

Parshas Shoftim
5779

September 6th,
2019

Candle Lighting:
Scottsdale 6:28
Henderson 6:42
Las Vegas 6:43
San Diego 6:48
Los Angeles 7:54
Tarzana 7:55
Lake Tahoe 7:04

have a Nageela Shabbos

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

Season 3
Episode 42

Build Gates

by Rabbi Dani Locker

“You shall put judges and officers at all of your gates.”

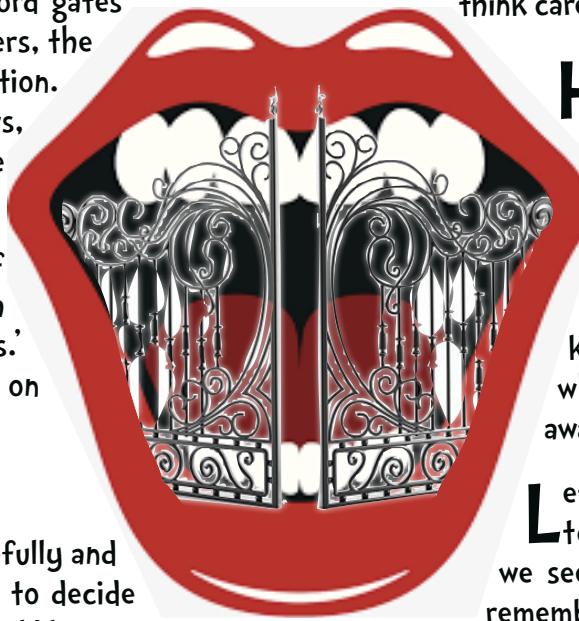
The Torah is giving us good advice, to make sure we have courts and an effective legal system in place in every town and city. Yet there are deeper meanings as well.

According to the holy Shelah, the word ‘gates’ is talking about the sensory receivers, the parts of our body that gather information. The eyes are the gates of sight, the ears, the gates of hearing, and of course, the mouth is the gateway of speech.

Every one of these gates is capable of allowing in positive ‘visitors’ through the gates or allowing negative ‘visitors.’ Our job is to place judges and officers on all these gates.

What does that mean?

Judges means that we think carefully and use the guidance of the Torah to decide what to let in and out. Not all things should be seen. There are many times when it would be better to close our eyes or turn our heads in order to



make sure our ‘eye-gates’ don’t allow in unwanted guests. Our ears have the potential to hear wonderful words of wisdom and Torah. They are also the receivers of Lashon hara- negative speech- gossip, insults, lies and foul language. Our mouths are gateways to kindness, teaching and prayer, but can also be used to knock people down, spread nasty tales or say other hurtful or inappropriate statements. Placing ‘judges’ means we think carefully before using these gates.

How do we place officers at the gates? An officer’s job is to keep you doing the right thing, because you’re nervous the officer will make life difficult. The officer we place on our own gates is the knowledge that God cares about what we do, and gives or takes away blessing based on our actions.

Let’s use the lesson of Shoftim to remind us to watch what we see, hear and speak. Let’s also remember to always keep God in mind and remember that His parental controls track our every move.

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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of Nageela Shabbos,
please contact dlocker@
nageelawest.org

core Jewish beliefs (also known as the thirteen principles), going through them a few at a time. Today we address

For

the past few weeks, we've been introducing the 13 cores 6-9, using the following question as a springboard.

Hi Rabbi,

The core, part 4

How do we know God didn't change his mind? I understand God gave us the Torah on Mount Sinai, but what if over thousands of years, He decided to switch it up a little? How do we know we're still doing the right thing?

Thanks,

Philip Phlopp,

Dear Phillip,

Let me answer with a story:

It was well past midnight, and Carly was exhausted, but she had finally finished her research paper. Dr. Kelvin was a very strict chemistry teacher, and he had told the class that 50% of their final grade was based on this major research paper. Carly and her friends had spent several weeks now working out all the details, but it had taken her all the way to the last minute to get her final draft ready. She would hand it in to the teacher in the morning, and hopefully ace the semester.

At 8:59am, a smiling Carly placed her thick binder, complete with the typed paper and research materials, on Dr. Kelvin's cluttered desk. He looked at her, puzzled. "What is this?" He asked.

"It's the paper you asked for." Carly replied. "The one you announced in front of the whole class, on the first day of school."

"Oh that..." mumbled the teacher. "I changed my mind a couple of days ago. I don't want a research paper anymore. You were supposed to do a field trip to the chemical plant instead. I can't give you any points for this paper. If you didn't do the field trip, you will receive a 0 for the grade!"

Carly could not believe her ears. "How was I supposed to know about the field trip? I only knew about the research paper, which, apparently, is useless now!" She

wanted to scream, and nearly did.

"Well... I did mention it to Fred, and he was supposed to tell the whole class. Didn't he mention anything to you? That's his bad."

Carly scratched her head. "Fred might have said something about a field trip, but he's just a student! I would never discard the direct instructions of a teacher based on the words of a student! I emailed you about it, and I never heard back, so I went with your original instructions!"

There's a problem with sending messages. You never know which one to believe. In the story above, Carly was right to distrust Fred. **The teacher had made a public statement, with his own mouth. Any contradictory statement would need to have that same strength to be believable.** Had Dr. Kelvin singled out Fred publicly and told the class to trust him, then Fred would be the person to trust, and the class should take his word over, say, Lilly's.

