

## It shall be with him and he shall read from it all the days of his life... so that his heart does not become haughty over his brethren. (17:19,20)

Arrogance is an indication of a defective character. Arrogant people are (often) those who failed to be recognized and respected by others who are important to them. Their solution is to lord it over others to whom they feel superior, thus receiving acknowledgment by force. Most often, the arrogant person has nothing about which to be haughty. It is like air puffed into an empty container. When it dissipates, the container returns to its original vacuous state. Having recently read a "confession" of a "once" arrogant person (the "pin" that releases the air had allowed him to finally see his true self), I cannot help but share of his observations. Who knows? Someone may even read this and take it to heart.

The "once" arrogant person's observation was founded on the notion that his youthful arrogance was based on a superiority complex brought on by an abundance of early successes. Eventually, life has a way of restoring one's humility. He quotes a well-known maxim, "Be kind to those while climbing the ladder of success, for they are the ones you will meet on the way down as well." Success has that opiate effect that blinds a person to his own shortcomings. At the end, we are given the opportunity to see the truth (if we are fortunate; some never see, because they refuse to open their eyes and look) which will humble us.

Why such a long *hakdamah*, preface, to the *dvar Torah*? I think that the preface allows one to have a deeper understanding of the *dvar Torah*. Veritably, only one who has spent his life learning Torah, plumbing its depths and familiarizing himself with its profundities, will understand that it is by far the consummate educational text. There is nothing like Torah, because it is Divinely authored. The **Gerrer Rebbe, Shlita**, interprets the above *pasuk* concerning the Torah's fear that the Jewish king might become haughty as the result of his constant study of Torah. Since he is enjoined to have the Torah with him always and to use it as his primary text, studying from it, applying its lessons as the inspiration for his life and endeavor, there is the fear that having such mastery might lead to arrogance. Otherwise, there is no reason to be impressed by anything else he has achieved. The only achievement of value, the only area of success that has any enduring significance and eminence, is accomplishment in Torah. Otherwise, what does he have to be arrogant about?

It happened a number of times that a student would present the *Lev Simchah* with a *kvitel*, written petition requesting a blessing (which is common fare in *Chassidic* circles), asking for advice and blessing on how to ward off the inclination towards haughtiness. The *Rebbe* looked at him almost incredulously; "Gaavah, arrogance? Have you mastered half of *Shas* by heart?" the *Rebbe* asked. "No!" "Yet you fear becoming arrogant?" The *Rebbe* was (not subtly) implying that unless he had mastered an incredible amount of Torah by heart, there was nothing to be arrogant about.

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How true. Everything that is material/physical is fleeting: here today; gone tomorrow. Torah is everlasting, and mastery of Torah is indicative of one who possesses an enduring treasure. Someone who has achieved such distinction in Torah is blessed.