

"He shall not break his word." (30:3)

In *Chagiga 10a Chazal* state, that although an individual may not break his own word, others may do so for him. This refers specifically to the power of annulment which a *Torah* sage maintains. Annulment is a procedure by which a *Torah* scholar can absolve a person from his vow in applicable circumstances. In addition, certain *halachic* requirements must be met. The *Kli Yakar* explains the reasoning behind this dispensation. When a Jew makes a vow, he does so with the assumption that the *Torah* authorities will concur with his decision. Consequently, the *Rabbi* has the power to invalidate an inappropriate vow.

The *Torah's* desire for a Jew to maintain a close bond with *Torah* sages is the cornerstone of this law. The *Torah* encourages spiritual linkage with *Torah* sages in all situations at all times. This is taught by the *pasuk* in *Devarim*, "You shall not turn (from Hashem's mitzvos) neither to the right or to the left" (5:29). *Rashi* says that this specifically means that one must heed the words of a sage in observing the *mitzvos* "even if he tells you that right is left and left is right." Indeed, this enjoinder applies even in such extreme circumstances as when it seems clear to us that the *Rabbi* is saying that left is right. A Jew must maintain an unfaltering faith in *Torah* sages, for their perception of a situation is enhanced by their ability to view it through the crystalline vision of *Torah* perspective. We must tenaciously accept upon ourselves the authority of the *Torah* sages of each generation who interpret the will of Hashem. The difficulty, however, surfaces in identifying those sages who really represent *daas Torah*. Disagreement among people as to who is deserving of this mantle will inevitably be routine. It is compulsory that the true *Torah* sage be an exceptional scholar with unquestionable moral rectitude. His *halachic* decisions must be totally untainted by personal prejudice, and his entire demeanor must reflect *yiraas shomayim* (fear of Heaven). Such an individual is the embodiment of *Torah*, and therefore represents true *Daas Torah*.