

“Tough” New Hope

by Ariel Bar Tzadok

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There is an old saying, “*when the going gets tough, the tough get going.*” Sometimes this is more easily said than done. But, nevertheless, its wisdom is sound and stable.

When times are difficult, we face the inevitable choice to either rise up to the occasion and confront life's difficulties straight on, or to succumb to them and become subject to the whims of fate. Mind you, those who do choose this second option, in every case, always live to regret it.

In difficult times, there is no other option that to face life's hardships head on and do what is necessary to survive. This ***toughening up in the face of hard times is the secret key to the door that leads to survival.***

Just remember this, ***heroes are not born from the womb.*** Rather, ***heroes are born from the fires of adversity.*** Tough times come to us all. How we deal with adversities defines both to ourselves and to others, what kind of person we really are.

Also, remember this, what we eventually over time realize about our own true natures, God already has known from the beginning. We often lie to ourselves, and we often either overestimate or underestimate ourselves. Whatever we do, God sees through all of our own individual misconceptions and deals with us as who we truly are in His Eyes.

Who we are inside can often be changed for the better, but this can only occur if and when we unleash the best that is within us and act “over and above the call of duty,” even in the worst of circumstances.

Everyone is afraid of personal loss. Yet, sometimes there are certain elements of our personal integrity that are more valuable than our other possessions, and sometimes personal integrity is more important to us than our lives. The value of personal integrity is what motivates the fight for human freedoms. It is the



compromise of personal integrity that allows one to become enslaved, either psychologically or physically.

What is important to you? Where do you draw the line and say, “with this there can be no compromise?” This very question is the one most avoided, because most are afraid to answer it. Most have no real boundary of compromise because they lack the will to defend such boundaries.

In spite of what is important to one, most are just too afraid to defend it. Thus when the moment of crises arises, most choose to take a loss, and then seek to justify it by claiming it is God's Will, or some other similar nonsense. But it is never God's Will that we choose to be weak. It is always God's Will for us to choose strength, life and what is right, whatever that may be.

But how many today are willing to sacrifice their comfort for standing up for what is right? Most today choose the easy path and say, if I am not going to be terribly hurt, in the here and now, then I'll compromise whatever I must in order to minimize the damage I must suffer. This was the attitude expressed by the majority of European Jewry in face of the Nazi onslaught. We all know the outcome of such misguided trust and lack of personal resolve.

This does not have to be. ***People of resolve must embrace the slogan, “never again.”*** The evil plans of evil enemies will never cease from the face of the Earth. It is up to the right and good people to stand up and do what it takes to make sure that which is right is done and accomplished.

When one does not stand up for what they know is right, in spite of whatever one might say, one will regret one's decision and lack of resolve for the rest of their days. ***The greatest of all illnesses that we bare, are the illnesses of the soul, that we, more often than not, bring upon ourselves.***

It doesn't take much to resolve this sorry state of affairs, but it does require of us something. It is not enough that we believe what is right, we also have to do what is right. As hard as it is, we have to act. This is when the tough gets going. For by rising up to the occasion and doing what is right, this is what makes one tough.

Essentially ***“toughness” comes in the doing. When the going gets tough, it transform normal ordinary folks into tough folks, and then the folks get going with their newfound toughness.*** One does not have to be tough first in order to properly face tough times. No, the tough times come first, then comes the resolve and commitment, and only then are the “tough” born. Being tough is a choice, not a birthright.

Modern society thrives on making people both dependent and weak. Independence and self-sufficiency have become “bad words” in the minds of many. We should recognize the voices that call out for more dependence, and more entitlements. This voice was heard long ago in ancient Egypt, in Pharaoh's time. This voice led first to the slavery of Egypt and then to the slavery of Israel.

Whenever one wants to surrender the personal control of their own fate into the hands of those perceived to be bigger than them, this is the first step to the loss of all control, the loss of all freedoms, and the beginning of tyranny and slavery. The most terrible thing about this is that people often bring this upon themselves, all the while thinking that this is exactly what they are avoiding. Remember this from the Biblical Joseph and Moses, and look at modern politics today, the government big enough to give you everything is also big enough to take away from you everything.

Personal salvation, from whatever troubles us, begins at home. There is an old Jewish teaching that each human being has a spark of the messiah/redeemer within us. Forget all the religious implications of this and understand this psychologically. Personally applied, the messiah is the redeemer, and the redeemer is us! We have what it takes within us to begin our personal process of salvation, to deliver us, from whatever personal issues that we face.

When the going gets tough, the tough get going. We do not have to wait for God to help us. God is already helping us. As long as we can still breath, and think and move, we have all the tools we need for God to move through us.

The spirit of God within our hearts is the spark of the messiah/redeemer within us. All we have to do is toughen up when the need demands it.

This is not a one-time thing. One does not become tough and stay tough throughout one's life. Even the most hardened of combat troops are normal people when not in service. Yet, when the call goes forth for their services, they answer. When the call goes forth to us, to rise up and face tough times, we too have to put on our symbolic uniforms and face battle, even as do hardened soldiers. Life demands this of us, and will tolerate nothing less.

We each have inner strength within us that we seldom imagine is there. We all face adversities everyday. There is always a problem to face, be it in the arenas of health, wealth, family, work or something. Life is always full of bumps and challenges.

Nothing is ever smooth. Some times are rough, some times are tough, and some times are really bad! The good times are seldom, few and far between. But we

manage to live, and for those who tough things out, we manage to thrive, even in the face of adversity.

This then is the secret of the tough, who get going, when the going gets tough. It is an attitude. It is turned on when needed and turned off when not needed. It is as simple as breathing. We hold our breaths when we are under water, and we breath once the waters have passed. We don't hold our breath above the waters, nor do we try to breath beneath them. Either way is unnatural and dangerous. But, when done right, breathing in the air, and holding the breath under the water, we survive, and we thrive.

God is already with us. It is we who must start being with ourselves. We already know what we need to do. We already have all that we need. All we need to do now is to do what is necessary.

We need to rise above our personal lethargy and self-imposed slavery. We need to make changes, one step at a time. And these are things we can do. Each one of us has our own personal challenges to face and to overcome. And overcome, we will!

When we choose to get tough, and be tough, we will find the Hand of God is already guiding our steps and comforting our hearts. It all begins with a first step. This is always our new hope. Yesterday is gone, tomorrow is coming. We prepare today for an unknown tomorrow.

We may be apprehensive, but we do not fear. Because, God is with us, and we are with Him. We can unleash our inner toughness and face the future, regardless of its adversities, with new tough hope and new tough resolve.