

Jan. 26, 2005

# Herev D'Hakham

## The Sword of the Sage

### *A Commentary of Heart on the Words of Ben Zoma (Avot 4:1)*

*By Rabbi Ariel Bar Tzadok.  
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Open your heart, arouse yourself from slumber, remember the forgotten and embrace the truth of things that you have always known. Let us proceed...

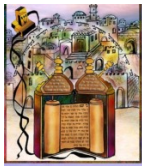
Before one can lift up the sword of the Torah, one must merit to raise up the sword of the Sage. Before one can lift the sword of the Sage, one must know well what it is he seeks to accomplish and who it is he seeks to be. Let us start at the very beginning, put aside now your troubled and burdened mind, and open your heart to receive these words therein.

A Sage is a Gibbor, a warrior, a mighty man of war. A Sage is not just one who has mastered the spoken or written words that communicate ideas to the mind. A Sage is also the one who has mastered the ways and means of the human heart. A Sage can only be called a Sage because as a warrior he has conquered both heart and mind and subdues them both to the power of spirit. This and only this defines a true Sage. In Hebrew a Sage is called a Hakham.

Hakham literally means "one who is wise." A Sage is thus one who has wisdom. Wisdom, according to the ways of the Kabbalah embraces heart, mind and spirit. Thus the true Sage is the individual of integration, the one who stands with all inner aspects united as one.

In order to calm the raging heart and to tame the wild mind, the Sage must first acquire many attributes that will mold his character and spirit. The Sage must embrace the attributes of strength, courage and discipline. He must before all things first become a warrior.

Before one can become a Sage of Torah one must first embrace the spirit of the warrior. A true warrior is not one who is a person of arms, but rather a person of strength of character who can demonstrate victory over life's adversities.



To be a warrior one must learn the ways of battle. All of us today are at battle. Some battles are physical, some are emotional, some are psychological, and some are spiritual. Whatever the battle, we are all under siege, we are all at war. If we wish success in life, we must have victory over our personal adversities.

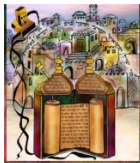
Herein lies the secret of life's success, those who are happy in life have learned to be master warriors, masters of their own fate in the right way, masters of facing and overcoming adversity. While we can never master that which happens to us, for this is always in Hands higher than our own, we are nonetheless always able to choose how we respond to that which befalls us. This is what defines the true warrior. The warrior can never dictate when and how an opponent will attack. Yet, the warrior, once attacked is master of the battle. The warrior rises to meet whatever challenge faces him and molds himself to the circumstances before him to successfully overcome them. The warrior thus bends like the reed before the wind and moves in harmony with the forces of the Higher Hand and thus accomplishes the task at hand, whatever that be, as ordained beforehand from Above.

There are many ways to meet the struggles we face everyday in life. The true warrior knows how to be pliant and to face every foe in accordance to the nature of that foe, and thus to defeat the foe on the foe's own ground. The rule is that the pliant can bend like a reed in the wind, while those stiff like the mighty oak tree crack and fall once enough pressure is exerted against them.

The strength of the warrior is also the sword of the Sage, for one who wishes to excel in Torah must be mighty like the warrior (gibbor). Indeed, to become a Sage also requires of one to face great battles, this time in the realm of mind. The lessons of discipline learned when training to be a warrior of life serve well the Sage assisting him to acquire his goals.

Without the tenacity and discipline of the warrior, one will never be able to rise to the level of Sage. For a Sage is not measured by how much knowledge he has acquired in his head, but rather by how much wisdom he has acquire in his heart. This is why a Sage is called Hakham, the one who has achieved wisdom.

Learn a lesson from the laws of nature and know then the ways of the HaShem's world. The path of ascent is from our earthly bonds to Heavenly freedom. The path of ascent follows the naturally ordained way. As it is in the world at large so is it within the world within the human. In order to ascend, we must first pass through and conquer the heart, only then can one properly ascend into the mind and control it. For the one who cannot control his heart will be controlled by it. The one who cannot control his mind will be held in prison by it. And the one who cannot control either heart or mind will remain in slavery and servitude forever being subject to whims and desires without control or discipline.



In Egypt, G-d set us free, freedom of the body, the heart, the mind and the soul. In freedom, the warrior Sage knows to distinguish between silence and sound between stillness and motion, between the sacred and the profane and between the right from the wrong. In his heart, the warrior Sages knows all these things because as it is written, the words that were commanded this day are upon his heart.

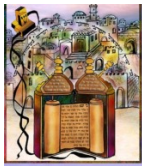
The heart is the center of the body, both the body physical and the body supernal. All from above and all from below meet in the heart. In the heart all merge into one. In the heart all is known, in the heart all is understood, as it is written, the heart understands. The heart unites what is known in the mind and what is felt in the emotions. The heart unites and balances these. When the mind above and the emotions below merge as one there is equanimity, balance and harmony; this is the true power of the warrior Sage. His Torah is his sword, his Torah is his heart; his Torah is his word. The word of the warrior Sage emanates from his heart and pierces the heart of his opponents like a sword pierces flesh. In this way is the Sage a mighty warrior, strong in body, strong in heart, strong in mind and strong in spirit.

With this might, the warrior Sage seeks not the joy felt from those who praise him, and feels no sadness because of those who would scorn him; all is equal in his eyes. The warrior Sage stands in the middle, in the center, as this place is the beginning of all things. He sways neither to right nor left, but stands motionless and moves only as the spirit from Above moves him; and even in this movement he never loses his stillness. For although the body may move from here to there, the heart, mind and spirit always remain in the center. In this way the warrior Sage serves his Creator, firmly rooted in truth, and thus reflecting the Image from Above in which he was created, the Image that emanated from the center point.

