

THE PATH OF THE JUST - CHAPTER 6:1

by Rabbi Yaakov Feldman

We'd been introduced to "caution" by a quick foray into the Garden of Eden, when wrongdoing and folly came to the fore (see 2:1). We'll begin our discussion of Ramchal's next trait, "enthusiasm", with a leap into the Messianic Era, when all of that will start to be undone.

Ramchal will clue us into the latent spiritual nature of "enthusiasm" -- in terms of a sense of zest and quickness -- when he'll say in the next chapter that enthusiasm is "the one great trait of perfection presently lacking in human nature". How could he say that, when so many people are enthusiastic about so many things? Obviously, then, we're talking about something other than simple enthusiasm for a project or a career for example. So let's turn to a reference he makes about the Messianic Era in another work to see what Ramchal's referring to.

Things will begin to become extraordinary then, Ramchal points out. For "joy will be very great, and blessings will grow greater and greater", and time will quickly and enthusiastically begin to shorten, in that "everything will occur instantaneously" (Ma'amar HaGeulah 42). In fact, we're told that "(A) woman will conceive and be in labor at once" (Jeremiah 31:8) then. And that zest and quickness will be a physical sign of the sort of enthusiasm that will prevail. So we see that there's a definite other-worldly side to enthusiasm.

Ramchal says elsewhere, in fact, that while enthusiasm is angelic, as is demonstrated by the verse that reads "And the Chayot-Angels ran to and fro like bolts of lightning" (Ezekiel 1:14), its opposite, laziness, is rooted in unholiness (Adir Bamarom p. 291). So let's explore the sort of enthusiasm we'd need to muster to achieve spiritual excellence.

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