

THE DUTIES OF THE HEART, GATE 2:4

by Rabbi Yaakov Feldman

Now that we're committed to catching sight of G-d's wisdom throughout the world, just where do we begin? After all, there are seven broad realms we could reflect upon.

We could delve into the world at large, sitting as it does in the midst of the cosmos, with all its component parts and counterparts, its chaos and order, and its manifold, stunning, and elegant natural laws.

Or should we reflect instead upon humankind in general, since each one of us is a veritable "world in miniature", so full and fecund as we are? Or because our creation is said to have "completed, embellished, shed light on, and perfected the order of creation" (in Ibn Pakudah's words), made as we are of such great spiritual substance.

Perhaps we should reflect on ourselves instead, "our body structure, our capabilities, and the mind given us ... that sets us apart from and makes us superior to all other living things".

We could certainly reflect on those other living things, "from the smallest to the greatest; those that fly, swim, crawl or move about on four legs; in all their various shapes and sizes".

It would be logical to reflect on the full range of plant and mineral life, without which we'd be stranded on a stark, cold, unlush planet.

It would also do us well to reflect upon "the sciences, arts, and technologies" that G-d bestowed upon us in order to "provide us our needs and sustain us."

And it would of course be important to reflect upon the stunning fact that G-d granted us His Torah with its mitzvah-system, with which we serve Him, and through which we're able to derive sublime happiness both in this world and in the World to Come.

So, which should we concentrate on most, given all that? We'll determine that next time.

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