

PRIDE & HUMILITY

We all intrinsically recognise that humility is a good thing. It allows for a balanced perspective of life and can only enhance the quality of our relationships. Yet this word although frequently used is quite elusive in its meaning and practical application.

In a fascinating *Midrash* we are told that when G-d was deciding on a venue for the giving of the Torah he chose Mount Sinai because of its modest height. This G-d felt was an appropriate setting for consummating his covenant with the Jewish people, illustrating the vital importance of humility.

You might well ask, if G-d was looking for an appropriate setting to convey to his people that humility is an integral part of Jewish life, why did he choose a mountain? A valley or even flat land would certainly have been more suitable.

It is with the careful choice of this setting that G-d is conveying to us the precise nature of the humility and the modesty seeks in man which is fundamental to living a balanced Jewish life.

As a prerequisite to fulfilling our role as messengers of G-d in this world, Strength and vigour are needed to resist negative forces undermining our mission. . Being singled out to carry this responsibility does not help. First and foremost we need strength of character, the conviction in our beliefs and a healthy pride in our great contribution to society, through the ages.

Simultaneously we must remember that all our achievements both on the micro and macro level were made possible by a gift from G-d. Yes, we put in a good life's work. But we never forget that the settings and circumstances that surround us are beyond our control. Life itself was given to us by G-d, a fact which must never be taken for granted.

It is the fusion of these two seemingly conflicting character traits that is the hallmark of the ideal Jew. Indeed there is no conflict. True strength and genuine pride flows from a profound humility, creating a transparency, which allows for G-d - the source of all life - to radiate and permeate our lives.

By Yosef Vogel

Friday 3rd May

Behar- Bechukotai (Mevorachim Hachodesh)

Iyar 23, 5773

Shabbat Begins: 20.13pm

Shabbat Ends: 21.23pm