CHAPTER 3:4 PERSONAL PROVIDENCE

by Rabbi Yaakov Feldman

Derech Hashem -- The Way of G-d 2:3:4

Sometimes we succeed or fail in life to one degree or another because of our deeds rather than our personality [1]. Some righteous people, for example, might deserve a degree of Divine assistance, others might deserve more, and yet others might be worthy of a great deal of help [2].

On the other hand, certain wrongful people who don't rightfully deserve to succeed in life might still-and-all have an easy time succeeding, others might have a harder time, while some thoroughly wrongful people might be completely stymied [3]. Needless to say, there are many other details to depict when it comes to both righteous and wrongful people about all of this, but these are the broad outlines.

On another plain, some righteous people may succeed materially in order to be successful in their Divine service, while others might have to face serious barriers in their pursuit of perfection. And contrarily, some [4] wrongful people might succeed materially in order to be lead to ruin, while other wrongful people might struggle in life so as to be held back from doing a specific wrongful thing which G-d knows shouldn't come about.

The point of the matter is that G-d brings all of this about by design and great wisdom so as to ultimately benefit humankind. He factors in everyone's situation when He decides what's to come about, knowing as He does, for example, that someone who's successful in life who nonetheless doesn't strive for perfection is on a different plane from someone who's *unsuccessful* who doesn't strive for perfection, etc.

We're to accept the fact that He judges each of us individually and in accordance with who we really are, whether we accidentally or purposefully go against His wishes, whether things are beyond our control or not, and more. And we're also to know that He's well aware of all of the factors involved, judging us all fairly and appropriately [5].

Footnotes:

[1] See 2:3:1 for the latter.

[2] That is, even righteous and good people experience different degrees of help from Heaven in their lives. We'd expect them all to be privy to a lot, since they'd been righteous and good, but that's not necessarily the case. Why? Because few things on G-d's earth function on an arithmetic level, where one good deed deserves one favor from G-d, more good deeds deserve more, etc. That fact oftentimes shocks us and has us wonder about the fairness of things, but the truth is that our perspectives are always tainted with self-interest.

The same non-linear reality comes into play when it comes to the success or failure of wrongful people, as the following paragraph will indicate.

[3] See 2:2:3.

[4] Thoroughly…

[5] That's to say that all of this is done with the sort of meticulous and pinpoint wisdom that only G-d Almighty can exhibit. For He alone knows all the details involved, the secret conversations we each hold in our hearts, and the eternal as well as earthly ramifications of each and every phenomenon.

This series is dedicated to the memory of Yitzchak Hehrsh ben Daniel, and Sarah Rivka bas Yaakov Dovid.

Subscribe to *Ramchal* and receive the class via e-mail.