

# THE DUTIES OF THE HEART, GATE 4:4 - PART 2

*by Rabbi Yaakov Feldman*

Now the \*second\* area in which we're to trust G-d, having to do with retail sales, investments, and the like (as opposed to the sort of salaried work we discussed last time). The best way to trust G-d in those sorts of moment-by-moment areas of earning an income would be to maintain your course and stick to the profession G-d chose for you despite the many shifts and bends.

For if you're meant to do well at one point, you will -- even without effort or exertion, if you trust G-d. Whereas if you're meant to just get by, it wouldn't matter how much effort you made, you'd still only get by. So, accept G-d's decisions and you'll feel secure and at peace in the knowledge that you'll be granted whatever is due you in its own time.

Indeed, some fortunate souls manage to be wealthy, with G-d's help, while others don't. But know that oftentimes people are granted wealth to test their mettle and to see the sort of people they'd be in that instance. Hence there are a number of errors of judgment the wise would want to avoid in wealth.

They'd want to be sure to earn their wealth in a halachically-sanctioned, ethical, and legal manner; to understand that their wealth isn't for them alone but for their families and others, too; and to never laud their wealth over others, or take it for granted either.

Ibn Pakudah now touches upon the awe, envy, and admiration the wealthy are afforded. He warns us never to fall into the trap of seeking that out or of even believing that wealth deserves that. After all, it's G-d who granted the wealthy individual his riches, so honoring him rather than the Source of his good fortune is absurd. Besides, many people come upon wealth serendipitously, others simply inherit it, and yet others lose it all in the end. So it would do us best to catch sight of G-d's will and wisdom behind wealth -- and everything else besides.

And finally, should you do poorly in your chosen work, then let the following thoughts carry you through.

Realize that just as G-d -- rather than you -- determined the moment you were to be born and the moment you'll die, He likewise determined that you wouldn't do well right now. So it would be wise to trust this decision, too.

Understand as well that just as G-d provided you with copious amounts of mother's milk to sustain you when you were a baby and then provided you with less food when you began to eat solids with

no harm done to you, He may be allotting you lesser food now along the same lines.

Finally, take heart in the fact that just as G-d decided which specific individuals would be your parents, just where in this whole wide world you'd be born, and what your particular shape and form as well as your traits would be, He's likewise providing you with just the right amount of livelihood you're to earn at this point.

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