

דברי מנחם

Diarei Menachem

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Parshat Matot incorporates two issues seemingly disconnected. The first: The laws of vows which, inter alia, includes a vow concerning a voluntary contribution to the Mishkan or Beit HaMikdash. The second is the dialogue between Moshe and Reuven and Gad pertaining to the tribes' desire to settle in the rich pasture land east of the Jordan, Eiver LaYarden".

Rabbi Yitzchak Twersky finds a connection between these two themes. For both treat of the relationship between what one aspires to do and the verbal commitment one makes to achieve that objective. Regarding the territory, Hashem declares to the tribes: "Build for yourselves cities for your small children and pens for your flock - and what has come from your mouth, you shall do" (Bamidbar 32:24). This sentiment echoes the law of vows whereby, "If a man takes a vow to Hashem... according to whatever comes out of his mouth he shall do" (30:2).

Moreover, in both historical contexts (a dedicated present to the Mikdash and the acquisition of territory in TransJordan), the vow that was made by the parties concerned transformed the mundane (object or land) to a new level of holiness (Kedusha).

By fulfilling their commitment, the two tribes transformed Eiver HaYarden - whose holy status is ambiguous - to a level whereby that territory could now be considered as an extension of Eretz Yisrael and endowed with Kedusha. How noble when we think of the incredible power of our speech and actions! No wonder that the Kabbalists called Man, "HaM'daber", the 'one who speaks'.

