

BITACHON WEEKLY

Stories of Novardok

פרשת נצבים תשפ"ב

In Comparison to Hashem, No Person Is Higher or Lower Than Anyone Else

In order to stand firm, we need *Achdus*. **אָחַדּוּס** We are “standing” because we are ALL together. *Achdus* means that the highest [**רָאשֵׁי כָּם** the leaders] and the lowest [**עֲצִיּוֹת** those who chop wood] are all on one plane. To be truly: **לִפְנֵי ה'** *standing before Hashem*, we have to realize how we are actually all the same, since we are all only: **נִבְרָאִים** His creations. When you think you are better or worse than others, then you have forgotten Hashem.

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The Passuk says **וְאֵת אֲשֶׁר אֵינָנוּ פֹּה עִמָּנוּ** *Rashi* says that those “who are not with us today” refers to the later generations. Imagine! The greatest previous generations cannot stand firm if they don’t include us “nobodies”. The *Seforim HaKedoshim* say that *Ik’visa Dim’shicha* means we are the heels [*Eikev*] to stand upon. How important it is to be *Machshiv* ourselves! We live in so much *Tum’ah* and *Kallus* frivolity. Today, people rarely talk about an afterlife of *Gan Eden* and *Gehinom*. So whatever we do is magnified a billion and it is **Chashuv with no end!** To be in such mud, and yet strive for greatness! No *Dor* was ever *Zoche* to such an unusual *Madrega*. **אֲשֶׁר נִוְרָה** *Fortunate is the lot of us American “Harrys”. And those holy generations [who were so great that we don’t even understand them] actually need US!*

Don’t Let Your Background Get in The Way of Your Coming Closer to Hashem

Dovid HaMelech says in *Tehilim*: **אָבִי וְאִמִּי עָזְבוּנִי תְהִלִּים כֹּזִי** *My father and mother have forsaken me*. A “father” and “mother” symbolize a person’s past. If *Dovid HaMelech* would have listened to his older brother *Eliav* [who was a big *Tzaddik*], he wouldn’t have killed *Golyas* the giant, and he wouldn’t have saved *Klal Yisroel*, *Chas V’shalom*. His brother had criticized him for wanting to get involved in the *Milchama*, and there is a special *Mitzva* to respect an older brother; especially if he is the oldest, and a *Tzaddik*.

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And *Dovid*’s father, *Yishai*, never sinned. Yet, *Dovid* was a different person. Often, living in the past or in the expectations of your parents can actually hurt you. You need to be **you**; just as *Avraham*, *Yitzchok*, and *Yaakov* were radically different from each other. Before *Rosh Hashanah* we say *L’Dovid Hashem Ori* because before a new year we become new people, and we have to bury our past and our bad habits from our youth.

If your parents were human, surely they had *Nachas* from a child who was a source of *Kavod* for them, and they were disappointed with a child who was a source of *Bizayon*. They will give “frum” reasons, that the good boy learns *Torah* which is a *Mitzva*, and the other boy is bad because he doesn’t... But behind everything is: **מָה יֵאמְרוּ הַבְּרִיּוֹת** *What will people say?? making impressions on others!*

There is plenty of *Redifas HaKavod* inside every one of us. It’s our job to go against our past, and keep *Shteiging* by becoming closer to Hashem, as it says in the end of the *Passuk*: **וְאֵסֵפֶנִּי וְהָיָה** *and Hashem has brought me close to Him*. This is what: **לִי יְדִידִי וְדִידִי לִי** *Elul is all about; so by Rosh Hashanah you’ll say, לְבָרֶךְ אֶתְּהָא Hashem, please be the ONLY Ruler of the world with your whole heart.*

עשרת ימי תשובה

The way You See Yourself, Is What You Become

Don't be involved in your sins too much, unless there is a concrete *Tachlis*; it can be a total *Yetzer Hara*. Just as on *Rosh Hashanah* you can't mention *Chet*, similarly, in *Slabodka* they almost totally ignored even their worst sins. [*T'nuas HaMussar* v. 3]. Getting involved in a sin pulls down a person. His self-image can be damaged, and his productivity lessens. The *Alter of Slabodka Zatzal* said that there is no worse *Sakana danger* than losing your self-esteem after you sinned. No wonder most *Gedolei Yisroel* came from his *Yeshiva*. The way you see yourself, is what you become.

