

SPIRITUAL INSIGHTS

UNRAVEL AN ANCIENT JEWISH WISDOM

A Summer Course with Rabbi Bentzion Kravitz

Part II - Divine Providence

Experience The Divine in Your Life

1) What is Divine Providence?

Divine providence (Hebrew: פרטית השגחה - Hashgochoh Protis or Hashgaha Peratit) is discussed throughout Rabbinic literature, by the classical Jewish philosophers, and by the tradition of Jewish mysticism, especially the Baal Shem Tov, the founder of the Chassidic movement. He taught that every event in the universe and every experience in a person's life, and their every aspect, is specifically guided and determined by the Divine will.

2) Psalm 33:14

From His dwelling-place He gazes on all
the inhabitants of the earth

מִמְכוֹן־שִׁבְתּוֹ הַשָּׁמַיִם אֵל כָּל־יֹשְׁבֵי הָאָרֶץ:

3) Psalm 37:23

The steps of a man are established by
God, and He delights in his way.

מִיְהוָה מְצֻעֵי־יָגְרֵךְ כּוֹנֵנוּ וַיְדַרְכּוּ יְהוָה:

4) Italian Kabbalist Joseph Ergas (1685-1730)

The Italian Kabbalist Joseph Ergas (1685-1730), in his *Shomer Emunim (Preserving Beliefs)*, summarizes what he considers to be the Kabbalistic views on the subject:

“Nothing occurs by accident, without intention and divine providence, as it is written in Leviticus 26:24

‘Then will I also walk with you in hostility (chance) [*be-keri*].’

הִלַּכְתִּי אִפְי־אֲנִי עִמָּכֶם בְּקָרִי וְהִפִּיתִי אֶתְכֶם גַּם־אֲנִי
שָׁבַע עַל־חַטָּאתֵיכֶם:

You see that even the state of ‘chance’ is attributed to God, for everything proceeds from Him by reason of special providence.”

5) The Talmud - Berakoth 33b

And Rabbi Ḥanina said: Everything is in the hands of Heaven, except for fear of Heaven, as it is stated: “And now Israel, what does the Lord your God ask of you other than to fear

ואמר רבי חנינא הכל בידי שמים חוץ מיראת
שמים שנאמר ועתה ישראל מה ה' אלהיך שואל
מעמך כי אם ליראה

6) Psalm 147-8-9

And now, O Israel, what does the LORD your God demand of you? Only this: to revere the LORD your God, to walk only in His paths, to love Him, and to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and soul. -
Deuteronomy 10:12

וְעַתָּה יִשְׂרָאֵל מָה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ שֹׁאֵל מֵעַמֶּךָ כִּי אִם־
לִירְאָה אֶת־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ לֵלֶכֶת בְּכָל־דַּרְכָיו וּלְאַהֲבָה
אֹתוֹ וּלְעַבְדוֹ אֶת־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ בְּכָל־לִבְבְּךָ וּבְכָל־
נַפְשְׁךָ:

7) Psalm 147-8-9

who covers the heavens with clouds, provides rain for the earth, makes mountains put forth grass; who gives the beasts their food, to the raven’s brood what they cry for.

הַמְכֹּה שָׁמַיִם | בְּעָבִים הִמְכִּין לְאֶרֶץ מָטָר
הַמַּצְמִיחַ הָרִים חֲצִיר נֹתֵן לַבְּהֵמָה לַחֲמֵה לַבֵּי
עֹרֵב אֲשֶׁר יִקְרָאוּ:

8) Isaiah 45:7

I form light and create darkness, I make peace and create evil— I the LORD do all these things. Isaiah 45:7

יוֹצֵר אוֹר וּבוֹרֵא חֹשֶׁךְ עֹשֶׂה שְׁלוֹם וּבוֹרֵא רָע אֲנִי
יְהוָה עֹשֶׂה כָּל־אֵלֶּה:

9) Exodus 3:15

And God said further to Moses, “Thus shall you speak to the Israelites: The LORD, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you: This shall be My name forever, This My designation for all eternity.

וַיֹּאמֶר עוֹד אֱלֹהִים אֶל־מֹשֶׁה כֹּה־תֹאמַר אֶל־בְּנֵי
יִשְׂרָאֵל יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵיכֶם אֱלֹהֵי אַבְרָהָם אֱלֹהֵי
יַצְחָק וְאֱלֹהֵי יַעֲקֹב שְׁלַחְנִי אֵלֵיכֶם זֶה־שְּׁמִי לְעֹלָם
זֶה זַכְרִי לְדֹר דָּר:

10) The Wording

עֹלָם

עוֹלָם

נְעֹלָם

11) Leviticus 4:13

If it is the whole community of Israel that has erred and the matter is **hidden** from the eyes of the congregation, -
Leviticus 4:13

וְאִם כָּל־עַדְתֵּי יִשְׂרָאֵל יִשְׁגּוּ וְנִעְלַם דְבַר מֵעֵינֵי הַקְהָל

12) Genesis 1:2

the earth being unformed and void, with darkness over the surface of the deep and a **wind** (spirit) from God sweeping over the water

הָאָרֶץ הַיְתֵה תְהוֹ וּבְהוֹ וְחֹשֶׁךְ עַל־פְּנֵי תְהוֹם וְרוּחַ
אֱלֹהִים מְרַחֶפֶת עַל־פְּנֵי הַמַּיִם:

13) Psalm 119:89

Forever God, Your word stands firm in heaven.

לְעוֹלָם יְהוָה דְּבָרְךָ נֶצֶב בַּשָּׁמַיִם:

14) Maimonides - Moreh Nevuchim, *ch. 18*

Divine providence does not rest upon all men equally. The degree of providence extended to an individual will increase in proportion to his superiority in the perfection of his human qualities....