Knowing the center the warrior Sage can go to all sides and to all places and never gets lost. For how can one know where he is going unless he first knows where he is? And how can one know where he is unless he first knows from where he came? In order to reach the end one must know the beginning; for beginning and end depend upon one another. One cannot embrace the one without first knowing the other.

The center is the beginning of all things. It is the home of the warrior Sage. Long did he fight, facing all of life's adversities seeking to discover and know this place. Long did he struggle along the arduous path of life to arrive at this place. Yet, once attained the warrior achieves the title of Sage, for he has learned wisdom.

Once achieved the warrior Sage is never lodged from his rightful place. For this place of the center is the place of freedom, balance, redemption and salvation. It is the place of Torah and only through embrace of Torah can one ever find this place. Yet, in order to



find this place by guidance of the Torah, the Torah must be embraced, not with hand, not with mind, but with heart, the place where His Words must rest.

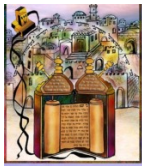
The warrior Sage is the wealthiest of men; although he may own next to nothing in this physical world. Who is wealthy? One who is happy with his portion. And what is the portion of the warrior Sage? The wisdom and balance of his heart, his peace of mind, his inner silence, his embrace of knowledge of the Torah of HaShem. In this place of the center the warrior Sage sees clearly and knows that he who has enough will always be satisfied with what he has. And when is this true? When the desiring eye looks within to see what there is instead of looking outside to see what there is not. The inner vision viewing from the center sees the balance of all things. Knowing the center and seeing all things in their rightful place, the warrior Sage knows contentment and is thus happy with his portion. And why, because he seeks not the portion of another.

What then does the warrior Sage seek? He seeks only to do the right thing. Above all, he is a man of honor. This is defined by the Torah and adapts to the time and circumstances of the moment. This is why the warrior Sage is like the pliable reed; he nullifies his own will before the Will Above and thus brings balance and harmony wherever he goes along his travels in life. He walks the path of Torah, not by rote, or by word, but in deed, in heart and in truth.

This is why the path of Torah is called Halakha, which means, "the way to go." For although one may endeavor to walk the path this does not mean that one is actually on it. For in order to walk the path, the true Halakha, one must embrace it in the heart, know its beginning, know its end, and thus know where along the path one stands. Not knowing where one stands in life is the true definition of being lost; in the Torah this is called Galut, exile.

We were redeemed from exile. We were set free. Yet in order to experience freedom one must be bold like the warrior, like Joshua and Caleb of old. These were the warrior Sages who went into the Land and spoke the message of freedom, the truth that emanated from the center of Being. Yet, their words were heard only by slaves, those who were still in exile, those who were still imprisoned to that which would sway the heart, cloud the mind, and rob the spirit.

Joshua and Caleb were warriors. Those to whom they spoke were not. Thus the warriors choose life and live, whereas those who were not warriors by definition chose to remain slaves to their undisciplined selves. As such they chose death and although alive in body, they were no more than the walking dead. For this reason were they destined to die in the wilderness. For only the warrior can embrace life and thus freedom. Only the warrior who battles adversity and defeats it becomes a Sage. Only the warrior Sage



lives to inherit the Land, and walk therein. This walk above all others is the true walking of the path, the true Halakha; the true and only Torah.

In this is the honor of the warrior Sage. Knowing the path and standing in the center, he moves in stillness. He moves without being moved. Knowing the Torah, firmly entrenched in the heart, he speaks in silence. His words are heard not from his mouth but from his deeds. The warrior Sage is the truly free man. His freedom emanates from his very nature and shines like the sun on a clear summer's day. His freedom, his warmth, his simplicity and his truth attract many to his side. The warrior Sage thus gathers in the lost souls and shelters them under the Shadow of the Almighty.

This is the honor of the warrior Sage. He is simplicity; the simplicity of the beginning, of the center. Simplicity is the true nature of Torah; it restores the soul to those who have lost it. Torat HaShem Tamimah (the Torah of HaShem is simplicity). Nefesh Hakham Gibbor Tamimah (the soul of the warrior Sage is simplicity).

“And you who bond to HaShem are alive everyone to this day.” (Dev 4:4). How is one to bond to HaShem and thus merit life? The warrior Sages of old have answered and said, by clinging to the Sage. The Hakham Gibbor becomes a living Torah that walks among us. Life comes through Torah. Torah is simplicity. The true Sage teaches both these things: Torah and simplicity. And the Sage must be a warrior to truly be a Sage. Only the warrior Sage properly wields the sword and thus slices through the ignorance and slumber to free the fallen captives.

Take these words to heart. Fret not the challenges of your mind. Your thoughts at this time are too clouded to perceive all their truths. Stand before the sword of the Sage and allow it to pierce you and penetrate your heart. Allow the warrior Sage to use his sword to remove from you your shell that encases you, separating you from the light of Truth. Allow your heart to blossom, open it to the rays of the summer sun. Be revived in spirit.

Seek out the warrior Sage and let him guide you to the true simplicity of Torah that restores the soul. Let the warrior Sage teach you the true ways of battle so that you too may find the center, and from there set out on your life's path and thus walk the Halakha, even as you were destined to by the Higher Hand.

As the warrior Sage Hillel, once said, “if not now, then when?”