

THE PATH OF THE JUST - CHAPTER 21:1

by Rabbi Yaakov Feldman

We need to step back a bit, though, to see what we'd have to do to become pious in the first place - to be so moved and inspired that we'd want nothing better than to be close to G-d and to do His every bidding.

Ramchal suggests that we'd need to engage in "a lot of introspection and profound reflection" upon a number of exalted things. If you'll recall, we spoke early on in this work about taking stock of ourselves every day in order to see just where we're successful and where we're not in our service to G-d and our life's mission (see 3:2). But Ramchal is referring to a whole other order of introspection here.

He suggests that we'd need to reflect upon "G-d's exalted nature". (And can there ever be a loftier subject to reflect upon? Certainly not.) We'd also do well to reflect "upon the infinite nature of His perfection, and upon the great and unfathomable difference between His loftiness and our lowliness".

At bottom his suggestion is that one would have to set aside time in a busy day to consider the stark and majestic reality of G-d Almighty; upon His inscrutable reality and being which is utterly different than our own; and upon the real albeit hidden ways His presence affects each and every thing and moment.

Do that on a regular basis, he says, and you cannot help but "be filled with trembling and reverence before Him" and moved enough to the core to dedicate your life to His service.

"Reflect as well upon the great goodness He has granted us", Ramchal then offers, in order to come to love Him; as well as "upon His vast love for Israel, and upon the closeness to Him that the righteous enjoy".

That's to say, reflect on His love for us, given that we'd been granted G-d's own Torah, as well as upon the sort of sure, eternal bond that would result from that in order to be inspired on a whole other level.

We're also told that if we reflect upon "the excellence of Torah, mitzvot and other learned matters," that "an intense and powerful love will arise within you (for G-d); and you'll want nothing other than to attach yourself to Him" and to be the sort of pious individual who could do that.

And finally Ramchal offers this, and quite touchingly at that. If you would only realize as well that "G-

d is quite literally a father to us, and expresses fatherly tender mercy upon us", then "a desire and longing to reciprocate" that love "would well-up in your heart" for Him, and you'll be far more easily drawn to loving piety than you would have been otherwise.

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