THE PATH OF THE JUST - CHAPTER 8:1

by Rabbi Yaakov Feldman

"Caution" and "enthusiasm" are two sides of the same trait coin. For while being cautious helps us to avoid losing contact with G-d by encouraging us not to sin (see Ch's 2-5), being enthusiastic helps us draw closer to Him by persuading us to do more and more good.

So, just as we were advised to do so to acquire "caution", it would help us to study Torah, and to reflect upon the significance of Divine service and the scope of Divine judgment in order to attain "enthusiasm".

But there's one other thing we could do, Ramchal tells us here. We could reflect upon "the high significance of the mitzvot", since once that becomes clear to us we're more likely to fulfill them eagerly.

Ramchal grants us some insight into the significance of the mitzvah-system in other works. He illustrates at one point how carefully laid out all the mitzvot and their details are, all so that we could achieve a "genuine (spiritual) rank" (Derech Hashem 1:4:5).

After all, as he puts it, G-d knows our "makeup through and through, as well as how (we) function". And so after considering all of that, as well as everything else that would need to be factored in (like our circumstances, context, and the historical moment), He charged us to execute certain actions with specific details there and then, and then He grants us the promised spiritual rank. After all, we were told that "G-d commanded us to perform all these statutes ... for our good" (Deuteronomy 6:24).

We're also told that with each and every mitzvah we fulfill, we "draw closer and closer to G-d", we enjoy a certain palpable "degree of perfection"(Derech Hashem 1:4:10), and that a certain degree of goodness "wafts down" upon us from up above (Clalei Kinot Hashem Tzivakot 4).

The world itself benefits by our observance, we're told. It's set right by our mitzvot to a degree (Derech Hashem 4:4:4, Da'at Tevunot 158), we connect it to the Higher Realms (Adir Bamarom p.3) thanks to the agency of our soul which acts as a mediator between the two (Yichud HaYirah), and we clarify the fact that G-d alone reigns in the world and nothing else (Klach Pitchei Chochma 49 [in the Peirush]).

So, with so much at stake and so much to be gained, how could a sensitive soul not be moved enough to do what he or she can?

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