

THE 13 IKARIM

יג עקרי אמונה של הרמב"ם

THE ELEVENTH IKAR - REWARD AND PUNISHMENT

סמינר מדרשת רחל וחיה

1. **היסוד האחד עשר** שהוא יתעלה נותן שכר למי שמקיים צווי התורה, ועונש למי שעובר על אזהרותיה. וששכרו היותר גדול הוא העולם הבא, ועונשו היותר גדול הוא הכרת. וכבר אמרנו בזה הענין מה שדי בו. והכתוב המורה על זה היסוד אמרו (שמות לב:ב) **אם תשא חטאתם ואם אין מחיני נא מספרך**, והשיבו יתעלה **מי אשר חטא לי וכו'.** ראיה על ידיעת הנשמע והממרה לתת שכר לזה ועונש לזה

רמב"ם - הקדמה לפ' חלק, משנה סנהדרין

The 11th Principle is that He (may He be exalted) gives reward to those who fulfill the commands of the Torah and punishes those who break its prohibitions. The greatest level of reward is the Next World and the greatest level of punishment is 'Karet' [spiritual death]. We have already spoken sufficiently on this issue. The verse that deals with this principle is: (Shemot 32:32) 'Now, if You would, please forgive their sin. If not, You can blot me out from the book that You have written.' And God (may He be exalted) replied '[I will blot out from My book] those who have sinned against Me'. This shows that he knows both the obedient and the sinner and rewards and punishes each accordingly .

2. בזמן שאדם אחד, או אנשי מדינה חוטאים, ועושה החוטא חטא שעשה מדעתו וברצונו, כמו שהודענו, ראוי להפריע ממנו; והקדוש ברוך הוא יודע היאך יפריע. יש חטא שהדין נותן שפנרעין ממנו על חטאו בעולם הזה, בגופו או בממונו או בבניו הקטנים - שבניו שלאדם הקטנים שאין בהם דעת ולא הגיעו לכלל מצוות, כקנינו הו, כתוב "איש בחטאו, יומת" (מלכים ב' יד:ו) וראה דברים כד,טו), עד שיעשה "איש". ויש חטא שהדין נותן שפנרעין ממנו לעולם הבא, ואין עובר עליו שום נזק בעולם הזה. ויש חטא שפנרעין ממנו עליו בעולם הזה, ולעולם הבא

רמב"ם הלכות תשובה פרק ו הלכה א

Punishment can come to a nation as a whole or to individuals. The Rambam also clarifies that some punishment comes in this world, some in the Next, and some in both

3. **ב** במה דברים אמורים, בזמן שלא עשה תשובה; אבל אם עשה תשובה, התשובה פתריס לפני הפריענות. וכשם שאדם חוטא ברצונו ומדעתו, כך הוא עושה תשובה ברצונו ומדעתו

רמב"ם הלכות תשובה פרק ו הלכה ב

Although, punishment is always liable to be set aside in the face of teshuva

4. **א** הטובה הצפונה לצדיקים, היא חיי העולם הבא; והם החיים שאין עמהן מות, והטובה שאין עמה רעה. הוא שפתיב בתורה, למען ייטב לך, והארכת ימים (ודברים כב,ו) מפי השמועה למדו למען ייטב לך - לעולם שכלו טוב, והארכת ימים - לעולם שכלו ארוך; וזה הוא העולם הבא. שכר הצדיקים הוא שיזכו לנעם זה, ויהיו בטובה זו; ופרעון הרשעים הוא שלא יזכו לחיים אלו, אלא יכרתו וימותו. וכל מי שאינו זוכה לחיים אלו, הוא המת שאינו חוה לעולם, אלא נכרת ברשעו, ואובד פבהמה. וזה הוא הפרת הפתיב בתורה, שנאמר הפרת תפריש הנפש ההיא (במדבר טו:לא); מפי השמועה למדו הפרת בעולם הזה, תפריש לחיי העולם הבא; כלומר שאותה הנפש שפרישה מן הגוף בעולם הזה אינה זוכה לחיי העולם הבא, אלא גם מן העולם הבא נכרתה

רמב"ם הלכות תשובה פרק ח הלכה א

The ultimate Reward and Punishment is, according to the Rambam, only in the Next World. If so, what does the Rambam do with the explicit reference in the Torah to reward and punishment in THIS world

