

Balanced Teshuvah

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Sometimes people get frustrated when they find themselves desiring just those things which they are trying to Teshuvah for. Someone might want to keep a pure and holy mind, but he finds that illicit thoughts keep popping up in his head. He finds that his thoughts are constantly thrown into just those situations which he wished he would never have to experience again.

In acquiring the proper perspective on this, it's important to remember that the main requirement of Teshuvah is that a person should be confronted with the exact same circumstance in which he originally made his mistake, and not to repeat his error. However, how can anyone expect to ever find himself in precisely the same situation as he was then, something which is not entirely in his control?

Hashem, in His infinite mercy, has therefore been so kind to us, and allows us to be tested in our minds. The Baal Shem Tov taught that a person is where his thoughts are. Based on that idea, we can understand that when is tempted with fantasies and thoughts about doing the wrong thing, in some respects it's as if he's actually in that situation.

Although thoughts come into our minds even when we don't call on them, it's in our ability to ignore them. When one breaks his desire to envision these ideas in his mind, it's as if he withstood a real life test. In some ways it's actually harder to withstand the temptation to fantasize than to actually do something about them.

Therefore, instead of getting frustrated when a person sees that he's being confounded by thoughts about things which he would rather not ever have know of, he should realize that Hashem is allowing him to merit a true, balanced Teshuvah.

This is his opportunity to truly rectify all that he has done wrong in the past. We should be thankful to Hashem for allowing us this opportunity, and only be b'simcha!

Based on Meshivas Nefesh 9

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