

CHAPTER 3:9 HUMANKIND

by Rabbi Yaakov Feldman

Derech Hashem - The Way of G-d 1:3:9

Our having to experience death -- and the universe itself having to go through a form of it too -- is also due to Adam and Eve's sin. For neither any one person nor the universe in its entirety can attain perfection while wrongfulness prevails over goodness as it does now. That state of affairs has to be transcended through (each individual's) death and (the universe's) destruction ¹.

It's also true that the soul can't purify a body ² until it's first separated from it at death and the body decomposes. Only then can a new edifice ³ that can achieve perfection be set up. That explains the need for The Resurrection of the Dead, and for the eventual destruction of the physical universe and its own "resurrection" in the course of the seventh millennium ⁴.

Notes:

¹ Ramchal is clearly drawing an analogy between the body-soul combination and the universe. But, what is the universe's "soul"? There's a rather erudite answer to that which is far beyond our concerns here, but let's offer a short explanation here.

We depicted how the Kabbalists describe the pre-creation stages (see our first note of 1:3:8). The point here is that at a certain moment G-d then projected a "line" of His Being back downward toward what would eventually be the space within which the universe would be created so as to animate it. That "line" (*kav* in Hebrew) is the soul of the universe, as it animates the universe and gives it "life". Ramchal speaks about this in a number of places: see *Klach Pitchei Chochma* 27-29 and *Klallim Rishonim* 6 for example.

² See 1:3:7 above.

³ I.e., a new combination of body and soul.

⁴ See *Sanhedrin* 97 a-b as well as *Rosh Hashanah* 31a; also see Ramchal's *Ma'amar Halkkurim* ("b'Geulah" and "b'Gemul"), *Adir Bamarom* (p. 188), *Da'at Tevunot* 92, and *Klallim Rishonim* 9 for a full explication of the events involved.

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.