5. **ב** העולם הבא אין בו גוף וגויה, אלא נפשות הצדיקים בלבד, בלא גוף כמלאכי השרת. הואיל ואין בו גויות, אין בו לא אכילה ולא שתיה ולא דבר מכל הדברים שגופות בני האדם צריכין להן בעולם הזה. ולא יארע בו דבר מן הדברים שמאריעין לגופות בעולם הזה, כגון ישיבה ועמידה ושינה ומיתה ועצב ושחוק וכיוצא בהן. כך אמרו חכמים הראשונים, העולם הבא אין בו לא אכילה ולא שתיה ולא תשמיש, אלא צדיקים יושבין ועטרותיהם בראשיהם ונהנין מאיו השכינה. הרי נתברר לך שאין שם גוף, לפי שאין שם אכילה ושתיה. וזה שאמרו צדיקים יושבין, על דרך החידה, כלומר נפשות הצדיקים מצויין שם, בלא עמל ולא געע. וכן זה שאמרו עטרותיהם בראשיהם, כלומר דעה שידעו שבגללה זכו לחיי העולם הבא, מצויה עמהן, והיא העטרה שלהן, כענין שאמר שלמה בעטרה, שעטרה-לו אמנו (שיר השירים ג:א). והרי הוא אומר ושמת עולם, על-ראשם (ישעיהו לה:י; ישעיהו נא:יא) ואין השמחה גוף כדי שתנוח על הראש; כך עטרה שאמרו חכמים כאן, היא הדעה. ומה הוא זה שאמרו, ונהנין מאיו השכינה - שידעין ומשיגין מאמתת הקדוש ברוך הוא, מה שאינן יודעין והן בגוף האפל השפל

רמב"ם הלכות תשובה פרק ח הלכה ב

The ultimate reward - of the Next World - is the non-physical existence of our minds which experience the unimaginable joy of bonding with G-d

6. **יג** והיה אם-שמע תשמעו אל-מצותי אשר אנכי מצוה אתכם היום לאהבה את-ה' אלקיכם ולעבדו בכל-לבבכם ובכל-נפשכם: יד ונתתי מטר-ארצכם בעתו יורה ומלקוש ואספת דגנך ותירשך ויצהרד: טו ונתתי עשב בשדה לבהמתך ואכלת ושבעת: טז השמר לך פריפתה ללבבכם וסרתם ועבדתם אלהים אחרים והשתחיתם להם: יז וחרה אפי-ה' בכם ועצר את-השמים ולא יהיה מטר והאדמה לא תתן את-יבולה ואבדתם מהרה מעל הארץ הטבה אשר נתן לתוכם:

דברים יא-יז

The second paragraph of the Shema directly refers to the reward and punishment in Eretz Yisrael for keeping mitzvot

7. **א** מאחר שנודע שמתן שכרן של מצוות והטובה שנוזפה לה אם שמרנו דרך ה' הפתוב בתורה היא חיי העולם הבא.... והנקמה שנוקמין מן הרשעים שעזבו ארחות הצדק הפתובות בתורה היא הכרת.... מה הוא זה שפתוב בכל התורה בלה, אם תשמעו גייע לכם, ואם לא תשמעו יקרא אתכם, וכל אותן הדברים בעולם הזה כגון שבע ורעב, ומלחמה ושלו, ומלכות ושפלות, וישיבת הארץ וגלות, והצלחת מעשה והפסדו, ושאר כל דברי הברית. כל אותן הדברים אמת היו, ויהיו, ובזמן שאנו עושין כל מצוות התורה, גייעו אלינו טובות העולם הזה בלא; ובזמן שאנו עוברין עליהן, תקרא אותנו הרעות הפתובות. ואף על פי כן אין אותן הטובות, הן סוף מתן שכרן של מצוות, ולא אותן הרעות, הן סוף הנקמה שנוקמין מעובר על כל המצוות.

