

# מצוות צריכות כוונה

## מצוות חנוכה

The Shulchan Aruch paskens (סימן (ס"ק ד') that one is obligated to have Kavana before doing a Mitzvah. Furthermore, having the Kavana: 'כאשר ציוה ה' can transform a routine action into a full-fledged Mitzvah!

It is preferable to speak out the words of Kavana, as the Chovos Halevavos writes, 'המחשבה נמשכת אחר הדיבור'

### כתב האלטר מקלם:

"צריך להקדים בכל דבר טוב שעושה האדם "כאשר צוה ה' את משה בתורתו, כן אעשה". ואז שָׁכרו מרובה מאוד נעלה, גם בלי צער, ומכל שכן בצער עוד ועוד הן בממון הן בגוף, שָׁכרו מרובה בלי תכלית עד שהקב"ה אמר "חשבון רב יש לי עמך." - ספר חכמה ומוסר חלק שני, רעו

### מצות נר חנוכה

The Rambam, in Hilchos Megilla v'Chanukah writes:

"The mitzvah of Ner Chanukah is an extremely precious mitzvah (מצוה חביבה עד מאד), and a person must take great care to make the miracle known, to increase praise of Hashem and to thank Him for the miracles that He performed for us. Even if one is sustained by tzedakah, he must borrow [money] or sell his cloak in order to buy oil and a lamp to light" (פרק ד הלכה יב).

Although lighting the Menorah is a מצוה דרבנן, one should have Kavana beforehand just like by a מצוה דאורייתא.

(משנה ברורה סימן ס, ס"ק י')

Once, before Chanukah, a student asked HaRav HaGaon R' Avrohom Pam zt"l which Kavana he should have when lighting the Menorah. Rav Pam told the student, "You are required to have Kavana to fulfill the מצוה דרבנן. Without this Kavana, you are missing the essential mitzvah (עיקר המצוה), and any other tefillos or kavanos will not help for that. (מתוך הספר "הרב פאם" מאת ר' שמעון פינקלמאן)

Therefore, before lighting the Chanukah Neiros one should be Mechavin:

### הריני מכויין לקיים מצות

### הדלקת נר חנוכה

### כמו שתקנו החכמים

### מצות דרבנן

Whenever someone does a מצוה דרבנן, he can simultaneously fulfill two mitzvos d'Oraisa: the mitzvas asef of וְעָשִׂיתָ עַל פִּי הַדִּבָּר אֲשֶׁר יִגִּידוּ לְךָ...כְּכֹל אֲשֶׁר יִוְרָךְ, acting according to the words of the Sages (who instituted these mitzvos), and the mitzvas lo sa'asef of לֹא תִסּוּר מִן הַדִּבָּר אֲשֶׁר

יִגִּידוּ לְךָ - not departing from what Chazal instruct us to do. (דברים יז, י-יא)

The ספר המצוות הקצר explains that this mitzvah includes everything that Klal Yisroel has been mekabel to do from חז"ל, written in the Shas that we have in our hands.

(מצות לא תעשה קנח)

Therefore, before lighting the Chanukah neiros, one should also be mechavin for the מצוה דאורייתא:

### הריני מכויין לקיים מצוות

### 'ככל אשר יורוך' ומצות 'לא תסור' כאשר ציוה ה'

### מצות זכרון חסדי ה'

In addition to the מצוה דרבנן of ner Chanukah and the מצוות כָּל אֲשֶׁר יִוְרָךְ לֹא תִסּוּר דאורייתא, one should also be careful to have kavana for the מצוה דאורייתא of זכרון חסדי ה' - recalling the kindness of ה' Who saved us by giving us victory over the יוֹנִים.

