

THE PATH OF THE JUST - CHAPTER 2:3

by Rabbi Yaakov Feldman

Most of us today are rather pleased to be busy and take pride in how much we can juggle. In fact the sort of adrenaline rush that comes with managing to double-, triple-, and quadruple-task that we strive for today is a sort of modern seventh-heaven. Some even encourage that, offering that being busy allows you to forget about your troubles and to lose yourself to the task at hand.

That would be fine if we'd fulfill our life's mission by forgetting ourselves and if our sense of what's expected of us didn't matter, or if we were only granted life so as to be productive. But Ramchal, like the great preponderance of the sages, doesn't think that's true at all. As we'd depicted it before, he contends that we're expected to change ourselves for the better and to amend the world. And that sometimes calls for quieting down and dwelling on the basics.

For as he words it, "relentlessly burdening yourself with tasks so that you haven't the time to reflect upon or consider where you're heading" which so many of us are guilty of," is in fact one of the devices and guiles of the yetzer harah" rather than a good thing.

Interestingly enough, though, he adds the insight that the yetzer harah knows that "if you were to concentrate upon your (wrongful) ways for just an instant that you would certainly repent of them, and a strong regret would grow within you that would lead you to utterly abandon your sins". That means to say that just given the chance to slow down, to dwell upon self, and to refocus upon goals would automatically have us turn a new leaf and improve ourselves.

Because deep within our beings is a draw to G-d that cannot be denied, but which is covered-over by this, that, and so much else that vies for our attention, and distracts the soul from the task at hand.

So the only way you can escape from all that would be to foster the trait of caution, by setting aside time to reflect upon yourself and your ways.

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