אלא כך הוא הסע הדברים. הקדוש ברוך הוא נתן לנו תורה זו, עץ חיים, וכל העושה כל הפתוב בה, ויודעו דעה גמורה נכונה זוכה בה לחיי העולם הבא; ולפי גדל מעשיו וגדל חכמתו, הוא זוכה. והבטיחנו בתורה שאם נעשה אותה בשמחה ובטובת נפש, ונהגה בחכמה תמיד שיסיר ממנו כל הדברים המונעים אותנו מלעשותה, כגון חלי ומלחמה ורעב וכיוצא בהן. וישפיע לנו כל הטובות המחזקים את ידינו לעשות את התורה, כגון שבע ושלו ורבות כסף וזהב כדי שלא נעסק כל זמנו בדברים שהגוף צריך להן, אלא נשב פנויים ללמוד בחכמה, ולעשות המצוה, כדי שנוזפה לחיי העולם הבא. וכן הוא אומר בתורה אחר שהבטיח בטובות העולם הזה, וצדקה, תהיה לנו (דברים ו:ח). וכן הודיענו בתורה שאם נעזב התורה מדעתנו ונעסק בהבלי הזמן, כענין שנאמר וישמן ישרון ויבעט (דברים לב:ט) שדין האמת יסיר מן העוזבים כל טובות העולם הזה, שהן חזקו ידיהם לבעט, ומביא עליהן כל הרעות המונעים אותן מלקנות העולם הבא, כדי שלא יאבדו ברשעים. הוא שפתוב בתורה, ועבדת את איביך, אשר ישלחנו ה' בך (דברים כח:מח) תחת, אשר לא עבדת את ה' (דברים כח:מז). שבזמן שאדם טרוד בעולם הזה בחלי ובמלחמה ורעבון, אינו מתעסק לא בחכמה ולא במצוה שבהן זוכין לחיי העולם הבא.

רמב"ם הלכות תשובה פרק ט הלכה א

The Rambam explains that the 'reward; of peace and prosperity promised in the Shema is NOT the reward for our mitzvot but the OPPORTUNITY to be able to use this world appropriately to gain more real reward in the Next World

8. For it is known from statements made in Scripture that these four, viz., the Patriarchs and Moses, had their minds exclusively filled with the name of God, that is, with His knowledge and love; and that in the same measure was Divine Providence attached to them and their descendants.

..... We have already stated in the chapters which treat of Divine Providence that Providence watches over every rational being according to the amount of intellect which that being possesses. Those who are perfect in their perception of God, whose mind is never separated from Him, enjoy always the influence of Providence. But those who, perfect in their knowledge of God, turn their mind sometimes away from God, enjoy the presence of Divine Providence only when they meditate on God; when their thoughts are engaged in other matters, divine Providence departs from them.

..... If man frees his thoughts from worldly matters, obtains knowledge of God in the right way, and rejoices in that knowledge, it is impossible that any kind of evil should befall him while he is with God and God with him. When he does not meditate on God, when he is separated from God, then God is also separated from him; then he is exposed to any evil that might befall him; for it is only that intellectual link with God that secures the presence of Providence and protection from evil accidents.

..... It is now clearly established that the cause of our being exposed to chance, and abandoned to destruction like cattle, is to be found in our separation from God..... For if we prepare ourselves, and attain the influence of the Divine Intellect, Providence is joined to us, and we are guarded against all evils.

Moreh Nevuchim 3:51

Note the focus in the Mishne Torah on reward in the NEXT World. The 11th Ikar also mentions the Next World as the ultimate reward, implying a system of reward and punishment in this world. This system of Divine Providence in THIS World is discussed at length in the Moreh Nevuchim 3:17

Appendix 1 - Extracts from Moreh Nevuchim 3:17

THERE are four different theories concerning Divine Providence

Theory that there is NO Divine Providence

There is no Providence at all for anything in the Universe. All parts of the Universe, the heavens and what they contain, owe their origin to accident and chance; there exists no being that rules and governs them or provides for them. This is the theory of Epicurus, who assumes also that the Universe consists of atoms, that these have combined by chance, and have received their various forms by mere accident. There have been atheists among the Israelites who have expressed the same view; it is reported of them: *"They have denied the Lord, and said He is not"* (Jer 5:12). Aristotle has proved the absurdity of the theory - that the whole Universe could have originated by chance. He has shown that, on the contrary, there is a being that rules and governs the Universe.

