

# CHAPTER 8: THE DETAILS OF DIVINE PROVIDENCE - PARAGRAPH 1

*by Rabbi Yaakov Feldman*

In broader terms, G-d oversees the world overall through justice and law <sup>1</sup>. Yet we know that at bottom what G-d wants to express is loving-kindness <sup>2</sup>, as He loves us like a parent. But <sup>3</sup> a parent must sometimes lovingly discipline his child for the child's ultimate good <sup>4</sup>.

So we see that justice and law are actually rooted in loving kindness, since when G-d disciplines He doesn't do so vengefully but rather out of love <sup>5</sup>.

Two things derive from this: first that His discipline is mitigated <sup>6</sup> and is neither severe nor cruel, given that the discipline is itself tinged with mercy. And second that sometimes the moment demands that G-d dispense with discipline altogether and act out of pure mercy <sup>7</sup>.

Now, a conflict arises. G-d wanted us to have free will and to reward the goodness we'd display accordingly. In a sense, then, G-d's actions are thus seemingly subservient to our own! Since He rewards or punishes us according to our willful actions.

But in truth G-d is subservient to nothing, He's dependent upon nothing, and He and His actions are affected by nothing <sup>8</sup>. So, when He wants to, He acts out of His own motivations and bypasses our actions. As such, He *does* act subserviently, if you will, according to the aforementioned rules of justice. Yet when He deems it necessary to He acts out of His supremacy and forgives all sins and faults <sup>9</sup>.

G-d thus uses these two modes of overseeing the world, one rooted in justice and the other in His supremacy <sup>10</sup> so as to allow for the world to continue existing.

## Footnotes:

1 Ramchal cites "Your scepter is a scepter of righteousness" (Psalms 45:7), and "A king maintains the land by justice" (Proverbs 29:4).

See 1:2:1 above.

2 See *Eitz Chaim*, *Sha'ar Ha'akudim* (5), *Sha'ar Haclallim* (1)

3 In keeping with the analogy.

4 Ramchal cites "As one disciplines his child, G-d your L-rd will discipline you" (Deuteronomy 8:5).

5 The idea that discipline is rooted in love is one of Ramchal's major themes and is enunciated (among other places) in *Clallei Milchomat Moshe* (7), *Klach Pitchei Chochma* (92), and *Da'at Tevunot* (154).

6 See *Klach Pitchei Chochma* (93), Zohar 254a.

7 Ramchal cites the verse that speaks of "The graciousness that I'll show and the mercy I'll exhibit" (Exodus 33:19). See *Berachot* 7a.

See *Klach Pitchei Chochma* (94) and *Da'at Tevunot* (36).

The point of the matter is G-d could be said to have two agendas, if you will. First, to have sin appear and then be judged so as allow for purification. And second, that rectification happens despite our failings and cannot be thwarted.

8 See *Da'at Tevunot* (36).

9 Whether they're deserving of that or not. As such, He who is above all rules and expectations can overlook anything and can rectify everything at will should He decide to exercise His absolute authority.

10 See *Da'at Tevunot* (39),