

A PROJECT OF

KA'ASHER TZIVA HASHHEM

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SPREADING AWARENESS OF THE IMPORTANCE OF HAVING KAVANAH B'MITZVOS

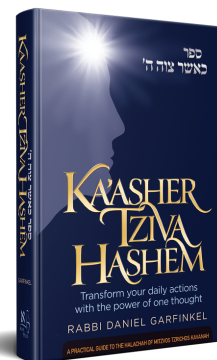
"It is a terrible shame that one who toiled to do everything that the Torah requires of him should not receive his full reward, simply because of the lack of kavanah!"
-Chofetz Chaim

One is required to have in mind that one is doing the mitzvah, כאשר צוה השם, as Hashem commanded. (Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim 60:4) And in addition, beyond the halachic perspective, kavanah is the main component in our service of Hashem. As the Mesillas Yesharim writes: Our Sages ztz"l said, רחמנא ליבא בעי, Hashem desires the heart. To Hashem, the external actions of the mitzvos are not enough; rather, the main aspect to Him is that one's heart be pure in order to intend a true service.

The difference between having clear kavanah before doing a mitzvah versus relying on the concept of muchach can be compared to two gold cups that appear to be identical. One is priced to sell for \$10,000, while the other costs only \$100. This is because the first one is made of solid gold, while the other is only gold-plated. To the untrained eye they seem identical but, in truth, they are worlds apart.

The Aruch HaShulchan (Orach Chaim 60:8) writes, "לפי מה דקימא לן מצוות צריכות כוונה", According to that which we pasken that mitzvos require kavanah, one should be careful to have kavanah l'shem mitzvah before doing any mitzvah.

Rav Shimon Schwab ztz"l once stayed in the home of the Chofetz Chaim. On Shabbos night, the Chofetz Chaim spoke about the taste of manna — how its taste would change and conform according to the thoughts of the person who ate it. "But," asked the Chofetz Chaim, "what did manna taste like if the eater did not have any thought in mind?" Answered the Chofetz Chaim, "Without thought, there is no taste! This was especially true for manna, something that was spiritual in nature, since anything spiritual is empty and void without putting one's mind into it!



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