First Theory of Divine Providence

Whilst one part of the Universe owes its existence to Providence, and is under the control of a ruler and governor, another part is abandoned and left to chance. This is the view of Aristotle about Providence, and I will now explain to you his theory. He holds that God controls the spheres and what they contain. From the existence of the spheres other beings derive existence, which are constant in their species but not in their individuals: in the same manner it is said that Providence sends forth [from the spheres to the earth] sufficient influence to secure the immortality and constancy of the species, without securing at the same time permanence for the individual beings of the species. But the individual beings in each species have not been entirely abandoned

All other movements, however, which are made by the individual members of each species are due to accident; they are not, according to Aristotle, the result of rule and management; e.g., when a storm or gale blows, it causes undoubtedly some leaves of a tree to drop, breaks off some branches of another tree, tears away a stone from a heap of stones, raises dust over herbs and spoils them, and stirs up the sea so that a ship goes down with the whole or part of her contents. Aristotle sees no difference between the falling of a leaf or a stone and the death of the good and noble people in the ship; nor does he distinguish between the destruction of a multitude of ants caused by an ox depositing on them his excrement and the death of worshippers killed by the fall of the house when its foundations give way; nor does he discriminate between the case of a cat killing a mouse that happens to come in her way, or that of a spider catching a fly, and that of a hungry lion meeting a prophet and tearing him.

In short, the opinion of Aristotle is this: Everything is the result of management which is constant, which does not come to an end and does not change any of its properties, as e.g., the heavenly beings, and everything which continues according to a certain rule, and deviates from it only rarely and exceptionally, as is the case in objects of Nature. All these are the result of management, i.e., in a close relation to Divine Providence. But that which is not constant, and does not follow a certain rule, as e.g., incidents in the existence of the individual beings in each species of plants or animals, whether rational or irrational, is due to chance and not to management; it is in no relation to Divine Providence. Aristotle holds that it is even impossible to ascribe to Providence the management of these things.

This view is closely connected with his theory of the Eternity, of the Universe, and with his opinion that everything different from the existing order of things in Nature is impossible. It is the belief of those who turned away from our Law, and said: *"God has forsaken the earth"* (Ezek. 9:9)

Second Theory of Divine Providence

This theory is the reverse of the second. According to this theory, there is nothing in the whole Universe, neither a class nor an individual being, that is due to chance; everything is the result of will, intention, and rule. It is a matter of course that he who rules must know [that which is under his control].

The Islamic Ashariyah adhere to this theory, notwithstanding evident absurdities implied in it; for they admit that Aristotle is correct in assuming one and the same cause [viz., the wind] for the fall of leaves [from the tree] and for the death of a man [drowned in the sea]. But they hold at the same time that the wind did not blow by chance; it is God that caused it to move; it is not therefore the wind that caused the leaves to fall; each leaf falls according to the Divine decree; it is God who caused it to fall at a certain time and in a certain place; it could not have fallen before or after that time or in another place, as this has previously been decreed. The Ashariyah were therefore compelled to assume that motion and rest of living beings are predestined, and that it is not in the power of man to do a certain thing or to leave it undone. The theory further implies a denial of possibility in these things: they can only be either necessary or impossible.

It follows also from this theory, that precepts are perfectly useless, since the people to whom any law is given are unable to do anything: they can neither do what they are commanded nor abstain from what they are forbidden. The supporters of this theory hold that it was the will of God to send prophets, to command, to forbid, to promise, and to threaten, although we have no power [over our actions]. A duty would thus be imposed upon us which is impossible for us to carry out, and it is even possible that we may suffer punishment when obeying the command and receive reward when disobeying it.

All these absurdities are admitted by the Ashariyah for the purpose of saving this theory. When we see a person born blind or leprous, who could not have merited a punishment for previous sins, they say, 'it is the will of God'; when a pious worshipper is tortured and slain, it is likewise the will of God; and no injustice can be asserted to Him for that, for according to their opinion it is proper that God should afflict the innocent and do good to the sinner. Their views on these matters are well known.

Third Theory of Divine Providence

Man has free will; it is therefore intelligible that the Law contains commands and prohibitions, with announcements of reward and punishment. All acts of God are due to wisdom; no injustice is found in Him, and He does not afflict the good. The Mu'tazila profess this theory, although they do not believe in man's absolute free will. They hold also that God takes notice of the falling of the leaf and the destruction of the ant, and that His Providence extends over all things. This theory likewise implies contradictions and absurdities. The absurdities are these: The fact that some persons are born with defects, although they have not sinned previously, is ascribed to the wisdom of God, it being better for those persons to be in such a condition than to be in a normal state, though we do not see why it is better; and they do not suffer thereby any punishment at all, but, on the contrary, enjoy God's goodness. In a similar manner the slaughter of the pious is explained as being for them the source of an increase of reward in future life.

They go even further in their absurdities. We ask them why is God only just to man and not to other beings, and how has the irrational animal sinned, that it is condemned to be slaughtered? and they reply it is good for the animal, for it will receive reward for it in the world to come; also the flea and the louse will there receive compensation for their untimely death: the same reasoning they apply to the mouse torn by a cat or vulture; the wisdom of God decreed this for the mouse, in order to reward it after death for the mishap.

