

A PROJECT OF
**KA'SHER TZIVA
HASHHEM**

SPREADING AWARENESS OF THE IMPORTANCE OF HAVING KAVANAH B'MITZVOS

One who does a mitzvah unknowingly (such as, absentmindedly blowing a shofar, or eating matzah on Pesach without realizing it is matzah or that it is Pesach) has not fulfilled the mitzvah.

-*Biur Halachah* (60:4:)

The *Chayei Adam* (68:9) rules that at times, a mitzvah done without a clear kavanah is still acceptable. For example reciting *Krias Shema* during davening, as we ordinarily do, or shake lulav at the appropriate time and place, then even if he did not have in mind to fulfill his obligation, he has nonetheless fulfilled it.

However, the *Mishna Berura* (60:10) points out that this leniency of the *Chayei Adam* only applies when it is *muchach*, meaning that it is apparent and self-evident that the person did the action because it is a mitzvah. (Meaning it is apparent either from the mitzvah act itself or from the preparation that one did beforehand, that the act is being done *l'sheim mitzvah*. The self-evident nature of the performance of the mitzvah serves as kavanah.)

The *Mishna Berura* also notes that, although one has fulfilled their obligation in this way, it is certainly not ideal. This way of doing a mitzvah is only considered to be *bedieved*, a valid but inferior way.

Many people desire to do mitzvos in a *lechatchilah* manner. They are careful to buy the most beautiful lulav and esrog, or the best *tefillin* with all the *hiddurim*. What a shame it would be to end up performing these mitzvos in a mediocre and inferior way, after exerting all the effort and spending so much money! All Poskim agree that not having proper kavanah when doing a mitzvah makes the fulfillment of such a mitzvah only *bedieved*. How can a person feel satisfied when they know their mitzvah was only second-rate because they relied on a leniency to fulfill it?

A man once admitted to the *Chofetz Chaim* that he would regularly say *Krias Shema* at the latest possible *zman* and that he was satisfied with fulfilling the minimum obligation and that he did not consider it to be important to do it *l'mehadrin*.

The *Chofetz Chaim* nodded.

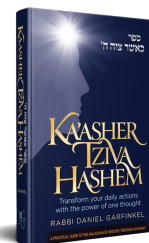
"Indeed, that are people like that.

There are tribes in Africa who are satisfied with covering only a small portion of their bodies, they don't have pants or shirts.

They live in thatched huts and are content with eating fruit and raw meat. What others consider to be *bedieved*, they consider to be *lechatchilah!*

The *Chofetz Chaim* then looked straight at the man and asked, "How many rooms do you have in your house?" The man turned white. He suddenly understood the holes in his logic.

From that point on, the man said he would make sure to do his mitzvos in the best possible way.



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