



The Importance of Pure Thoughts

The Gemara (*Yoma 29a*) states, “*Hirhurei aveirah kashin mei’aveirah*,” thinking of sin (*arayos*) is more severe than committing the sin itself. The *mefarshim* ask, how can a mere thought of sin be more severe than transgressing the sin itself?

The Rambam (*Moreh Nevuchim 3:8*; see *Rabbeinu Bachya, Devarim 29:18*) explains that a person is comprised of two components: the body (i.e., the physical component) and the mind (i.e., the G-dly, spiritual component). The brain is the foremost bodily organ, as it controls both the physical and spiritual components of the person.

Ordinarily, when one commits a sin, it negatively affects only the organ which he used to commit the sin. On the other hand, when one sins by having sinful

thoughts, he damages the organ upon which his entire physical and spiritual being is dependent.

We all understand that when one commissions a slave to perform menial work it is not as demeaning as when someone commissions a respected person to do such work. The same concept applies to sin —sinning with the mind is more damaging than sinning with other organs.

On the positive side – *middah tova merubah* – when one protects his mind from inappropriate thoughts, he is not only uplifting his mind, but rather his entire being, toward the Ribono Shel Olam!