

CHAPTER 2: THEURGY □ PARAGRAPH 8

by Rabbi Yaakov Feldman

Make no mistake about it, though -- one can tap into unholy and corrupt forces through this system just as well, and harm himself and others. Since it's axiomatic that for every good and holy force in the world there's a countervailing bad and unholy one (and vice-versa). Ramchal thus takes this opportunity to go off on a vital and enlightening excursus on the nature and place of wrong and evil in the world which we'll now offer.

The obvious question underlying this entire subject is, "Why would G-d, who is all-good and all-merciful, ever allow for wrong and evil?" After all, He created everything of His own will and volition - including wrong and evil. So He must have had His reasons. What are they?

At bottom, it comes to this: wrong and evil have to exist along with right and good if we're to be free enough have the option to choose one and reject the other. Otherwise we'd be drones and be no more worthy of consideration than pebbles and fish. Our task, then, is to undo the wrong and evil in our hearts and our world after having realized its existence, and to "establish good, both in ourselves and in the universe as a whole, for ever and ever" in Ramchal's words.

Though we were created in "the image of G-d", our potential to actualize wrong and evil sets us apart from Him. Yet, our ability to *reject* that draws us closer to Him. Thus on one level, wrong and evil could be said to be "right and good", since they challenge our beings and are capable of bringing out the best in us when we meet their challenge (much like adversity challenges someone yet makes him or her stronger when he transcends it). As such, wrong and evil could be said to be "necessary evils", if you will.

Of course, though, right and good are superior to wrong and evil, in that they're rooted in G-d's own eternal perfection while wrong and evil are merely created and temporal phenomena that will be annihilated once their function ceases.

Suffice it to say, though, that the ramifications of all this are extraordinarily broad, wide, and deep, and obviously far beyond the reaches of this necessarily brief presentation.

This series is dedicated to the memory of Yitzchak Hehrsh ben Daniel, and Sarah Rivka bas Yaakov Dovid.

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