

THE PATH OF THE JUST - CHAPTER 21:4

by Rabbi Yaakov Feldman

The only thing that will undo the sorts of preoccupations and worries that distract us from our dreams of piety, Ramchal suggests, is trusting in G-d -- "casting one's lot upon G-d completely", as he words it.

That means to say, we'd need to believe in G-d so vigorously and intensely that we'd actually leave our lives and the world at large to His care. For while most of us believe in G-d as our Creator and as the Almighty, few of us base our day-to-day decisions on His living presence.. We often act as if He'd somehow "retired" or "gone part-time" long, long ago, and that the world was largely in our own hands, which is so fallacious.

That's most especially true when it comes to our livelihood. Despite the fact that we'd been taught long ago that "all of one's sustenance (for the year to come had already been) fixed on Rosh HaShannah" (Betzah 16a) by G-d. and that G-d sees to it that "one cannot have as much as a hair's-breadth worth of another's possessions" (Yoma 38b) given that He Himself measures it all out beforehand, we nonetheless forget all that and push ourselves ever onward as if we could thwart those realities.

The truth is we could have been able to do nothing, for all intents and purposes, and yet had enough to eat, drink, and all the rest had Adam and Eve not sinned. But they did, and as a consequence we're forced to "eat bread by the sweat of (our) brow" (Genesis 3:19). For had the original plan stayed in place in fact, then like our ancestors who lived on manna in the desert and drank well-water all the time without effort, we too would have come to recognize the hand of G-d in all things. That's not the case, though, so we're hard pressed to lay our trust in Him in fact.

The point to remember, as Ramchal reminds us, is that "it isn't so much the effort (we make) that produces results, it's that the effort is necessary" because of Adam and Eve's blunder. The truth of the matter is that "by making the effort (we) meet that requirement, and we thus produce a receptacle for the blessings of heaven to dwell upon".

For in truth "once you work just a little, all you need do after that is to trust in G-d" Ramchal then assures us, "and you'll never be concerned about worldly matters". Indeed, "your mind will be set free" from your distractions, "and your heart will be prepared for true piety and perfect service to G-d".

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