I do not consider it proper to blame the followers of any of the [last named] three theories on Providence, for they have been driven to accept them by weighty considerations. Aristotle was guided by that which appears to be the nature of things. The Ashariyah refused to ascribe to God ignorance about anything, and to say that God whilst knowing one individual being or one portion of the Universe is ignorant of another portion; they preferred to admit the above-mentioned absurdities. The Mu'tazilites refused to assume that God does what is wrong and unjust; on the other hand, they would not contradict common sense and say that it was not wrong to inflict pain on the guiltless, or that the mission of the Prophets and the giving of the Law had no intelligible reason. They likewise preferred to admit the above-named absurdities. But they even contradicted themselves, because they believe on the one hand that God knows everything, and on the other that man has free will. By a little consideration we discover the contradiction.

Fourth Theory of Divine Providence

This is our theory, or that of our Law. I will show you [first] the view expressed on this subject in our prophetic books, and generally accepted by our Sages. I will then give the opinion of some later authors among us, and lastly, I will explain my own belief.

The theory of man's perfectly free will is one of the fundamental principles of the Law of our Teacher Moses, and of those who follow the Law. According to this principle man does what is in his power to do, by his nature, his choice, and his will; and his action is not due to any faculty created for the purpose. All species of irrational animals likewise move by their own free will. This is the Will of God; that is to say, it is due to the eternal divine will that all living beings should move freely, and that man should have power to act according to his will or choice within the limits of his capacity. Against this principle we hear, thank God, no opposition on the part of our nation.

Another fundamental principle taught by the Law of Moses is this: Wrong cannot be ascribed to God in any way whatever; all evils and afflictions as well as all kinds of happiness of man, whether they concern one individual person or a community, are distributed according to justice; they are the result of strict judgment that admits no wrong whatever. Even when a person suffers pain in consequence of a thorn having entered into his hand, although it is at once drawn out, it is a punishment that has been inflicted on him [for sin], and the least pleasure he enjoys is a reward [for some good action]; all this is meted out by strict justice; as is said in Scripture, "*all his ways are judgment*" (Deut. 32:4); we are only ignorant of the working of that judgment.

....

We, however, believe that all these human affairs are managed with justice; far be it from God to do wrong, to punish any one unless the punishment is necessary and merited. It is distinctly stated in the Law, that all is done in accordance with justice; and the words of our Sages generally express the same idea. They clearly say: "*There is no death without sin, no sufferings without transgression.*" (B. T. Shabbath, 55a.) Again, "*The deserts of man are meted out to him in the same measure which he himself employs.*" (Mish. Sotah, i. 7.) These are the words of the Mishnah. Our Sages declare it wherever opportunity is given, that the idea of God necessarily implies justice; that He will reward the most pious for all their pure and upright actions, although no direct commandment was given them through a prophet; and that He will punish all the evil deeds of men, although they have not been prohibited by a prophet, if common sense warns against them, as e.g., injustice and violence.

.....

The same principle is expressed in all sayings of our Sages. But they contain an additional doctrine which is not found in the Law; viz., the doctrine of "afflictions of love," as taught by some of our Sages. According to this doctrine it is possible that a person be afflicted without having previously committed any sin, in order that his future reward may be increased; a view which is held by the Mu'tazilites, but is not supported by any Scriptural text. Be not misled by the accounts of trials, such as "*God tried Abraham*" (Gen. xxii. 1); "*He afflicted you and made you hungry,*" etc. (Deut. viii. 3); for you will hear more on this subject later on (chap. xxiv.)

.....

My opinion on this principle of Divine Providence I will now explain to you. The principle which I accept is far less open to objections, and is more reasonable than the opinions mentioned before. It is this: **In the lower or sublunary portion of the Universe Divine Providence does not extend to the individual members of species except in the case of mankind.** It is only in this species that the incidents in the existence of the individual beings, their good and evil fortunes, are the result of justice, in accordance with the words, "*For all His ways are judgment.*" **But I agree with Aristotle as regards all other living beings, and à fortiori as regards plants and all the rest of earthly creatures.** For I do not believe that it is through the interference of Divine Providence that a certain leaf drops [from a tree], nor do I hold that when a certain spider catches a certain fly, that this is the direct result of a special decree and will of God in that moment; it is not by a particular Divine decree that the spittle of a certain person moved, fell on a certain gnat in a certain place, and killed it; nor is it by the direct will of God that a certain fish catches and swallows a certain worm on the surface of the water. In all these cases the action is, according to my opinion, entirely due to chance, as taught by Aristotle.