Remembering all the chassadim that Hashem constantly does for us is a מצוה דאורייתא, as the pasuk says:

'זוכרת את כל הדרך, אשר הוליקך ה' אלקיך זה ארבעים שנה במדבר' (דברים ח, ב)

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Although these words were said by Moshe Rabbeinu to the Jews in the desert, Rabbeinu Yonah (sha'arei teshuva 3:17) learns through a Kal v'Chomer that this mitzvah applies to the chassadim that Hashem does to each one of us.

It is very important to have this mitzvah in mind when lighting the menorah, because this mitzvah is the very reason why we light the menorah on Chanukah!

As HaRav HaGaon R' Shlomo Zalman Auerbach זצ"ל, explains in his sefer מנחת שלמה (מנחת שלמה, מנחת שלמה) (תניא ס' נח:), on Chanukah we thank ה' for the successful war against יון, and our thanks is in the form of lighting the menorah. He writes:

*"It seems to me that the lighting of the neiros on Chanukah is itself the thanks and the praise (ההודאה) (להודא, meaning that this action will inspire our hearts to thank ה' for the tremendous miracles He did for us in the matter of winning the wars."*

R' Shlomo Zalman goes on to point out that in the words of הנרות הללו...

*"...no mention is made of the פח שמן because the lighting is not done as a remembrance of the פח שמן. For we do not find anywhere that we thank Hashem for many generations for a neis that He did to allow Klal Yisroel to perform a mitzvah."*

It is therefore crucial that when one lights the menorah, he takes a moment to reflect on how Hashem saved us in the wars and that he thanks Him for this!

Before lighting the Chanukah neiros and while singing *maoz tzur* (which describes how Hashem saved us from our enemies), and before saying Al Hanisim or Hallel, one should seize the opportunity to fulfill this mitzvah and be מכויין:

## הריני מכויין לקיים מצות זכרון חסדי ה' כאשר צוה השם

### מנהגי חנוכה

There are many מנהגים that we do on Chanukah including: having Chanukah mesibos, eating foods fried in oil such as donuts and latkes, eating milchig foods (to recall how Yehudis killed Eliporni), giving children Chanukah gelt, and playing with dreidels. These מנהגים are for the purpose of recalling the Chanukah neis - the victory of the Chashmonaim - and to inspire us to have gratitude to Hashem for saving us.

Before doing any of these minhagim, one should first be mechavin:

## הריני מכויין לקיים מצות זכרון חסדי ה' כאשר צוה השם

### Kavana Stories

The following story was told by HaGaon Rav Shach ztz"l:

*HaGaon Rav Isser Zalman Meltzer ztz"l told me a story that happened when he was traveling by train with the Chofetz Chaim.*

*At one of the stations, a poor Jewish*

*woman boarded the train to sell nuts. The Chofetz Chaim purchased some from her. Seeing this, the passengers purchased some as well. Soon, the train's horn sounded, the woman disembarked, and the train continued on its way.*

*When the lady had left, the Chofetz Chaim commented, "Do you know how silk is made? One takes thin threads and makes silk out of it. However, nobody takes silk and turns it into thin threads!"*

*"Similarly, when we purchased the nuts, we could have had in mind that we were helping a poor Jewish woman. This can be compared to turning thin thread into [valuable] silk. But if a person simply buys the nuts because he is hungry and needs to eat, he loses the mitzvah — and that is like taking silk and turning it into thin threads!"* (From the sefer Shimushah Shel Torah, p. 168.)

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*HaGaon Rav Yechezkel Abramsky ztz"l was once walking in the street when he passed an avreich who was rushing to shul.*

*"Where are you running?" R' Chatzkel asked the man. "I am going to attend a bris," he responded.*

*Rav Chatzkel then asked, "What mitzvah does one fulfill by attending a bris?" The avreich was not sure. "Chessed, perhaps?" he responded hesitantly.*

*"When one attends a bris," said R' Chatzkel, "he fulfills the mitzvah of b'rov am hadras Melech!"* (Adapted from sefer Mishmar HaLevi, Parashas Vayeira, p. 136.)

## א לוסטיגער חנוכה!