

# THE PATH OF THE JUST - CHAPTER 7:1

*by Rabbi Yaakov Feldman*

Mitzvahs should give us pause. Their connection to G-d and His hopes for us should hit us each time we're faced with one, but they often don't. And so we either fulfill them perfunctorily or not at all. For while we're taught that "the enthusiastic are eager to do mitzvahs" (Pesachim 4a), we seldom are.

That doesn't only touch on mitzvahs, though. A lot of what we do is like that; for we're frequently stopped in our tracks by no one other than ourselves. We set out to do something or another and then pause. Perhaps because it occurred to us that we could be doing something else. But we'd need to reconsider the hesitation, because the truth is that many good things have slowly melted in the sun for the best of intentions.

So, as Ramchal puts it, "when the time comes to do a mitzvah, or one presents itself to you, or it first occurs to you to do one" be sure to "hurry to take hold of it and do it" before it escapes you. After all, hasn't it been pointed out, and don't we all know deep within, that "time is limited and there's so much to do" (Pirkei Avot 2.18)? So it would clearly be best to snatch each mitzvah that comes your way.

Now, there's a more arcane aspect of the idea of our time being limited, as Ramchal illustrates in another work (see Adir Bamarom pp. 31-32). And it alludes to the spiritual underpinnings of the trait of enthusiasm we'd pointed out earlier (see 6:1 above).

Ramchal indicates there that on a mystical level, our whole life can be considered a single (hopefully very long) "day", with its own dawn, morning, noon, evening, and night.

But the sad fact is that our "days" were much longer before Adam and Eve were expelled from the Garden of Eden. After all, human life was rooted in repose and rest back then, and all that changed with the expulsion. On a deeper level, though, it's also based on the fact that our having had longer "days" then alludes to the fact that our beings were fuller, more extensive, and nearly fully comprehensive back then, and that they've since been "shortened".

The point is that now that our "days" and beings are no longer what they used to be, we'd need to spur ourselves on, and to go at things with much more alacrity if we hope to grow.

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