



All of the service of Hashem is dependent upon the improvement of one's character traits.

Vilna Gaon - Even Shleima, Chapter 1

Kavanah During Davening Module

Packet 1

איזו היא עבודה שהיא בלב? הוי אומר זו תפילה

What is the service (of Hashem) that is in the heart? I would say Tefillah

Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Ta'anit, 2a

September 11, 2006

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Contact Information

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Use of Material

The material in this *ACTT Module Packet* is intended for the use of the ACTT organization’s members and any other individuals interested in creating and sustaining meaningful changes in their lives. If an organization is interested in using this material, the ACTT organization would appreciate your contacting us. Thank you.

ACTT Kavanah During Davening Module – Packet 1

Goals of *Kavanah During Davening* Module

- To deepen one’s understanding of the importance of Tefillah in general and *Kavanah During Davening* in particular.
- To study sections of the Shemoneh Esrei in depth in order to increase one’s understanding of Tefillah, thereby improving one’s *Kavanah During Davening*.

Module Duration

Kavanah During Davening will be covered in several parts. This initial module will last for 9 weeks.

To Do List

- If you are not yet a member of the ACTT Organization, fill out a membership application and submit it
- Fill out the “ACTT *Kavanah During Davening* Commitment Form”, keep a copy for yourself and submit a copy to the organization
- On a daily basis:
 - Follow the Learning Schedule and record your *Kavanah During Davening* activity in your “ACTT *Kavanah During Davening* Activity Log”
 - Record your maintenance activity (from the *Ahavas Chesed* and *Judging Favorably* modules) in your “ACTT *Kavanah During Davening* Activity Log”
- Participate in the chizuk activities, as desired:
 - ACTT *Kavanah During Davening* kick-off event and face-to-face discussion group meetings
 - ACTT online discussion group and e-mail list
 - Read inspirational material from sources recommended by the ACTT organization and also distributed by the ACTT organization
 - Recommend inspirational material to the ACTT membership and submit inspirational material to be distributed to all the ACTT members

***Kavanah During Davening* Resources**

The following are some resources for learning about *Davening* and *Kavanah During Davening*:

- *The Art of Jewish Prayer* by Rabbi Yitzchok Kirzner with Lisa Aiken; Judaica Press; ISBN: 188058283X
- *Praying With Fire - Igniting the Power of Your Tefillah - A 5-Minute Lesson-A-Day* by Rabbi Heshy Kleinman; Artscroll Mesorah; ISBN: 1422600157

- Pathway to Prayer, A Translation and Explanation of the Shemoneh Esray by Rabbi Mayer Birnbaum; distributed by Feldheim Publishers; ISBN: 1583301097
- Rav Schwab on Prayer - The Great Rav's Teachings on the Siddur by Rabbi Shimon Schwab; Artscroll Mesorah; ISBN: 1578195128
- Twerski on Prayer by Rabbi Abraham J. Twerski; Shaar Press; ISBN: 1578196728
- "Change the Way you Daven" tape series, released by the Awareness/ Chovevey Tefillah organization; P.O. Box 753, Monsey, NY 10952; (845) 426-1999
- נתיב בינה מעת הרב יששכר יעקבסון: הוצאת ספרים "סיני" תל-אביב

The Rewards of Praying with Concentration

Reproduced with permission of Rabbi Mayer Birnbaum of Passaic, NJ, from Pathway to Prayer, A Translation and Explanation of the Shemoneh Esray by Rabbi Mayer Birnbaum

In order to aid those who are encouraged to strengthen themselves in the service of prayer, mention should be made of some of the other benefits one receives for praying with concentration- outside of fulfilling one's obligation of prayer:

The Talmud Yerushalmi (Brachos 5:5) quotes Rabbi Shmuel ben Nachmaini, who says that if one concentrated his heart on his prayer, he can rest assured that his prayer was heard (in Heaven).

The Gemorah (Shabbos 127a) is the source for that which we say in the morning prayer after Bircas Hatorah, that one of the special mitzvos for which one receives reward in this world, besides the main reward he receives in the World- to- Come, is concentrating in tefillah.

The Ya'aros Devash (R' Yonason Eybschuetz, 1690-1764) writes (ch.4), "It is tried and tested that on whatever day a person prays the morning (Shemoneh Esray) prayer and Shema with concentration, he will earn the opportunity to do another great mitzvah on that day. He will also succeed in his business, and even if it does not seem that he is succeeding right away, ultimately he will find that he did. And, needless to say, he will succeed that day in Torah learning."

