

nageela

shana

SEASON 7, EPISODE 1

A Kid Friendly Torah Magazine by nageela West Coast

DVAR TORAH

Mo stepped off the
noisy bus and
checked his watch.
It was a pointless
habit, because
his watch had
stopped telling time

some time ago (he wasn't sure exactly how long ago, because, well, his watch was broken). It took 3 train transfers and a bus just to reach the pickle factory where he worked, but he really needed the money. Mo lived in what could be described as either a very small apartment or a rather large box, with his 19 and a half children (don't ask; believe me, you don't wanna know) and his only income was this job. He could not afford a car, hence the aforementioned public transportation.

The work was hard, but Mo knew that at the end of today he would collect his weekly paycheck, so he whistled as he worked. Occasionally, he threw in some lyrics that he had composed himself:

"Gonna stir me
some pickles,
In spices and

Paycheck Priorities

by Rabbi Dani Locker

brine.

Gonna earn me some nickels,
Maybe even a dime."

As the workday ended, the factory owner patted Mo on the back. "Good work this week, Mo. I've added a bonus to your check."

Mo pocketed the check and hurried to the bus stop where he quickly grabbed the first bus available headed downtown. He headed directly for the baseball stadium where he found the very best box seat tickets available, for \$900.

With his bonus money, he bought some peanuts and crackerjacks, and one of those mini baseball bats, and settled in to enjoy a great game. When Mo got back to work on Monday, he approached his boss. "I could really use a raise. I haven't been able to feed my family since baseball season started!"

"You're joking, right?"

"Whaaaat? I like baseball, OK?"

When that Friday came, the boss handed Mo his check with a serious look. "Mo, I've given you a raise, like you asked. But please,

Would you consider sponsoring an episode?
I'd tell you about all the blessings & rewards you'll get,
but then you might lose out on some of the merit!



please. Go straight home and use the money for your family. Please, please, please, please, PLEASE don't go to a game."

"But I saw an even cooler luxury box section with wide screen views and catering. I'm so there!"

