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Keep Your Word

23: 21-23

Keep your word DIG: What do you see as the purpose of this mitzvah? What does it say about the people's relationship to ADONAI? What stories do you know of people in the Bible who kept their word, even under difficult circumstances? How did Jacob keep his word to Laban?

REFLECT: Is there anyone to whom you have failed to keep your word? What can you do about that? How does that reflect badly on the Lord? Have you been hurt by someone? Go to the Lord. How has ADONAI been a promise keeper for you? Are you a promise keeper?

Vows were made freely, but to make a vow and not keep it would be taking God's name in vain.

Deuteronomy 19:1 to 26:15 (to see link click [DI](#) - The Social and Family Mitzvot) deals with individual mitzvot, and to today's readers they might appear irrelevant at first, but the very principles behind these commandments were the ones that have brought dignity to mankind. We need to examine these mitzvot in depth to discover the spirit in which they were given, so that we can still live in obedience to **God's Word** today. For example, in **Numbers 18**, the **Israelites** were to bring **their tithes** to the Tabernacle because **the priests** and **Levites** had **no inheritance**. But today we have no Temple and no priesthood; however, we bring our tithes to our place of worship. That is the spirit of the mitzvah.



From **23:15** to **26:15**, **Moses** deals with **twenty** real life situations that **the nation** would need to function in a godly manner, and valuable lessons for us today as well: **number four**.

Underlying **God's** mitzvah concerning **vows** is the covenant **He** made with **His** people. **His** words were reliable and would be fulfilled. They were not spoken to manipulate **the people**; neither were they withdrawn in the heat of anger. **The people** of **God** were to follow **His** example. For **the Israelites**, to make **a vow** and not follow through on it would be contrary to the whole spirit of the covenant. Several observations are made here concerning **vows**.

No one is forced to make a vow: If you make a vow, you made it freely to **ADONAI your God with your own mouth (23:21a, 23b)**. The vow was a promise made to **God**, which normally meant making a sacrifice at the sanctuary (**Leviticus 7:16-17; Psalms 22:25**), in return for a special blessing. Alternately, it could mean dedicating goods or even persons (**First Samuel 1:11**). So, when a person made **a vow** of their own **free will**, it would be pleasing to **God**. Once it is made, however, it is a serious matter and must be fulfilled (**Psalms 56:12-14, 61:5** and **8, 66:13-15, 116:12-14**). His character was at stake where his promises were concerned.

If a vow is not made, no sin is committed: But if you refrain from making a vow, you will not be guilty (**23:22 NIV**). No one was forced to make **vows**.

Ha'Shem holds us accountable for our voluntary vows: Whatever your lips utter you must be sure to do is a principle that applies to many areas of life, not just promises made to **God** in moments of great stress or relief. Casual carelessness regarding commitments, especially among believers, breaks both the third and fourth commandments.⁵⁰⁷

To make a promise and not keep it would be contrary to the whole spirit of the covenant, and at the same time would take **God's name in vain**. Wisdom warns against hasty promises (**Proverbs 20:25; Ecclesiastes 5:4-5**). Having once made a vow, a person was not only required to fulfill it, but to do so in a reasonable amount of time. **Do not be slow to pay it, for ADONAI your God will certainly demand it of you and you will be guilty of sin (23:21b, 23:23a NIV)**. It would be better not to make **a vow** at all than make **one** and fail to fulfill it, for it would provide to his fellow Israelites and the pagan nations a corrupt picture of the character of the **God** whom he served and whose name he bore.⁵⁰⁸

The covenant principle in this passage promotes the deepening of the relationship between **God** and **His people**. The vow which **the Israelites** made to **ADONAI** was to be an expression of sincerity that could enhance **their** relationship with **Him**. The purpose of **the vow** was to be a blessing, not binding.⁵⁰⁹

Dear Heavenly **Father**, How amazing that **You** keep perfectly all **Your** promises/vows! I love many of **Your** promises, such as: **For God Himself has said, "I will never leave you or forsake you," so that with confidence we say, "The Lord is my helper; I will not fear. What will man do to me" (Hebrews 13:5c-6)?** **Your** promise of always being there to help me is so comforting! **Your** promise of mercy to forgive the sins of those who fear you, is unbelievably generously kind. **For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is His mercy for those who fear Him. As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us (Psalms 103:11-12).**

The icing on the cake is **Your** promise to those who hear and believe **You**, not to those who only hear, but when the hearing is coupled with real belief that works itself out in loving obedience - then the promise is **eternal life!** **"Very truly I tell you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be judged but has crossed over from death to life. (John 5:24 NIV). For if you confess with your mouth that Yeshua is Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart it is believed for righteousness, and with the mouth it is confessed for salvation. For the Scripture says, "Whoever trusts in Him will not be put to shame." For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord is Lord of all - richly generous to all who call on Him (Romans 10:9-12).** I love **You** and call you my **Lord** and **Master**. I look forward to worshipping **You** and praising **Your** great name, for all **eternity!** In **Yeshua's** holy name and **His** power of resurrection. Amen