

**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 silentbattle - 05 Mar 2010 17:12

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You're making a good point...I need to think that over...

In the meantime, I use this forum as a place to journal my thoughts, even if no one responds!

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**Re: La-Briut and Beyond!**

Posted by briut - 05 Mar 2010 18:12

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Thanks, SB. You raise good points, too. I'll keep thinking.

And don't worry about my feeling all that lonely on my thread. I also like to talk to myself. I do it all the time. I even give myself the courtesy of a reply. (As in, "let's stop for milk on the way home." "No, I got milk last night. That's right. We'll be okay." "Okay, then we'll head straight home." Some folks find it strange, but I for one think it's far better to give my inquiry the courtesy of a thoughtful reply so I answer myself. To each, his own.

Good Shabbos.

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Re: La-Briut and Beyond!  
Posted by silentbattle - 05 Mar 2010 18:14

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Re: La-Briut and Beyond!  
Posted by the.guard - 06 Mar 2010 18:12

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[Briut wrote on 02 Mar 2010 11:51:](#)

I had intended that when I was "with" my wife, I'd be thinking only about her. Not other 'scenes' or 'people' or anatomy or anything else. Last night, I'll avoid the details for tznius sake but when my interest began to a little, I put myself into a different scene that perked my interest back right away.

Wow, you are jumping a lot of rungs on the ladder at once. Go easy on yourself, man. It takes some guys YEARS after dropping the shmutz and masturbation before they can make progress in the area you are referring to. That's BIG stuff. One step at a time. I'm not saying you shouldn't

aim for this, but surely don't let it get you down. You've come very far in a short time. As I've said before, you're an amazing person in my eyes.

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Re: La-Briut and Beyond!  
Posted by briut - 07 Mar 2010 01:22

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## MORE THOUGHTS ON LUST VS LOVE....

Guard:

Your words of confidence and encouragement are very stirring. At the same time, what's really hitting me is that staying away from isn't nearly as difficult as ever before in my life. I'm now on about Day 54 (who's counting?) including two niddah cycles, and it's an occasional challenge but not the end of the world.

What's feeling like a HUGE challenge is resolving this feeling of ALL-LOVE versus lust (or even versus love with a small l). I had a dream last night. Shook me to my CORE. The actual dream was probably only 30 seconds. Maybe I had it multiple times before I woke up. Sweating and lonely and everything. Basic message:

IF YOU LOVE SOMEONE, AND THEY DO THINGS THAT MAKE YOU FEEL LESS LOVING TOWARD THEM, THEN THE EMOTION YOU WERE FEELING ABOUT THEM IN THE FIRST PLACE ... IS NOT REALLY LOVE.

If I REALLY loved my wife (love, as a verb; love, as unconditional; love, as all-forgiving; etc), then her singing off-key wouldn't make me feel less loving toward her. It's not love. It might be enjoyment, self-interest, like or lust, or whatever, but it's not ahava and raiyus. I'm realizing that this GYE work is really about love vs lust. Which requires defining what love means. Which means, I REALLY DON'T KNOW LOVE AT ALL (apologies to Joni Mitchell, and to you guys who don't wanna know from kol isha).

This is very very heavy work, but I think I have to get to the bottom of this ALL-LOVE concept, and separate it in my mind -- not only from LUST but even from SELF-GRATIFICATION or

ADMIRATION or MUTUAL COMFORT or whatever.

And Guard, if you think it could take years to figure out how to be "with" my wife without other images etc, just think what it will take to be "with" my wife in a way that won't be altered by her off-key singing in my ear, or apikorsus Torah at the table, or underbaked challah, or anything. To see nothing but ALL-LOVE.

I just heard in the name of R' Noach Weinberg that true loves means we can give the other person the same excuses / benefit of the doubt / justifications for their OWN shortcomings that we would give OURSELVES... that this is the meaning of v'ahavta l'reyecha k'mocha. So, just as I was thinking of how to celebrate 90 days without shmutz, I'm realizing I need to be building the foundation of what I'll replace that shmutz WITH. Until the LOVE is there, the absence of shmutz is simply a big dark empty hole ready to fill with another addiction. I wonder if I can find that replacement before Day 90....

