

# THE PATH OF THE JUST - CHAPTER 2:4

*by Rabbi Yaakov Feldman*

It's not easy coming upon caution, though. For not only does it call for a lot of self-awareness, forethought, concern and determination ... there's also a hitch attached to it. It's the fact that even if we do our level best to be as cautious as we can and avoid all the traps of the yetzer harah, we're still-and-all not likely to succeed -- "without G-d's help" that is, as Ramchal adds.

That's because while some have indeed come to be quite pious and even holy, such individuals are rare. For as we'll see in the very last chapter of The Path of the Just, becoming holy (and pious, too) is essentially a supernatural phenomenon; for it "begins in striving and ends in being given as a gift. That is to say, it's initiated by your sanctifying yourself and concludes with your being sanctified" by G-d.

And that's also true of lesser levels of achievement like caution, because it calls for transcending your baser instincts. For, "the yetzer harah is mighty", as Ramchal puts it. It long ago figured you out and knows how to trip you; and it has the uncanny ability to have you agree with it again and again, even though you know you'll regret it later.

Nonetheless if you do in fact make the effort to be on top of your choices, G-d will "save you from the yetzer harah" and grant you caution, because He wants you to draw close to Him. But if you don't try, "G-d will certainly not oversee your doings" and will allow you to falter. "After all", as Ramchal worded it, "if you will not have compassion upon yourself, who will?"

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