

THE PATH OF THE JUST - CHAPTER 8:2

by Rabbi Yaakov Feldman

It's truly mortifying to have to admit to, but most of what we do is rooted in what we'll get back for it. Our motto seems to be, "you scratch my back and I'll scratch yours", we're so self-absorbed. But like any ignoble trait, this too can be turned around to good. For, Ramchal contends that it wouldn't be hard for us to be more altruistic toward G-d once we realize how He deals with us from the first.

As he says, we're bound to become more enthusiastic in our service to G-d once we realize all "the very many good things (He) does for us moment by moment" our whole lives long even without our asking.

"There can be no person, whatever his circumstances," he remarks, "be he poor or rich, healthy or ill, who will never have experienced some wonders or great good in his life" thanks to G-d's benevolence. For while the rich and robust certainly have a lot to be grateful for, the poor and sickly do as well.

Because even the poor manage to get by somehow with G-d's help (though with less to be sure), and oftentimes the ailing manage to remain stable for a time, to be alleviated from this or that if not from everything, and the like. In point of fact, the wise have even managed to grow in their beings as a consequence of challenges, by taking certain things to heart or deepening in mercy. (Because the truth be known, all adversity is either a death-sentence or a course of instruction in good judgment and growth; the choice is yours alone to make.)

The crux of the matter lies in each one of us "reflecting on ... all of the good we enjoy" and in realizing that all that we need and enjoy "is in the hands of G-d". Know that, and you're bound to serve Him enthusiastically, which is to say, to approach His presence gratefully and in full knowledge of the enormous debt we owe Him which we can repay to some degree by fulfilling His mitzvot lovingly and eagerly.

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