

# THE PATH OF THE JUST - CHAPTER 23:1

*by Rabbi Yaakov Feldman*

As anyone who has ever been a living, breathing human being knows only too well, humility doesn't come naturally to us. What then can we do to foster it? Ramchal offers that we'd need to draw on two things: on force of habit, and on certain reflections and realizations.

As to force of habit, we'd need to accustom ourselves to act humbly, Ramchal makes the point -- by consciously and purposefully doing certain specific things that truly humble people would do just naturally and without forethought, which we would have to set out to take upon ourselves. That's to suggest that we'd need to get ourselves to play the part of a humble person if you will, again and again, in order to transform ourselves into one.

For what many actors do are things like wearing the clothing that the character they'd be depicting would wear, living in his or her environment, eating his food, etc., and all so as to get a sense of what it must feel to be that person. Ramchal suggests that we draw on that technique in order to first act and feel, and then to actually become humble.

So, for example, we'd need to get used to sitting in a less than auspicious place than we'd be inclined to; to walk at the back of a company of people rather than at the head; to dress in modest clothing (which he depicts as clothing that's respectable, but that doesn't stand out) rather than in stylish, showy clothes; and more. And he contends that by habituating yourself in this path you'll find that humility will slowly enter and penetrate your heart from the outside in, which is the plan.

But why not get at egocentricity at its root, and expunge it from our hearts from the first rather than go about it this way, you might ask? Ramchal offers that's because it's in our heart's nature to swell and grow haughty as a matter of course, making it very difficult to uproot this natural inclination.

The only way anything like it can be accomplished he says, is by your taking control of the external actions associated with modesty, since those actions are available to you while the trait itself isn't at all easy to get hold of. Do that and eventually you'll affect the inner drive too (also see 7: 3 where we focused on this technique).

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