

# THE PATH OF THE JUST - CHAPTER 5:3

*by Rabbi Yaakov Feldman*

There's only so much time in the day, yet so much and so many beckon. Besides family and friends, Torah and mitzvot, and work, each and every small and not-so-small thing calls to us and demands our attention. And here we are, trying to be cautious and self-reflective, and thus making even more demands on ourselves. Surely something has to give.

The small and not-so-small things would have to leave us alone for longer stretches of time than the important ones. We wouldn't need to abandon them to be sure since they matter, too. They could relax us, for example, or allow us to assuage our anxieties and to set mind and spirit free enough to hurry back to the more serious things. For everything permissible and ethical -- no matter how humble -- is granted us as a gift from G-d to be used to good ends. It's just that they matter less in the end, and we would do best to consider our need for them here and now.

Family and friends deserve more of our time and attention; our jobs have their own timetables and they urge us onward more persistently; each mitzvah has its own time, season, and environment, and we're to dedicate our whole beings to them alone when they arise; and Torah-study is essential since it grants us perspectives on the smaller things, family and friends, work, and the whole mitzvah-system, so it cries out for attention. And so, one would think that there's simply no time left for anything else. But he would be lacking one essential element of spiritual excellence -- the "setting aside of specific time for reflecting upon your actions and rectifying them", as Ramchal terms it, which we cited before.

Because "if you're wise, then any free time you might have from your everyday concerns wouldn't be wasted. You'd grab hold of it and not let go" and use it to reflect upon "spiritual concerns and (upon) rectifying your Divine service". There's a lot to be said about that point, but suffice it to say that we're to sit apart for a time once a week, perhaps, or once a month to think "Big Thoughts" as they're called.

We're to wonder why we were born, what we're meant to do in this world, what our ultimate goal is in life, what we need to improve in ourselves, what matters little and can be done without and what deserves ultimate allegiance. Ramchal has already answered these questions earlier on, but his charge here for us is to take the questioning process itself to heart, and to make the time needed for it a priority in our lives. For, otherwise, few of the other things will matter in the end, since we wouldn't have had the impetus to go forward in our beings.

So what has to "give" -- to refer to our realization above -- is a life without reflection. For such a life is rife with wasted time, while a reflective life is full, vital, and momentous, and each of its moments is substantive.

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