



Proper Surroundings – Introduction

The *Rambam* famously writes (*Deios* 6:1) that Hashem created man with the natural tendency to become influenced by his surroundings and by those around him, both in the way he thinks and in the way he acts.

Therefore, a person should try to spend his time amongst virtuous and righteous people in order to become influenced by them for the better. He should do his best to stay far away from corrupt people. Regarding this, Dovid Hamelech says (*Tehillim* 1:1): “Praised is the man who does not follow the counsel of the wicked.”

The *Rambam* adds that even if one’s only choice is to either live amongst non-righteous people or become a recluse and live alone in the backwaters, without any friends, he should choose to live in solitude, rather than live with people who may influence him negatively.