Divine Providence is connected with Divine intellectual influence, and the same beings which are benefited by the latter so as to become intellectual, and to comprehend things comprehensible to rational beings, are also under the control of Divine Providence, which examines all their deeds in order to reward or punish them. It may be by mere chance that a ship goes down with all her contents, as in the above-mentioned instance, or the roof of a house falls upon those within; but it is not due to chance, according to our view, that in the one instance the men went into the ship, or remained in the house in the other instance: it is due to the will of God, and is in accordance with the justice of His judgments, the method of which our mind is incapable of understanding.

I have been induced to accept this theory by the circumstance that I have not met in any of the prophetic books with a description of God's Providence otherwise than in relation to human beings. The prophets even express their surprise that God should take notice of man, who is too little and too unimportant to be worthy of the attention of the Creator: how, then, should other living creatures be considered as proper objects for Divine Providence!

All that is mentioned of the history of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob is a perfect proof that Divine Providence extends to every man individually. But the condition of the individual beings of other living creatures is undoubtedly the same as has been stated by Aristotle. On that account it is allowed, even commanded, to kill animals; we are permitted to use them according to our pleasure. The view that other living beings are only governed by Divine Providence in the way described by Aristotle, is supported by the words of the Prophet Habakkuk.

There are many similar sayings extant in the writings of our Sages, but they imply nothing that is contrary to my view. All these passages refer to Providence in relation to species, and not to Providence in relation to individual animals. There is a rule laid down by our Sages that it is directly prohibited in the Law to cause pain to an animal but the object of this rule is to make us perfect; that we should not assume cruel habits: and that we should not uselessly cause pain to others: that, on the contrary, we should be prepared to show pity and mercy to all living creatures, except when necessity demands the contrary.....

Understand thoroughly my theory, that I do not ascribe to God ignorance of anything or any kind of weakness; I hold that Divine Providence is related and closely connected with the intellect, because Providence can only proceed from an intelligent being, from a being that is itself the most perfect Intellect. Those creatures, therefore, which receive part of that intellectual influence will become subject to the action of Providence in the same proportion as they are acted upon by the Intellect.

This theory is in accordance with reason and with the teaching of Scripture, whilst the other theories previously mentioned either exaggerate Divine Providence or detract from it. In the former case they lead to confusion and entire nonsense, and cause us to deny reason and to contradict that which is perceived with the senses. The latter case, viz., the theory that Divine Providence does not extend to man, and that there is no difference between man and other animals, implies very bad notions about God; it disturbs all social order, removes and destroys all the moral and intellectual virtues of man.

Appendix 2 - Extracts from Moreh Nevuchim 3:12

People frequently think that the evils in the world are more numerous than the good things; many sayings and songs of the nations dwell on this idea. They say that a good thing is found only exceptionally, whilst evil things are numerous and lasting. Not only common people make this mistake, but even many who believe that they are wise

The origin of the error is to be found in the circumstance that this ignorant man, others like among the simple people, judge the whole universe by examining one single person. For an ignorant man believes that the whole universe only exists for him; as if nothing else required any consideration. If, therefore, anything happens to him contrary to his expectation, he at once concludes that the whole universe is evil. If, however, he would take into consideration the whole universe, form an idea of it, and comprehend what a small portion he is of the Universe, he will find the truth.

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What we have, in truth, to consider is this: The whole mankind at present in existence, and a fortiori, every other species of animals, form an infinitesimal portion of the permanent universe. "*Man is like vanity*" (Ps. cxliv. 4); "*How much less man, that is a worm; and the son of man, which is a worm*" (Job xxv. 6); "*Behold, the nations are as a drop of the bucket*" (Isa. xl. 15). There are many other passages in the books of the prophets expressing the same idea. It is of great advantage that man should know his station, and not erroneously imagine that the whole universe exists only for him.Man's existence is nevertheless a great advantage to him, and his distinction and perfection is a divine gift.

The numerous evils to which individual people are exposed are due to the defects existing in the people themselves. We complain and seek relief from our own faults: we suffer from the evils which we, by our own free will, inflict on ourselves and ascribe them to God, who is far from being connected with them!