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Re: La-Briut and Beyond!  
Posted by silentbattle - 07 Mar 2010 01:56

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It is interesting - before we start this journey, it seems like it would be impossible. But we can be truly amazed at how much we can accomplish!

Love isn't all or nothing, we can grow in our ability to love. In general, and with a specific person. And the more we give, the more we love. Reaching the highest levels of love-capacity takes years - it's the work of a lifetime. Have you seen R' Dessler's discussion of this topic?

[Briut wrote on 07 Mar 2010 01:22:](#)

So, just as I was thinking of how to celebrate 90 days without shmutz, I'm realizing I need to be building the foundation of what I'll replace that shmutz WITH. Until the LOVE is there, the absence of shmutz is simply a big dark empty hole ready to fill with another addiction. I wonder if I can find that replacement before Day 90....

Really? maybe, I guess - but I think that naturally, as we separate ourselves from shmutz, we grow in other areas - our connections with others, our ability to learn, to daven, etc. So just capitalize on those options...no?

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Re: La-Briut and Beyond!  
Posted by briut - 07 Mar 2010 12:14

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No, SB, I don't have a cite for your suggestion on R' Dessler. Feel free.

What I do know, though, is that there's something totally compelling to me over the past 24 hours about my last quote: [Briut wrote on 07 Mar 2010 01:22](#):

IF YOU LOVE SOMEONE, AND THEY DO THINGS THAT MAKE YOU FEEL LESS LOVING TOWARD THEM, THEN THE EMOTION YOU WERE FEELING ABOUT THEM IN THE FIRST PLACE ... IS NOT REALLY LOVE.

I sat by my Rav at a simcha last night and asked him. He basically affirmed that men can separate the love and the lust into two separate tracks. One can be strong while the other fluctuates. No sweat. Women are different: it's all one track and each aspect affects the other. He thought the answer sat there.

A separate point: I'm also trying to figure out how this work I'm doing relates to my observation that our life seems to be amazingly good these days, and in ways I might not have anticipated.

Breathe.

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Re: La-Briut and Beyond!

Posted by briut - 07 Mar 2010 15:56

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At the risk of overwhelming the folks nice enough to come and visit, I think I should 'journalize' a recent dream in a little more detail. The dream only took about 30 seconds, I'm guessing, but each time I went back to sleep I had it again.

The dream: I took my son, at age 9-10, to a sandwich shop. It was up a flight of stairs, with a maitre-d' at the top. They had us wait on the staircase. After 20 minutes, my son said, "Abba, when do I get to eat?" I had no answer. In 5-10 minutes more, he asked the same thing. Plaintive voice, not impatient. I felt sad.

Next time: same dream, but I recognized the stairs as my grandparents' house. The maitre-d' didn't let us through, but I knew I'd find a table somewhere and went through. Still couldn't get served.

Next time: Got through and found... my late grandmom's bedroom. (A person VERY closely linked in my life to the bracha of love. A story in itself.) She was sitting up in bed, sorta ghost-like with a very hazy exoskeleton (shell). She said, she'd been given permission to come down as far as a dream but no further, and only for a short while. Message for me. I MUST start to love unconditionally; ALL-LOVE. No choice. Time to fall into Hashem's loving hand and just do it.

The dream continued but even more bizarre. She said: You must finish this work in this dor, in this gilgul. It's been unfinished for too many doros. When Moshiach arrives, very soon, we'll all attain this level but the s'char of attaining it is only in this age when we have free will in a battle with a Y'H. I realized I was standing on a spiral above the abyss where ALL-LOVE rested; I knew a Yad Hashem existed beneath me to catch me and take me to the new place in peace. But I struggled with the notion that I'd jump off the spiral in the wrong place and Yad Hashem would fail to catch me. The dream ended.

Reviewing the dream, I saw that my emunah in Hashem is unshakable but my bottom-line bitachon to simply jump into that abyss is lacking. So the dream is really a plea that I overcome my fears (i.e., lack of practical-level bitachon) and simply jump from a state of cautionary desire into a state of ALL-LOVE.

