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Forbidden Vows
27: 26-27

Forbidden vows DIG: What do you see as the purpose of these forbidden vows? Why would ADONAI have to remind the Israelites that they were already His? Why did they forget?

REFLECT: What already belongs to God in your life? Have you acknowledged that it is His or are you still holding on to it? What happens when you take for granted His gifts to you?

God's people could not make vows to give God what already belonged to Him.

The Israelites could not vow to sacrifice an animal that was already designated for sacrifice **(Exodus 13:2** and **34:19-20)**. Because **the firstborn** males (see the commentary on **Deuteronomy, to see link click Da –Dedicate All the Firstborn Animals**) were already sacred and set apart for sacrifice, they could not be **vowed**. They could not give to **God** what **He** already owns. Illustrations of items dedicated completely to **YHVH** may be found in **Joshua 6:17** and **Micah 4:13**. The Torah says: **No one can dedicate the firstborn among animals – neither ox**

nor sheep – since it already belongs to ADONAI (27:26). The firstborn animals were to be sacrificed as **peace offerings** (see **Ak – The Peace Offerings: At Peace with God**), the owners had the right to eat the meat of the sacrifice. The sacrifice and offering of **the firstborns** were brought in conjunction with the tithes brought as a part of the annual celebration of the pilgrimage **feast of Sukkot** (see **Eg – Hag Sukkot**). **But if it is an unclean animal, he may redeem it at the price at which you value it and add one-fifth; or if he does not redeem it, it is to be sold at the price at which you value it (26:27).** If **they** were **not redeemed**, they were to be sold with the proceeds from the sale going to the Temple.

*Dear Heavenly **Father**, Praise **You** for our great and awesome love! Sometimes, having heard for many years of your gracious mercy and grace, people grow callous to the joy of giving back to **You**. They forget what great shame and incredibly painful cost **You** paid for the gift of our salvation **(John 14:23, Romans 5:17)**. In no way can anyone ever earn their salvation, no matter how many good deeds are done. It is all about **Your** grace and the joy of loving **You** back for **Your** fantastic gift of life. **For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not from yourselves – it is the gift of God. It is not based on deeds, so that no one may boast (Ephesians 2:8-9).***

*In the days of **Isra'el** during the time of Moses, every **tenth animal** belonged to **You**, because of **the Passover (Exodus 13:2)**. In a similar yet different manner, all who love **You** belong to **You** and we ought to rejoice in giving **You** our life, our time, our talents and tithe. **Your** blood paid the price that rescued all who love **You** from suffering in hell for their sins. In grateful response, we should all rejoice at the opportunity to sow seeds of love in giving **You** their lives and possessions. **The point is this: whoever sows sparingly shall also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully shall also reap bountifully. Let each one give as he has decided in his heart, not grudgingly or under compulsion – for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace overflow to you, so that by always having enough of everything, you may overflow in every good work (Second Corinthians 9:6-8).** Thank **You** for the joy of being able to give back our love to **You** by offering you our time, money and all we say and do. In **Your** holy name and power of **Messiah's** resurrection. Amen*