

"And Moshe spoke unto the heads of the tribes of Bnei Yisrael saying: this is the thing which Hashem has commanded... he shall not break his word, according to all that proceeds from his mouth he shall do." (30:2-3)

The *parsha* of vows is articulated in a unique fashion. This may be noted from Moshe's first address to *Am Yisrael's* leadership. The significance of this *parsha* lies in the statement of "*He shall not break his word all that proceeds from his mouth he shall do*". Although it is a fundamental principle underlying the entire *Torah*, this imperative is expressed in a more concrete manner in the *parsha* of vows.

Let us momentarily consider an important phrase which we frequently utter. One says, "*Hear O' Yisrael - Hashem our G-d, Hashem is one!*" Unless this statement is heard by the one who stated it, he does not fulfill his own word! He must live the *Shema Yisrael*, incorporating it into every aspect of his daily life. This approach also applies to every declaration which one makes in the course of his daily prayers. Every statement is either a reflection of one's intention to perform a specific action or an affirmation of his belief. Therefore, the *parsha* of vows - which is the embodiment of the concept of "*He shall not break his word*" - was originally taught to the leaders of each tribe and only subsequently to the general population. The leaders must first be imbued with the importance of this precept in order to hand it down to *Klal Yisrael*. This order of transmission enables each individual Jew to fulfill his mandate in accordance with his own level of understanding.