

# CHAPTER 5: THE DIFFERENT REALMS AND THEIR SPECIFIC SITUATIONS □ PARAGRAPH 2

*by Rabbi Yaakov Feldman*

While we are readily aware of physical phenomena and their properties, we simply can't fathom spiritual ones all that well because they're out of our experience <sup>1</sup>. All we can say about them is what we've been taught by our tradition <sup>2</sup>.

One of the most important axioms we have about them, though, is that everything in the physical realm has its counterpart in the Transcendent Forces <sup>3</sup> from which those physical phenomena devolved in the stages that G-d has ordained they must <sup>4</sup>. Thus, the Transcendent Forces are the roots of all physical phenomena <sup>5</sup> and physical phenomena are the offshoots and products of those Forces, and the two are bound to each other like links in a chain <sup>6</sup>.

We've also been taught that everything that happens in this physical realm -- both crucial and incidental -- is under the rule of the other spiritual phenomenon, the angels <sup>7</sup>. They allow for and maintain those events and bring about the sorts of innovations that G-d decrees <sup>8</sup>.

Notes:

1. We in modernity are privileged to know more and more about the physical realm each and every day right down to the genetic nub. Nonetheless it's imperative for us to realize that we'll never be able to examine and portray the properties and laws of the spiritual realm, too, to that degree. Expecting to is like expecting to sight an idea under a microscope. See 1:1:5.
2. That's to say that while spiritual phenomena can't be seen, touched, heard, etc. they can be known and experienced on a non-material level by prophets and other holy individuals. And the data gathered thereby can then be passed on to others. See 1:1:2 and Maamar Halkkurim, Beruchaniyim. Kabbalists do speak of other means of discerning the spiritual that aren't stemmed in a tradition per se, such as revelations of Elijah the prophet and deeply intuitive readings of spiritual texts like the Zohar and the like.
3. See 1:5:1 as well as Zohar 1:156b, Ramban on Genesis 28:12, and Moreh Nevuchim 2:4.
4. The process described here is that of the connection of the highest reaches of heaven to the

lowest reaches of earth and back by degrees. It functions as a ladder set up on the earth, the top of which reached to heaven: and (with) angels of G-d ascending and descending on it. (Genesis 28:12).

5. That's to say that the Transcendent Forces are the sublime and ethereal counterparts of every single entity and interaction on earth. They're sort of the non-material germ and kernel of, and concept and notion behind everything we experience in this world.

See 2:5:6 and 3:2:1. Notice that it's written in 4:6:13 that G-d's Throne is the source of all physical phenomena, but the seeming contradiction is explained by the fact that there are various levels of Transcendent Forces and Sephirot and as such the exalted level known as the Throne is the superior one.

6. That is, touch one and you'll automatically affect the other. See Klallei Pitchei Chochma vDaat 4.

7. Hence, angels also play a vital role in the aforementioned link between the transcendent forces and the actual physical phenomena that result. In fact, angels can be said to be the intermediaries between the Forces and the material world. See 1:5:1 and Breishit Rabbah 10:6, Zohar 1:34a. We're also taught that everyone has his or her guardian angel (Chagiga 16a, Berachot 60b).

8. See 1:5:10.

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Rabbi Yaakov Feldman has translated and commented upon "The Gates of Repentance", "The Path of the Just", and "The Duties of the Heart" (Jason Aronson Publishers). His works are available in bookstores and in various locations on the Web.