

## **Torah Tidbits – July 14, 2014**

You might have heard the phrase "silence means assent" before. This week's portion may be the first time that this concept is made completely clear.

In the beginning parts of his drawn-out farewell, Moses reminds the people that vows are a serious matter. What you promise to do you should do. There is a potential exception to this. The Torah specifies the case of a daughter making a vow. When her father hears the vow, he has the opportunity to nullify the vow at that time (as he may know something she doesn't, or what she plans on doing might just seem wrong). Should he refrain from nullifying it, then the vow stands. The same process is followed when she gets married, with the additional step that her husband gets to find out all the vows she is already fulfilling, and can nullify those at that time.

Silence, on the part of the father and husband, meant assent.

Today we would take the specifics of that case and have them apply to all members of the family who might be affected, or who know a reason that a particular vow can't work.

It is better to act properly without making a promise to do so, than to make that promise and fail to fulfill it. If you ever hear the words "b'li neder" (no promises) from somebody of whom you have asked for something, this is why.

B'li neder, I will discuss more about further expansions of this topic on Shabbat.