

have a Nageela Shavuos



**EXPANDED
EDITION**

A KID FRIENDLY WEEKLY PUBLICATION OF NAGEELA WEST COAST JOYFULLY JEWISH EXPERIENCES

SEASON 4
EPISODE 25

HELP ME DO YOU A FAVOR BY RABBI DANI LOCKER



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Your sister knocks on your door, and asks you a favor. She wants you to help with her math homework. Your choices are:

- A. **T**ell her to get lost and never darken your doorstep again.
- B. **M**ake some excuse, tell her you have a nose bleed in your toe, or something.
- C. **S**ay, "I really, really, really wish I could help! It would be a huge help to me, too... I just have too much schoolwork of my own. Let me help you ask someone else."
- D. **B**e honest, and let her know you are not going to help her because you don't want to.
- E. **H**elp her, while grumbling, rumbling, mumbling and otherwise being disagreeable.
- F. **S**ay, "Wow, I was actually hoping to practice some 5th grade math. Thank you so much for giving me this opportunity!"

On Shavuos, we read the story of Ruth. Ruth was a princess from the kingdom of Moav, who sacrificed everything to convert to Judaism and move to Israel with her mother-in-law Naomi (I've often wondered if the sacrifice wasn't converting to Judaism, but living with her mother-in-law... **JUST** kidding. Ouch, that hurt! No, please don't tell your mother, I'm terrified). In Israel, Ruth was extremely poor and relied on the kindness of others. She and Naomi came up with a plan to ask Boaz, a relative of Ruth's late husband, to marry and take care

of her. Late at night she snuck into Boaz's property, and in secret, asked him to keep his side of the deal.

What was Boaz's response? He told her (I'm paraphrasing, not quoting), You have been very kind, taking care of Naomi and sticking by her side. But your later kindness is greater than your prior kindness. You could have tried to marry a younger man, but instead you want to marry an old guy like myself.

Basically, Boaz was telling Ruth, "No, I'm not doing you a favor. You're doing me a favor!" This, says Rablag, is a lesson we can all learn. When someone asks a favor of us, they feel embarrassed, uncomfortable, maybe a little inadequate. It's naturally hard to ask for favors (unfortunately, some people ask so often, that it loses that discomfort). Boaz was also extra sensitive because he wasn't ready to say yes right away. He first asked a different relative to accept Ruth's proposal. As hard as it is to ask, it's even more embarrassing if you get rejected and you think, "Maybe they don't want to help me!"

Can you think of how you feel when you ask someone for a favor? I don't just mean a small favor like homework help, but a big favor, like a large loan, a long ride, or a major inconvenience. It's queasy and cringey. We learn from Boaz how to answer. Make the asker feel comfortable by making it sound like they are doing you the favor!

Sometimes, in helping you do kindness, they actually are the ones doing you the favor.



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OMG!

Dear Rabbi,

One of the Ten Commandments is not to take God's name in vain. What exactly does this mean? We make blessings with God's name all the time, and read the Torah with God's name. Does it mean making promises? Isn't God's name good and important to use? I'd appreciate it if you could please clarify,

Thanks,

Stephen Wearing



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

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

Dear S. Wearing,

OMG, that's a great question! Let's break it up into two categories. Swearing, and using God's name without an oath.

Swearing in God's name: Have you ever heard someone say, "I swear to God?" Well that could possibly be breaking this commandment. The Torah doesn't say, "don't ever" swear in God's name. It says "in vain." Basically, that means using God's name for an inappropriate oath. There are 4 ways that an oath or promise is considered in vain:

Something that's obviously false. For example, "I swear that the Marlins are the best team in sports."

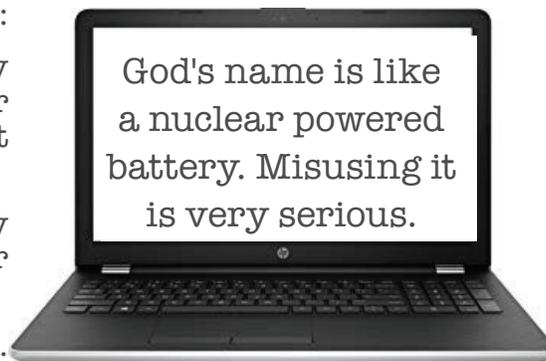
Something that's obviously true. For example, "I swear this pickle is a pickle."

Swearing to violate a mitzvah. For example, "I swear never to give charity again!" Even if your oath is true (or you plan on it being true) it's still considered an inappropriate use of God's name.

