

have a Nageela Shabbos

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

Candle Lighting:
Scottsdale 6:16
Henderson 6:28
Las Vegas 6:29
San Diego 6:37
Irvine 6:40
Los Angeles 6:42
Reno/ Tahoe 6:46

Season 4
Episode 16

JEWSPLAINING by Rabbi Dani Locker



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When my Hebrew school students are learning to recite shema, I tell them the reason we cover our eyes with our right hands is so they should not get distracted by silly Rabbis.

The truth of the matter is a little trickier. There are loads of vitally important prayers we say that don't require us to close and cover our eyes. Sure, keeping your eyes closed help us concentrate sometimes. But maybe there's a deeper explanation.

This week's Torah portion tells us about a very dark time in Jewish history. A time, just after the incredible events when we received the Torah from God. Just after the miracles of Mt. Sinai. Only weeks from the plagues and the splitting of the sea. Even after these inspirational events, our ancestors had an epic fail. They created a young cow made of gold, and celebrated. This was big no-no. Some people even worshipped it. That's an even bigger no-no.

However there was a group within the Jewish people who did not participate in the badness. You might be thinking of the tribe of Levi. While true, there's another, larger group who did not participate. The Midrash tells us that the Jewish women resisted the men's influence. While the men wanted to gather all the gold jewelry to create this calf, the women didn't go along with the plan. Due to this they were rewarded with Rosh Chodesh becoming a holiday sacred to women. **Why were**

the women able to see clearly when the men were not?

It has to do with mansplaining. If you're not familiar with the term, it describes the tendency of men to sometimes overthink and over explain things (it might be overused, but there's certainly some truth to it- and I think I just mansplained a bit). We come up with logic and arguments upon more logic and arguments, which so overcomplicate a discussion that we sometimes come out with the wrong conclusions. The mansplaining went something like this: "We can't see God. We have Moses as our guide so we can better relate to God. Moses is gone. He's been on the mountain for forty days and he's missed the deadline to come back. For all we know, he's in an additional 2 week quarantine up there. We need a new conduit to connect us to God. A cow sounds good!" The Jewish women at that time exemplified the trait of Emunah- deep rooted belief. Their response was something like, "I'm pretty sure we're not supposed to make statues and worship them. We just won't."

Shema is the fundamental acceptance of God as our one and only ruler and master. We symbolically cover our eyes when we make this declaration to send ourselves (and others) an important message. When it comes to trying to understand God, it may be best not to look around too much. Put your hand over your eyes. Trust that we're in God's hands and try not to Jewsplain too much.

In the current time of great fear and nervousness, we can take this message to heart. Of course, we need to listen to professional advice; that's what God wants us to do. After that, we can cover our eyes a bit, and let God do the 'splaining.



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HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

Happy Birthday to family members celebrating this week!

Kyle Harris
Ledon Gabay
Mrs. Locker
Sammy Lefkowitz

Nicole Green
Jacob Hayes
Darby Kankoski

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to Camp Nageela West Asst. Head
Counselor **MAYER MINKOWICH**
upon his engagement!



Where do
young cows eat?

At the cafeteria!

OUCH! GROAN!

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

A COUPLE OF WEEKS BACK, WE BEGAN THE DISCUSSION ABOUT FOLLOWING THE MAJORITY. NOW IT CONTINUES.

MAJORI-TEA

Hi Rabbi,

You wrote recently about how Jews follow the majority opinion. Like with a Rabbinic court. Since the majority of people in the world don't follow our religion, why don't we follow them? If we follow the majority, shouldn't we all be Christian?