The Meiri (R' Menachem ben Shlomo Hameiri, 1249-1315) writes in his composition on Teshuva (p. 507), "From what one understands (about the praises of Hashem, His wonders and His good deeds) when he says the prayers, he will reach the perfection intended by them, and cling to Hashem and His ways." We see that understanding the meaning of one's prayers will bring him to true perfection. Similarly, Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch zt'v'l writes in his monumental Horeb (p. 475), "The flower of all tefillah is the resolution which infuses the whole man and unites all your powers to be a servant of Hashem in life. Your attitude to life, clarified anew in prayer, should help you toward this." But he warns (p.551), "It is obvious that the fruit of your inner self's growth from the tefillah can ripen only by means of devotion. Your prayer has only the worth that you have acquired from its thoughts and sentiments." So we see that through prayer with concentration and devotion one can bring himself to his true purpose in life- to be a servant of Hashem.

Finally, the Sefer Darchei Noam (79a) states, "One must be very careful in his Tefillos, certainly in these times, which are close to the arrival of Mashiach, because there is nothing that affects the Heavenly spheres like prayers that are favorable to Hashem; for it is on them that the coming of Mashiach depends!" R' Yaakov Emden writes in the introduction to his siddur, "If the Jewish people

would pray even one tefillah properly in all aspects, they would be redeemed immediately without any doubt in the world!”

We can bring the coming of Mashiach, but it requires “prayer that is favorable to Hashem,” proper prayer- prayer with concentration. May we merit the ultimate redemption speedily in our days.

ACTT Module Packet Appendix



ACTT Commitment Form – Kavanah During Davening Module

Remember, it is better to commit to less – you can always do more!

Please PRINT all information

This commitment does not constitute a vow; I am doing the following, bli neder

From ___/___/___ To ___/___/___

In memory of _____

As a zechus for:

a refuah shelaimah for _____

a shidduch for _____

parnassa for _____

other _____

- *Davening ___ Tefillos with Kavanah daily in a 😊 mood*
(ACTT recommends concentrating on 1-2 Tefillos daily – the *ACTT Daily Activity Log* has suggestions)
- *Performing ___ judging favorably act(s) daily/weekly in a 😊 mood*
(ACTT recommends 1 act daily for maintenance - *Judging Favorably Module Packet* has suggestions)
- *Performing ___ act(s) of chesed daily/weekly in a 😊 mood*
(ACTT recommends 1 act daily for maintenance - *Ahavas Chesed Module Packet* has suggestions)
- *Learning ___ minutes daily from* (ACTT recommends 5 minutes daily):
 - The ACTT *Kavanah During Davening Learning Schedule Book* (see *ACTT Daily Activity Log*)
 - Praying with Fire by Rabbi Heshy Kleinman
 - Pathway to Prayer by Rabbi Mayer Birnbaum
 - Twerski on Prayer by Rabbi Abraham J. Twerski
 - Other _____

Please PRINT all information

Name: _____ Date _____

Email address: _____ Tel. number _____

Address: _____

😊 *Be happy about your ability to Daven with Kavanah!* 😊

Please email form: commitment@actt613.org or mail: ACTT, 48 Edgemount Road, Edison, NJ 08817

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ACTT Daily Activity Log – Kavanah During Davening Module

Abbreviations: 1) Art of Prayer = The Art of Jewish Prayer by Rabbi Yitzchok Kirzner with Lisa Aiken;
 2) K= *Kavanah During Davening*; 3) JF = *Judging Favorably*; 4) AC = *Ahavas Chesed*

Acknowledgement: Some of the ideas for Kavanah During Davening were adapted from Praying with Fire by Rabbi Heshy Kleinman

IDEAS FOR IMPROVING KAVANAH DURING DAVENING

Meditate for 5 minutes before davening
 Write translations to difficult words in your siddur
 Think about all Hashem has given you
 Say the words, “ I am standing before Hashem” out loud
 Remember that Kavanah During Davening is a Halachik requirement of prayer
 Pronounce each word slowly and clearly
 Use a siddur, even for Tefillos I know by heart
 Establish a specific place for davening

Learn the meanings of words you do not know
 Select one prayer a week to say with more kavanah
 Write down your favorite phrases from davening and focus on them when you daven
 Arrive before the minyan begins to daven and be ready when they start
 When davening at home, remove distractions from around you
 Select one word a day to say with more kavanah
 Select one phrase a day to say with more kavanah
 Before you start to daven, review what Hashem has given you in the last 24 hours

		Learned (√)		Activity	
Date	√	Book	Chapter	√	Notes (description of activity, comments, etc.)
EXAMPLE ENTRY					
Day	m/d/06	√	Art Of Jewish Prayer	x	√
				√	K: Concentrated for 3 seconds on each word of Modim in Shemoneh Esray
				√	JF: Realized that my friend did not see me carrying packages when he passed by
				√	AC: did car pool for a neighbor with a sick child at home

Note: Each chapter assigned below is to be read over several days - please decide how much of each chapter you want to read each day

Tue	9/12/06	√	Art of Prayer	1		
Wed	9/13/06	√	Art of Prayer	1		
Thu	9/14/06	√	Art of Prayer	1		
Fri	9/15/06	√	Art of Prayer	1		
Sat	9/16/06	√	Art of Prayer	1		



