

A PROJECT OF

KA'ASHER TZIVA HASHHEM

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SPREADING AWARENESS OF THE IMPORTANCE OF HAVING KAVANAH B'MITZVOS

"The difference between doing a Mitzvah with and without kavanah is greater than the difference between Shamayim and Earth!"
-Rav Aryeh Finkel ztz"l

The *Shulchan Aruch* (Orach Chaim 60:4) rules that *mitzvos tzrichos kavanah*, which means that to fulfill a mitzvah , one *must first* have kavanah. Therefore, before doing a mitzvah, one must take a moment to reflect and then think or say, "I am doing this mitzvah כאשר צוה השם - as Hashem commanded.

The *Mishna Berura* writes (60:7) that the kavanah one should have before doing a mitzvah is the kavanah "*Ka'asher Tziva Hashem*". With this concept, a person can connect and bond with Hakadosh Baruch Hu through the mitzvah. When a person has this kavanah, it gives them an awareness that with their actions, they are doing the will of Hashem.

The Aruch Hashulchan writes (Orach Chaim 60:8) that for an action to have the sanctity of a mitzvah, kavanah is required. Otherwise, the action is not a mitzvah.

In Addition, Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach (Halichos Shlomo on Moadim, Rosh Hashana, 2:20) writes that kavanah is an integral part of the mitzvah act and not simply an additional requirement. Therefore, a lack of kavanah is not merely a defect in the fulfillment of the mitzvah but rather makes it as if the mitzvah has not been done at all.

See also Shevet Halevi (Vol. 4, 8-9) who writes that a mitzvah done without kavanah is like a mundane activity.

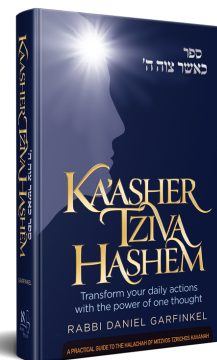
HaGoan Rav Yosef Stern ztz"l was a grandson of Rav Yaakov Yosef Herman ztz"l. A grandson of Rav Yosef, who was close with his grandfather, relates the following story:

Not long my grandfather passed away, he appeared to me in a dream. I asked him, "What happens in *Shamayim*?"

My *zaidy* responded that he was able to tell me several things:

"First, in *Shamayim*, the prohibition of *lashon hara*, is treated with utmost severity. Second, it is an *olam hafuch*- an upside-down world.

Third, a person's kavanah in his actions is a very essential thing in *Shamayim* and plays a major role. There, the reward depends not only on a person's actions but also on their intentions.



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