

# THE PATH OF THE JUST - CHAPTER 19:14

*by Rabbi Yaakov Feldman*

"Besides serving God by performing His mitzvot with this motivation", that is, for G-d's sake alone, Ramchal continues, "a pious person would have to be in a constant state of agitation about the exile and the destruction of the Holy Temple, because both are the cause of the lessening of G-d's honor". A lot is implied there but in short it comes to this.

When the Holy Temple stood and our people dwelt in our homeland in antiquity, everyone could sense G-d's Presence at every moment and with each act. And one would know that he was living out his life's mission fully either in the Temple itself or through all the other things that went on to contribute to it. While most of us don't sense the loss of all that today and have managed to make peace with it (as much peace as anyone can make with inner emptiness and spiritual torpor), the pious cannot.

They would know only too well what's missing in life without the Holy Temple, and concretely sense the fact that our homeland is no longer seeped in the holiness it had once been. They'd also know deep in their beings how all that has besmirched G-d's honor in the world's eyes. (After all, just imagine how little the arguments for this or that anti-religious theme would resonate if G-d's full presence could be sensed, and if each mitzvah clearly had its effects on the universe!)

As such, Ramchal informs us, truly pious people should long for the honor of Jerusalem and the Holy Temple, and "constantly pray for the redemption of Israel and the restoration of the former glory of Heaven".

But that seems to be a tall order indeed. Who among us could claim to be of the stature he'd need to be in order to offer that prayer with any hope of a response to it from G-d Almighty? How dare anyone among us even think of stepping forward to volunteer?

Yet Ramchal cannot accept that stance, though, and might even term it false modesty (though he doesn't say as much). He implores us to consider the following words of rebuke and to consider our hesitancy in their light.

Isaiah the prophet said a number of things about that in despair including, "I saw that there was no man, and I was dumbfounded that there was no interceder" (Isaiah 59:16), "I looked and saw that

there was no helper, and I was dumbfounded that there was no supporter" (Isaiah 63:5), "There is no leader for her from amongst the children she has borne, nor a protector from amongst the children she has raised" (Isaiah 51:18) and more. And finally he said, "All flesh is like hay and all its kindness is like weeds in the field" (Isaiah 40:6), given that no one keeps our people's wellbeing and spiritual lifeblood in mind.

So, we'd need to take our people's troubles to heart and to approach G-d with our prayers and pleas time after time if we're to be pious, and to keep at it.

In fact, "G-d derives satisfaction from His children's prayers for this". And though "He may not respond to their prayers" for redemption "because the right time has not come, or for some other reason," still and all, we're to "do what (we) must and G-d will be pleased with that".

(By the way, that last point speaks volumes about what G-d expects of us in this life, given our limitations and His own intentions, and gently reminds us that we're each to do what we must do in this life and then allow G-d to decide the outcome.)

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