

BITACHON WEEKLY

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פרשת שופטים תשפ"ה

The Big Thing in Novardok Was Being Anavim and An Eidele Yid

The Passuks says וְיִרְשׁוּ אֶרֶץ תְּהִלָּים לְזֵי אֵל: An *Anav* lives long, as it says: the humble will inherit the earth (and delight in abundant peace). Look what happened to *Rechavam ben Shlomo* when he spoke arrogantly. He lost the ten *Shevotim*. The big thing in *Novardok* was being *Anavim* and an *Eidele Yid*. *Teshuva* and *Hachna'a* go together. (*Rambam*). By them, their *Hachna'a* wasn't being a piece of butter; i.e., since everyone scares you. It was real! Speaking softly is true *Yiddishkeit*, like it says: הַקוֹל קוֹל יַעֲקֹב תוֹלְדוֹת כֹּז the voice is the (distinctive) voice of *Yaakov*.

When R' Ahron Belzer *Zatzal* found out about the high level of *Tz'niyus* of Hungarian Jews, he said that as soon as the war is over, he'll try very hard to bring those *Madregos* to his own *Chasidim*. Instead of being "*Shtoltz*" (high-headed) and playing down the accomplishments of those *Yidden*, and being boisterous over his own accomplishments, he was *Mach'nia* (humbled himself)! *Novardok* admired such type of *Hachna'a*. A famous *Novardoker Rosh Kollel* was overheard saying: "I need to improve myself!"

A Person Who Works on His Middos Is Respected by His Wife

A *Chashuva* eyewitness saw an old *Novardoker* baking matzos in the Polish *Shteibel Matza* bakery. Those days, they used forks to put holes in the matzos, and this was important for air to enter the matzos. His *Rebbetzin* decided to get involved, and she became "*Ah Gantzer Macher*", commanding like a sergeant: "Do it this way!" "Do it that way!". When her husband tried to say his opinion, she screamed at him and told him to go back to the *Bais Medrash*!

This *Novardoker* was not a push-over. He had been in Siberia, and he was one of the *Rosh Yeshivos* in the *Pinsk Yeshiva* together with the *Steipler*. But with his wife he acted like a wimp. I was once on the telephone on a conference call with a *Novardoker* and his wife on the other end. He was telling me a story, and his wife constantly interrupted; he

Appreciating All the Good We Do

R' Ben-Tzion Kuk *Shlita* was a *Yasom*, and R' Zevulun Graz *Zatzal* became his mentor. He noticed how R' Zevulun *Zatzal* was always doing everything with tremendous *Simcha*, and he asked him why. He answered that when he was a *bachur* learning in *Chevron*, the *Alter* of *Slabodka* came over to him after first *Seder*, and he called him a *Tzadik* and a *Rasha*. When he asked him why, he said that the *Alter* called him a *Tzadik* because he noticed how he learned with such *Geshmak* during *Seder*, and also with *Chidushei Torah*. He's a *Rasha* though, because he looks like he didn't do anything special.

R' Zevulun *Zatzal* was: מְתַבּוֹן (contemplated) for several days, and decided that for the rest of his life, whenever he did something good, he would appreciate what he did. R' Ahron Karliner *Zatzal* said that if a *Bachur* walks in the street, and arrives home without looking at a: דָּבָר אֲסוּר (something one is not allowed to look at), he should dance for a half hour! And the reason why *Bachurim* don't become *Gedolim* is because they don't do this!

Look how *Simcha Shel Mitzva* is #1 by *Chasidim* and by *Litvaks*, and how not having it, it can cause you to be a *Rasha*, or a *Rachmanus* who don't become a *Gadol* because he didn't tap into this. Perhaps this is one reason why *Dovid HaMelech* was so unique. He would learn *Torah* for the first half of the night, and then he would sing during the other half (*Gemara*) in thankfulness for the *Torah* he learned during the first half. (R' Zundel of Salant *Zatzal*). *Doeg*, *Achitofel*, *Yoav*, *Avner*, *Shim'i ben Gera*, *Y'ravam ben Nevat*, and none of his contemporaries became like him (and many lost their *Olam HaBah*) because they didn't appreciate their own *Avodas Hashem* the way he did.

For us, I would recommend 10 minutes a day to write down all the special *Torah* and *Mitzvos* you did that day.

always backed down and allowed her to dominate.

