

IN OUR HANDS

by Rabbi Label Lam

If a man takes a vow to HASHEM or swears an oath to establish a prohibition upon him-self, he should not desecrate his word; according to whatever comes out of his mouth should he do! (Bamidbar 30:3)

Why are we told to "do"? Isn't sufficient the warning about not desecrating a word? How does one desecrate a word anyway? Isn't a word- just a word? How does it become profane for one and holy for another?

Question! Is possible for a person to do two Mitzvos at the same time? Sure! Many Mitzvos may have overlapping domains. Here we have at least two grand Mitzvah opportunities. One is commanded to not cheapen his words by failing to fulfill an oath or a vow. Simultaneously there is potentially another ubiquitous Mitzvah in the mix to have in mind.

The verse sates, *"HASHEM will establish you for Him-self as a Holy People, as He swore to you- if you observe the commandments of HASHEM your G-d, and you go in His ways."* (Devarim 28:9) Here the Mitzvah is called "going in His ways". Our sages define as follows, "Just as The Holy One blessed is He is called "merciful" so you too should be merciful. Just as The Holy One blessed is He is called "gracious" so you too should be gracious. Just as The Holy One blessed is He is called "righteous" so you so should be righteous. Just as The Holy One blessed is He is called "holy" so you too should be holy." Whatever we can know about the traits of the Almighty through deed or description is another way to emulate. In the liturgy of morning prayers we recite daily "Boruch She'amar", "Blessed is He Who spoke and the world came to be. Blessed is He. Blessed is He Who makes the creation. Blessed is He Who says and does. Blessed is He Who decrees and fulfills..." We can therefore say that just as HASHEM fulfills His word so should we.

A woman was out clothes shopping with her children before a holiday when she took notice of an orphaned child looking longingly into the store window. Moved by the sight of the child's plight she moved into action. She told her children to stand aside for a short while and declared what she what she was about to do. She approached the poor child and asked him what he would like to buy. He looked at her with amazement and disbelief. Then the kind woman proceeded to lead the child through the department store picking out and matching him with a handsome wardrobe for Yom Tov. The little child who had become used to disappointment in life was astonished that his dreams were being fulfilled before his eyes. He asked the woman, "Are you G-d?" The woman chuckled at his sweet naiveté and quipped, "No, I'm one of His children!" To which the boy responded, "Oh, I thought you must be related!"

Deeds are like money in the bank, while words are like checks. When the currency has backing, when the words we utter have deeds to back them, then those words can have supreme value. However, when even profound words are bounced about like bad checks then they can become hollow and cheap. A word's real true is in our hands. DvarTorah, Copyright © 2007 by Rabbi Label Lam and [Torah.org](https://torah.org).