

DA'AT TEVUNOT - SECTION 3: CHAPTER 2

by Rabbi Yaakov Feldman

Da'at Tevunot 3:2 (# 98 - 102)

1.

Ramchal starts to explain the role of wrong and injustice in the world with a proposition derived from Rambam ¹. It's that when G-d creates or sustains something He does so with wafts of life-energy radiating toward it known as Divine "emanations" ². And that emanation defines that person, place, or thing's makeup ³.

An analogous phenomenon in our experience, he offers, is the way the constellations emanate upon ⁴ things in the world, Ramchal offers ⁵. Indeed, they affect and color everything that happens in our world. For as our sages put it, "each and every blade of grass down here has a 'constellation' up above that strikes it and says to it, 'Grow!'" (*Breishit Rabbah* 10:6).

2.

But know that those constellations only bestow upon and control things that they'd been told to by G-d, as G-d alone is the source and impetus behind each and every act of emanation ⁶. For as Rambam put it ⁷, it's G-d alone who is the ultimate source of the existence of everything.

Yet recall that His ways are not our ways ⁸. And nothing He does as He interacts with this universe emanates from His own pure Being itself which transcends everything.

Everything that He has occur here ⁹ has been bestowed upon according to His will by an agent ¹⁰. And everything is to be bestowed upon exactly the way He decreed it should be, and is to fit into the makeup and needs of this world specifically.

3.

It turns out then that *both* the agents that generate this world that G-d created as well as the persons, places, and things they helped to generate are created phenomena -- not just the latter. It's also true that G-d created different manners and degrees of emanation according to the things He wanted to be created. And each agent of emanation is to affect a specific thing. Isn't it true, after all, that the emanation of wisdom is one sort, that of strength is another, and that of wealth is yet

another, etc.

. But why would G-d have done it that way when He could have had everything bestowed upon by a *single* agent rather than by a number of them?

That's because what emanation is at bottom is what G-d provides to His created beings so as to accomplish one thing or another. It's not up to us to consider the makeup of that emanation from G-d's perspective, since we can't fathom what He Himself does, but rather from our own perspective. So when G-d bestows might, for example, to something or another He does through the agent that bestows might since G-d wanted that thing to be powerful. And when He wants something to experience wisdom He has it bestowed upon by the agent of wisdom, etc. ¹¹.

Let's consider goodness and wrongfulness ¹². How are they bestowed upon?

Footnotes:

¹ While this doesn't seem to touch on the subject at first blush it will be explained on later.

² See 1:14 note 7 above for an explanation. Also see Ramchal's statement below that "what emanation is at bottom is what G-d provides to His created beings so as to accomplish one thing or another".

The point here is that G-d has to effulgently grant either life itself or the ability to continue to live and exist upon a person, place or thing in order for it to do that.

It's because of this mechanism in fact that G-d is termed "the fountain of living waters" (Jeremiah 17:13) and "the source of life" (Psalms 36:10).

³ That is, the strength, character, and configuration of G-d's emanation shapes and "colors" the person, place, or thing it's bestowed upon (much the way the degree and quality of love or the lack of it that a parent bestows upon a child defines and shapes his or her being).

Ramchal cites *Moreh Nevuchim* 2:10, but see 2:11 there, too, as well as Ramchal's discussion of much this idea in *Derech Hashem* 1:5:2.

⁴ Or, control and fuel.

⁵ "Constellations" in this context can also refer to any higher celestial phenomena that have control of lower ones, and so on downward, and need not refer to the physical constellations we know of (since the Hebrew term is *mazal*, which has both implications).

⁶ That is, G-d Himself is the source of every emanation, whether it's His very own or one of His dutiful agents.

⁷ See 2:12 there.

⁸ As we're told, "'For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways', declares the L-rd." (Isaiah 55:8).

⁹ Both the processes G-d uses to create and maintain things, and the makeup of things themselves.

¹⁰ That is, though G-d indeed fuels the emanations that would be necessary for all the instances of wrong and injustice in the universe, nevertheless that emanation isn't directly from G-d or a part of His Being -- it only serve a specific purpose.

This underscores the point that while G-d certainly allows for wrong and injustice since things only exist and go on with His awareness and approval, still the point is that it's separate from His essence and only serves a temporary end which will be undone in the end.

¹¹ That is, G-d does indeed emit what we might term a "composite" emanation -- one single amorphous extension of His will, but we don't experience it that way. It's just that when it touches upon our own situation it takes on as particular hue and tone specific to the task at hand, whether it's to allow for intelligence, strength or the like.

¹² In light of all this now, rather than traits as we have been.