

THE RECTIFIED WORLD □ CHAPTER 5

by Rabbi Yaakov Feldman

This has been a very, very long and arduous exile for us indeed, which hasn't escaped anyone's attention. In fact, the idea that our people have seemingly been left to its own devices for all these many years has caused people to doubt G-d's plans for us. The more cynical have taunted, "Their G-d must be asleep!" (Esther Rabbah 7:12), and we ourselves have asked Him plaintively, "Why do You stand so far away, G-d? Will You hide Yourself in times of trouble (like this)?" (Psalms 10:1), because we've almost lost hope. And those sorts of attitudes tend to embolden the side of unholiness.

But just as we're told that "G-d looked upon the people of Israel and ... knew (their plight)" (Exodus 2:25) at a crucial point in the first exile, He'll certainly do the same for us. But with a distinct difference that's aside from the ones we've learned about until now.

"I still have to explain a certain mystery" Ramchal adds here in relation to what will set this final redemption apart from that first one. It's the fact that the greatest event to come about in the days of the Moshiach "will be the emendation of the body". Which is to say that the universe will be so rich with radiance then that even what had been earthy, mundane, and ordinary would teem with holiness. In fact, "much of the world's emendation" itself will depend on "this ... very important principle". "After all," Ramchal adds rather matter-of-factly and cryptically, "wasn't the soul sent to this world to emend the body?"

So he starts to lay-out the relationship of the body and the soul in this world to help us understand the significance of all this. We learn that "the body had been corrupted by Adam's sin" in the Garden of Eden, and that all the other losses and downfalls that humankind has experienced since then has "followed in its wake". Ramchal adds though (and quite frustratingly), that "since these things are (already) known to those who know the truth," and "inasmuch as I spoke about it a lot elsewhere, I won't delve into it at length here". So let's take a quick look at some of what he'd already said about this.

As he'd explained at length in "The Way of G-d" and elsewhere, humankind was originally to have been an equal mix of the spiritual (soul) and the material (body), and had Adam and Eve not eaten from the Tree of Knowledge, the soul would have dominated the body forever and ever, and humanity would have achieved perfection in short order. For spirit would have so purified matter that the two would have partaken of the ultimate reward right in this world.

But the damage was done, and the body was charged to endure death while the soul was made to

separate from it in the Afterlife as a consequence. As a result of the Great Redemption, though, body and soul will be rejoined (in the course of the Resurrection of the Dead, which will follow the Great Redemption), and all will be primed for the ultimate perfection (in The World to Come, which will follow the Resurrection of the Dead).

It's in the course of The World to Come then that the soul -- which would have been emended already to a great degree in the Afterlife and The Resurrection -- will come to fruition and will emend the body and thus fulfill its *raison d'être* in this world, as Ramchal said above.

Ramchal explains the subtle and transcendent process of body-emendation elsewhere in great detail, but suffice it to say for our purposes that all of that will begin to occur in the course of the Great Redemption.

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