

DA'AT TEVUNOT - SECTION 3: CHAPTER 19

by Rabbi Yaakov Feldman

1.

If everything is indeed interconnected and assumes a role in the great playing out of G-d's intentions as we'd learned, then why do so many things seem so disconnected and pointless, let alone so unfair and malevolent? And if wrong and injustice is so off the mark and out of synch with everything else, what then does that say about its nature?

As Ramchal explains it, the truth of the matter is that "wrong only exists in things that haven't yet connected (with other things) in order to fulfill their final goal" of realizing G-d's intentions for the universe which is to reveal His sovereignty, as we'd explained. Wrong and injustice simply can't exist in "finalized things" he tells us, in things that are good and that contribute to that great goal. And that's what sets wrongfulness apart from goodness.

The best way to explain that perhaps is to suggest that everything wrongful, evil, and unjust is disjointed, and is merely "in process". Nonetheless, the promise is that wrongfulness will eventually come into its own and be righteous [1].

For "as we know," he adds, "whatever G-d does is fully good" [2]. It follows then that "whatever seems to be imperfect on some level" at this point and hence wrongful, "will be repaired on that level" once the universe is rectified.

2.

For even though all the things we see about us now seem to be disjointed and aimless, that entire system will be undone in the end and will be replaced by the state of universal interconnectedness and geared toward achieving of total perfection. And what had once been wrongful and unjust will be salvaged and made whole.

All that explains the Talmudic statement we'd offered at the end of the last chapter that "Everything G-d created in His world was for the sake of His Glory" [3]. The significance of that statement is that G-d will only be in His Glory once He's happy with His creation and can "take pleasure in His deeds" so to speak. And that will occur when the sublime state termed the era of "full restoration" will come about, when wrong and injustice will no longer exist [4].

Understand, though, that while this state will only come about once everything joins together with everything else to achieve it, nevertheless the mere fact of things joining together will not itself bring

on that goal. It's just that their having joined together will change the makeup of things, and that will bring about the great rectification.

What's left to explain, though, is the unique role that the Jewish Nation plays in all that.

Notes:

[1] That's to say that every instance of wrongfulness and injustice is like a child still working through his or her immaturity, coming into his- or herself, who will eventually mature and be the kind, loving, good, compassionate adult long awaited. Or it's like someone hoping to be righteous who nonetheless errs from time to time until he or she achieves his or her spiritual potential.

For, at bottom, most of us are indeed immature and "in process", as is much of the world; the promise is, though, that we and the world will mature in the end and achieve full human perfection. For that was the plan from the first.

Understand that this is quite an original perspective on wrong with wide implications and with deep insight into the ways of the world.

See R' Goldblatt's note 16 and R' Shriki's note 90 for Kabbalistic insights.

[2] See 1:5:2, 1:14:1, and elsewhere about G-d's goodness.

[3] See 1:19:3 for a discussion of G-d's Glory, as well as R' Friedlander's Iyyun 19 on pp. 51-52 of his edition. We'll return to this theme in ¶ 160.

[4] See end of 3:12:2.

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.