He wasn't a pushover either. He was a *Chashuva Menahel*, and he had been R' Galinsky's chavrusa in Bialystok. But in his wife's presence he turned to mush! The son of a *Novardoker* told me how his mother would scold his father, and the father would lower his voice and apologize with *Hachna'a*. She kept pouring her wrath, and he kept apologizing like a broken record.

This same person once disappeared from home for about 8 months since he felt he needed *Chizuk* in *Bedidus* (seclusion). His wife was totally behind him. A person who works on his *Middos*, in the long run is respected by his wife, and he can get away with such an outrageous disappearance.

Novardok

To truly enjoy this world, you need your mind in *Shamayim* (כפי הסבא זצ"ל). When R' Ben-Tzion Bruk *Zatzal* spoke in Beth Medrash Gavoha, he was so engrossed in the *Mussar Shmuess* that he was giving, that it looked like he

Don't "Chap Hispa'alus" From "Insurmountable" Issues

In the *Parshiyos* of *Va'eschanan*, *Eikev*, *Re'eh*, and *Shoftim*, we have constant repetition not to be afraid; and for us this means not to "Chap Hispa'alus" from so many "insurmountable" issues. Life is full of "impossible" situations. *Rashi* says: וְאַתָּה אַתָּה אַתָּה you are big, but they are bigger, i.e. never look at yourself as zero. You are also plenty strong. Not chapping *Hispa'alus* in *Novardok* was a constant *Avoda*. Similarly, the *Chovos Halvavos* in *Shaar HaBitachon* says many, many times the same *Yesod*: וְאַתָּה אַתָּה אַתָּה do not have any fear, and: וְאַתָּה אַתָּה do not become broken, again and again.

was in a different world. It was a packed *Bais Medrash*, but I wonder if he had any idea of how big his audience was. I'm sure it wasn't important to him. He was a person who talked about the *Yamim Nora'im* like a real upcoming court case. And he was heavily engrossed in the details of how to deal with it.

When you truly feel Hashem, then the rest of the world is zero to you. I heard a story about R' Ben-Tzion Bruk *Zatzal* that when he was in the process of raising money for his yeshiva during pre-war Europe, he suddenly fainted at someone's doorstep. When they revived him, they found out that he had actually forgotten to eat for 3 days!

I just got off the phone after talking with one of the 14 *Bachurim* from the *Novardok Yeshiva* in *Eretz Yisrael*. By just talking to him, I felt like I was in a different world. He discussed *Elul* with a happy voice, but with utter seriousness. The biggest *Bnei Torah* and *Roshei Yeshiva* in *Eretz Yisrael* have remarked that these bachurim are uncommonly "healthy" spiritually. (They love people, but aren't afraid of them, and aren't *M'chanef*

(sweet-talk) them. They are seriously concerned about each other's welfare, in *Ruchaniyus* & *Gashmiyus*.)

He told me that in *Elul*, they usually learn about an hour or two of *Mussar*. And this they learn first thing in the morning, or else, by the time you learn *Mussar* you are already far away into your regular *Da'agos* (worries). They try to have their heads full of *Chovos Halvavos*, *Shaarei Teshuva*, and *Madregas HaAdam*, etc. They keep learning these *Seforim*, and they sit on a *Passuk* until it sinks in.

The idea of *Elul* is to keep your regular schedule, but in a stronger way, in *Torah* and *Tefila*, etc. I heard the same thing in the name of R' Nosson Wachtfogel *Zatzal*.

During *Elul*, many *Bachurim* from other *Yeshivos* would come to *Novardok*, including R' Chaim Shmuelevitz, who considered *Novardok* to be more on fire than the greatest *Baalei Mussar* of the times. When the *Bachurim* would cram together to hear a *Shiur* or *Shmuess*, the son-in-law of the *Alter*, R' Yisroel Yaakov Lubchansky *Zatzal*, would walk slowly between the rows, and **very, very** gently would tell them to be careful not to push each other. Being gentle and *Eidel* was a major *Novardok* issue, despite their fire. No heavy *Kana'us* type "*Mussaring-out*" people; just *Eidelkeit*, which is the Jewish way, as it says: וְהַקוֹל קוֹל הַקוֹל the "voice" is the voice of *Yaakov*. They say that whoever heard a *Shmuess* from R' Yisroel Yaakov **had** to become a new person. Both *Slabodka* and *Novardok* had an ongoing agenda of people changing themselves completely.