

CHAPTER 2:9 MANKIND IN THIS WORLD

by Rabbi Yaakov Feldman

Derech Hashem -- The Way of G-d 2:2:9

Everything mentioned in this chapter until now also helps to explain the conundrum of why the righteous sometimes suffer while the wrongful succeed ¹ as well as the travails of the Afterlife in preparation for the World to Come. The success of the righteous in life, though, is based on other things as we'll soon see ².

All we've explained so far is rooted in the aforementioned preparation of a society of righteous in the World to Come ³. But things are different when it comes to one's own specific situation, as we'll see in the next chapter.

Footnotes:

¹ See 2:2:5-6 especially for this.

The idea behind this is known as "Theodicy", the art of justifying G-d's ways to humankind. The truth be known, the natural world is seemingly very unfair in that chaos, randomness, and chance seems to rule so much of it, and violence, pain, and suffering often prevail (as it often must; for as the expression goes, "You have to break a lot of eggs to make an omelet"). What determines, for example, which cow is to be slaughtered over another one; which stone is to be displaced to clear the land; which pond will be undone by draught, etc.?

Things are of course different though when it comes to explaining the seeming anarchy of the *human* situation, as to why some people suffer and others thrive -- especially when it comes to elucidating how G-d rewards and punishes the righteous and wrongful.

This is a vast and millennia-long conversation that begins in the belief in an omnipotent G-d who is just, versus the lack of same, G-d forbid. And it continues from there to the equally weighty discussion of the extent of G-d's providence -- whether it begins and ends with humankind or it extends to animals and maybe even inanimate objects. But this is an immense topic that's far beyond our discussions here.

Theodicy itself is discussed very, very widely in Jewish sources, from the Book of Job from beginning to end, to the Talmud (*Berachot* 7a, *Ta'anit* 11a), by the likes of Ibn Pakuda (*Chovot HaLevovot* 4:3), Rambam (*Moreh Nevuchim* 3:23, 51), Ramban (*Drasha al Divrei Kohelet* and *Hakdamah*

to *Peirush l'Sefer Iyov*), to the Zohar (2, p. 10b), the Kabbalists, etc.

In any event, Ramchal himself has addressed this to a degree in this chapter as well as in 2:3:8 below and in *Da'at Tevunot* 166.

² See Chapters 3-4 below.

³ See 2:2:2.

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