

CHAPTER 1: THE SOUL AND ITS INFLUENCE - PARAGRAPH 4

by Rabbi Yaakov Feldman

Recall that we said that our soul is actually an amalgam of many components, and that the G-dly component is its highest. Ramchal's first point here is that the G-dly component is *itself* an amalgam of many parts.

His second point is that just as all the components of the soul at-large are linked to each other and as intertwined as one memory is with another in our minds, the components of the G-dly component itself are likewise linked. And that, if one could say as much, its highest reach is infused by Heaven's "blood" and its lowest infuses our own blood.

Now, one or more of those components can loosen itself from the rest now and then, then return. Other outside and even more exalted components can add themselves on to our soul, and then leave as well. And we wouldn't be aware of a thing! Because they'd touch upon areas of our being far above consciousness (including our connection to the other transcendent entities mentioned before), and they're far too ethereal and subtle to detect on a bodily, emotional, or intellectual level. (This phenomenon will go far to explain how the Heavens speak to us, by the way, as we'll see another time).

In fact, this also goes to explain the concept of the "extra soul" granted us on Shabbat. We're taught that an additional soul comes to us from the very beginning of the Shabbat that stays to the end, which is part of the magic and holiness of the day itself. Some say that it's what adds delight to the day, that it's what peppers our awareness of the Divine then, and that it's what heightens our taste buds for the Holy Day's special foods. But Ramchal reveals that while all that might very well be true on some level or another, it's not *really* true -- that perhaps the day itself is what does all those things, but not the "extra soul".

In any event, the soul at-large is termed the "nephesh", and the G-dly component's own overarching components are termed (in ascending order) "ruach", "neshama", "chaya", and "yechida". To be sure, each one of those terms has its own implications, but the English language has no single word to translate them other than "soul" and "spirit".

This series is dedicated to the memory of Yitzchak Hehrsh ben Daniel, and Sarah Rivka bas Yaakov Dovid.

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