



Volume 1. Issue 2.

Good Intentions

The *Mishnah* in *Brachot* (2:1) states:

"If one was reading the Torah and the time for Sh'ma arrived: if he concentrated with his heart he has fulfilled his obligation."

The *Gemarah* in *Brachot* interprets this *Mishnah*, stating:

"This implies that Mitzvot require kavanah (intention). [No, rather] what is the meaning of 'concentrating with his heart'? To read. But he is reading! Rather [the Mishnah] refers to a case where he is koreh le'haggiah."

What is the meaning of this answer *koreh le'haggiah*?

Rashi interprets *koreh lehaggiah* to mean an automatic reading where the reader is not aware of what he is reading. The reader is only examining the text, skimming through the Torah, and does not intend to say the *Sh'ma*. Here, a person is not *yotzei* because the act is being performed automatically.

Tosafot disagrees with *Rashi*. They state that a person is not *yotzei* in this case, not because he is not concentrating and reading automatically, but rather *koreh le'haggiah* is ineffective because it is an incorrect reading. *Tosafot* answers that the case of *koreh le'haggiah* is reading without taking into account the proper pronunciation and *nekudot* (punctuation). Therefore when the *Mishnah* is talking about having *kavanah*, it refers to a case where a person is reading the *Sh'ma* correctly.

However, both *Rashi* and *Tosafot* seem to agree, that the *kavanah* required for *Sh'ma* is the same as the *kavanah* required for any other *mitzvah*. Both *Rashi* and *Tosafot* try to explain the exception of *koreh le-haggiah* as an incomplete performance of the *mitzvah* of *Sh'ma*.

The *Rashba* however, seems to make a distinction between the *Sh'ma* and other *mitzvot*. The *Rashba* comments that the *kavanah* required in *Kriyat Sh'ma* is that of *kabbalat ol malchut shamayim* - the acceptance of the yoke of heaven. *Rashba* seems to emphasise that this kind of *kavanah* is different to that of all other *mitzvot*, because the *mitzvah* of *kriyat Sh'ma* is not only to concentrate on the words being said, but also to turn towards *Hashem* and accept Him as the *melech malchei hamlachim*. This is a required element

in the recital of the *Sh'ma* going beyond just the simple *kavanah* of performing the *mitzvah*.

The *Rambam* also supports this view. In *Hilchot Kriat Sh'ma* (2:1) the *Rambam* writes:

"He who read Sh'ma and did not concentrate during the first verse (Sh'ma Yisrael) did not fulfil his obligation. As for the other verses, if he did not concentrate, he has fulfilled his obligation, even if he was reading the Torah routinely or checking sections of the text."

The implication of the *Rambam* is clear. If the reason why *koreh le'haggiah* was due to the element of automatic or incorrect reading, as *Rashi* and *Tosafot* hold, it should apply to all sections of the *Sh'ma*. The fact that the *Rambam* says that if one did not concentrate in the sections of *Sh'ma* (besides the *pasuk* of *Sh'ma* itself) he is still *yotzei b'dieved*, implies that there is something different about the first verse. It would be wrong to maintain that the *kavanah* the *Rambam* spoke of applying to the first verse was the same *kavanah* that applied to the rest of the verses because *Rambam* holds that the recital of all three sections of *Sh'ma* is a biblical obligation (*De'orayta*) - i.e. all have the same level of obligation. So what is different about the first verse according to the *Rambam*?

Rav Soleveitchik answers this question by saying that the *kiyum* of the *mitzvah* of *Sh'ma* is different for the first verse and the other verses. The Rav says like the *Rashba*, that there is an extra level of *kavana* needed to fulfil one's obligation with regards to the first verse. This level of *kavanah* is that of *kabbalat ol malchut shamayim*. The first verse - "*Sh'ma Yisrael, Hashem Elokeinu, Hashem Echad*" - contains this theme of accepting the yoke of Heaven. It is during this verse that an extra level of *kavanah* is needed. However, the rest of the verses of *Sh'ma* only need be recited with the level of universal *kavanah* that applies to all other *mitzvot*. Therefore, when the *Rambam* states that one who does not have *kavanah* during these verses is *yotzei*, the concentration he is referring to is this second, additional level of *kavanah* of accepting the yoke of heaven, which does not apply to the later verses of the *Sh'ma*.

Yehudah Gottlieb

Revision Questions

ברכות ב' ב' - ד' א'

- To what does *בין הפרקים* refer? (ב' ב')
- Explain the ordering of the chapters of *kriyat sh'ma*? (ב' ב')
- Explain the debate or ruling in the following cases: (ג' ב')
 - Reading *sh'ma* without hearing the words.
 - Not being precise with the pronunciation of the words.
 - Reading the *p'sukim* out of order.
 - If someone made a mistake.
- What is ruling regarding an employee working in a tree with regards to reading *sh'ma* and *t'fillah*? (ד' ב')
- Until when is a groom exempt from reciting *sh'ma*? (ה' ב')
- What are the three cases where *Rabban Gamliel* acted against the ruling of the *mishnah*? What was his justification in each of these cases? (ו' ה'-ז')
- What was the name of *Rabban Gamliel's* slave? (ז' ב')
- Can a groom be *machmir* and recite *sh'ma* on his wedding night? (ח' ב')
- What three *mitzvot* are close relatives of the deceased exempt from prior to the burial? What is the law regarding those carrying the coffin and others attending the funeral? (א' א')
- What is the law regarding the obligation of *sh'ma* for people attending a funeral as the mourners pass by them after the burial? (ג' ב')
- What are the *mitzvot* that women, slaves and minors are exempt from listed in the *mishnah* and why? What are the listed *mitzvot* that they are obligated to perform? (ג' א')
- What is the debate regarding a *ba'al ker*i regarding *sh'ma* and *birkat ha'mazon*? [To which *takanah* does this debate (and the next three *Mishnayot*) refer?] (ד' א')
- If someone was in the *mikvah* close to *netz ha'chamah* what should they do with regards to *sh'ma*? What if the water was filthy? (ה' ג')
- Explain the debate about a *zav* that also becomes a *ba'al ker*i? What are the other cases included in this debate? (ו' ג')
- Explain the debate about the starting and finishing times for all the *t'fillot*? (ד' א')

Local Shiurim

Sunday -Thursday

Between mincha & ma'ariv

Mizrachi Shul

David Bankier

9:50pm (after ma'ariv)

Beit Midrash -

Naftali Herc

Yehuda Gottlieb

Friday

Between kabalat-Shabbat & ma'ariv

Mizrachi Shul

Shabbat

10 minutes before mincha

Mizrachi Shul

Next Week's Mishnayot...

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	שבת קודש
17 th Oct. ב' חשוון	18 th Oct. ג' חשוון	19 th Oct. ד' חשוון	20 th Oct. ה' חשוון	21 st Oct. ו' חשוון	22 nd Oct. ז' חשוון	23 rd Oct. ח' חשוון
Brachot 4: 2-3	Brachot 4: 4-5	Brachot: 4:6-7	Brachot 5: 1-2	Brachot 5: 3-4	Brachot 5:5-6:1	Brachot 6: 2-3

