

THE PATH OF THE JUST - CHAPTER 7:3

by Rabbi Yaakov Feldman

The best way to cultivate "enthusiasm" is from the outside in, it seems. We'll learn of other ways too in the next chapter, but at this point Ramchal presents us with this method, and it comes to this.

Ruminating upon the trait, Ramchal first declares that "enthusiasm is an outcome of some inner incandescence", which means to say that it's rooted in what we'd term "drive" or a sense of personal urgency. For as we all know, there are times when we're moved to do things almost involuntarily, as when a deep intuitive understanding of what has to be done takes us over, and we're off.

But often times we're not moved at all and either drudge along or abandon the idea. In any event Ramchal asserts that the sort of "inner incandescence" he spoke of can actually be prodded on; that we needn't wait for it to burnish on its own. As he puts it, "enthusiasm itself can produce this incandescence". That means to say that we can set fire to our souls by acting enthusiastic, and thus bring on a degree of inner passion by means of outer instigation.

For, "just as you yourself instigate external movements" from the inside out, "so too can (your external movements) instigate inner movements" from the outside in, "even to the point where they can consciously arouse your very yearnings and desires".

So "make use of what you have command over" -- your outer promptings, and "you will eventually take control over what you do not". And as a result, "a great inner joy, desire and longing will come about as a result". And you will be the sort of person "whose spirit is aflame in the service of his Creator" spoken of above.

It's thus important to even settle for this sort of "ruse", if you will, if you don't seem to be driven to spiritual excellence internally, since "the most desirable traits in service to the Creator are willingness of heart and longing of soul" on our part. So, learn to "enthuse yourself" from the outside in "so that enthusiasm might eventually become second nature to you."

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