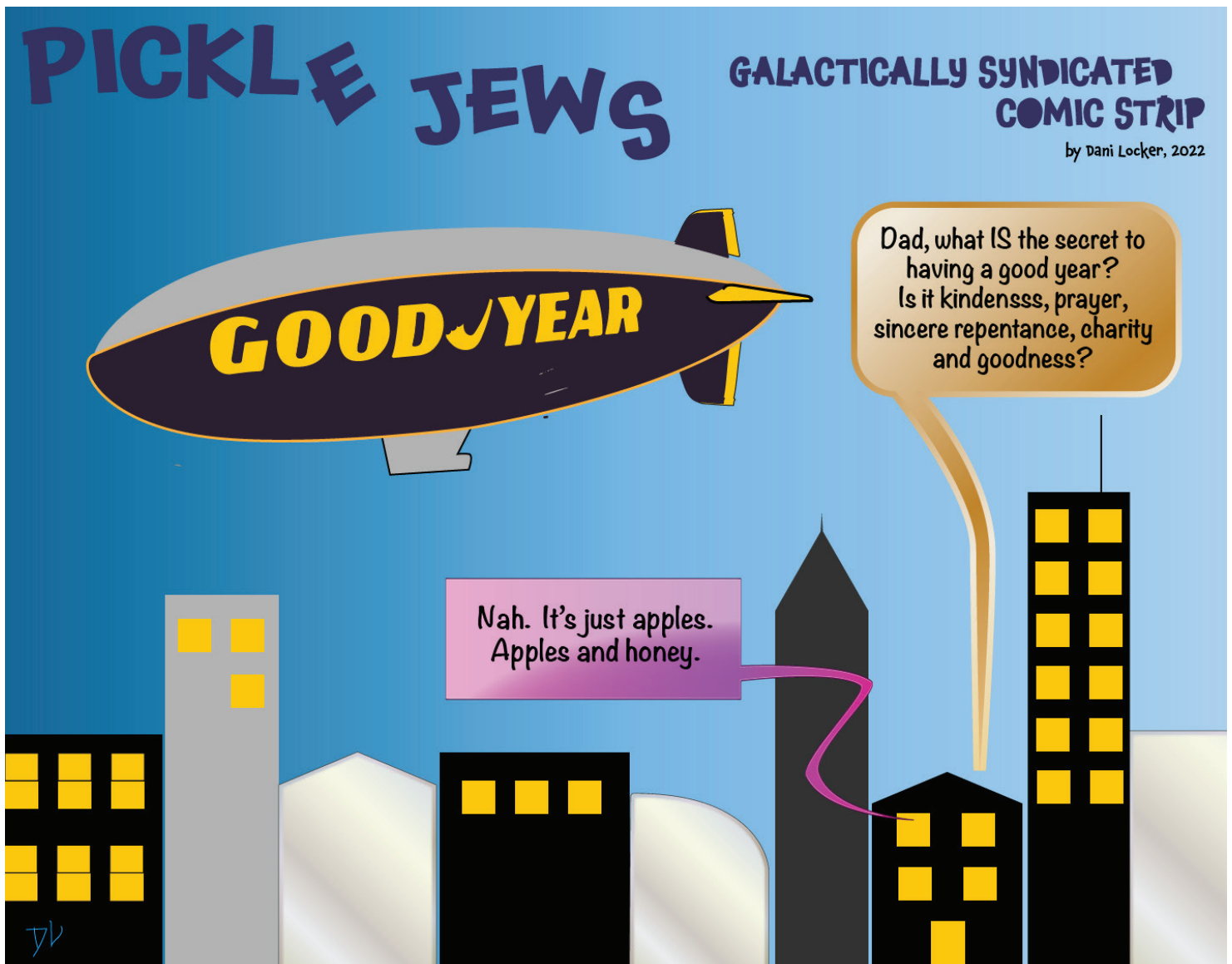
God begs us to make the right choice

We all have tools and blessings that we have gotten in life. We have time, health, money and brains. We have family and supportive friends and community. Sometimes we're tempted to use these tools- this paycheck- for rather unimportant goals. When we choose what to do with our lives, time and money, we can choose to use them for the most wonderful causes. We can choose life. Or, we can use these tools for things that aren't truly that im-

portant. Yes, these choices are ours, but God puts His arm around our shoulder (no, not literally, of course) and tells us, "CHOOSE LIFE." God, as our employer and the one who provides the blessings to us, also cares deeply about how we use these tools.

We will (if we don't already) have children, grandchildren and many generations to come. The choices we make with the tools we're given can enrich them in meaningful ways, or can be used to help us enjoy meaningless pleasures, leaving our descendants starving. In this past week's Torah portion, the Torah says, "Choose life, so that you AND your children may live." God does not just give us instructions. God begs us to do what's right for ourselves and all who come after.

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STUMP 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

(Most) questions here are real. Names and some wording have been changed.

Note & Disclaimer: We call this 'Stump The Rabbi' for fun, but that's not really the point. The goal is to learn something important in an interesting way.

The answers here should not be taken as halachic decisions. You should always ask a competent Rabbi personally.

#214

-Whose Choice is it?

Dear Maya Owens,

Take a look at two different sentences that both appear in this week's torah portion (Nitzavim).

1. "And God will open up your hearts and the hearts of your children to love God with all your heart..." (30:6)
2. "Life and death I have placed before you; the blessing and the curse, and you should choose life." (30:19)

Or in language that's easier to understand:

1. You need God to help you be good
2. The choice is totally yours. God doesn't guide our choices.

Have any questions? These two sentences seem to contradict each other. And they aren't the only ones. Many sources in torah and rabbinic writings talk about how God gives us complete control over our lives. Yet there are other sources that follow the

Hi Rabbi,
I've always been told that Judaism believes in free choice, that God doesn't choose for us. Yet we have prayers (I think) where we ask God to purify our heart, and other similar things which sound to me a lot like asking God to choose for us. What's the dill?

