

EXILE □ CHAPTER 8

by Rabbi Yaakov Feldman

Ramchal then goes back to depicting what's to come about in Jewish and in world history as well with the onset of the redemption. He'll get a little esoteric here and later on, too, but we'll once again try to illustrate his contentions as clearly and concretely as we can.

He reports that "all evil will be removed from the husk in The World to Come, and what's left will return to the service of holiness." Two questions, though: first off, what does The World to Come, which is depicted as the end of history and the ultimate future, have to do with the redemption of the Jewish Nation?

And second, if the husk is the yetzer harah as we'd said it is, and the yetzer harah is manifest evil and unG-dliness, then how can Ramchal say that "evil will be removed from the husk" then and that "what's left" will "return" to the service of holiness? After all, if you take the heat out of the fire, then what will be left over to warm things up? And how are we to understand the idea of what's left finally "returning" to the service of holiness?

His point is that, at bottom, the yetzer harah is indeed a servant of G-d, as is absolutely everything else. For while it may seem to go against G-d's wishes, the truth is that nothing ever can; G-d is Almighty and can't be defied. It's just that we don't quite "get" that now, and so a subset of the yetzer harah seems to go against His wishes.

In any event, at a certain point, evil -- which is that subset of the yetzer harah -- will be undone. And the yetzer harah will then be able to return to the service of G-d in its entirety and openly.

The argument is that once the redemption has come about -- once our people are back where we belong and everything else is back in place as well -- then G-d's presence will be manifest, and all wrongdoing will be gone as well, and all will be well in the cosmos as we enter The World to Come.

Thus, the pending conclusion of the exile will not only be an astounding fact of Jewish life -- it will also be an essential aspect of the revelation of G-d's sovereignty on earth.

Our text then continues with the declaration that "everyone will recognize that holiness is the real source and master over all". That means to say that it will then occur to everyone that G-d's will is the sole authority, despite appearances to the contrary.

Ramchal then goes on now to explain the confusing verse we'd cited earlier on. "In fact," he says, "that's why the verse reads, 'And G-d will be "as" king over all the earth'. For (the truth be known), G-d

is already king over all the earth and always has been. After all, nothing can do anything without His permission" as we'd cited before, and nothing can thwart His wishes whatsoever.

"It's just that not all His servants *realize* that (as things stand) now. But everyone will realize it, though, in The World to Come" which will be ushered in with the redemption. And everyone "will willfully prostrate him- and herself to G-d then. As it's said, 'For then I will convert the peoples to a clear language so that they may all call upon G-d's name, and serve Him with one accord' (Zephaniah 3:9)".

So it's said that "G-d will be as a king over all the earth" because "everyone will finally realize G-d for who He really is then, and they'll recall His name and ways."

We'll soon delve into even more of the esoterics of the ultimate future, then move on from there to lay out the dynamics of the redemption itself.

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