

מצוות צריכות כוונה

מצות כיבוד אב ואם / מצות שמירת הגוף

The *paskens* (סימן ס, שולחן ערוך) 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: אחר הדיבור'

מצות כיבוד אב ואם

The term *כיבוד אב ואם* refers to two separate מצוות עשה: 1. *כיבוד אב ואם* - the מצוה to honor one's parents, and 2. *מורא אב ואם*, the מצוה to fear one's parents. These two מצוות are clearly written in the Torah:

'כבד את אביך ואת אמך כאשר צוך ה' אלוקיך' (דברים ה, טז)

And

'איש אמו ואביו תיראו' (ויקרא יט, ג)

There are many ways in which one can be מקיים the מצוה of *כיבוד אב ואם*. Some examples are: bringing them food or drink, obeying them, standing up when they enter a room, calling them to

inquire about their wellbeing and dressing them. After a parent passes away, the mitzvah can include saying *Kaddish* for them, naming a child after them, as well as any מצוות, to bring לימוד תורה or *niftar*. When honoring one's parents in any way, one should first have in mind:

הריני מכיין לקיים מצות כיבוד אב ואם כאשר צוה השם

Rav Elyashiv *zt"l* said that if one is already standing, it is proper to sit down so that he can stand up again and thus be מקיים the מצוה (פיסקי הגרי"ש קבט).

One is מקיים of מצוה by refraining from: sitting in a parent's seat, contradicting them, or calling them by their first names – even after they pass away.

When refraining from any of these, one should first be מכיין:

הריני מכיין לקיים מצות מורא אב ואם כאשר צוה השם

One can have this *kavana* every time he addresses his mother or father as "Mommy" and "Tatty" (or "Aba" and "Ima"), since it is forbidden to address a parent by name.

The *אדם* writes that the

main *אב ואם* is in one's thoughts. One must *feel* awe and fear of his parents, and not simply go through the motions without any feeling. Along these lines, the חרדים (ט:לה) writes that by feeling awe and fear, one's actions will follow suit. The סופר writes that honoring a parent is natural and proper, since a child recognizes that their parents have provided for their needs from infancy. However, this is not the מצוה of *כיבוד אב ואם*; it is simply 'honoring a benefactor'.

However, he explains, the mitzvah of *כיבוד אב ואם* is even if the parent was not good to the child! Even so it is a mitzvah to honor them, *כי כן* (כתב סופר, פרשת ואתחנן). *צוה ה'*

Chazal teach us that there are other people with whom we are commanded to perform these mitzvos, besides for our parents. For example, since *בני* 'בנים הרי הן כבנים', one is obligated in these mitzvos for grandparents as well. Stepparents are also included. (חרדים פ' יב, אות ג). In addition, according to some שיטות, one is obligated in the mitzvah of *kibud* towards in-laws. *מדרבנן* one is also obligated in the מצוה of *כיבוד* for an oldest brother!

When fulfilling the mitzvah to honor these people, one must

first be מכּוּיִן:

**הריני מכּוּיִן לקיים מצות כיבוד
זקני/ החם/ החמות/ אחי הגדולי
כאשר צוה השם**

שמירת הגוף

The תורה places a very strong emphasis on a person's responsibility to maintain his health and stay safe. We are given several מצוות in this respect.

The winter is a good time to think about these מצוות, as the cold weather and hazardous conditions force us to pay attention to our health and safety. With a little bit of kavana, we can be fulfilling many mitzvos through the actions we already do.

מצות ולא תשים דמים בביתך

It is a מצוה מדאורייתא for us to keep our homes safe. As the פסוק says, 'ולא תשים דמים, בביתך' (דברים כב, ח) 'and you shall not place blood in your home'

The תורה is commanding us to remove any dangerous hazard from our homes so as not to cause harm to the people who live there.

The ספר מצוות הקצר explains that based on this פסוק it is forbidden to raise a dangerous dog in one's home. (מצות עשה עה)

Although most of us today are not raising dogs, this מצוה is still highly relevant to us! Every time one is careful to move a sharp knife

out of reach of a child, it is a fulfillment of this מצוה. Other examples are: closing a child safety gate or fastening the safety locks on cooktop knobs, draining a bath after bath time, cleaning up broken glass from the floor and securing outlets or exposed electrical wiring.

In the wintertime, one can fulfill this מצוה when putting out salt to melt the ice on his walkway.

This מצוה also applies to hazards as well! When one is careful to spill out used water – which has a רוח רע, it is a fulfillment of this מצוה (הרב ישראל גואלמן, רב ומ"צ קהילת 'משערי תבונה' רמות א - ירושלים)

Instead of a mindless action of self-preservation, we could be fulfilling many מצוות דאורייתא if, beforehand, we are careful to מכּוּיִן:

**הריני מכּוּיִן לקיים
מצות לא תשים דמים בביתך
כאשר צוה ה'**

מצות ונשמרתם מאד לנפשתיכם

In addition to the mitzvah of removing hazards, there is a מצוה to actively protect one's health and wellbeing. The פסוק says 'ונשמרתם מאד...and you shall guard your lives exceedingly' (דברים ד, טו)

Regarding this פסוק, the רמב"ם

writes, "...a complete and healthy body is 'מדרכי ה' (of spiritual importance) since it is impossible to understand or know anything from the wisdom of the Creator if a person is sick. Therefore, it is necessary for one to distance himself from that which causes the body to deteriorate, and to [instead] act in ways that increase healing. (עיין קיצור. (הלכות דעות פ' ד הלכה א), שולחן ערוך סי' לב ס' א)

We already do many things that fit this description! All that's needed is a quick thought to turn these actions into מצוות מדאורייתא!

Some examples of this מצוה are, exercising or taking a walk, going to sleep on time, buckling your seatbelt, being careful not to text while driving, stopping at a stop sign, looking both ways before crossing a street, going to sleep on time, staying calm in stressful situations (see Karyana d'iyagarta – written by the Steipler - 242) following your doctor's instructions, and also taking medicine or vitamins when necessary.

The winter gives us unique opportunities to do this מצוה. We drive cautiously on icy roads, and we put on a warm coat before going outside.

Before doing each of these, let us be careful to have kavana and earn the מצוה:

**הריני מכּוּיִן לקיים מצות
'ונשמרתם מאד לנפשתיכם'
כאשר צוה ה'**

א גוט שבת!

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For a more complete understanding of the topic of מצוות צריכות כוונה, as well as additional practical applications, see ["עין אור"](#)

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