

מצוות צריכות כוונה

א"ח סיבון ס'

Before doing a מצוה, say or think the following:

I am fulfilling the מצוה of _____ as Hashem commanded

הריני מכוין לקיים מצות _____ כאשר ציוה השם

מצוות Practical applications of the מצוה:

חסד	an act of kindness for others, especially your children or spouse: feeding children, changing a diaper, taking out the garbage, cleaning the house to make it pleasant for the family, cooking meals, doing laundry, spending time with your kids, lending a cell phone, shopping for the family's needs, giving directions, returning seforim to their place
תפילה	davening the daily tefillos, making a request from Hashem, saying Tehillim
כבוד אב ואם	showing respect for your parents: listening to their request the first time without arguing, doing something you know they would appreciate, helping your parents at home, running errands, bringing them a drink or something to eat, standing up when they enter the room, calling them on the phone
תלמוד תורה	learning Torah, listening to a shiur
קריאת שמע	saying Shema (additionally have in mind to be עול מלכות שמים)
ברכת המזון	bentching
צדקה	giving tzedakah
ונשמרתם מאד לנפשתיכם	taking care of your health by eating properly, refraining from overeating, exercising, taking medicine or vitamins, brushing teeth, going to sleep, going to a doctor, wearing a seatbelt, driving safely, crossing the street carefully
חינוך ילדים	instilling in your children good middos and yiras shamayim as well as training them to do mitzvos in preparation for life as an eved Hashem, keeping in touch with teachers, learning with children, reviewing parsha sheets, arranging tutors, paying tuition
הפרשת חלה	separating challah from dough
השתדלות*	going to work (also have in mind: I am supporting my family so that we can serve Hashem properly)
הלכת בדרך	to conduct yourself with good middos: to control your temper, to give in, to be patient, humble etc.
ביומו תנו שכרו	paying a worker upon completion of a job: technician, handyman, babysitter, barber, cab driver, private tutor, seamstress, sheitel macher, dentist
שמירת הלשון	refraining from speaking, writing or listening to lashon hara. In many instances, a helpful tip to refrain from speaking lashon hara is to think beforehand: Would I say this if he/she was here?
צניעות	dressing modestly, married women covering their hair
כבוד שבת	honoring Shabbos: buying and preparing food, cleaning the house, wearing nicer clothes, lighting candles, setting the table, bathing, cutting nails, getting a haircut, buying flowers, tasting food to make sure that it is well spiced
קידוש היום	making kiddush on Shabbos evening, or listening to kiddush recited by others
סעודת שבת	eating three festive meals on Shabbos

*רובות הלכות שער הכניסה פרק ג'

When performing a מצוה keep the following in mind:

By doing this מצוה I am becoming closer to Hashem.

"One should make every effort to come close to Hashem by means of actions designed for this purpose, and those actions are the mitzvos." מסכת ירושלמי פירא

The Chafetz Chaim says: "There is a tremendous difference between a mitzvah performed with kavana and one without, for when it is performed with kavana, its spiritual benefit is greatly increased, extending its influence to higher realms of Creation" (אהבת הסוד ח"ב פני ברית)

For a more complete understanding of the topic of מצוות צריכות כוונה as well as practical applications, see "ספר כאשר צוה ה'". To obtain, please contact 613kavana@gmail.com 058-324-1532

Kavana Card Overview

In Shulchan Aruch, siman 60, Rav Yosef Karo paskens that

"במצוות צריכות כוונה"

This means that in order to fulfill your basic halachic obligation while performing a mitzvah, you must keep in mind that you are fulfilling a commandment of Hashem.

Most of us were trained to do mitzvos from a young age, and we often live in communities where mitzvos are a cultural experience. This makes a life of mitzvos comfortable and familiar, but it also presents us with a tremendous challenge: How can we use our daily actions to connect to Hashem's will, to consistently remind ourselves that there is a Creator who commanded us to fulfill mitzvos, and that when we are doing a mitzvah, we are carrying out His will? How can we come to see our daily mitzvos as constant opportunities to fulfill a personal request from Hashem?

To help us meet this great challenge, we have printed a useful card, which lists everyday examples of how a little kavana before performing the mitzvah (to be mentioned in English or hebrew) can make a great impact on how we fulfill Hashem's mitzvos. There are obviously many more mitzvos then was mentioned in the card and by all of them one should have kavana before performing the mitzvah.

For example, when a woman is preparing food for her family, she is performing the mitzvah of chesed to feed her hungry children. If she keeps in mind "I am fulfilling the mitzvah of chesed as Hashem commanded" as she is peeling, chopping, boiling and serving, she can transform her seemingly mundane actions into an exalted spiritual achievement that makes her more connected to Hashem.

We all say Birchas Hamazon at the end of a meal, sometimes more than once a day. If a person bentches 3 times every Shabbos, and once a day the rest of the year, that is over 400 mitzvos in just one year. Over the course of a lifetime, that adds up to tens of thousands of potential mitzvos! But if we forget to keep in mind before bentching that "I am fulfilling the mitzvah of Birchas Hamazon as Hashem commanded," we have not fulfilled the mitzvah properly. Without the proper kavana, all those years of bentching become tens of thousands of missed opportunities.

We hope that this kavana card will be a useful daily reference to help you see how many easy opportunities there are to fulfill Hashem's will, with the addition of a small kavana before you do the מצוה. With time, you'll be astounded at how much fulfillment you can add to your life!