

THE PATH OF THE JUST - CHAPTER 3:3

by Rabbi Yaakov Feldman

Even though we're advised to catch sight of what we do in order to set things right, that doesn't mean to imply that we truly see things for what they are! In fact, our sages likened this world -- reality as we know it -- to night-time (Baba Metzia 83b), which Ramchal takes to mean that the world is mired in darkness. And as a result of that, he asserts, we simply don't "see what's in front of us" or understand what we're looking at.

So we lose sight of the glorious fact that we were placed in this world to perfect our beings and to do as much good as we can (Adir Bamarom, pp. 458- 460), and we tend to flutter about here and there as a consequence.

Indeed, Ramchal says here that "the coarseness and materiality of this world" in fact "doesn't allow you to notice the (ethical) stumbling blocks along the way" and has you "misinterpret things so that what's actually bad seems to be good, and vice versa". And all because we've become so ensnared by our yetzer harah that we're incapable of making rational decisions. So we'd need the advice of those who are able to see things for what they are if we're ever to grow.

We'll return to that last point shortly; for now though it would do us well to see how Ramchal explains our "night-blindness" in more detail. He says elsewhere that G-d actually restricted our insights on purpose by creating us with our five senses (though we think that they are what we depend on for our insights in the first place!).

As he explains it, "the soul itself actually sees and hears everything" as it really is, "because it isn't subject to the (influence of the) senses". It easily sees what "impels everything from the inside-out", which our five senses prevent us from doing. That's why we misread signals, miss cues, and make wrong ethical decisions (Adir Bamarom, Ibid.).

That isn't to imply though that that's a universal phenomenon. For there are some rare individuals who do see things as they are -- people who "have been freed from this state of imprisonment and can see the truth for what it is, and who can advise others" about how to grow. They know very well that we were created for the higher purposes we've indicated and that most of us only see the outer reaches of things. And they also know what has us make the sort of mistakes we make as a consequence of that (Adir Bamarom, Ibid.). Hence, we should seek them out and ask their advice.

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