

# DA'AT TEVUNOT - SECTION 2: CHAPTER 2

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*Da'at Tevunot 2:2 (# 69-70)*

1.

Why, we might wonder, do we have a separate body and soul rather than a combination of the two, as G-d could very well have created us to have from the first <sup>1</sup>? The answer to that lies in the fact that our body and soul each plays a distinct and vital role in G-d's ultimate intention behind the creation of the universe, which was for Him to be as benevolent to His created beings as possible <sup>2</sup>. For, our initially having a separate body and soul enables us to perfect ourselves <sup>3</sup>.

This question also touches on the idea discussed early on about just what our imperfections are rooted in and what enables us to rectify them <sup>4</sup>.

2.

Our imperfections are rooted in the makeup of our body <sup>5</sup>, which is material, dense and dark, and thus unable to bask in G-d's holiness. As, "only those fully prepared to can pass through the King's gate and visit His palace" <sup>6</sup>, as Ramchal words it. And one who's under the sway of all sorts of untoward desires certainly couldn't do that.

So G-d granted us another vital element, the soul, which was hewn from the inchoate "stuff" beneath G-d's Throne of Glory, which is by its very makeup capable of purifying our body and making it holy. In fact, *purifying and elevating our body is the soul's major function on earth* <sup>7</sup>.

In fact there have already been instances of individuals whose soul had so perfected their body that the two joined together before the World to Come. Moses was one such person, as was made manifest by the beams of light that emitted from his face <sup>8</sup>, Enoch who entered Heaven with both his body and soul intact was another <sup>9</sup>, and Elijah was another <sup>10</sup>.

But the soul can only purify the body in this world by means of the mitzvah-system and by complying with the directives of the Torah. As such, the more engaged one is in Torah study and mitzvah observance, the more easily is one able to have his soul purify his body <sup>11</sup>.

## Footnotes:

<sup>1</sup>That is, why aren't we already the fully conjoined combination of body and soul we'll be after the resurrection of the dead? After all, G-d could very well have created us whole and fully perfected from the first, so why did He decide not to?

But see footnote 6 to 2:1 above which cites a source that says that body and soul *were* created as one at first, so which is correct? The answer is that while body and soul had been one in their ultimate root, they were soon separated for the purposes soon to be enunciated.

<sup>2</sup> See 1:1:3.

That's to say that our having a separate body and soul enables G-d to be more benevolent to us than if we'd been created as a combination of the two, for ...

<sup>3</sup>In order to eventually reap the benefits of that benevolence.

See the third chapter of the first section of *Derech Hashem* for much of the above.

<sup>4</sup>Ramchal raised a *number* of vexing questions early on in *Da'at Tevunot* that we weren't yet able to answer, which we will in the course of the book. Relevant to the subject at hand, we said in 1:2:1, "we know that G-d wants us to perfect ... ourselves", but "what is human perfection in fact" and "how do we come to it"? And in 1:2:3 we asked, "given that we're indeed imperfect, what then can we draw upon to perfect ourselves?" We'll now begin to touch upon that.

<sup>5</sup>The "body" in question includes one's whole worldly self, including his mind, personality, memories, and the like -- not just his rank physicality. It could be termed "the self" versus the soul as "the Self".

<sup>6</sup>Which is our ultimate goal (See 1:2:1-2).

<sup>7</sup>Some think the soul is here to be purified itself, but that's simply not so: it's already pure, as we ourselves affirm every day when we recite, "My L-rd! The soul you have granted me is (inherently) pure!" (Morning Prayers).

As Ramchal underscored in the first chapter of *Messilat Yesharim*, "G-d ... breathed into us a soul so exalted and distinguished -- a soul greater than the angels themselves" that it's manifestly out of place in this world. For what it's meant to do, in fact, is to ready the body for the place in the World to Come, which both body and soul will then enjoy.

But it's important to understand that body and soul are interdependent. See *Sanhedrin* 91b.

<sup>8</sup>See Exodus 34:29-35. That is, Moses' body was so pure that his soul's light already shone through it on earth.

<sup>9</sup>See Genesis 5:22-24.

<sup>10</sup>See 2 Kings 2:11,

<sup>11</sup>See Ch. 1 of *Messilat Yesharim*.