

## Mind Matters

Excerpted and adapted from a *shiur* by Rav Moshe Yitzchok Weg

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<https://baishavaad.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/3-Bo-R-Moshe-Yitzchok-Weg.mp3>

*They shall eat the flesh on that night—roasted over the fire—and matzos; with bitter herbs shall they eat it.*

Shmos 12:8

The primary view in the Shulchan Aruch (O.C. 60:4) is that mitzvos *tzrichos kavanah* (mitzvos require that the performer intend to perform them). But the Shulchan Aruch (O.C. 475:4) also rules that one who was forced to eat matzah still fulfills the mitzvah. Why?

The Gemara (Rosh Hashanah 28a) distinguishes between the mitzvah of matzah, which can be fulfilled without *kavanah*, and that of shofar, which cannot.[1] Rashi explains that in the case of matzah, because one enjoys the eating, he fulfills the mitzvah without *kavanah*, but blowing shofar without intent is considered *misaseik*—the act is not attributed to him. The *Acharonim* explain that the standard way that a *ma'asei* mitzvah is attributed to the doer is for him to have *kavanah* to fulfill the mitzvah, but physically enjoying the mitzvah act can also accomplish this. In the case of shofar, with neither *kavanah* nor physical enjoyment, there is no *ma'asei* mitzvah that is attributable to him.

Note that the Mishnah Brurah cites some *Acharonim* who hold that matzah requires *kavanah* even *bedieved* (ex post facto).

[1] Although the Gemara makes this distinction in the *hava amina* (initial hypothesis) stage, it seems that the Shulchan Aruch (based upon the Rambam) understands it to be retained in the Gemara's conclusion.