

DA'AT TEVUNOT - SECTION 5: CHAPTER 6

by Rabbi Yaakov Feldman

1. But there are other phenomena at work here aside from the tireless efforts of the righteous. After all, everything in this world hinges on G-d's verbal directives and on His bestowing His favors upon the world or withholding them, which affects our relationship to Him. So everything can and should play a part in elevating the world [1].

Now while it's certainly true, as Ramchal reminds us, that G-d's "celestial Glory dwells everywhere, and animates everything", which we learn from the verse that affirms the fact that "the whole world is full of the Glory of G-d" (Isaiah 6:3), it's likewise true that our sins set us apart from His Glory. Happily, though, the opposite is also true: our merits draw us closer to G-d's Glory. For G-d dwells in our midst most manifestly when we do good things and are righteous. So our moral and spiritual status certainly affects the world's standing, too.

2. There's a concept associated with this, though, that gives us pause. Ramchal points out that G-d Himself is benefitted -- is "elevated and exalted", as he puts it -- when He dwells among us "lower ones"; for, we're taught that, "everything that G-d created in the world was created for the sake of His Glory" (Yoma 38a). So we're charged with affecting His Glory positively.

It follows then that our being in exile, when we cannot serve Him as we might and when the Holy Temple doesn't function, somehow "diminishes" G-d's Glory so to speak. And it also follows that His Glory will be elevated when we're to be redeemed and we'll be charged to "Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has shone upon you" (Isaiah 60:1). Thus we see that our national standing likewise affects the world's standing.

Other factors contribute to all of this, too, including the actions of the angels. For, we're taught that G-d wanted to accomplish things in this world through "middlemen", if you will -- His angels. So He tied His presence in this world to their actions as well. They function as His emissaries to us and to this world en toto. G-d's Glory rests upon them as well to be sure, and is attached to them. The point is that their actions factor into all this as well.

3. But not only do people and the angels play a role in all of this, specific locations and spiritual realms do, too. For though the whole world is full of G-d's Glory as we'd said, it's most especially manifest in a specific, albeit lofty realm -- the realm that sits deep in the human heart in which those

who want to cling onto His presence go to seek Him out.

And while there are very many and various stations to this realm, the loftiest of them was the one in which one can indeed attach himself to G-d's presence: the Holy Temple. As it was the physical paradigm of the inner realm we spoke of, with rooms, corridors, and courtyards that corresponded to those heart-based realms one would need to enter in order to experience closeness to G-d.

We're likewise taught there's a "heavenly Holy Temple", and it's there that the highest order of angels sing G-d's praises and thus elevate the world as a consequence, and it lies in the deepest reaches of our hearts and beyond. But even the more prosaic things play a role in the elevation of the world and G-d's Glory as we'll see.

[1] For Kabbalistic references to this chapter see Klallim Rishonim 33, R' Friedlander's Iyyunim 49- 51, his notes 429, 433; R' Goldblatt's notes 5 and 12 as well as his note 83 on p. 489 of his edition; and R' Shriki's notes 137-139.

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.