

CHAPTER 1: G-D □ PART 2

by Rabbi Yaakov Feldman

Yet, G-d chose to interact with us. So He elected to be known -- to some degree -- so that we could refer to Him, serve Him in more palpable ways, and thus draw close to Him. Because it's simply impossible to interact with an unknowable entity.

Thus, in our limited scope and frame of reference, G-d can best be described as being "the Master of everything in existence", who "created everything" specifically "when and how He wanted to", who "sustains everything for as long as He wants", and "rules over everything with complete authority", as Ramchal puts it.

What "the Master of everything in existence" means to say is that G-d alone is responsible for everything throughout the cosmos and that nothing happens without His input into it. It also means that He's accountable for everything, meaning that the answer for every question always comes back to His place in it, as He alone is the cause of, impetus behind, and the ground under everything.

He alone "created everything", for while we humans fashion, elaborate upon, bounce off of, and rethink things (albeit in oftentimes stunningly fresh ways), only G-d created anew. And He did that "when and how He wanted to", neither before or after He decided to, following neither a formula or a schedule but truly independently. He "sustains everything for as long as He wants" in that if He no longer wants something to exist it simply disappears (along with all traces of it, if that's what He prefers), and He "rules over everything with complete authority" implying that His word is the first, middle, and last one.

Understand again, though, that all that only describes Him in relation to us, and to the extent that we can depict Him. It says nothing about Himself, before we came upon the scene. But let's go on.

G-d is also said to be an "utterly perfect being with absolutely no imperfections". That means to say that while we're all limited to one degree or another and of fixed scope, G-d is not. Unlike anything or anyone else, G-d "depends on nothing or no one" for anything, and is "affected by no one or nothing", in that His will and movements are utterly free and they need not answer to anyone or anything.

"He is without beginning or end" Ramchal continues, explaining that to mean "that He didn't (suddenly) come into existence after not existing, and He will never cease to exist". And that while He is "the direct impetus behind everything and everyone", nothing or no one brought Him about.

G-d "is not a composite" or multiplicity of elements or component parts (since if He were, then He'd be divisible and thus subject to imperfection); rather, His being is "without structure and utterly simple", sheer and unalloyed.

And finally, nothing that is true of anything or anyone else is true of Him since He is without form, content or structure, is above space and time, and is subject to no natural laws.

Understand that this is all very heady stuff and oftentimes hard to grasp. Suffice it to say that it comes down to the fact that while He is unknowable unto Himself, as we said, as best as we can depict Him, He is perfect, eternal, all-knowing, and all-powerful. Take that to heart and you can't help but be drawn to Him in love and awe, and that's what's required of us at bottom.

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