

# DA'AT TEVUNOT - SECTION 2: CHAPTER 6

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*Da'at Tevunot 2:6 (# 80 l'beg. – middle)*

1. Ramchal reveals an important insight here — that this principle of G-d's alternately concealing or revealing His presence explains many things about our body and soul. And conversely that our body and soul explain many things about G-d's hiddenness or revelation, too, since they're all interrelated 1.

As such we're told that not only is the body a product of G-d's hiddenness, it also serves as a model of it, just as the soul serves as a model of G-d's presence. And G-d's concealing or revealing His presence also explains many things about ourselves, given that we were all created in G-d's "image and likeness" (Genesis 1:26) 2 and we reflect all of His ways in our makeup.

So, let's see how this works.

2. As we've explained before, the body is rooted in darkness 3. In fact, even if you'd purify your body as much as you possibly could it would never be a soul, since the soul is a lofty and illuminated product of G-d's presence while the body is simply not 4. The body is rooted in G-d's hiddenness. Indeed, the body could only be purified to the point where body and soul nearly touch, but no further 5. For, your soul will always be a soul and a perfect entity, while your body will always be imperfect, no matter how much you purify it 6.

It's also obviously true that your body is comprised of a large number of parts with specific functions: with eyes to see with, for example, ears to hear with, etc. But that's not true of your soul. All of your soul's "parts" 7 are merged together rather than separate. And that's connected to the body's being a product of G-d's hiddenness and the soul being a product of G-d's presence 8.

Now, this is all rooted in a well-known principle that perfection 9 is rooted in oneness 10 and can't be disproportionate 11. But there are times — when G-d's presence is hidden — that He doesn't want perfection to be in place, as when He allows for reward or punishment 12 for example. And when He sees to it that there are instances of multiplicity and disproportion 13 in the world 14.

3. This paradigm also manifests itself in our having been created in G-d's image, as cited above. Let's see how.

Our body-parts correspond to the traits that G-d uses to interact with the world. And so our eyes correspond to the "eyes" that G-d observes and judges us with, our ears correspond to the "ears"

that He listens to our prayers with, and our mouths correspond to the "mouth" that G-d uses to converse with, etc., as all of our body-parts correspond on some level to G-d's traits in this world.

The fact that we're comprised of a left and right side for our eyes, ears, hands, feet, etc. corresponds to G-d's ways of interacting with us with either His "right", loving side or His "left", critical side 15, which He displays when His presence isn't manifest 16.

It's also true that just as our body-parts are differentiated by function, our experiences in this world are likewise all different from each other, as a consequence of G-d's hiddenness. Whereas perfection, which is rooted in oneness as we said and in G-d's presence, would undo all shortcomings, it wouldn't be comprised of various parts, and it would see to it that everything achieves perfection 17.

4. In any event, know that at bottom, the point is to have the soul take command of the body and purify it so that G-d might manifest His perfection here on earth and to rectify all of the world's imperfections.

The body would then suffer judgment for having taken command of our souls, for having contributed to G-d's hiddenness and for leaving humankind and the world to suffer all of the vicissitudes and upheavals that define the human situation.

So the body is equipped with all the parts it needs to contend with such vagaries and for the environment in which perfection is hidden away, and also to help bring perfection about. While the soul on the other hand has what it needs for perfection and in order to rectify each imperfection, so that it might be encouraged to do all of that – if only we'd improve our ways and allow the soul to reign 18.

Footnotes:

1 See Clallim Rishonim 23, "V'ha'pen hasheini hu"; and Klach Pitchei Chochma 4, end of perush, "shehanivraim atzmam"; and 9, perush, "ach yesh metziut achas".

2 This will be reiterated below. But refer to the following works on this vital concept: Kuzari 4:3; Moreh Nevuchim 1:1; Hilchot Yesodei HaTorah 4:8, Hilchot Teshuva 10:6; Siach Yitzchak, Likkutim, p. 286; Nephesh Hachaim 1:3; Michtav M'Eliyahu 1, p. 32; Derech Hachaim 3:14; Zohar Chadash 1:28b, etc.

3 I.e., in the fact that G-d's shining countenance is hidden from it. See 2:5:2 above.

4 Even though we said above in footnote 6 to 2:1 that body and soul actually derive from the same root, it's still and all true that that reality changes once the two are manifested in the world.

5 According to R' Yoseph Spinner, some older manuscripts eliminate what's said from this point in our text all the way to the beginning of section 4 below. That of course disallows for much of this chapter's insights, but it also does away with a lot of its obscurity and wordiness, which makes it so

difficult to understand. (It's unclear, though, whether Ramchal edited out the extra text or added it in later.)

Moving the text in question to these notes and explaining it with bracketed comments would have helped clarify things and made the text itself easier to read, but we decided against that simply because all of the existing versions of Da'at Tevunot include the text in question.

6 This is an instance of our body and soul modeling G-d's hiddenness or presence.

7 I.e., all of its inchoate elements, functions, and gradations of holiness.

8 This is another instance of our body and soul model G-d's hiddenness or presence.

9 ... which is also a product of G-d's presence just as the soul is...

10 I.e., in a single, sheer cohesive entity without differentiations.

11 See Clallim Rishonim 6.

Interestingly, Ramchal is thus defining "perfection" here as an instance of amalgamation and of flawless proportion. A "perfect person" would thus be someone who's consistent in his or her righteousness and would be an example of Rambam's temperate, righteous personality (see Ch. 4 of Sh'mone Perakim).

12 For the sake of free choice in an imperfect world.

The other point is that since there'd only be goodness and reward if G-d's presence were to be manifest; instances of reward or punishment thus only come about when His presence is hidden.

13 ... which are instances of plurality and imperfection ...

14 This is an instance of G-d's hiddenness or presence manifesting itself in the world.

15 See the second introduction to Tikkunei Zohar, Zohar 1:109b.

16 Thus is an instance of our body being a model of G-d's hiddenness or presence.

17 This is another instance of G-d's hiddenness or presence manifesting itself in our body and souls.

18 And this all is a vision of our overcoming G-d's hiddenness and having Him manifest His presence in the world, which is our life's purpose.