Repentance and verbal confession

*In his Mishne Torah, Maimonides dedicates **ten chapters** to the subject of Teshuba (repentance). In those chapters he describes and explains the technical issues involved in **the process of repentance**. He deals in length with the idea of **freedom of choice** and its relationship to Teshuba, and most interestingly, **he clarifies the Jewish view on afterlife and the World to come ('olam-habba).** On the last chapter he elaborates on the proper way to serve God: if we should **serve God expecting a reward or out of our unconditional love for Him**. In this month, Elul, I will try B'H to cover some of these important issues.*

At the very beginning of Hilkhot Teshuba (The Laws of Teshuba 1:1) Maimonides clarifies that **Teshuba**, understood as**: 1.Admission of our wrong behavior. 2. Repentance and 3. Resolution to change our behavior,** is a ***prerequisite*** for the performance of the Mitzvah which is explicit in the Torah: the Viduy, or "confession".

"When one repents and returns from his sin, he must confess before God… as it is written: (bamidbar 5:6) "…and they shall confess the sin that they committed". This refers to a oral confession. This confession is positive commandment".

Oral or verbal confession is said to the exclusion of **a mental confession**. Similar to psychoanalysis, where the patient begins his metal healing when he or she is able **to articulate his trauma,** in the process of Teshuba, we reach the level **of 'admission of our sins'** only when we are able to articulate our transgressions with words, not with thoughts. Bad habits might remain forever **in our subconscious mind** unless we articulate them. Confessing and verbalizing is **the ultimate way of admitting our mistakes**, which is the most important step we must take to arrive to **the goal** of the Teshuba process: **positive behavioral change.**