

DA'AT TEVUNOT - SECTION 2: CHAPTER 3

by Rabbi Yaakov Feldman

Da'at Tevunot 2:3 (# 71-72 [beg.])

1.

Purifying the body ¹ is the soul's main objective in this world, as we'd said ². And the soul will be rewarded for that ³ because by doing that it enabled the body ⁴ to become righteous. And *that* allows for an enhancement of G-d's glory and for the elevation of all of creation, given that everything was created so G-d could be glorified ⁵. After all, the soul delighted Heaven that way and will be rewarded for that ⁶.

Understand, of course, that the soul undergoes other things in the Afterlife, but that's not our concern here ⁷.

2.

But to our great adversity, Adam and Eve's error brought death into the equation ⁸. So the soul can't bring on the aforementioned perfection until the body first experiences death ⁹. And the necessity of death for all helps explain why certain rare utterly righteous individuals had to die when they didn't deserve to -- because of "the advice of the serpent ¹⁰" (*Bava Batra 17a*).

Once the body is separated from its impurity ¹¹ and comes back to life ¹², the soul re-enters the body -- along with all of the merits the body had earned beforehand in life. And the glow that the soul had earned in the Garden of Eden ¹³, because of its merits would then shine brightly upon the resurrected and purified body. And the soul will then further mend all the bad that the body had experienced beforehand ¹⁴.

3.

We've thus explained mankind's obligations and its rewards for it in the course of the two time periods encompassing all of reality ¹⁵. And we've learned that since the body is imperfect, the soul must have its light shine upon it and purify it, and both body and soul are to be rewarded ¹⁶ once this

purification process is completed.

Footnotes:

¹ By means of the mitzvah-system (see 2:2:2).

² See 2:2:2, and Zohar 1:115a which Ramchal cites in the text.

³ See 2:4 below.

⁴ See note 5 to 2:2 above where we pointed out that the term "body" here includes one's self, personality, etc.

⁵ See Psalms 29:2 and Isaiah 43:5:7.

⁶ The point remains, though, that the soul also blooms on its own in the here and now – albeit in very subtle but vital ways beyond our ken; but it doesn't yet live up to its full potential.

⁷ Ramchal's concern here is the resurrection of the dead, not the Afterlife. See a discussion of the Afterlife in *Derech Hashem* 1:3:11.

Let's clarify the chronology and "geography" involved here since it can be confusing: body and soul are together in life, the body then dies and the soul experiences the Afterlife (i.e., the Garden of Eden and *Geheonim*), body and soul are then reunited in the course of the resurrection of the dead, and the two then experience the World to Come.

⁸ Had they not erred, the soul would have purified the body right there and then, and our mission would have been accomplished from the first. See 3:14 below as well as *Derech Hashem* 1:3:6.

⁹ The point is that perfection could have and in fact *should* have come about quickly and easily, but it was delayed by the introduction of death and the need for the body to be purified very, very slowly.

¹⁰ To Eve and then Adam to eat from the Tree of Knowledge.

¹¹ See *Derech Hashem* 1:3:12.

¹² At the resurrection of the dead.

¹³ After the body had died.

¹⁴ See Zohar 1:113b, 116a which is cited by Ramchal in the text.

¹⁵ I.e., this world (including the Afterlife), and the World to Come (after the resurrection of the dead).

¹⁶ In the World to Come.