

Parshas Re'eh
5779

August 30th,
2019

have a Nageela Shabbos

Candle Lighting:
Scottsdale 6:37
Henderson 6:52
Las Vegas 6:53
San Diego 6:57
Los Angeles 7:04
Tarzana 7:04
Lake Tahoe 7:15

A Kid Friendly Weekly Publication of Nageela West Coast Joyfully Jewish Experiences

Season 3
Episode 41

Kind of Illegal by Rabbi Dani Locker



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There's a book you might have never heard of, it's called Ahavas Chessed, Love of Kindness. It's an unusual book in that it explains the rules of kindness and charity.

Stop and reread that line. The. Rules. Of. Kindness. And. Charity. Most people think of charity as something wonderful and personally meaningful. Not a technical activity with rules. You can have rules about how many timeouts a football team gets in a game. You can have rules about when to turn your homework in, or not to chew gum in class. Why should we have rules about how to be nice and awesome to people? Well, maybe we should have a rule **TO** be kind, but beyond that seems unnecessary, and frankly, weird.

Singapore has some strange laws. For example, it's against the law to play a musical instrument in public. Singapore is rated by travelers as the cleanest city to visit, and some of these laws are the reason. Chewing gum is illegal. Selling gum can get you a massive fine. Graffiti is punishable by jail time, and possibly even by getting whipped. Littering carries a heavy fine, as does spitting, and- get this- forgetting to flush a public toilet.

Some of these laws seem extreme. Maybe they are. But they show that cleanliness is really important to them. Lots of cities SAY cleanliness is important to them, but setting rules shows that you're serious. And it helps.

Every culture (maybe not Slytherin) says they value kindness. Charity is universally accepted as being good. But it's hard to do. Well, it's not that hard to do a little. It's really hard to make it a major part of your life. Having rules about kindness shows us with great clarity how important charity is to us. This is surely one of the main reasons why Jews are consistently rated as the group that gives the most charity per capita. By telling us to whom we should give, when we should give and how much, God is sending a clear message: "This is important to Me."

In this week's portion, the Torah gives a number of interesting instructions regarding charity. The Torah sets up the 10% number, guiding us to use one tenth of our wealth for charitable causes. The Torah also guides us to understand that giving \$1 to 100 people

If you eat too much soup, you can get a spoon- sore. That's bad.
If you value Jewish outreach, you can become a spon-sore. That's good.

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is (often) better than giving \$100 to one person (want to know why? Ask!). We're told that giving anonymously is better, so we don't embarrass the receiver, and we're instructed that lending money can be a greater act of kindness than giving a donation outright!

In contrast to the Torah's attitude, the ancient region of Sedom made kindness illegal. They had laws forbidding charity, or hosting guests. Spend some time, and learn the rules of kindness that the Torah gives us. Use them to help you understand how important kindness is.

BTW, in my home, we have rules about pickles. Don't ask.

mazel tov! to Camp Nageela West staff member Talia Hassan upon her engagement!

mazel tov! to Zahava Locker who is celebrating her Bas Mitzvah this weekend!

Jewnior NCSY ANNOUNCEMENTS

We're excited to announce new **regionwide** programs for Middle School students everywhere in the West coast!

1. Points and prizes: Every Jr. NCSY event you attend will earn you points. There will be a live online drawing monthly, and a larger drawing in June including an iPad and other great prizes! Coming to a weeknight event like LNL will earn you 100 points.

Shabbatons are worth 500 points, and our Jr. Regional Shabbatons are worth 1000 points!

2. Jewnior Board: Board members get special events and privileges, and help plan and run local and regional events. 7th and 8th graders may apply to be part of your local Jewnior board (where available) and our newly forming Regional Council. Email locker@ncsy.org to apply.

3. Mega- Weekend Regional Shabbatons! See graphic below.



2 mega- weekend events in 2020

For 6th-8th graders

WINTER REGIONAL
WEEKEND

JAN. 17-20 (MLK)

NORTHERN
CALIFORNIA

SPRING REGIONAL
WEEKEND

MAY 22-25

(MEMORIAL)

SO. CALIFORNIA

For the past few weeks, we've been introducing the 13 core Jewish beliefs (also known as the thirteen principles), going through them a few at a time. Today we address cores 4 and 5, using the following question (which I get often) as a springboard.

Dear Rabbi,

The core, part 3

Who made God? He had to have come from somewhere, right?

Thanks,

Aura Jensen



Dear Aura Jen,

OK, let's have some fun with this question (that will most definitely get me into trouble). What if I told you that God was made by a being named Bob?