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How many potential *Mosdos*, *Vaadim*, *Seforim*, *Kiruv Rechokim*, and *Tzeddakos* never happen because people are preoccupied with their sins. You think it's the *Yetzer Tov*. But in truth, it's the *Yetzer Hara*! R' Nossan Wachtfogel *Zatzal* used to say that during *Elul* and the days of *Teshuva*, the main thing is: **טוב עשה** *be productive* [i.e. take a *Chavrusa* and learn!]

Be a doer! Many, many, of us need to live in denial, as if they never sinned. They even need to spend time thinking of how to be *Dan* themselves *L'kaf Zechus* and playing down all those sins! Worse than sins, are the bad feelings of guilt, inferiority, and sadness that sins cause. [*Arizal*]. But when a person is always building himself by remembering his *Maalos*, it helps him to do *Teshuva* and become great.

But if you are stuck in the mud and can't control those negative thoughts, then be happy that you're a *Lev Nishbar*, about whom it says: **לֹב נִשְׁבָּר וְנִדְכָּה אֱלֹקִים לֹא תִבְזֶה תְּהִלָּתוֹ** *Hashem will never reject a broken heart*.

NOVARDOK

No Sleeping in Novardok Allowed

When I was a *Bachur* learning in *Yerushalayim*, R' Shimshon Pincus *Zatzal* took me and my friends to hear a *Novardoker Shabbos Shuva Drasha*. R' Ben-Tzion Bruk *Zatzal* gave the *Drasha* in his *Yeshiva*. It was quite dramatic. At first, he said *Divrei Torah* about *Teshuva*. Slowly but surely, he got involved in *Mussar* and *His'orerus* with a *Niggun*. It was towards the end of *Shabbos*, and all of a sudden he signaled for someone to close the lights. He became more and more *Nis'orer* about the truths in life, and the importance of saving your holy *Neshama* before it's too late, *Rachmana Litzlan*. My friends never forgot that *Shabbos Shuva Drasha*. They talked about it for months and months. *Novardokers* strive to be *Baalei Ruach*, and they are on fire. They sing and dance a lot, *B'shita*, for *Ruach*. In R' Gershon's *Yeshiva*, the learning was very animated. It was full of pilpul chavirim, and plenty of screaming in the *Bais Medrash*. The davening and *Mussar* was *B'hispa'alus* and fire, *B'shita*.

הִתְעוּרֵי י! They wake you up in *Novardok*; no sleeping allowed! You live only once, and you can't afford to wake up some day and find out it's time to say good-bye to *Olam HaZeh*, and you are totally unprepared because "I wasn't the *Mussar*-type", "I wasn't the *Masmid*-type", or "I wasn't the spiritual-type". In *Novardok*, they said: **WAKE UP NOW!** **הִתְעוּרֵי י!** No excuses! You have a gold-mine of *Torah*, *Kedusha*, *Middos Tovos*, *Chesed*, *Mussar*, *Simcha*, *Bitachon*, *Chochma*, and *Yiras Shamayim*; but you aren't using it!

That's why having a *Chabura* was so important in *Novardok*. When you sleep and look for excuses, your friend gives you a pinch. You do that to him as well. We work together as we grow and grow! R' Shimshon Pincus *Zatzal* was a big *Baal Ruach*. His father in law's father in law was R' Hillel Vitkind *Zatzal*, a famous *Novardoker* who was a *Talmid* of the *Alter Zatzal*.