

THE DUTIES OF THE HEART - GATE 5 INTRODUCTION

by Rabbi Yaakov Feldman

To now we've been treated to a lavish dose of the truth of G-d's presence in the world which we're very grateful for. But what's one to do after that? After all, half the "fun" of searching for the meaning of life is finding it, and most of the burden and challenge of having found it is living with it!

So we'll now discuss the things Ibn Pakudah suggests we do with what we have, one at a time.

The first category of things to do, which is offered here in this gate, is dedicating everything we do to G-d. When you do that, Ibn Pakudah explains, you enjoy certain advantages. "You purge your mind and heart of the confusions that plague them", for example, and you "liberate them of the need to embellish, ... to be hypocritical, and to flatter others". As these are advantages that *all* of us would like to enjoy, it seems we're going to be treated to a lot of wisdom in this gate, and we will.

The first task, though, is to determine just what "dedicating our actions to G-d" means. Then we'll need to learn how to do that, how to determine *which* of our actions to dedicate to Him, we'd need insight into what keeps us back from dedicating our actions to Him and how to avoid such things, and finally -- how to use our minds to achieve spiritual excellence.

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