

CHAPTER 4:5 ISRAEL AND THE OTHER NATIONS

by Rabbi Yaakov Feldman

Derech Hashem – The Way of G-d 2:4:5

Now, just as all of Adam and Eve's descendants were originally divided into source "trees" with "branches", each subsequent "tree" was able to yield its own "branches" which could then produce their own off-springs ¹.

Abraham's "branches" ² could only number 600,000, which is the number of Jews who left Egypt, received the Torah at Mount Sinai ³, and inherited the Land of Israel ⁴, who thus comprised the essential Jewish Nation. All Jews who descended from them are considered their "branches" and off-spring.

The other nations were given one more opportunity to achieve their spiritual potential — when the Torah was given to us and they, too, were offered it ⁵. Had they in fact accepted it, they'd have been given the same spiritual potential as the Jewish people, but they declined it. Their fate was then sealed and the gate ⁶ was permanently closed ⁷. Still and all as we said, any individual non-Jew can decide to attach him- or herself onto Abraham's "tree" ⁸.

Footnotes:

¹Without restriction.

²On the other hand.

³Ramchal spoke of the centrality of the revelation at Mount Sinai in a number of his works. See for example *Da'at Tevunot* 78, 159, *Tikkunim Chadashim* 21, 33, 42, and *Klach PitcheiChochma* 30.

⁴He also spoke of the centrality of the Land of Israel in several of his works. See for example *Adir Bamarom* p. 235; also see *Ma'amar Hachochma* (*Tephilat Rosh Hashanah*) for the relationship between it and the Jewish Nation.

⁵See *Avoda Zara* 2b.

⁶Of access to that special level.

⁷See 2:4:2 where it's said that "humanity has been granted the freedom to choose to ascend to a very great level. It's just that there's a time limit within which we can do that".

⁸That's to say that the Jewish Nation was purposely set up from the start to be a small, "tight" corps of agents of change and rectification which can take on new members but will never be large.