God wanted to make sure that nobody could contradict the Torah, so He publicly spoke to Moses in front of the entire Jewish nation. He told the people that no prophet would ever be able to contradict Moses, and his word was final. He also empowered other prophets to spread the word of God, as long as they would not directly contradict Moses. This procedure ensured that people would always know the accurate word of



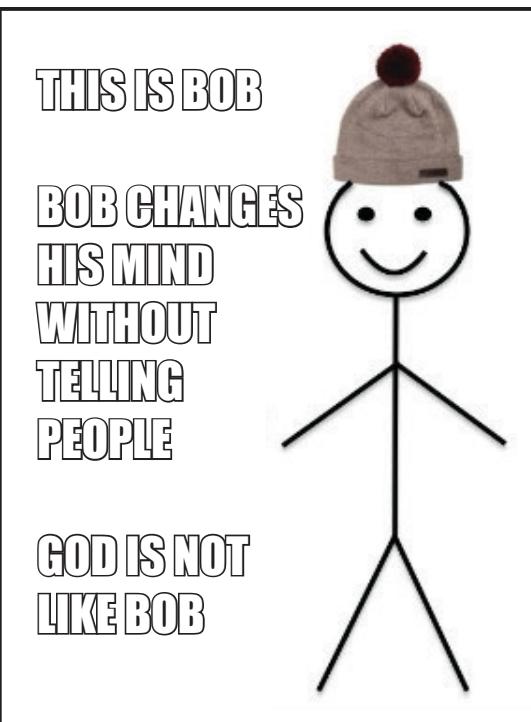
God, and not be swayed by false prophets. In fact, the Torah specifically tells us that if a prophet comes, performs miracles, but tells us something that contradicts the Torah of Moses, not to believe this new prophet. The truth and accuracy of the Torah of Moses is absolutely critical to all of Judaism. Otherwise, people could make up (and have) completely new religions and call them Judaism! I also think it's simply silly to assume God would change His mind anyway. Little kids change their minds often. Changing your mind comes from making poor decisions that you come to regret. That just doesn't work with God's supreme wisdom. God doesn't make bad or impulsive decisions.

With this in mind, let's examine the middle section of Judaism's core beliefs: The existence, and accuracy of God's instructions to us, in the form of the Torah:

6. There were people called prophets who truly delivered messages from G-d to the Jewish people.

This is, of course, important, because it's how we know ANYTHING. God doesn't pop in to the local coffee shop to give us instructions. Judaism is based on the understanding that God communicated what He wants with humans, who then communicated that information with the rest of us. These people are called prophets.

mazel
TOV!
to YANIV BEN- SHIMON
who is celebrating his BAR
MITZVAH this weekend!



7. Moses was the greatest prophet, and his word is final. Any prophets who argue with Moses aren't prophets at all.

As we discussed above, God established Moses as the last word, because otherwise, someone claiming to be a prophet could create a whole new religion. So nobody messes with Moses. Nobody.

8. Ya'know that Torah we have? It's the same text Moses first showed us. Nothing has changed in three thousand+ years.

Every Torah written has been copied from an existing Torah, which has been copied from an existing Torah. This guarantees a high level of accuracy. Torah scrolls from generations ago have no important differences from today's

Torahs.

9. The Torah will never be changed. God gave us the final edited version. Done.

We can be safe in the knowledge that God is not like Dr. Kelvin. God doesn't change the expectations He has set for us. God is consistent and steady.

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.



BRAND NEW JUNIOR LNL!



JUNIOR NCSY

6TH-8TH GRADE



**THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 5TH 6:30- 8:00 PM
COFFEE BEAN 9541 W PICO BLVD**

Rabbi Dani Locker, Director Junior NCSY Toekerd@ncsy.org 917-613-1037

Esther Neissany, Special Programs Coordinator, neissany@ncsy.org 310 359 3310

WEEKLY juniors LNL PROGRAMS:

Tarzana/ Studio City: alternating Wednesdays, 6pm

LA City: Every Thursday, 6:30pm

Las Vegas Summerlin 4-6 grade: Mondays 5:45pm

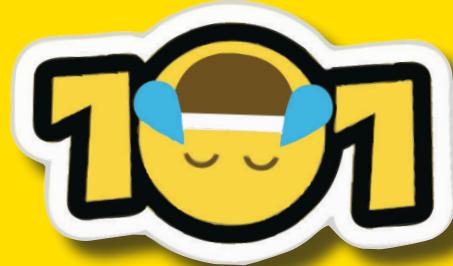
Las Vegas Summerlin 7-8 grade: Mondays 7pm

San Diego: 3rd Thursday of each month

Phoenix: Last Thursday of every month

Join your city's Junior Board: email lockerd@ncsy.org

SAVE THE DATE: Regional Shabbaton Weekend/ San Francisco
Jan. 17th (MLK weekend)



My friend named her two new puppies Rolex and Timex.

She says they're her watchdogs!

OUCH! GROAN!

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

ASK US ANYTHING. REALLY!
GET YOUR QUESTION FEATURED IN STUMP THE RABBI
BY SENDING IT TO STUMP@NAGEELAWEST.ORG

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

Happy Birthday to Nageela
Family members celebrating
this week!

Noam Goldman

Noam Eden

Matt Sheynis

Berit Ben-Shimon

**HAPPY UNBIRTHDAY TO
EVERYONE ELSE!**



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.