

# SPECIAL: MORE INSIGHTS INTO CHAPTER 4:6

by Rabbi Yaakov Feldman

We cited 1:4:6 of this work verbatim a few weeks back and indicated that we could only hope at the time to touch upon it lightly since it encompasses so much. So we'll now meander a bit more about this nugget of wisdom and touch upon a number of other points.

Once again the quote:

"The root of Divine service lies in your constantly engaging yourself with your Creator and comprehending that you were created to attach yourself onto G-d, and were placed in this world to prevail over your '*yetzer hara*', subjugate yourself to G-d through reason, overturn your physical cravings and inclinations, and to apply all your activities to this end without ever wavering from it."

Some more insights:

"The root of Divine service lies in your constantly engaging yourself with your Creator..." Something very, very deep in the human soul somehow finds great satisfaction in *serving* -- in being subordinate to something or someone, in fulfilling another's wishes, and in being relieved of authority. Something else very, very deep in the human soul, however, is only happy in fact when it seizes authority. Ironically, though, the part of the soul that seeks power is often *over-powered* by the part that runs from it. And the whole of our beings is best satisfied (both in Heaven and on earth) when the need to serve holds sway. Though we're tempted to, we won't expand upon the dynamics behind all that.

The struggle between those two forces, though, is real. And it goes to the very core of every ambivalent feeling anyone has ever had. The greatest resolution of all human ambivalence thus lies in our *allowing* our power-hungry side to acquiesce to our need to serve. And the greatest Entity we could ever subordinate our beings to is G-d. The realization of that leads to the sort of "Divine service" spoken of here.

As was said, that service "lies in your constantly engaging yourself with your Creator". How stunning a revelation! We're to "engage", i.e., experience, interact with, and subject ourselves to G-d Almighty. This, too, is a very deep and latent human dream hardly spoken of in our day and age. Few among us dream of engaging with G-d in our day-to-day life; and fewer yet are those who have dreamt that since they were young, and thus tally their successes and failures in life on that basis.

Nonetheless, you and I were "created to attach... onto G-d" at bottom. And to thus enjoy the sort of

familiarity just alluded to-- and then some. For being *attached* to G-d doesn't just come to "encountering", "interacting" with, and "subjecting" yourself to Him in the sort of ways we indicated. It also involves being His confidant, if you will; and accepting Him alone as your confidant (which goes even deeper yet).

Our quote then goes on to say that it's important to realize in light of the fact that your deepest aspirations actually hinge upon such a degree of intimacy with the Creator that "you were placed in this world" specifically, with all its noise and clutter, in order "to prevail over your '*yetzer hara*'". That calls for explanation.

What characterizes our lives in this world is one struggle after another followed by one more-or-less of a resolution after another. We're taught, though, that that's not only true of the \*outer\* world, which is to say, life "out there". It's also true of our *inner* world. Where we experience other sorts of struggles and quasi resolutions. That inner struggle-resolution paradigm is coined the battle between one's "*yetzer hara*" and "*yetzer hatov*".

Our "*yetzer hara*" is usually taken to be our untoward, feral impulses; while our "*yetzer hatov*" is usually taken to be our G-dly, devout impulses. But in the context of our quote, our "*yetzer hara*" is our above-mentioned need to take control, and our "*yetzer hatov*" is our need to acquiesce. And while the need to acquiesce (our "*yetzer hatov*" often overpowers the need to take control (our "*yetzer hara*") on its own, as we said above, it's up to us to set out to *consciously* "prevail" over that need to take control. We were thus "placed in this world" of discord and conflict (control and acquiescence) to do just that. For by doing that we manage to "subjugate (ourselves) to G-d" rather than try to have Him subjugate Himself to \*us\*, if you will, as we all do.

We're then told that we're to do that "through reason" rather than through brute determination and resolve. For "reason" doesn't only entail conscious thoughts and conclusions. It also includes solid and heart-felt realizations of what's holy and what's not; what serves one's ultimate aim in life, and what thwarts it. Thus Ramchals point is that were to strive for such realizations and act on them.

Ramchal then goes on to say that we only manage to do *that* by "overturn(ing our) physical cravings and inclinations" and replacing them with G-dly, holy ones. That again suggests that we're to consciously prevail over our need to take control, as spoken of before. But his point now is that not only are we to do that consciously within our beings. Were also to do it on a practical level, in the world. By teaching ourselves to yearn to succeed at G-dly things just as much as we now yearn to succeed at unG-dly ones.

The only way to do *that*, were then taught, is to "apply all (our) activities to this end" alone "without ever wavering". Which is to say, to make holiness our aim and greatest dream. May G-d grant us the capacity to do just that-- and may we take Him up on the offer!

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