I explain this theory in the following manner. The evils that befall man are of three kinds:--

(1) The first kind of evil is that which is caused to man by the circumstance that he is subject to creation and destruction, or that he possesses a body. It is on account of the body that some persons happen to have great deformities or paralysis of some of the organs. This evil may be part of the natural constitution of these persons, or may have developed subsequently in consequence of changes in the elements, e.g., through bad air, or thunderstorms or landslips. We have already shown that, in accordance with the divine wisdom, creation can only take place through destruction, and without the destruction of the individual members of the species the species themselves would not exist permanently. Thus the true kindness, and beneficence, and goodness of God is clear. He who thinks that he can have flesh and bones without being subject to any external influence, or any of the accidents of matter, unconsciously wishes to reconcile two opposites, viz., to be at the same time subject and not subject to change.

If man were never subject to change there could be no generation: there would be one single being, but no individuals forming a species. It is therefore impossible that man should be free from this species of evil. You will, nevertheless, find that the evils of the above kind which befall man are very few and rare: for you find countries that have not been flooded or burned for thousands of years: there are thousands of men in perfect health, deformed individuals are a strange and exceptional occurrence, or say few in number if you object to the term exceptional,--they are not one-hundredth, not even one-thousandth part of those that are perfectly normal.

(2) The second class of evils comprises such evils as people cause to each other, when, e.g., some of them use their strength against others. These evils are more numerous than those of the first kind: their causes are numerous and known; they likewise originate in ourselves, though the sufferer himself cannot avert them. This kind of evil is nevertheless not widespread in any country of the whole world. It is of rare occurrence that a man plans to kill his neighbour or to rob him of his property by night. Many persons are, however, afflicted with this kind of evil in great wars: but these are not frequent, if the whole inhabited part of the earth is taken into consideration.

(3) The third class of evils comprises those which every one causes to himself by his own action. This is the largest class, and is far more numerous than the second class. It is especially of these evils that all men complain, only few men are found that do not sin against themselves by this kind of evil. Those that are afflicted with it are therefore justly blamed in the words of the prophet, "*This has been by your means*" (Mal. i. 9); the same is expressed in the following passage, "*He that does it destroys his own soul*" (Prov. vi. 32). In reference to this kind of evil, Solomon says, "*The foolishness of man perverts his way*" (ibid. xix. 3).

This class of evils originates in man's vices, such as excessive desire for eating, drinking, and love; indulgence in these things in undue measure, or in improper manner, or partaking of bad food. This course brings diseases and afflictions upon body and soul alike. The sufferings of the body in consequence of these evils are well known; those of the soul are twofold. First, such evils of the soul as are the necessary consequence of changes in the body, in so far as the soul is a force residing in the body; it has therefore been said that the properties of the soul depend on the condition of the body. Secondly, the soul, when accustomed to superfluous things, acquires a strong habit of desiring things which are neither necessary for the preservation of the individual nor for that of the species. This desire is without a limit, whilst things which are necessary are few in number and restricted within certain limits; but what is superfluous is without end

They as a rule expose themselves to great dangers, e.g., by sea-voyage, or service of kings, and all this for the purpose of obtaining that which is superfluous and not necessary. When they thus meet with the consequences of the course which they adopt, they complain of the decrees and judgments of God; they begin to blame the time, and wonder at the want of justice in its changes; that it has not enabled them to acquire great riches, with which they could buy large quantities of wine for the purpose of making themselves drunk, and numerous concubines adorned with various kind of ornaments of gold, embroidery, and jewels, for the purpose of driving themselves to voluptuousness beyond their capacities, as if the whole Universe existed exclusively for the purpose of giving pleasure ...

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For those who observe the nature of the Universe and the commandments of the Law, and know their purpose, see clearly God's mercy and truth in everything; they seek, therefore, that which the Creator intended to be the aim of man, viz., comprehension. Forced by the claims of the body, they seek also that which is necessary for the preservation of the body, "bread to eat and garment to clothe," and this is very little; but they seek nothing superfluous: with very slight exertion man can obtain it, so long as he is contented with that which is indispensable. All the difficulties and troubles we meet in this respect are due to the desire for superfluous things: when we seek unnecessary things, we have difficulty even in finding that which is indispensable. For the more we desire to have that which is superfluous, the more we meet with difficulties; our strength and possessions are spent in unnecessary things, and are wanting when required for that which is necessary.

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