

# Do You Daven As If Your Life Depends On it?

This year, we begin our journey into the *Yomim Noraim* with the future of *Klal Yisrael* and the world hanging precariously in the balance. And though the fate of our people and the world seems frighteningly uncertain, there is at least one thing that we do have control over: *kavana* in our *tefilos*.

This Rosh Hashana, your personal fate and that of the Jewish people, may rest upon the quality—the *kavana*—of your prayers. So as you *daven*, please keep in mind that the intention behind your words really does matter. In fact, it could make all the difference in the world.

## Suggestions for Improving *Kavana*

Strategies for creating and maintaining a connection with Hashem.

### Prepare Yourself Before Davening—It's Crucial

Come on time and settle down. Stop and think about what you can accomplish with your prayers. Prior to davening, think what you need and how Hashem can bless you with it.

### Internalize That You Are Standing Before Hashem

As often as you can (preferably, at least before the end of each *b'racha*), visualize yourself thanking Hashem and asking for His compassion and mercy. Rejoice that you are supplicating before the only One who can really help you.

### Personalize Your Prayers

Pray with *kavana* to Hashem to maintain your security, health, sustenance, shalom, *ruchnius*, etc. Hashem is the only One who can really grant your personal requests and fulfill your needs.

### Controlling Foreign Thoughts During Davening

If you had an opportunity to count a stack of \$100 bills and could only keep them if your count was accurate, would you allow thoughts of other plans or responsibilities to enter your mind at that time?

A person cannot concentrate on two different thoughts simultaneously. Focusing on the words of the prayers will help prevent the person from having inappropriate thoughts during *davening*.

Remember, Hashem only requires of us that which we can accomplish.

### Study The Meaning Of The Words Of Davening

One of the many reasons why people find it difficult to have *kavana* during *davening* is because they do not understand what they are saying when they *daven*. Learn the meaning of the words of *davening*. This will help to awaken the desire to have *kavana* during *davening*.

For example, when saying *פתח את ידך ומשביע* "פּוֹתַח אֶת יָדְךָ לְכֹל חַי רִצּוֹן" in *Ashrei*, *daven* for your **livelihood**.

When saying *יְנַחֵם אֶמְנוּ וְצַדִּיקֵינוּ* in *Birchas HaTorah* have *kavana* that your **children cleave to Torah**. For health have *kavana* in "רפאנו". For *Eretz Yisroel* concentrate on "ראה נא" and "ולמלשינים". For **spirituality** have *kavana* in "השיבנו" and "שלח לנו". For **peace** have *kavana* in "שים שלום".

Perhaps most importantly, for the **Geulah**, have *kavana* in "את צמח דוד" and "ולירושלים עירך".

In addition, some of the *tefilos* are written in language we find difficult. For instance the *y'kum purkan* we recite each Shabbos after reading from the *Sefer Torah*. It is full of concerns which are very close to our heart..... asking for children who study and are scrupulous in the observance of the Torah, for long life, for health. If we took the trouble to think of the meaning of the words, we would say it with deeply heartfelt longing.

### Keep A Record And Be Proud Of Your Success In *Kavana*

At this time of year we all know that "All our deeds are written in a book". Your book in this world will positively reflect on your book in the next world. Keep a record and be proud of your success in having *kavana*.



## Mark Your Success in Having *Kavana* in Davening During Aseres Y'mei Teshuva

Rosh Hashana I	Rosh Hashana II	Monday 3 Tishrei	Tuesday 4 Tishrei	Wednesday 5 Tishrei	Thursday 6 Tishrei	Friday 7 Tishrei	Shabbos 8 Tishrei	Sunday 9 Tishrei	Yom Kippur
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