

THE PATH OF THE JUST - CHAPTER 19:15

by Rabbi Yaakov Feldman

If you are pious for your own sake, you are simply not pious, Ramchal would argue -- even if you seem to be. For we are not only to be pious for the sake of G-d's honor as we'd learned, but also for our people's sake, as he emphasizes here. For we're each to do all we can for the well-being of the Jewish Nation -- especially the pious.

They must be so centered on the well-being of our people that they'd do absolutely everything they can for "the good of the generation" which depends upon them, and "to earn them merit and to protect them" with their out-and-out piety.

For at bottom, "the pious of Israel are to (do all they can to) atone for and make worthy all of our people", be they good or not. For despite the distastefulness of their actions, "G-d doesn't want the destruction of the evil", we're assured. Indeed, "the righteous have been commanded to try to make the wrongful worthy "with his guidance" and to atone for them" with his prayers. As, "the pious have to pray for their generation's well-being, to atone for whomever needs atonement, to return in repentance for whomever needs that, and to act as an intercedent for the entire generation".

For the truth be known, Ramchal says quite astoundingly, "G-d only truly loves those who love the Jewish nation; and He only grows more and more in love with those who grow more and more in love with them."

Only the individuals whom Ramchal terms our people's "true shepherds" -- those who "sacrifice themselves for the sake of the Jewish Nation, who plead and strive for their welfare and well-being in all ways, who stand by the breach to pray for them so that any edicts against them be nullified and so that the gates of blessing would be open for them" -- they alone are the ones whom "the Holy One, blessed be He, truly desires".

For "like a father who loves no one more than someone he sees faithfully loving his child", G-d especially loves the pious who love His people.

This closes our chapter; and while there are some other points to be made about true piety, the essentials have thus been laid out. So we pray that G-d grant us the strength of character and depth of conviction to be counted among His pious servants, so as to serve Him and His holy nation earnestly and wholeheartedly.

Text Copyright © 2010 by Rabbi Yaakov Feldman and **Torah.org**