

THE PATH OF THE JUST - CHAPTER 21:3

by Rabbi Yaakov Feldman

What really prevents us from being pious, Ramchal offers, are all our "preoccupations and worries". After all, don't we spend an awful lot of time dreading growing old when we're young, while brooding over being so young; being preoccupied with making a good living when we're establishing ourselves, while being overwrought with too much work; yearning to be renowned and sought after when we're striving higher, while treasuring our solitude, and so much more?

Ramchal contends that each of those thoughts and hungers robs us of our time, gnaws away at our being, and distracts us from the soul's need to draw close to G-d Almighty.

For "when the mind is preoccupied by and stewed in its worries and external concerns," he reiterates, "it becomes impossible for it to reflect"; and if you can't do that, then "you'll never come to be pious".

In fact, such ruminations not only prevent you from becoming pious, they can even undo your piety after the fact or stunt it, and they can prevent you from "growing in your reverence, love and the other things having to do with piety".

For these kinds of thoughts "which flirt with the heart and draw it after themselves rather than to anything relevant to abstinence and true knowledge" are anathema to our dreams of spiritual excellence and are certainly to be shunned.

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