

מצוות צריכות כוונה



מלחמת היצר

The *paskens* (סימן ס, ערוך שולחן) that one is obligated to have kavana before doing a מצוה.

Having the kavana כאשר ציוה ה' can also turn most routine actions into full-fledged מצוות!

It is preferable to speak out the words of kavana, as the חובות 'המחשבה נמשכת: writes: הלבבות אחר הדיבור'

עצת היצר

Harav Hagaon R' Mordechai Lichtenstein ז"ל is the author of the sefer מצוות הלבבות on the topic of kavana b'mitzvos. In his hakdama, R' Lichtenstein explains why people neglect to have kavana before they do mitzvot:

The Torah tells us (דברים ל, יב-יד):

'כי המצוה הזאת אשר אנכי מצוך היום לא נפלאה היא ממך ולא רחקה הוא וגו'...

...כי קרוב אליך הדבר מאד

בפיך ובלבבך לעשתו'

'For this commandment that I command you today - it is not hidden from you and it is not distant... rather the matter is very near to you in your mouth and in your heart to perform it.'

With these words, the תורה is preempting two possible mistakes that a person might make:

The first mistake is thinking that avodas Hashem requires lofty kavanot which are only relevant to great tzaddikim. 'Surely I will never achieve this level,' the person thinks, 'so why should I even bother trying?'

With this attitude, he will eventually give up and the result will be: 'יתרשל מעבודת' 'חס המצוות ויפול משמים ארץ, חס' ושלום'.

The second mistake is to think that mitzvot don't require any thought at all, and that only the actions are important! If one has this belief, eventually he will forget that he does the mitzvot for Hashem, and avodas Hashem will just become a burden to him.

Therefore, the pasuk which says, "It is not far from you", teaches us that one need not be on a very high level to do the mitzvot. And the pasuk which says "Rather... in your mouth and in your heart to perform it" is telling us that we just need to add the kavana of 'לשם מצות' to our mitzvot - and more than that is not mandatory.

Of course, if one adds more thought to the mitzvah, his mitzvah will certainly achieve a

greater effect, but this is not מעכב.

In addition, Rav Lichtenstein writes how there can be two people, both of whom daven, put on tefillin, say krias Shema, wash Netilas Yadayim, bentch etc. The only difference between them is that one thinks 'לשם' 'השם' before a mitzvah and the other does not.

The one who does will be yotzei his chiyuv and his avodah will be sweet to him, since he knows that he is fulfilling מצות ה' מלך מלכי המלכים הקב"ה. His mitzvot will be as dear to him and as precious as diamonds.

But not so the other person. He may have done all the same actions, but his obligations remain unfulfilled and his avodah just feels like a heavy burden.

We thus see the tremendous importance of adding kavana to all our mitzvot; giving Hashem a nachas ruach, and making our own lives so much sweeter!

מצות חינוך הילדים

It is a מצוה מדברי קבלה to be מחנך children properly. The ח"י אדם writes:

**'אם יש לו בנים קטנים יחנכם
במצוות והיא מצות עשה מדברי
קבלה כמו שכתוב
'חנוך לנער על פי דרכו'
(משלי כב, י)**

The Mishnah Berurah says that chinuch pertains to one's daughter as well (ס' שמג, ס"ק ב).

Therefore, when one is mechanech his child to do mitzvos (and do them with kavana), to learn Torah with them, to have emunah and midos tovos, and when he speaks to them about hashgacha pratis and yir'as shamayim, he should first have in mind:

**הריני מכויין לקיים
מצות חינוך הילדים
כאשר ציוה ה'**

מצות כבוד חכמים וזקנים

It is a mitzvah d'oraysa to stand up straight for a זקן who enters within one's אמות ד', as well as to show honor in other ways such as making room for him to sit down or allowing him to enter a doorway first. This is learned from the פסוק which says:

**'מפני שיבה תקום והדרת פני זקן'
(ויקרא יט, לב)**

This must be done for a seventy-year-old man or woman (some say the age is sixty). If one is

uncertain how old the person is, the halacha requires standing up anyway since we pasken (פיסקי הגר"ש. דאורייתא לחומר) דף קמא-ב)

This mitzvah also applies to a talmid chacham, even one who is younger than sixty, as well as the wife of a talmid chacham.

One is also required to stand up for someone who is doing a mitzvah such as those who are being melaveh a meis. (ט"ז יו"ד סי' ש"ס ס"ק ב)

(This may be the source for the minhag to stand up for a chosson and kallah as they walk down to the חופה, for they are about to do the mitzvah of Kiddushin.)

Similarly, one is required to stand up for a person who is known to be a gomel chesed such as a Hatzalah or Chaveirim volunteer or someone who runs a gemach.

Since it is good manners to show respect for an elder or a respected person, it would not be apparent that one is doing so because it is a mitzvah. Therefore, the mitzvah is not fulfilled unless he first is mechaven:

**הריני מכויין לקיים
מצות כבוד חכמים וזקנים
כאשר צוה השם**

מצות קידוש הכהנים

It is a מצוה to give a כהן prec-

edence for any דבר קדושה, such as when the Gabbai calls him up first to the Torah, or when one is mechaved him with leading a zimun.

Likewise, it is a mitzvah to honor or serve a kohen, for example by giving him the first portion at a meal, by pouring a cup for him or seating him in a place of honor. (עיין ספר מצוות הקצר, עשה נ')

Included in this mitzvah is honoring the kohen with words and even in one's thoughts! (האבן עזרא ויקרא כא, ח)

These comprise the mitzvah d'oraysa of being 'מקדש את הכהן'. It is learned from the pasuk in vayikra which says:

**'וקדשתו כי את לחם אלקיך
הוא מקריב...'
(כא, ח)**

When one does any of these forms of honor, he should first be mechaven:

**הריני מכויין לקיים מצות
'וקדשתו'
כאשר צוה השם**

It is known that when HaRav HaGaon R' Chaim Kanievsky זצ"ל responded to letters that were sent to him, he gave priority to those letters sent by kohanim.

א גוט שבת!