYE work, I might have seen walking away as MY OWN incredible power, perhaps with His “help.” Now, I'm seeing not MY strength but HIS... and that Hashem has planted it right inside ME and it's there WHENEVER I call. HaMelech ya'anenu b'yom kareynu. And that He will ALSO take over in those moments when I forget that, or when I feel my own strength isn't sufficient.

For me, this is BIG. My work here feels SO much less of a burden. But I know I'm hardly done -- for one thing, I'll confess, I've got moments in my marital life when old fantasies have proven very satisfying. Marital life without them seems challenging. (Other middle aged men will catch my drift.) So I'm almost grateful for the reminder that I still need to connect to Him every day, even if this new gift prevents a lot of acting out.

There's one more point -- it's about tshuvah. I think the FIRST business trip showed me I could “just say no” out of ahavas Hashem, not fear of retribution. To put me in the scene and help me say no – amazing tshuvah as per Rambam (i.e., it's not tshuvah until you're in the same matsav and say no).

BUT on the second trip, I actually felt past aveiros turn into merits. I had NEVER understood that concept before. But overcoming 30 years of non-Torahdig habits is FAR more amazing than overcoming one or two. I can start to accept why He “made me this way” in the first place: the duration of the aveirah actually makes the tshuvah powerful enough to transform aveirah to

merit.

My work here is hardly over, but knowing (!) He actually put the keys into my own pocket rather than pulling them out Himself when I ask... will IY'H be fueling my work to another level. And I know that the gift comes from Him and not from my own mortal power.

I've got a lot to think about (and to show gratitude for). Keep on Trucking, everyone.

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Re: La-Briut and Beyond!

Posted by the.guard - 24 Oct 2010 20:21

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WOW ;D ACE

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Re: La-Briut and Beyond!

Posted by an honest mouse - 24 Oct 2010 21:48

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wow bri, thats beautiful!

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Re: La-Briut and Beyond!

Posted by Eye.nonymous - 25 Oct 2010 06:43

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THAT'S GREAT!

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Re: La-Briut and Beyond!

Posted by ZemirosShabbos - 25 Oct 2010 16:13

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briut, i am wondering whether i can make an "oseh maaseh bresihis" and "shekocho" on that story

note to self: He is there, He is real, He is our Poppa

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Re: La-Briut and Beyond!

Posted by briut - 29 Oct 2010 04:21

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I'm not sure how to describe it, but the events in my last couple of posts have brought me a calm in the world of my se\*uality that I haven't felt in a long time.

Tov l'hodos la'Shem.

(u'I'ZAMER l'Shimcha elyon, eh Zemmy?!?)

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