Yes you heard me. God was made by Bob (calm down, please put the pitchforks away, take a few deep breaths and give me a minute). What's your obvious followup question?

Who made Bob?

Oh, that was Sam. Sam made Bob. Any more questions?

Who made Sam?

Sam was made by Jennifer, who was made by Agnes, who was, in turn, made by Mark. Mark was created by Susan, and Susan was designed by Antonio. Have I answered all your questions?

If you've finished tearing out your hair in frustration, I'll get to my point. If you take the position (as your question did) that EVERY BEING HAD TO BE MADE BY ANOTHER BEING, then you've got a really big problem, because you'll always be able to ask, "Well, who made THAT being? And who made THAT being? And..." The only logical solution is that there is ONE BEING who has always existed and was not made by anyone or anything. I'll repeat that. There is one being who

has always existed and was not made by anyone or anything. That's a little bit hard for us humans to really understand, and that's OK. We don't need to understand everything, as long as we can determine that it's true.

That brings us to number 4 on the core beliefs list:

4. G-d existed before anything else, and will exist after everything else.

Believing that God had a 'launch date' would mean He was made or created by someone or something else. As we just explained, that's not logical, and is untrue. Having an 'expiration date' would mean God has a weakness and a time limit. Also untrue. God is ETERNAL, which means God's existence isn't measured in time.

5. We only pray to G-d. Nobody else. We don't pray to trees, statues, prophets or Rabbis.

Prayer assumes power. Let me explain what I mean: If you're at school and you want extra credit on your science grade, whom do you ask? Not the school cook, nor the history teacher. They have NO POWER over your science grades (although some school food might qualify as scientific research, and some students are the

guinea pigs). You ask the science teacher, or, better yet, the principal. They have power over your science grades. Praying to someone or something is saying, "You have the ability to help me, so I'm asking you for your help." This core belief confirms that there are no other beings with power, besides God. The sun and moon do their thing only with God's control. Even the angels have no power of their own, and are simply reflections of God's will.

How about Rabbis? We don't pray to Rabbis, period. Some people might ask a Rabbi to pray to God for them. That's OK. Some people will visit the grave of a great tzadik to pray, but even then, it's not the Rabbi being prayed to. The prayers are directed to God, in the merit of the great

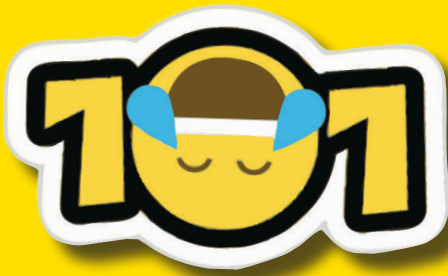
person. The bottom line is there is only one being in all of the universe who has power, and it is that being (God, NOT Bob) to whom we pray.

Have-A Nageela Shabbat,

the Rabbi

Stump the Rabbi is a forum where kids can ask ANY Jewish question. Have a question? Please send it in to stump@nageelawest.org

Questions here are real. Names and some wording have been changed.



Why did the old lady fall into the water hole?

Because she couldn't see that well!

OUCH! GROAN!

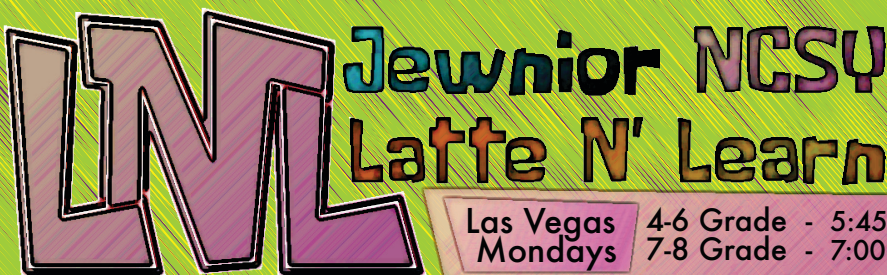
got a better joke? Email it to dlocker@nageelawest.org

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

Happy Birthday to Nageela family members celebrating this week!

Rome Eden
Tehilla Ben- Shimon
Yoni Stein

HAPPY UNBIRTHDAY TO EVERYONE ELSE!



WE'RE BACK!
and we're gonna
have a latte fun!

Monday night
Tarzana 6-7pm



Nageela West breaks the mold of old school Jewish outreach by providing out-of-the-box social and educational programs for Jewish children across the west coast. Through afterschool activities, weekend retreats and our signature summer camp, we engage elementary and middle school children in a fun and meaningful experience.

Our "questions encouraged" mindset makes Nageela a comfortable learning and growing environment for Jewish children of all backgrounds.