THE 13 PRINCIPLES: # 13: Tehiyat hametim, just for the righteous?

The thirteenth principle of the Jewish faith states our believe that the dead will be brought back to life. This is known as resurrection or in Hebrew *teḥiyat hametim*. ("Resurrection" should not be confused with what *ḥakhme haqabbala* call *gilgul neshamot* , or reincarnation).

In his *"ma-amar 'al teḥiyat hametim"* Maimonides explains:

"The concept of resurrection is well known among all Jews, and there are none who dispute it. It is mentioned many times in our prayers… prophets and sages. The body and the soul will be reunited again after they have been separated by death. This concept if found in the book of Daniel (12:2): "Many who sleep in the dust shall awaken, some to everlasting life, some to everlasting shame and reproach".

We have no specific details about how or when exactly *teḥiyat hametim* will take place.

For Maimonides, the resurrection of the dead is just for the righteous (*ṣadiqim*). "It will be absurd for the wicked to be brought to life again, for even when they are alive they are consider dead". In the wise words of Rabbi Hayim Pereira Mendes. "The reward of the righteous in future life is spiritual happiness, the punishment of the wicked is exclusion from it." Wicked people, do not recognize God and are not aware of the existential goal of this life: coming closer to Him (*uldobqa bo*). If given a new opportunity the wicked would waste his life in vanity, physical pleasures and material endeavors.

To better understand Maimonides idea, let us imagine a scenario close to *teḥiyat hametim*. If I'm now 80 years old, and I'm offered the elixir of youth to become again a 20 years old, what would I wish to do with my life now? If I say: "Well, now that I know what is important in this life, and I'm given this new opportunity, I will dedicate myself to strengthen my connection with HaShem", then, I qualify for Maimonides' *teḥiyat hametim*!. But if I say: "If I'm 20 again,

I will party all day long” or something like that, then I don’t.

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