

# CHAPTER 2:5 THE PURPOSE OF CREATION

by Rabbi Yaakov Feldman

1:2:5

Human beings, who will assume the central role in the playing out of eternity and of G-d's intentions for it, who will be the focus of the remainder of this work, and to whom all other entities both more mundane and more celestial than they are subservient, are in that position because of two propensities <sup>1</sup>.

First, because we can grasp exalted things that no other entity can <sup>2</sup>; and second, because we can acquire far loftier characteristics <sup>3</sup>. That is what enables us to perfect ourselves and to draw close to G-d. Their opposites -- concentrating on more mundane things, and settling for lesser character traits -- are what limit us and draw us away from G-d.

We've thus been placed in a world that enables either propensity so that we'd (hopefully) choose the loftier one <sup>4</sup>.

Notes:

<sup>1</sup> Many would be struck by the fact that Ramchal designated *all of humanity* as the center of concern rather than the Jewish Nation which, after all, has been chosen to observe G-d's Torah and to thus fulfill His wishes in this world. He seemed to evidence that same sympathy at a couple of other points. He said that "all souls in their entirety are (in fact) one soul" (*Klallei Pitchei Chochma v'Da'at* 4), Jew and Gentile alike; and similarly, that "all souls were incorporated in the soul of Adam" (*Derech Eitz Chaim*, based on *Shemot Rabbah* 40:3).

Nonetheless Ramchal explained in the fourth chapter of Section 2 below, there came to be a point when this was longer true. Indeed, had Adam and Eve not sinned, then all of humanity would have been capable of drawing close to G-d equally; and had later generations not sinned either, the same would have been true. But he underscores the fact that since that didn't come to fruition then only the descendants of Abraham -- the Jewish Nation -- has that ability.

The point of the matter is that we're still at the beginning of Ramchal's study of human potential; and so far in this work, all of humanity has the ability to draw intimately close to G-d Almighty. But as we'll discover, that's simply no longer true; only the Jewish Nation can ultimately do so -- and only by fulfilling the conditions presented below.

<sup>2</sup> See Rambam's *Iggeret Taimon*; *Moreh Nevuchim* 3:54; and *Sh'mone Perakim* Ch's 2, 7 (where he discusses good character traits, too). Also see *Avodat HaKodesh* 3:13.

<sup>3</sup> As most would understand by now, the more exalted things we're encouraged to grapple with and try to grasp include G-d's being and His intentions for the universe, and His Torah-based requirements of us. It's not yet clear what personal characteristics he's referring to, though. But that comes to this.

We all know very many "nice" and "good" people who go out of their way to be kind and friendly, who can take a joke, who like other people, and who think it's good to be good, and bad to be bad. Yet they may be utterly childish at home, selfish, grumpy, rude, and even heartless; they may lose their temper easily, sulk, berate people behind their backs, cheat in small but nettlesome ways, respect hardly anyone, etc. That's to say that they're not truly "good" people so much as fairly average individuals who want to please and be liked, but who drop all that when they're home and in safe quarters. Faced with the delicious prospect of drawing close to G-d Almighty, such individuals would certainly be "nice" to Him, too, but they'd probably complain about something He said once they'd left His presence.

Only the sort of person who's good to the core, who's driven by an electric and driving urge to be good, do good things, help, give, and excel in his or her being could ever hope to achieve the sort of *laudable character* we'd need to grow close to G-d.

Ramchal most famously laid out the character traits one should strive for in his *Messilat Yesharim*, but also see 2:3:1 below for some discussion of this.

<sup>4</sup> Many of these ideas will be reiterated later on this in this work, in 1:4:4, 4:4:1, 4:5:1, 4:9:1-2, etc. Also see *Ma'amar Halkkurim*, "*b'Torah u'Mitzvot*".

---

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.