I'd defend myself that "I don't know how" (to take the jump), but the truth is, I'm scared. I talk a good game about being an Eved Hashem and all that, but here I get a message that Moshiach is coming and there's a great s'char I need to address beforehand and that heaven and earth are waiting and that life for me after that step is great and... I hesitate. A lofty level of unconditional love, free of lust or judgment or doubt or anything, seems like too much for my lifetime.

A few posts back, Guard said this was a step that takes years, and that I should be patient and forgiving with myself. But the side of me that resonates with that might not be my bitachon, but my pachad (fear). If He's recently brought me to a state where I can put aside some of my deepest sexual fantasies, and where I can survive for an entire niddah cycle (comfortably if not yet ideally) without , then why would I stand in the way of trying the next level? Jump. And if I fall, He'll have another place for me. Or as you guys like to say, "fell, shmell."

It doesn't mean I'm not scared. I wonder, though, scared of what.... I'll keep meditating on that one.

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Re: La-Briut and Beyond!  
Posted by briut - 08 Mar 2010 02:07

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[guardureyes wrote on 06 Mar 2010 18:12:](#)

Wow, you are jumping a lot of rungs on the ladder at once. Go easy on yourself, man. It takes some guys YEARS after dropping the shmutz and masturbation before they can make progress in the area you are referring to. That's BIG stuff. One step at a time. I'm not saying you shouldn't aim for this, but surely don't let it get you down. You've come very far in a short time. As I've said before, you're an amazing person in my eyes.

I guess I tend to take things on pretty intensely (note the outrageous volume of postings this week), but I think this gap between lust and love is something that deserves another round on my part. Time to get to work.

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Re: La-Briut and Beyond!  
Posted by briut - 09 Mar 2010 12:39

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Just got inspired to make a post on the Married Men's forum. I liked it so much (curse that ego!!) that I wanted to put it onto my other 'thread' so I wouldn't forget it. Because it's so good (curse that ego!!).

Maybe someone wants to offer a proof of why it's screwed up, and what might replace it as a more healthy thought?? Thx.

[Briut wrote on 09 Mar 2010 02:41:](#)

[guardureyes wrote on 08 Mar 2010 22:30:](#)

It just feels to me these days as if it's sometimes hard to give, give, give.

Especially when she sings off-key, or forgets the noodles on the stove (again), or....

No, Guard, this is BIG. Listen up. I might have a suggestion on this one!

I came across an answer to this, so powerful and so heavy that I don't even know how to tackle it effectively. But I've been trying it with some real success. It came in some frum newspaper



story:

This guy described himself as the irritable type. Some joker would come up in shul and open the window he had just closed. (How dare he!) Some idiot would drive too fast, or too slow, or not know how to operate their cash register. You know, just little annoyances. (Okay, wives who sing off-key are a bigger problem. But stick with me....)

And then, his first kid got engaged. He was on top of the world. Full of joy. These things somehow stopped taking away from his simchas ha'chaim because he had so much simcha. And he realized he could act toward all these annoying people like a billionaire foundation chief. He could "give a grant" to that joker to close the window without his getting alarmed. He could "give a grant" to be patient with idiots. He could "give a grant" to just about anyone to allow just about anything.

After all, he was ON TOP of the world, and it was HIS universe and HE could decide to be as nice as he wanted. And since he was Warren Buffett (or whoever), it wasn't hard at all.

So he started giving out grants, for free, in his head. And all of a sudden these people weren't so annoying anymore. After all, he had a billion dollars and giving them a grant only cost a small sum. So, in his totally egotistic view of the world, he conquered his irritation by being in charge of giving them permission to act imperfectly.

So now, when my wife sings off-key, I can TRY to remember that she really ENJOYS singing, that it means a lot to her. I can give her a grant for singing time. It's an expensive gift, granted (I have musical training; off-key is PAINFUL), but I'm benevolent and rich and kind and (totally full of ego and gaiveh and stuff and) happy to give a gift to a fellow human being.

