

EXILE - CHAPTER 6

by Rabbi Yaakov Feldman

If the redemption is the "end of the story" of our long and wearying exile, then let's continue doing the job of reading from that conclusion as we'd begun to do in Ch. 4. For a writer once remarked that he always reads the end of any book he was reading first, so that he could follow how things eventually got there; and we want to do just that when it comes to the redemption.

So in order to do that we'll offer a translation of the 26th section of "Ma'amar HaGeulah", our source text, in the next few chapters. It presents what's to come about as a consequence of the redemption. It also touches upon one of the most important themes in all of Ramchal's writings -- the revelation of G-d's "Yichud" (His sole, utter, and cosmic sovereignty), when "everything will (prove to) be inexorably linked to everything else" under G-d's rule. But it's vital to realize that that glorious revelation will only come about after our redemption.

The section we'll be citing begins with the statement that "the consummate goodness and peace that G-d promised the Jewish Nation in the ultimate future is expressed by the verse, 'And G-d will become as a king over all the earth' (Zacharia 14:9)." Ramchal then asks us, though, to "notice that the verse doesn't read, 'And G-d will be king' but rather that G-d will be *as* (or, like) a king." We'll expand upon this last point later on, but for now let's explain those aspects of G-d's sovereignty that are relevant to our reading.

An axiom that Ramchal presents over and over again to us is that G-d's ultimate wish for humanity is that we benefit from His goodness, and that the ultimate expression of that goodness will be the revelation of His sovereignty (see Da'at Tevunot).

The idea comes to this. The goodness that the revelation of G-d's sovereignty will present us with will be the outright display of the fact that *despite appearances to the contrary* G-d's presence and rule is real, and that His will to express love and goodness has always been carried out.

But aren't there always things that seem to thwart that will? Don't evil and un-G-dliness seem to contradict it? So, it will also become clear when G-d's sovereignty is revealed that evil and wrongdoing were *also* fulfilling G-d's will, and that they were merely a means to His end. For when evil and wrongdoing will be undone -- which will indeed come about when G-d's sovereignty will be revealed -- goodness will abound *measure for measure* in contradistinction to all the evil that had been.

That's to say that the world will then be as glorious, bounteous, and G-dly as it had been coarse,

circumscribed, and un-G-dly up to that point. And the contrast between what had been and what will be will prove G-d's sole authority. After all, the sole (apparent) contradiction of G-d's authority -- evil and unG-dliness -- will have been undone.

So the point is that our experience of all that glory and bounteousness will be "the consummate goodness and peace that G-d promised the Jewish Nation in the ultimate future" spoken of above.

Now, that's no mean feat, you realize. For it also implies that the entire immense, variegated, fraught-with-struggle 6,000 year-long allowance for evil that characterizes our exile will come to an end -- and that it will prove to have been a mere stop along the way. For once the redemption begins we'll start to ascend ever upward and to luxuriate in the Divine Presence.

Let's continue now with our citations from section 26 and see how that will begin to happen.

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