

# THE PATH OF THE JUST - CHAPTER 9:3

*by Rabbi Yaakov Feldman*

We also lose our enthusiasm for goodness when we're thrown off by things or distracted by fear and anxiety. But Ramchal terms the great majority of the things we fear "transient" -- not rooted in ultimate reality.

For at one point, "you might be nervous about cold or heat," for example, while "another time you might worry about accidents occurring, then another time about illness, and yet another time about the wind, and so forth", whisked here and there and back again by life's vicissitudes as so many of us are.

So what would help? Should we simply lay our trust in G-d and face the blustery weather, come what may? Or should we admit our fears and hold off? After all, while some fears are indeed baseless, scores of others aren't.

First off, as Ramchal puts it, "you must know that there's fear, and there's fear. There's warranted fear and senseless fear; then there's trust and there's naiveté". For indeed, "G-d created man to be sensible and straight-forwardly logical so that he could accustom himself to... be on guard against the things that might cause him harm .... One who doesn't want to go along the ways of wisdom and is willing to expose himself to danger isn't practicing trust in G-d-- he's naive, and he's ... going against the will of G-d who wants him to protect himself".

His advice then is to be sensible and to take no unwarranted risks, but not to "compound one form of self-protection onto another, one fear or worry onto another" to the point where we're immobilized with fear. For at bottom, we're to "consider (ourselves) as only passing through the world, but settled-in in (our) Divine service", which is to say that we're to not see ourselves as rooted in the here and now but rather in eternity.

That way we'll be able to reasonably and wisely, "willingly and contentedly face whatever greets (us) in this world, and take hold of whatever circumstances come (our) way". And we'll thus be free to concentrate upon the sort of things that will lead us to spiritual excellence.

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