I'm not perfect at practicing it yet , and I know it's not an ideal solution since it leaves me in as self-centered a place as I was before. (Who the H\*\*L do I think I am to decide whose singing is worthy of being heard in the world, anyhow!) I'm even starting to see that it's moving me off my place of ego regarding the annoyances from myself and others; we all need a grant sometimes.

But it's a really really good way to stay at peace with the wife. Which has so many other benefits.

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Re: La-Briut and Beyond!  
Posted by the.guard - 09 Mar 2010 15:12

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What an amazing and inspiring dream! Wow. wow. wow.

And Guard, if you think it could take years to figure out how to be "with" my wife without other images etc, just think what it will take to be "with" my wife in a way that won't be altered by her off-key singing in my ear, or apikorsus Torah at the table, or underbaked challah, or anything. To see nothing but ALL-LOVE.

All those things you mention, are not things that take away love, but the exact opposite. They are opportunities to BUILD love... By granting her "grants" to be imperfect, you will find your love only will grow.

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Re: La-Briut and Beyond!  
Posted by briut - 10 Mar 2010 14:35

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Oh, no! I've realized that my lust is ALL OVER me, and not just in my erotic corners. Is there anyone on the Forum (beyond, of course, hitbodedut w/ Hashem!) who can help me find clarity?

I took my kid to the Mall yesterday (in US). (Remember, I'm now on a quest of focusing on genuine love and not just lust.) Haven't been to the mall in a while, with its half-dressed women and couples kissing and.... In walking around the mall, I kept my eyes peeled on the folks around me. All kinds: singles, couples; some apparently cultured, many of them what be called 'trailer trash.'

I realized how much I had been using images from a mall etc, in the past, to fuel some lustful feelings. Not only was I not averting my eyes, I must admit to myself that I was sorta LOOKING for 'scenes' that I might invoke later that night to keep things interesting.

Twisted. Twisted. Twisted. But at least I'm finally starting to see why a focus on 'guarding the eyes' is a foundation (yesod) of the work to do.

My current question for severe introspection:

How can love and desire co-exist without stoking the fire with a little lighter fluid of lust? Help me, Hashem -- this is both baffling and emotionally painful! Help.

(And in the meantime while I'm thinking, can I give myself a little "grant" (of forgiveness) to be imperfect myself?)

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Re: La-Briut and Beyond!  
Posted by briut - 11 Mar 2010 00:59

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[guardureyes wrote on 09 Mar 2010 15:12:](#)

All those things you mention, are not things that take away love, but the exact opposite. They are opportunities to BUILD love... By granting her "grants" to be imperfect, you will find your love only will grow.

Oh, Guard, if I could only think my love could only GROW through my overlooking imperfections....

But I can't forgive her for her failings until I forgive MYSELF for my own, demanding therefore that I see my own failings as FAILINGS and not as something cute or out-of-my-own-control or deserving credit or whatever. And then to take in that... failings are a perfect part of His plan.

To see that imperfection can be perfect seems to be a prerequisite for living with someone who can't carry a tune. Typically, I just want her to take singing lessons. Or keep her mouth shut. Or whatever.

But to have it INCREASE my love -- well, THAT is what I think will take years for me. Or, maybe it's just a moment away. In any case, I think you've hit a nerve, Guard. I'll continue reflecting on it. Thanks. I think....

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Re: La-Briut and Beyond!  
Posted by briut - 12 Mar 2010 12:33

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Steve posted this last night on Zalman Dovid's thread. It hit home. Now it's journalized. And if you see this, Steve, thanks.

"NOTICE WHAT REALLY HAPPENED EARLIER - you were really upset and angry about something, obviously something that happened BEYOND YOUR CONTROL. You had a bout of what is known as RID - Restlessness, Irritability and Discontent."

I've GOT to get a way to break through this RID. I CAN'T and WON'T go into Pesach adding this stressor into the family situation. Poshut. Just gotta do it.

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Re: La-Briut and Beyond!

Posted by silentbattle - 12 Mar 2010 20:17

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Your positive attitude is inspiring, as always - I think it's great how much you want to truly grow and become better and better!

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