

HUMBLE OPINIONS

by Rabbi Dovid Green

This week's parsha can be viewed from a psychological perspective, as is beautifully elucidated in the book "Growth Through Torah", by Rabbi Zelig Pliskin. We can learn some important lessons for life from Pharaoh's negative example. The Torah states in Exodus (10:3) the following verse. "And Moshe and Aharon came to Pharaoh and they said to him, this is what G-d, the Lord of the Hebrews said, how long will you refuse to humble yourself before Me? Let my people go and they shall serve Me." It appears that arrogance was the issue that was causing Pharaoh to act in self-defeating ways. He sees with his own eyes that his kingdom is being destroyed, yet he continues in his stubborn refusal to send the Children of Israel out to serve G-d. What possessed him? Rabbainu Bachya, a medieval commentator writes that G-d requests a person to submit his will to that of G-d's. This requires humility. Pharaoh was arrogant, and could not bring himself to be humble before G-d. As a result, he caused his own downfall.

Arrogance is a character flaw which causes many people problems. Arrogance causes people to retaliate against those who may have slighted them in some way. A humble person would remain silent, and end the matter right there. Arrogance causes a person to prolong a quarrel ad nauseum.

A humble person would ask forgiveness when he/she is in the wrong, even if he/she feels the other person is more to blame. An arrogant person will not ask forgiveness even when he/she knows deep down that he/she is at fault.

A humble person reaches out for help when in need. An arrogant person finds it beneath his dignity to show vulnerability and weakness by asking for help, and chooses to suffer rather than "belittle" himself.

The Torah teaches us that we should introspect, and be honest with ourselves. How do we cause ourselves problems through arrogance? How can we improve our own lives by recognizing what our own arrogance causes and correcting it?

Good Shabbos!

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