

The concept of sin & teshuva

Posted by DavidT - 10 Mar 2021 15:08

Many people misunderstand the concept of sin. They think someone who sins is a "bad person."

Actually, the Hebrew word *chet* does not mean sin at all. *Chet* appears in the Bible in reference to a slingshot which "missed the target." There is nothing inherently "bad" about that slingshot! Rather, a mistake was made ? due to a lack of focus, concentration or skill.

The same is true with us. When we engage in irresponsible or destructive behavior, we have simply misfired. Every human being has a soul, a pure piece of Godliness that distinguishes us from the animals. When we do something wrong, it is because the soul's "voice" has become temporarily muted by the roar of the physical body. This confusion is what we call the "Yetzer Hara." But our essence remains pure. We only need to make a few adjustments ? and we're back on target!

This is the idea of teshuva. Teshuva literally means "return." When we "do teshuva," we examine our ways, identify those areas where we are losing ground, and "return" to our own previous state of spiritual purity. And in the process, we "return" to our connection with the Almighty as well.

Teshuva is a 4 step program:

Step 1 - Regret. Realize the extent of the damage and feel sincere regret.

Step 2 - Cessation. Immediately stop the harmful action.

Step 3 - Confession. Articulate the mistake and ask for forgiveness.

Step 4 - Resolution. Make a firm commitment not to repeat it in the future.

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Hashem doesn't ask you to change in an area that is not yet feasible for you to change. We are commanded to be human beings, not angels. This means making a serious commitment to change ? and taking the right steps at the right time.

An individual doesn't need to have all the answers right now. The key is the commitment to change. Be aware of situations in which you're likely to stumble, and keep a safe distance from them. The Torah tells us: Strengthen your resolve in a certain area and Hashem will ensure your success. Nothing that can stand in the way of persistence and determination. As the Talmud (Makkot 10b) says, "In the way that a person wants to go, he will be led."

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Re: The concept of sin & teshuva
Posted by Oved - 10 Mar 2021 16:22

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Re: The concept of sin & teshuva
Posted by DavidT - 10 Mar 2021 16:30

[Oved wrote on 10 Mar 2021 16:22:](#)

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Depends on the situation.

?According to Rabeinu Yona in sharrei teshuva, if the person just sinned once, then step 1 is Regret but if he keeps on repeating the sin over and over, then step one is STOP.

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