

# THE PATH OF THE JUST - CHAPTER 22:3

*by Rabbi Yaakov Feldman*

Now, "the trait that would most likely bring you to arrogance and self-aggrandizement", Ramchal offers, "would be wisdom" (which is the capacity to use one's broad knowledge to make good judgments). And that is so because wisdom "is a personal trait that is in a special part of yourself, your mind". In other words, anyone blessed with a good mind is bound to feel he's especially gifted in the realm that counts the most, so he must be very important.

(It is interesting to note that Ramchal does not bother citing being proud of one's wealth, status, reputation or the like -- all of which matter so much to much to us today, since we think that they're rooted "in a special part of [ourselves]", our ego and our social status. But it's clear that he didn't consider any of that worth being arrogant about anyway, so why bother citing them?)

But, being proud of one's wisdom would be absurd, Ramchal points out. For, "there's no wise person who's never made a mistake" despite his understanding; and there's no wise person who "couldn't learn from his colleagues or even from his students". So, "how could one ever boast of his wisdom", knowing all that?

In fact, he underscores, "someone whose intellect is greater than another's is only acting in a way that comes naturally to him, the way a bird would just naturally fly and an ox would naturally be able to pull with his brute strength", so being bright and proud about that would be like being able to breathe and taking pride in that. And it is also true in fact that "those who are not as naturally wise as yourself ... could train themselves to be" if they really wanted to. So "you have no reason to be proud or to boast" about your wisdom.

Furthermore, "if you are indeed a great sage, then it is incumbent upon you to teach others" with your gifts, just the way one would be expected to be charitable if he were wealthy, or to rescue people in trouble if he is strong, and the like. In fact, "there's no place for personal pride" where any of this is concerned, as one would simply be doing what's expected of him and utilizing his gifts as he should.

Ramchal concludes the point by declaring in fact that "one would only be taken as truly humble once all of this becomes manifestly clear to him", for then "he'd be humble in his heart and in his inner-being", which matters most.

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