

# THE PATH OF THE JUST - CHAPTER 11:15

*by Rabbi Yaakov Feldman*

Though we all know that "the jealous person gains nothing" being that way, that "he does nothing against the person he's jealous of" in his stew, and that he only "harms himself" in fact, as Ramchal notes, still and all nearly all of us succumb to the form of "temporary insanity" as he terms it that is jealousy. (And if anger, as we'd depicted it above, is in fact an instance of a quick, arrogant, malevolent assertion of self as well as a harsh denial of another's worth, then jealousy is perhaps a quick and meek denial of one's own self-worth.)

The most jealous among us often get so "depressed, worried and bothered by the fact that someone they know becomes successful at something", Ramchal offers, that even "their own successes give them no pleasure". Solomon was apparently referring to them when he asserted that "Jealousy is the very rotting of the bones" (Proverbs 14:30).

Others wouldn't be quite as "bothered or wounded" as they, he suggests, but they'd nonetheless "experience some pain, or at least a certain chilling of the spirit" when seeing someone else doing well. And while they might "offer some encouraging words" half-heartedly to the other person, nonetheless "in their hearts they'd actually be hesitant" and might secretly want to downgrade the other's success. In fact, Ramchal adds, "this is very common" -- "especially when it comes to a competitor's success" as most of us know.

But not only is being jealous shameful and harmful, it's rooted in a deep misreading of reality. For, we're taught that no one can "approach within a hairsbreadth's worth of something that's reserved for another" (Yoma 38b). That means to say, there's a certain amount of this and that allotted to each one of from the first in this world, and absolutely no one can pass that line -- neither the jealous person, nor the other one. For "absolutely everything is from G-d, and emanates from His wondrous counsel and unfathomable wisdom", know it or not. So, "there's no reason to be bothered by another's good fortune", Ramchal assures us: each one of us has just what's coming him.

The truth is that we'd be hard-pressed to catch sight of that in the world, since it plays itself out in realms beyond our comprehension before it comes to earth. For as Ramchal points out in another work, while the angels see the celestial source of their good fortune, we simply don't. And certain realities are tainted on the way down to us, so we pick up mixed messages and arrive at erroneous conclusions which can lead to jealousy and the like (see Pinot HaMerkavah, as found in Ginzei Ramchal pp. 323-324).

In the end, though, we'd need to concentrate on the goodness that G-d Almighty has granted us, to remind ourselves that those who have things we don't have would love to have things we do have and might very likely be jealous of us for them, and to understand that each blessing carries its own curse just as each curse has a blessing wrapped inside.

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