

CHAPTER 2:4 THE PURPOSE OF CREATION

by Rabbi Yaakov Feldman

1:2:4

Since the polar opposite phenomena of spiritual "perfection" and "imperfection" we'd cited both need to exist ¹ in order for humankind to freely choose between them (and to preferably choose perfection, of course), and since humankind had to have an environment in which to make that choice, it stands to reason that it became necessary to create such a setting. The point of the matter is that our universe, with all of its very many components where all of that is to be played out, is just that ².

In a sense then, all of reality as we know it is the stage upon which humankind's great moral-spiritual drama is to be enacted ³.

Humankind is thus the central character and focus of that reality since it alone can draw close to G-d by its own actions, while everything else is either a member of the "supporting cast" or a "prop" ⁴.

Notes:

¹ That is, since the ability to achieve spiritual perfection and to draw close to G-d by pursuing the good and the right, or to settle for spiritual imperfection and to avoid G-d by pursuing the bad and the wrong, had to exist.

Notice that contrary to common practice, Ramchal doesn't speak in moral terms here so much as in utilitarian ones, saying in effect "if you want to succeed at what's good rather than failing at it, then ..." rather than "if you want to be good rather than bad, then ...".

² Also see *Ma'amar Halkkurim*, "*b'Torah u'Mitzvot*".

³ We purposely worded it ambiguously, saying, "*in a sense then*, all of reality as we know it is the stage upon which humankind's great moral-spiritual drama is to be enacted" because Ramchal might have made another point here, as he did elsewhere.

For as we said in 1:2:1 note 4, Ramchal posited several reasons for the world's existence. While he suggests here that it exists to allow for the playing out of human free will and for the chance to draw close to G-d, which we addressed in that note, at other points -- as we also said there -- he indicated

that the world is more than a battlefield for humanity's spiritual struggles: it's where G-d will reveal His Sovereignty in the end despite humankind's efforts, and regardless of the shifting, swaying, confounding, and often inexplicable sway of earthly circumstances.

See statements to that effect in *Da'at Tevunot* 17, 36, 48, 54, 80, etc.; *Klach Pitchei Chochma* 30 (in Ramchal's own comments); *Adir Bamarom* pp. 80, 148; etc. And while the point is accentuated here, in *Derech Hashem*, nonetheless see 4:4:1, 7 below. Also see Zohar 1:70b ("*Amar R' Chizkiyah*") and elsewhere.

⁴ The idea of humankind's centrality is a subject of great and contrasting discussion among our rabbis. See *Kohelet Rabbah* on Ecclesiastes 7:13; *Sanhedrin* 37a; Zohar 1:134b; *Emunot v'Deot*, introduction to Ch. 4; *Ikkarim* 1:11; *Moreh Nevuchim* 3:12; *Avodat HaKodesh* 3:3 and onward; *Pardes* 24:10; *Eitz Chaim* 26:1 and 39:4; *Sha'arei Kiddusha* 3:2; *Shelah*, "*Asseret Hadibrot*" 2; *Leshem*, *Sefer HaClallim* 15:11; R' Tzodek HaCohen, *Sichat Malachei HaShoret* 2; etc.

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