

The Rambam devotes ten chapters to laws of Teshuva, repentance. Some people learn one chapter a day during the ten days of repentance. In the first chapter of the Rambam on Teshuva he mentions the three elements that are needed in order to repent: one, a recognition of the sin; two, an admission that you did wrong in the past; three, a resolution never to do it again. In the very first chapter he says, "How does a person confess?" He says, "I sinned before You. I did so and so and such and such and, behold, I regret it and my actions. Never again will I repeat this offense." In the second chapter he mentions these same elements but in a different order. He says, "What is Teshuva? It is when a sinner will decide in his heart that he will never do it again as it says that an evil person shall leave his way and so he should regret on the past." Here we see that the process is reversed. Here he first decided he will never do it again in the future and then he has great regret about the past. Why this contradiction? What's more, in the first four chapters of the Rambam we discuss the elements of Teshuva, of repentance. In the fifth and sixth chapter we speak about free will. In the seventh chapter the Rambam goes back to start talking about repentance. Why this break? Also, why didn't the Rambam speak about free will in the very beginning? After all, this is the whole basis of the concept of Teshuva. Rambam, himself, said that this is the whole basis of moral man. It seems to me that here we are speaking about different types of Teshuva. The Rabbis compare sin to sickness. They even use the Hebrew word, Rapeh, which means to be cured. Each of us has within us a soul. This soul is a little piece of G-d. When we sin, when we do things that are beneath us we alienate ourselves. We suffer inwardly. We almost, in effect, mourn for ourselves. Many times we are overcome by depression. This we see happen after the Jewish people worship the golden calf. On the morrow they strip themselves of their ornaments and they begin to mourn. It is the morning after that tells us that we have done wrong. This is the same story we have about Abigail and her husband, Nabal. Nabal in Hebrew means a fool and he acted foolishly. David had protected him and his flocks and when a feast day came and he asked that his men be given something to eat and drink they were refused. David was coming against them with 400 men when Abigail approached him and placated David. She brought him some

food for his men and told him to forgive her husband since he was a foolish man. David relented. Abigail then went back to her husband, Nabal. He was drunk with wine. She waited until the next morning and then ^{she} told him ^{that David} He fainted when he heard the news.

The problem with sinning is when you wake up the next morning. The pangs of conscience, the feeling of being alienated from yourself all take hold. The word Teshuva in Hebrew means to return, to return to yourself, to return to the best within yourself, to return to the soul. The soul has two parts. One is the intellect. The mind is what distinguishes man from all the other animals. The second part is emotions, the ability to make lasting attachments, the ability to display love and self-sacrifice and dedication. Rambam, when he speaks in the first chapter about Teshuva, is talking about Teshuva which comes as a result of sins of the emotions. The story of Amnon and his half sister, Tamar, illustrates this. Amnon wanted his half sister, Tamar. He devised a plan whereby to ravish her. He pretended he was sick and then he called her to nurse him. When she came he had his way with her. Immediately afterwards he hated her more than he had ever loved her because he transferred his own feelings of disgust and revulsion upon her. It was all her fault. She was too beautiful, etc. The sins which have to do with the emotions we are not worried that the person will return to that sin. That's why we first say, "I am ashamed of what I did." However, we are afraid that maybe the person will get himself in the same circumstances again and, therefore, we say it as the last step that he should promise never to do it again in the future. He should be very careful not to put himself in a position whereby his emotions would be aroused again. The second type of sin is the sin of the mind. Here a person makes a cold calculation to implement certain policies. For example, a person who joined the Mafia in Brownsville, New York in order to escape poverty. He would not do anything bad now. He has already made his fortune but he does not regret what he did in the past. He now is straight. The sins of the mind are almost the worst sins of all. Look what the Communists and Nazis did in the name of their ideologies. Even today you have many ex-Nazis who say, "Of course, we would not do what we did then but if the circumstances would change

we would do the same thing." With the sins of the mind we are not worried about the future. They are not going to do it again. We are worried about them admitting it was wrong in the past. Of course, if circumstances beyond our control should change and they are once again cast into poverty they may do it again. There are two separate kinds of sins, the sins of the mind and the sins of the emotion, and for both we must do Teshuva. We must admit they were wrong and that we did wrong in the past and that we will not do it again in the future. The question still remains, though, why did the Rambam wait until the fifth chapter to discuss free will, and why did he talk again about Teshuva in the seventh chapter? The reason for it is that the Teshuva depicted in the first two chapters of the mind and the emotions was really not a product of free will, but a product of pain. The pain of continuing on with the sin was greater than the pain of not doing it. It was not that the person just decided not to do it. It was because of the pain involved, the pain of the consequences, of forbidden love measured against that love, or the pain of poverty against the pain of not being respectable. That's why in these types of Teshuva sometimes they do not take effect immediately but they wait until Yom Kippur or even later. However, the Teshuva that is talked about in the seventh chapter is a product of free will. The Teshuva takes effect immediately because the person does not even want to do these things he was drawn to before. It is not a question of pain, but the person is not even interested in them anymore. This, of course, is the real purpose of Torah study in Judaism. It is not just to learn how to build a Succah or to make Kiddush properly, but it is to mold and shape our characters so that we do not want to do immoral and bad things. We would not consider it. On Yom Kippur we all pray not only to be forgiven but to become pure. On this Yom Kippur may we all not only be forgiven but be made to feel pure.