ACTT Daily Activity Log (continued) – *Kavanah* During Davening Module

		Learned (✓)		Activity		
Date		✓	Book	Chapter	✓	Notes (description of activity, comments, etc.)
Sun	9/17/06		Art of Prayer	1		
Mon	9/18/06		Art of Prayer	1		
Tue	9/19/06		Art of Prayer	1		
Wed	9/20/06		Art of Prayer	2		
Thu	9/21/06		Art of Prayer	2		
Fri	9/22/06		Art of Prayer	2		
Sat	9/23/06		Art of Prayer	2		
Sun	9/24/06		Art of Prayer	2		
Mon	9/25/06		Art of Prayer	2		
Tue	9/26/06		Art of Prayer	3		
Wed	9/27/06		Art of Prayer	3		



ACTT Daily Activity Log (continued) – *Kavanah* During Davening Module

		Learned (✓)		Activity	
Date	✓	Book	Chapter	✓	Notes (description of activity, comments, etc.)
Thu	9/28/06	Art of Prayer	3		
Fri	9/29/06	Art of Prayer	3		
Sat	9/30/06	Art of Prayer	3		
Sun	10/1/06	Art of Prayer	3		
Mon	10/2/06	Art of Prayer	3		
Tue	10/3/06	Art of Prayer	3		
Wed	10/4/06	Art of Prayer	4		
Thu	10/5/06	Art of Prayer	4		
Fri	10/6/06	Art of Prayer	4		
Sat	10/7/06	Art of Prayer	4		
Sun	10/8/06	Art of Prayer	4		



ACTT Daily Activity Log (continued) – *Kavanah During Davening* Module

		Learned (√)		Activity		
Date		√	Book	Chapter	√	Notes (description of activity, comments, etc.)
Mon	10/9/06		Art of Prayer	4		
Tue	10/10/06		Art of Prayer	4		
Wed	10/11/06		Art of Prayer	4		
Thu	10/12/06		Art of Prayer	4		
Fri	10/13/06		Art of Prayer	4		
Sat	10/14/06		Art of Prayer	4		
Sun	10/15/06		Art of Prayer	4		
Mon	10/16/06		Art of Prayer	4		
Tue	10/17/06		Art of Prayer	4		
Wed	10/18/06		Art of Prayer	5		
Thu	10/19/06		Art of Prayer	5		



ACTT Daily Activity Log (continued) – Kavanah During Davening Module

		Learned (√)		Activity	
Date	√	Book	Chapter	√	Notes (description of activity, comments, etc.)
Fri	10/20/06	Art of Prayer	5		
Sat	10/21/06	Art of Prayer	5		
Sun	10/22/06	Art of Prayer	5		
Mon	10/23/06	Art of Prayer	5		
Tue	10/24/06	Art of Prayer	5		
Wed	10/25/06	Art of Prayer	5		
Thu	10/26/06	Art of Prayer	5		
Fri	10/27/06	Art of Prayer	5		
Sat	10/28/06	Art of Prayer	5		
Sun	10/29/06	Art of Prayer	5		
Mon	10/30/06	Art of Prayer	6		



ACTT Daily Activity Log (continued) – Kavanah During Davening Module

		Learned (√)		Activity	
Date	√	Book	Chapter	√	Notes (description of activity, comments, etc.)
Tue	10/31/06	Art of Prayer	6		
Wed	11/1/06	Art of Prayer	19		
Thu	11/2/06	Art of Prayer	19		
Fri	11/3/06	Art of Prayer	19		
Sat	11/4/06	Art of Prayer	19		
Sun	11/5/06	Art of Prayer	19		
Mon	11/6/06	Art of Prayer	19		
Tue	11/7/06	Art of Prayer	19		
Wed	11/8/06	Art of Prayer	21		
Thu	11/9/06	Art of Prayer	21		
Fri	11/10/06	Art of Prayer	21		

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Glossary

Ahavas Chesedloving kindness
B'li Nederwithout making a formal commitment
Bitachon	.....trust in Hashem
Chesed	.....kindness
Chizuk	.....moral support
Davening	.....praying
Hakaras HaTov	.....gratitude
Kavanah	.....concentration
Klal Yisrael	.....the Jewish people
Lashon Hara	.....evil tongue (speech) that denotes gossip and defamation
Machsom L'fi	.....guarding one's tongue
Midah	.....character trait
Midos	.....character traits
Mussar	.....ethical teaching
Neshamah	.....soul
Nisayon	.....a test
Parnasa	.....livelihood
Refuah Shleimah	.....a complete recovery from an illness
Sefer	.....a book
Shidduch	.....a match of two eligible and marriageable Jewish singles
Shiurim	.....classes
Siddur	.....prayer book
Talmidim	.....students
Tefillah	.....prayer
Tefillos	.....prayers
Teshuva	.....repentance
Zechus	.....merit