

# THE DUTIES OF THE HEART, GATE 7:5 - PART 2

*by Rabbi Yaakov Feldman*

In addition to simply admitting to and asking to be forgiven for the sin you'd committed (the third component of teshuva), you'd also be expected to understand that you've likely committed many others. And not only blatant ones, but subtle sins, too; since everything we do and say can either do quiet and tender good or set off subtle noxious chords in others and be suffused with self-indulgence. So you'd need to admit to and ask to be forgiven for those sins as well.

You'd likely remember them all the time and would fast and mourn in anguish; you'd spend the long cold night praying to, beseeching, and pleading with G-d to forgive you and to restore your spiritual well-being. And you'd be prone to persuading others to better themselves, too, like someone with a dread disease he'd brought on himself, who now knows how foolish he'd been and wants others to know also.

And when it comes to taking it upon yourself never to commit the sin in question again (the fourth and final component of teshuva), you'd do well to consider the pro's and con's of sinning. As Ibn Pakudah puts it, that comes down to "weighing the immediate but fleeting and mixed pleasure you'd get from committing a sin against the eventual, permanent, constant, pure and unadulterated pleasure you'd get from fulfilling a mitzvah. Then weighing the quick, short-lived, impermanent woe you might suffer fulfilling a mitzvah" as when you'd visit the sick, perhaps, or attend a funeral, etc. "against the eventual, constant, endless woe you'd suffer for committing a sin".

That would undoubtedly move you to dwell upon your own mortality and what's to follow in its wake if you abandon G-d, who'd been so incessantly loyal and kind to you; and you'd want to be sure that all your debts had been paid to others you might have inadvertently (or purposefully) stolen from -- perhaps even from G-d Himself, so to speak, in your lack of gratitude. And the latter would humble and discomfit you deeply.

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