

A PROJECT OF

KA'SHER TZIVA HASHHEM

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SPREADING AWARENESS OF THE IMPORTANCE OF HAVING KAVANAH B'MITZVOS

"If one affixes a *mezuzah* to his doorpost thinking that it is an amulet or good luck charm, would anyone think that such an act has any connection to a *mitzvah*?!"

-*Hagoan Rav Boruch Ber Leibowitz ztz"l*

As mentioned, The *Chayei Adam* (68:9) rules that at times, a mitzvah done without a clear kavanah is still acceptable.

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. 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.

Therefore, if one mistakenly relies on the *Chayei Adam's* leniency for *all* mitzvahs, he will lose out on innumerate mitzvah opportunities that do not fulfill the condition of the *Mishna Berurah*. This is because there are many situations where it is *not* clear that one is doing the action for the sake of the mitzvah.

The following are some common situations in which it is not obvious that one is intending to do a mitzvah:

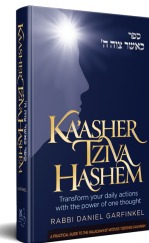
- Lending Money
- Repaying a loan
- Returning a lost item
- Paying a worker on time (such as a taxi driver, barber, or repairman)
- Refraining from taking someone else's item.

These are actions which most people do ordinarily; however, they usually will have non-mitzvah motivations for doing them. For example, people may want to be a good citizen or have consideration for others; they may want their fellow man to reciprocate; they may simply want to follow the laws of the land. In any event, fulfilling a mitzvah obligation is usually the farthest thing from their mind.

A man once approached Rav Shlomo Zalman Aurbach ztz"l and asked him to explain the following *Mishna*. The *Mishna in Makkos* states, *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* wants to give merit to Yisrael, therefore, He gave them Torah and mitzvos.

"Please help me understand," the man said. "Isn't having more mitzvos a burden? It makes life more difficult!"

Rav Aurbach responded with the following explanation: "Many mitzvos involve actions that people are doing anyway, such as putting on shoes in the morning. Hashem, in His great kindness, gave *Klal Yisroel* the merit of a mitzvah to put on shoes in a specific order, the right before the left. Similarly, many mitzvos are actions that we do anyway and therefore do not require extra effort on our part. If we simply have in mind that we are performing a mitzvah when we do them, we will be rewarded!"



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