

RaYBaSH's Torah Thoughts for Kids
Parashah #42 Matot (Tribes)
Numbers 30:2-32:42
By: Yehudah ben Shomeyr

Abrah-Kadabrah! Alla Kazam! Presto! Ta Dah!

Magic; people claim they have magic words and can make things appear or happen.

We as Jews may not have magic words, but we can make things happen with our words. Our words, what we say is very powerful, in proverbs says the power of life and death is in our speech.

As Jews if we say we are going to do or not going to do something we must abide by it. Promises we make can be binding like a Torah command.

Numbers 30:2 If a man vow a vow unto the LORD, or swear an oath to bind his soul with a bond; he shall not break his word, he shall do according to all that proceedeth out of his mouth.

Matthew 5:37 But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil.

Yeshua's brother Ya'akov (James) said the same thing:

James 5:12 But above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath: but let your yea be yea; and your nay, nay; lest ye fall into condemnation.

In other words don't be vague or wishy-washy, vain or flippant in making vows (Promises), rather, be specific and defined. Also in Yeshua's discourse He says not to "...Swear not at all; neither by heaven; for it is God's throne..." etc. Many people have taken what He said out of context to say that you cannot swear by God or on the Bible in court. This is not what Yeshua meant. Basically He meant don't swear something you can't do, (Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black.) or on anyone else's reputation (God and

His throne, City or Temple) but your own! Say what you mean and mean what you say. Don't provide for yourself loopholes.

Also, don't make a vow lightly either! Shlomo Ha Melek (King Solomon) has this wise warning and advice concerning vows:

Ecclesiastes 5:4-7 When thou vowest a vow unto God, defer not to pay it; for he hath no pleasure in fools: pay that which thou hast vowed. Better is it that thou shouldest not vow, than that thou shouldest vow and not pay. Suffer not thy mouth to cause thy flesh to sin; neither say thou before the angel, that it was an error: wherefore should God be angry at thy voice, and destroy the work of thine hands? For in the multitude of dreams and many words there are also divers vanities: but fear thou God.

Yefthah found this out the hard way:

Judges 11:30-39 And Jephthah vowed a vow unto the LORD, and said, If thou shalt without fail deliver the children of Ammon into mine hands, Then it shall be, that whatsoever cometh forth of the doors of my house to meet me, when I return in peace from the children of Ammon, shall surely be the LORD's, and I will offer it up for a burnt offering. So Jephthah passed over unto the children of Ammon to fight against them; and the LORD delivered them into his hands. And he smote them from Aroer, even till thou come to Minnith, even twenty cities, and unto the plain of the vineyards, with a very great slaughter. Thus the children of Ammon were subdued before the children of Israel. And Jephthah came to Mizpeh unto his house, and, behold, his daughter came out to meet him with timbrels and with dances: and she was his only child; beside her he had neither son nor daughter. And it came to pass, when he saw her, that he rent his clothes, and said, Alas, my daughter! thou hast brought me very low, and thou art one of them that trouble me: for I have opened my mouth unto the LORD, and I cannot go back. And she said unto him, My father, if thou hast opened thy mouth unto the LORD, do to me according to that which hath proceeded out of thy mouth; forasmuch as the LORD hath taken vengeance for thee of thine enemies, even of the children of Ammon. And she said unto her father, Let this thing be done for me: let me alone two months, that I may go up and down upon the mountains, and bewail my virginity, I and my fellows. And he said, Go. And he sent her away for two months: and she went with her companions, and bewailed her virginity upon the mountains. And it came to pass at the end of two months, that she returned unto her father, who did with her according to his vow which he had vowed: and she knew no man.

So be very careful what you say and what you promise, don't say it unless you really mean it.

Shabbat Shalom and Shavuah Tov!
-- Yehudah ben Shomeyr

RaYBaSH's Torah Thoughts for Kids
Parashah #43: Massei (Allotments)
Numbers 33:1 - 36:13
By: Yehudah ben Shomeyr

These are the journeys of the children of Israel...(33:1)

Most kids right now are on summer break from school. Some kids keep a summer journal so they can remember all the cool things they did, saw and the places they went to over the summer. If not, more than likely they have to write a report about it in class when school starts. This last Torah Portion in Exodus is kind of like the Children of Israel's 40 year travel journal. So why is it in our Torah for us to read year after year? Well it serves as a type of journal to remind us of all the places and people the Children of Israel saw and encountered on their 40 year trek. But most importantly it is to remind us of the things that happened to them and the lessons that they/we learned through their trip, in order not to forget them and so as not to make the same mistakes as they committed in the past.

So when Israel looks back and remembers Ba'al Peor, they will be reminded not to worship Idols or fall for a good looking pagan! Just like when you see photos of your summer vacation and you see that roller coaster you threw up on, your reminded not to eat that elephant ear, giant pretzel, cotton candy and that slushy before you hop on the cork screw!

It is traditional after completing a book of Torah, in this case the book of Numbers, one says: "Chazak, chazak, v' nit'chazek (Be strong, be strong and let us be strengthened)!"

Shabbat Shalom,
-- Yehudah ben Shomeyr

