

DA'AT TEVUNOT - SECTION 4: CHAPTER 13

by Rabbi Yaakov Feldman

1.

"Whoever could see from G-d's perspective and could sense what He's thinking when He administers His justice," Ramchal boldly offers, "would know why He rules the way He does". He doesn't mean to say that no one does, since he quickly offers that G-d "reveals His secrets to His prophets" and sages, and that He does indeed "inform them about His administration of justice". But Ramchal's point is that the rest of us are simply not privy to any of that. So he goes on to fill us in on some of the details.

As we'd said, Divine Justice is meted out either lovingly and tolerantly, or strictly and intolerantly (or judiciously, which is a combination of the two). And as we'd also said, G-d's "natural bent", if you will, is to judge us lovingly and tolerantly, but that's often overturned by circumstances in the world.

A point to keep in mind about that, though, is that's not simply because things "need" to be that way, as G-d's sovereignty is utter and complete, and He needn't do anything. He just decides for that to be so, and it comes about. But let's examine some of the details of the process.

2.

As "each and every thing is comprised of details, circumstances, and component parts", that's likewise true of Divine Justice, Ramchal remarks. So for example, when G-d's strictness comes into play, each (earthly and heavenly) detail, circumstance, and component part is taken into consideration; and each is made to fit just-so into G-d's intentions. We obviously can't go into every detail involved, but we'll do what we can to lay out the general rules.

In short, G-d takes each matter into consideration when administering His justice [1]. After all, some things need to occur, others should, and many others simply can occur; while some other things mustn't occur, others shouldn't, and others could occur. At bottom we're to know that all of that goes into the mix, as well as their consequences.

Then all the details, circumstances, and component parts we'd spoken of must begin to play their parts after a judgment is rendered. Each is indeed set into motion by G-d's will, and each is factored into the next phenomenon.

3.

All those factors feed into the administration of Divine Justice. (The great preponderance of it is frankly beyond our ken, since we're not privy to the details and know nothing of what needed to be factored-it behind the scenes). And the results often play themselves out with a great rush of wind and a roar of the sea.

Some things ascend, others descend, and yet others move laterally or not at all. And all at its own pace. But it's all heading in a single direction: the fulfillment of G-d's ultimate goal for the universe.

Just rest assured that behind the "screen", if you will, lies the very best, most exacting and most judicial blend of leniency and strictness called for under each circumstance.

Notes:

[1] See Klallim Rishonim 24 (near the end) for the Kabbalistic themes referred to here, as well as R' Goldblatt's notes 6-7, 10-14, and his notes 71-73 on p. 486 of his edition; and R' Shriki's notes 124-125.

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.