Thanks,

Alon Jew

Dear Alon Jew,

It was getting late, and Michelle was hoping to reach her destination before dark. She had been walking down the dusty, winding road for hours, and according to the sign, the town lay just a mile ahead. She breathed a sigh of relief and pushed herself onward. And then she stopped. Michelle looked up, confused, seeing a fork in the road. Knowing how tricky the bends in the road could be, she didn't want to take the wrong fork, which might cause her hours of wandering in the darkness. Pausing at the fork, she watched as a large group of people came up behind her. 2 people took the fork to the right, while 6 went left. Michelle had to decide quickly, so she followed the larger group, thinking that, as a rule, it's smart to follow the majority. She walked behind the group for a while, and was dismayed when the road ended suddenly. Approaching one of the members of the group, she asked why they had gone the wrong way. "I dunno. I was just following him!" "Me too!" Michelle soon realized that 5 of the travelers had been following one guy, who seemed lost, too!

You see, following the majority only helps if everyone is making their own decisions and thinking clearly. In many religions, questions are discouraged and their belief system is based on blind faith. In such a system, it's not actually a majority. A better analogy would be many blind people following one leader. But what if everyone is thinking for themselves?

Take this new scenario:

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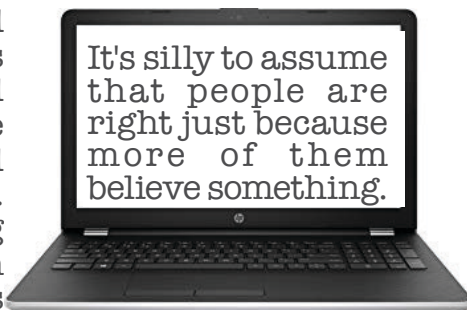
We believe in following the majority when they have similar or better tools than the minority. It would be silly to assume that people are right just because more of them believe something. It's simply illogical. The Torah's guidance is simply that when two



**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.



the same caliber disagree, then we follow the larger of those groups (as was the case with Beis Hillel and Beis Shammai; see previous episode). Here's one more scenario. I'll introduce a new character. Her name is Michelle...

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able to very clearly tell which road was right. She ignored the majority group, and followed her own eyes.

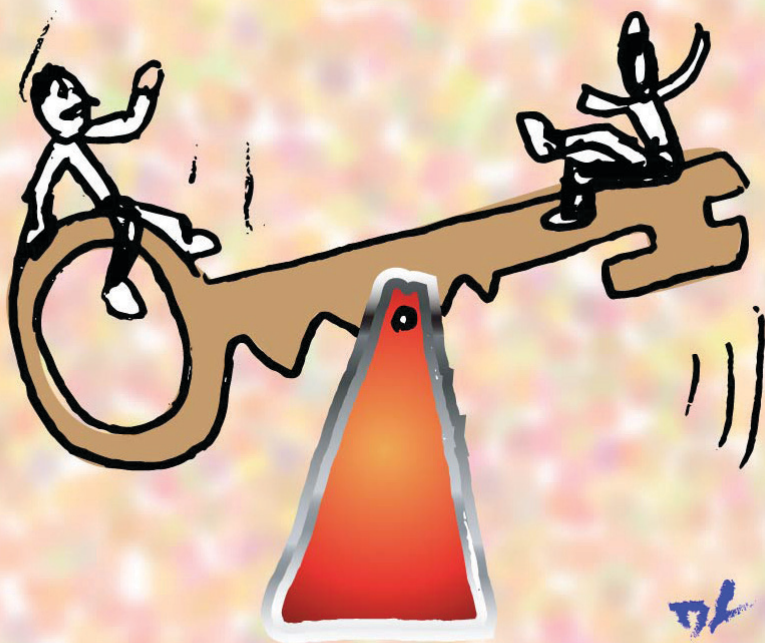
Once again, we see a limitation to the 'majority rules' rule. If you know something to be true, you've got to do what you know to be true. In fact, the Torah specifically tells us not to follow a group, or peer pressure when it's the wrong thing! How can we know if it's the wrong thing? Sometimes we've got to trust our minds and eyes. Sometimes, we've got to ask the people holding the GPS devices.

Have-A Nageela Shabbat,

the Rabbi.

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