

THE REMEMBRANCE □ CHAPTER 14

by Rabbi Yaakov Feldman

Ramchal then proceeds to end this section of the book by chronicling more of the history of the battles of good and evil.

Now, though the two were quite separate and distinct from each other at first, as we saw, that soon came undone. And good and evil took turns holding sway in the passage of time.

Adam and Eve were to have separated good and evil right at the start, after which "G-d would (have) amended the various (mystical) groupings enough for the Divine sustenance to flow through perfectly forever and ever", and Adam and Eve would have been eternally and amply rewarded. In fact, all they had to do was to adhere to G-d's commandments, and "everything would have been rectified". But they sinned indeed, and the holy and the profane mixed together once more, until the combination of the two "grew strong enough ... to spread throughout the world in the course of (the) ten generations" from Adam himself to Noah. And as a result, we -- their descendants -- really "can't rectify things until the two are separated" once and for all.

Once the generation of the flood came to be sinful, "the yetzer harah grew stronger yet" and to "spread out in all directions throughout the world", which then "left no room whatsoever for holiness". Things got so bad, in fact, that "the world nearly returned to its 'formless and empty' (Genesis 1:2) state". Then the terrible dispersion that came about when humankind tried to build the Tower of Babel did even more harm, but "holiness assumed a place of its own" despite that, in which our forefather Abraham drew his inspiration. Despite his presence, though, "impurity continued to spread throughout the world".

There came to be a distinction between good and evil, though, when Esau and Ishmael separated themselves from the Patriarchs, and "from that point on (things) spread out in such a way that the profane and the holy each stood in direct opposition to each other", which was of course an important thing because evil was separated from good again.

Nonetheless, though "the side of holiness hadn't yet gotten strong, ... the profane side came to be very much in control", which was a bad thing of course. Still and all, even though the side of holiness "wasn't cleansed well enough of its earlier attachment to the profane", it came to be "fully purified in the iron furnace of Egypt" when we were enslaved, which *was* for the good.

Now, things were amended to a very great degree when our people received the Torah at Mount Sinai, which then began to render the other nations powerless over us. In fact, "not only were the

other nations unable to rule over the Jewish Nation (then), but the Jewish Nation itself could have ruled" -- "had they not sinned with the golden calf", which was of course our greatest error and our most lethal national sin.

By then, "the evil that had left" them at Mount Sinai "re-attached itself" to them when they worshipped the golden calf. In fact, "had they not sinned (that way) they'd have immediately gone to Israel where they'd have initiated ... the original rectification", but that didn't come about. Things went downhill once again with the incident of the spies; as a result "they weren't able to go (straight) to Israel" and bring on that rectification, and they had to remain in the desert for forty years.

In any event, though "we hadn't yet been purified from that evil that re- attached itself" it still and all "sometimes lessened and other times grew strong again", until the days of King Solomon when the Holy Temple was built, and "we experienced a (degree of high) rectification". Evil would actually have been utterly eradicated then "were it not for Pharaoh's daughter (of that era, whom Solomon married), because of whom it stayed within (their environment)" and when it "regained strength to the point where the Temple was destroyed and the Jewish Nation was exiled for seventy years".

The husk nonetheless "left them alone for a time, when they went back and built the (second) Temple". But the trouble was that "the evil hadn't vanished" -- it only "lessened and weakened". Be that as it may, "the Jewish Nation had a place to grow strong in" when they returned to Israel, "but it wasn't long before an utterly black darkness overcame them again" which we'd endured until now and will continue to stew in "until the throne of the righteous Moshiach would be built".

But that's just the beginning, in a way.

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