

THE DUTIES OF THE HEART, GATE 3:1

by Rabbi Yaakov Feldman

It's almost unnatural to serve G-d, despite all the compelling reasons we'd offered until now. Simply because serving G-d implies no longer serving the slew of people, things, and ideas we serve and worship each and every day (whether we realize it or not).

But there's another reason as well. It's the fact that all the great good that comes to us from birth on -- like life itself, sustenance, comfort, and love -- seems so natural, so right, so fair and just, that we get jaded about it all at a certain point. And we forget how stunningly loving it has been of our Benefactor, G-d Almighty, to have granted it all to us.

So we need to be reminded; to be *induced* to serve G-d.

But there are ultimately two ways to be thus motivated: from the "inside, out", which is to say by means of our personal experiences, thoughts, and feelings. And from the "outside, in", by means of the Torah, which is at bottom a trustworthy tradition rooted in Divine revelation that's nonetheless out of our experience.

We'll delve into the advantages and functions of both in the course of this gate.