**Thanks,
Maya Owens**



theme that we need God's help. The tal-mud (Kiddu-shin) says that

without God's help we would totally get beaten up by our own desires and inclinations. So which is it? Are we helped (read: controlled) by God, or are we on our own?

Let me tell you a true story I made up. Paul opened up his email to see a message from the CEO. Glancing around, he noticed several other employees who must have gotten the same email at the same time, reading with interest. "All employees are invited to join in a contest to show your fortitude, commitment and hard work. At the end of this year, I will retire from my position as CEO. The winner of the contest will get the job, the salary and the corner office.

The contest is simple. I will be standing at the top of a 500 sto-

LOL

**YESTERDAY A RABBI STOPPED
BY MY HOUSE. HE WAS LOOKING
FOR A DONATION TOWARD THE
LOCAL MIKVAH.**

I GAVE HIM A CUP OF WATER.

THINK YOU CAN DO BETTER? YOU'RE PROBABLY RIGHT.
SEND YOUR JOKES IN TO DLOCKER@NAGEELAWEST.ORG

DEEPTHOUGHTS

WHY DO TEACHERS ALWAYS TELL KIDS NOT TO BE SMART WITH THEM? ISN'T THAT LIKE, THE PURPOSE OF SCHOOL?

ry
sky-
scrapers (yes, I know that doesn't exist, don't question the story). The first employee to climb to the top will win!"

Paul and his fellow workers were excited. For weeks and weeks they trained, running up and down stairs, drinking pickle juice (that's actually a real thing for hydration and preventing cramps) and trying to learn how to fly. When the contest started, everyone started with excitement, but within about 20 minutes of stair climbing, more than half of the contestants had either given up, fainted or sprained a limb (one guy sprained his nose). After an hour, only Paul and 3 others were at it, up to the 80th floor. But it was slow going. Nobody was sprinting, or even climbing steadily. They needed breaks after every few steps, and by the time they got to the 95th floor, Paul and his only rival were crawling on hands and knees. At 99, his competitor dropped out. Paul knew he had

THURSDAY, SEPT 29 5:30-7:00PM

CHESSSED MISSION

PROVIDING MUCH NEEDED SUPPLIES FOR UKRAINIAN REFUGEES.
AT NCSY OFFICE, 9831 W PICO BLVD.

MONDAYS, 5:45-6:45

JEWISH BRAIN FREEZE

AT BRUSTERS LAS VEGAS.
WE'RE OFF FOR ROSH HASHANA, BUT WE'RE BACK NEXT MONDAY, OCT 3RD.
FOR 4-8 GRADERS

no chance of making it to the top of all 500 floors, but he wanted to go as far as he could. With his final effort, he made it to the 100th floor landing, and was about to give up. Then he saw it. There stood an elevator, doors open, and smiling CEO seated inside, waiting to take him the rest of the way to the top.

"I knew nobody would make it to 500 on their own, but I needed to see who put in their max effort. You are truly the man deserving of this job."

HBD

We'd like to wish a happy birthday to:

SARI LEWIS
GAVI ARNELL
BENYAMIN SHERIZEN
SARA BOCARSKY
ARI STEINBERG
SETH GOLDKLANG
EITAN MALKA
LIEL MALKA
ELIE CHEIKKA
AVITAL DESMOND

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FIND MORE INFO ON OUR YEAR-ROUND EVENTS BY SCANNING THE CODE BELOW



God does not control our choices or our effort. Yet if we ask God to help us make the right choices, that in itself is us putting in the effort. So these statements are not a contradiction at all. Yes, God helps us choose the right thing, we can even ask Him to purify our heart but only after we make the choice that we want to get to that elevator. The asking IS the choice.



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