

# THE PATH OF THE JUST - CHAPTER 20:4

*by Rabbi Yaakov Feldman*

So at bottom being pious not only comes to being scrupulously observant and reverential. To be so you'd also need to be sure to "evaluate all your actions in light of their consequences" as Ramchal underscores, and to make sure "they're in harmony with the conditions you find yourself in".

And if you find that not doing a usually pious deed "sanctifies the name of G-d and satisfies Him more than doing it, then you should refrain rather than do it". Because, again, the principle is that "if an act appears to be good but it's actually bad in its consequences ... while if another act seems to be bad, but is actually good in its consequences, then you're to act with the ultimate effect and outcome in mind" and do the latter.

But this is extraordinarily hard to determine oftentimes, and it's easy to falter on either end. So Ramchal adds that one must be "understanding of heart and ready of mind" to be successful at this, "because it's impossible to enunciate the infinite number of particulars" for you to consider and act upon. He assures us though that in the end, "G-d will give wisdom from His mouth, knowledge and understanding" (Proverbs 2:6).

Nonetheless his other point is that few people actually take this principle of balancing circumstances and actions into consideration -- yet one cannot truly be pious without it.

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