

CHAPTER 2:6 MANKIND IN THIS WORLD

by Rabbi Yaakov Feldman

Derech Hashem - The Way of G-d 2:2:6

The utterly wrongful -- those whose inner beings are so deeply sullied and dark because of their misdeeds, and whose bodies and souls are actually besmirched as a consequence ¹ -- could never attach onto G-d's presence ². Yet they too might have done some good ³.

Still and all, when placed on the scales of justice and considered in the face of the majority of their deeds, those few good ones are neither qualitatively nor quantitatively good enough to incline them toward the side of actual goodness. For if their deeds *were* that good, then those individuals wouldn't be considered utterly wicked, but rather almost good ⁴.

And so that Divine Judgment not be demeaned ⁵, their few good deeds are to be rewarded -- but in this world alone, as we indicated ⁶. Their merit will eventually be undone, though, and they'll never earn a lofty status ⁷.

Footnotes:

¹ This then serves as a depiction of the inner makeup of the extremely wicked: they're essentially and deeply sullied and dark, and their entire being -- body *and* soul -- is besmirched. As such, they ...

² Since their beings are the obverse of G-d's own.

³ That's to say that despite their being so utterly wicked, sullied, dark, and besmirched, they had to have done *some* good in their lives -- perhaps by being kind to a child, doing a small favor to someone, repaying a loan on time, etc. For such is the complex and often contradictory makeup of the human heart which makes it possible for the very most wicked to do some good, however little (which explains why family members may love them and only see "their good side").

⁴ I.e., they'd be the "very wrongful" depicted in 2:2:3 who'd nonetheless be given a chance to experience the World to Come.

⁵ I.e., so that *all* good deeds be rewarded, as one would expect, considering their importance.

⁶ See 2:2:3.

But being the worldly people that they are, worldly reward must seem glorious to them! Thus, since no worldly reward could ever match the true and eternal bliss the soul revels in, in the World to Come, their not experiencing the World to Come could be seen as an act of mercy since it would allow them to do without the terrible agitation of realizing just how very wrong their viewpoint had been all along.

⁷ Yet see note 4 to 2:2:4.

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