Swearing to do the impossible, For example, "I swear to keep my mouth closed while I put in my contact lenses."

Judaism takes oaths and promises really, really seriously. God's name is like a nuclear powered battery. Using God's name in an oath supercharges it with meaning and power. Misusing that special nuclear power is really serious. According to some halachic

authorities, the only way to break this commandment is to swear in one of the 4 inappropriate methods listed above. However, it has become accepted in Jewish culture to avoid swearing as much as possible, and many Jews are so careful that they will not swear for any reason. In the United States court system, they generally require all witnesses to swear they're telling the truth. Even so, they allow Jews to 'affirm' they're telling the truth, because they understand that we are not fans of swearing.



The second category is just using God's name, without an oath. We use God's name often. In fact, Jews are supposed to try to make 100 blessings a day, each of which uses a divine name at least twice. So yes, God's name is GREAT, and we use it often. But we must always

use it for a good reason. There's something called 'bracha livatala' which means making a blessing for no reason. This, according to some authorities, is a violation of this commandment not to use God's name in vain. We also don't try to do things to make us need to make a blessing that's unnecessary. For example, if I'm eating my Shabbat meal (and I had bread), and now I want a pickle for dessert (I think that's a perfectly reasonable dessert, Why are you looking at me funny?), I should not bentsch (say grace) and then make a new blessing on my pickle. Rather, I should have that pickle

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with no blessing, as it's part of a meal. God's name, and blessings are holy and special, and can't be overused, or else they seem to become less important!

It is OK to use God's name while reading biblical verses (so for example, you can say 'Shema' as many times as you want). It's also fine according to most authorities to use God's name while singing appropriate praises to God. Zmiros is the Hebrew word for special songs sung during Shabbat meals, and many of them have God's name used often. There are also some other exceptions. In the Book of Ruth, which we will read on Shavuot, Boaz greets his workers using God's name. The sages explain that in that generation, Boaz and the other leaders decided to start doing

that for a reason. People were not respecting one another as much as they should have, so the Rabbis decided that using the very special name of God to greet people would help everyone understand just how holy and special people are!

There's a whole other part of this discussion, which is 'nicknames' for God, like the English word "God," and also names of the false gods of other religions. Perhaps we'll work on those questions next week.

Have a Nageela Shavuos,

the Rabbi.

Photo of the Week

CLIMBING SINAI



This week, over 40 participants joined for an online Virtual Shavuot themed scavenger hunt. The submissions were hilarious and the game educational. Notice the pickle jar in the foreground.

The holiday of Shavuos has 5 names:

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. <i>Shavuos</i> (Festival of weeks) | 3. <i>Chag Habikurim</i> (Festival of the first fruit) |
| 2. <i>Zman Matan Torasseinu</i> (Time of the giving of the Torah) | 4. <i>Chag Hakatzir</i> (The harvest festival) |
| | 5. <i>Atzeres</i> (Gathering) |

DID JEW KNOW?

Moses went up Mount Sinai for the first time on Shavuos, but he also went up 2 more times, and didn't come back down for the final time (with the second set of tablets) until 4 months later, on Yom Kippur!



TO FORMER nageela STAFF MEMBER BINNY OVADIA UPON HIS MARRIAGE THIS WEEK!

TO FORMER nageela ALUMNUS CORBEN SLATER UPON HIS RECENT ENGAGEMENT!

DEEP THOUGHTS



WHY IS THE THIRD HAND ON YOUR WATCH CALLED THE SECOND HAND?

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

Happy Birthday to family members who have celebrated recently:

- | | |
|-------------------|----------------|
| Zeidy Locker | Brandon Zucker |
| Tal Facher | Corben Slater |
| Tiffani Minkowsky | Zachary Gray |
| Yoni Ghalili | Isaac Wheeler |

Top Ten List

reprinted from Season 2, episode 21



Dear Rabbi,

At Hebrew School this week, we learned about the Ten Commandments. We also learned that there are a lot of commandments, not just ten, but these are singled out because they're the most important. My question is, what's special about them? If I had to choose the ten most important rules for life, I don't think most of these would make my list. Can you please clarify?

Thank you,

Raoul Bouke

Dear Rule Book,

Most people would probably not put jealousy on their top ten list of rules for life. Take a minute to think about which rules YOU might put on the list. The Rabbis have been careful NOT to consider these ten commandments the MOST IMPORTANT. Every instruction God gives us should be equally important in our minds. These ten are listed for a couple of reasons. Some authorities propose that they are the main categories that all other mitzvot can be learned from. Others explain that these ten offer a summary of a guide for life in ten critical areas. I'd like to suggest how each one of the ten commandments is super important in living our lives.

