

# THE DUTIES OF THE HEART, GATE 8:6

*by Rabbi Yaakov Feldman*

What are we to do after having dwelt upon all we have in this chapter? Are we just to go about our business and find another "project" to busy ourselves with? Are we to just begin again from the beginning (after all, weren't we told to ponder what we'd come upon in this chapter "deeply and repeatedly" [8:3 Part 9])? Or is there yet another factor to consider?

The two best things to do after engaging in introspection clearly and intelligently, we're told, is to understand what we're meant to accomplish by it, and to dedicate ourselves to G-d in the process. That's to say, to always remind ourselves to practice introspection consciously and purposefully rather by rote and to emphasise our relationship with G-d.

For when you do, we're all promised, G-d will help you fulfill His mitzvot, and He'll also "teach you by the light of wisdom and enlighten you with the radiance of reason". As a result "you'll enjoy serenity and your mind will be free of the world's anxieties and attractions. You'll rejoice in the service of the Creator and delight in the fact that you peered into some of wisdom's mysteries in all their brilliance."

And you'll be counted among those who "fulfill The Duties of the Heart and the physical duties easily, eagerly and enthusiastically", who "have come upon wisdom" and "act righteously all the time". Ibn Pakudah then concludes this chapter with the plea that "G-d in His compassion place us in their midst, and include us in their category".

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