

# CHAPTER 1: G-D □ PART 1

*by Rabbi Yaakov Feldman*

It goes without saying that we rely on our mind and its perceptions for nearly everything. So if something doesn't quite jibe with our sense of what's rational, reasonable, and explicable we tend to reject it.

Yet it's also true that our minds haven't an infinite capacity (even when they're aided by the greatest of computers and joined by the finest of other minds). So it's clear that we can't always depend on our minds to arrive at the truth. In fact, there's a whole realm beyond our abilities to reason that's far richer and more varied than our own that's simply inexplicable, known as the realm of faith. And it's the one we enter into when we discuss G-d as well as all things spiritual.

For G-d unto Himself is utterly, utterly unfathomable since He's far removed from our experience and occupies an inscrutable domain that's devoid of space, time, and all the qualities of reality we know of. So we depend on our faith and our holy tradition for depictions of Him. Given the chance we could draw many analogies to Him and derive proofs for His existence from the natural world, but all of that would fall flat in the end because we'd always wind up facing the fact that G-d Himself is simply inscrutable.

We'd thus be wise to accept the fact, as Ramchal puts it, that G-d's "actual essence and makeup cannot be fathomed whatsoever", that there's absolutely nothing analogous to Him "in all of creation or in anything our minds could conceive of or imagine", and that "no words or depictions" could capture His essence.

Now, you might argue that the Torah uses all sorts of analogies for Him and depicts Him in many, many ways and you'd be right. But suffice it to say that the Torah doesn't speak of G-d Himself when it describes Him to us: it refers to Him as He presents Himself to us in \*our\* realm and in terms that we could understand and draw upon to understand what He requires of us.

It's been said that that's analogous to the way great geniuses present their ideas to lesser souls. If they'd lay out their thoughts as they themselves understand them, their listeners would miss the whole point, and their effort would have been in vain. But if they'd present their ideas in terms that others far less advanced than they could understand and relate to, then their ideas would be grasped for all intents and purposes. And while the latter explanations wouldn't be "true" from the genius's perspective, they'd nonetheless serve his ends, and would thus be "true enough" under the circumstances. (Understand this point well, as it helps to explain many otherwise unfathomable

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