1. There's always got to be a boss. When people are left to make up our own rules, we sometimes make horrible choices, like putting pineapple on pizza. Who's idea was that? Believe in an ultimate boss to guide you.

2. What is important to you? The second commandment is really telling us not to put our faith in the wrong things, because we make decisions based on what's important to us. What are your priorities? If you believe in God, but you also 'worship' money, celebrities, athletes or politics, your decision might be based on those ideals. Don't worship anything or anyone else.

3. Hypocrisy (which, I was relieved to find out is not a secret branch of government run

by hippopotami). Don't claim to be following religion and then do things in "the name of God" which are against His wishes. Suicide bombing in the "name of God" is using God's name falsely.

4. We get soooo busy! Whether it's schoolwork, Snapchat or the swim team, our lives are hectic. Take some time away from the grind of daily life to think about family, God and life. Remember the Shabbat because without it we're like rats in a maze. Or tributes in a Quarter Quell.

5. Gratitude may just be the most important trait in life. Living with appreciation of those who help us will enrich our lives and the lives of those around us. Honor your parents and appreciate them and all the other blessings you have in life.

6. Do not murder. You probably had this on your list, too. Respect for the value of human life is critical for doing life right. If we're committed to preserving life we may work harder to make life itself more meaningful.

7. We're supposed to have pleasure in this world. But pleasure needs boundaries to keep it appropriate, happy and good for people. Make sure that you pursue your enjoyment in life in a way that won't hurt others, or destroy the person you want to be. Don't commit adultery or use other means of getting pleasure in the wrong ways.

8. It's not just about don't steal. A society where people can't trust each other makes it really hard to be happy or productive. Skipping

continued on next page

PICKLE JEWS



GALACTICALLY SYNDICATED COMIC STRIP

*continued from
previous page*

school while pretending to be sick, speaking behind people's backs, cheating on tests or sneaking into the movies. These activities make the world an untrusting, frustrated place, and are directly against the pure truth of God.

9. Our words can be tools of great good or weapons of destruction. With a single story we can destroy a reputation, or make someone feel like a million bucks! Don't bear false witness. Don't hurt people or yourself with words. Use encouraging, enabling words to help others grow.

10. Just be happy with what you have! Many people think happiness is something that 'happens' when we win the lottery, get bitten by a radioactive spider or become famous. The commandment "Do not

be jealous" reminds us not to judge our own happiness by how much other people have compared to us. We need to make the choice to be satisfied with what we have!

How's that for ten important rules for life? Take a look at your own top 10 list and see if you want to edit any of it now. You see, the Torah is just a big storybook. It really captures what it means to grown into a stronger, better person. Good luck!



GOD'S NAME IN VEIN

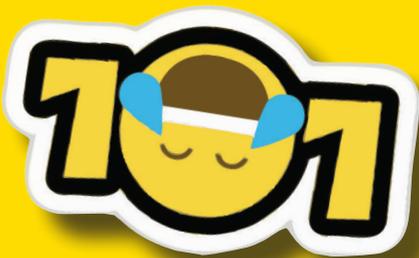
I once ate a watch.

It was time
consuming.

OUCH! GROAN!

got a better joke?

Email it to dlocker@nageelawest.org





WE TOOK OUR CAMP SUPPLIES OUT OF STORAGE THIS WEEK. FOUND THE MOUNTAIN BIKES! CAN'T WAIT FOR CNW2020!

Important COVID-19 information:
Please see the website at nageelwest.org for up-to-date information on our response to the pandemic, and CDC, ACA guidelines for running camp

camp nageela west
BIG BEAR
2020

Girls session: June 23-July 13
Boys Session: July 15- Aug 4

Registration is open now
nageelawest.org/apply

The Shavuot Search

1. What is the boy's name?
2. What game did they just play?
3. What city do they live in?
4. Did they just start dessert?
5. Which of the kids like to draw?
6. What is the boy learning?
7. Where were the flowers?
8. At least how many kids are in the family?
9. What are the father and daughter doing?
10. How many things tell us it is Shavuot?



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DAYS TO CAMP NAGEELA WEST GIRLS SESSION | DAYS TO CAMP NAGEELA WEST BOYS SESSION

Find out about our summer 2020 and see photos from GT2019 at nageelawest.org



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.