

Mitzvah Minute

Writing a Torah

Source:

"Write for yourselves this song." (Book of Devarim chapter 31, verse 19)

Details:

- This is the last Mitzvah in the Torah
- The mitzvah is to personally write a Torah scroll, but if that's impractical (it takes a professional scribe around a year to write a whole Torah), you can accomplish the mitzvah by paying someone to write for you, or buying a Torah.
- The mitzvah applies even if you already have a Torah from your parents
- You can accomplish this mitzvah by writing even one letter in a Torah scroll

- Now that people study mainly from printed books, you can accomplish the mitzvah by buying Torah books. For example: A chumash, A gemara, Pirkei Avot.
- It stands to reason that buying Torah apps or downloading Jewish educational videos is a good practice that can be learned from this mitzvah.

Lessons:

- The first step toward knowledge is having the right supplies
- Each person should try to get his or her own connection to Torah, not just mirror what parents have
- Utilize whatever tools are right for you in your generation, and with your skills in order to grow

SEASON 2 EPISODE 3

SEPT 16, 2017

Candle Lighting:

Phoenix 6:16
Las Vegas 6:29
San Diego 6:36
Los Angeles 6:41

have a

Nageela Shabbos

Parshas
Nitzavim/
Vayelech
5777

A Weekly Publication of Nageela West Coast Joyfully Jewish Experiences

Ripple Away

by Rabbi Dani Locker

There are loads of different kinds of Jews. There are good Jews, and strong Jews. Wise, sad, sly, ignorant and kind Jews. I'm starting to sound like a Dr. Seuss book. It's important to look to those wiser than us to provide understanding and insight. But it goes beyond that.

Our Torah reading opens with a great gathering of the entire nation. Moshe tells them, "You're all standing here." From the woodcutters and the water carriers to the greatest leaders. He continues, "Kol Ish Yisrael- Every man of Israel." The commentaries explain that this tells us that all members of our nation are responsible for one another. It's everyone's job to make sure everyone else is doing their best.

But wait! Let's take a closer look.

This explanation doesn't say that the great, wise and strong Jews are responsible for those less capable. It says that ALL Jews are responsible for all other Jews. This means that it's not just our leaders, parents, Rabbis, teachers whose job it is to take care of us. Every person has a tremendous ability to impact and affect others. Even people people greater and wiser!

But wait!

How many times are you going to ask me to wait?

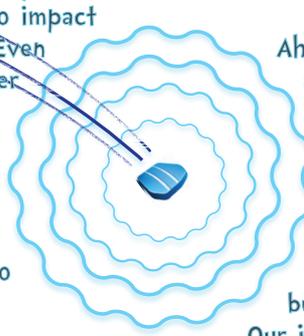
Sorry.

This means even the lowest, humblest

Jew. Even those who aren't good. Even children who haven't acquired wisdom in their lives. Those who do things wrong consistently. They're also responsible for all Jews. Which means, something can be learned from them as well! And you! You can actually help people older, wiser and more experienced than you.

Who am I to tell greater people how to act?

Ahhh... I didn't say anything about "telling" people. Every person in the world is interconnected. The things we do impact everyone! Maybe they have a relatively smaller impact than a great leader, but the ripples are still felt. Our job is to ripple in the right direction and it will be felt by all. You never know whose life you might change (it might even be your own)!



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Stump The Rabbi



Blurred Lines

Hey Rabbi,

Why are Rabbis always adding more rules? It's tough enough to do the right thing, then we get more restrictions! Also, you wrote last week that it's not cool to add rules to the Torah, so why is it OK for Rabbi to add rules?

Thanks,
Nicholas Rabin

Dear RabbinNick,

You're absolutely right. The Rabbis may not add laws to the Torah. End of conversation. Have a Nageela Shabbat.

What? That wasn't a good enough answer for you?

FINE! Be that way. It's about blurred lines. Let me put it this way. The Midrash (that's the part of the Talmud that details

some of the more interesting parts of the Torah's storyline) explains what happened when the first woman, Chava (also known as Eve) ate from the forbidden fruit. Adam and Chava had decided that since God had told them eating the fruit was punishable by death, they should not even touch the tree. Good idea, right? I mean, if you know a fruit is poison, you're not gonna build your kids a tree house there. I hope. Unless you're a really bad parent.

Chava's mistake is that she convinced herself that GOD told them not to touch the tree. So when ole sneaky snakey pushed her into the tree and nothing happened, she thought God's whole rule was a mistake. Chava blurred the line of what God said and what humans decided. Her precaution ended up messing her up.

When Rabbis made up rules (long ago... Rabbi's don't make up rules anymore), they did it to protect the Torah's rules, and they made it clear that this was not the actual Torah rule, but a Rabbinic rule. For example, one of the Torah's rules is not to write on Shabbat. The Torah does not say not to hold a pen on Shabbat. But let's be real for a sec... If I gave you a pen to hold and came back an hour later, what

would the paper in front of you look like? Mine would be full of pickle drawings. The Rabbis realized this so they decided to ban holding pens, too (I guess they were anti-pickle). They didn't claim this was a new Torah commandment, or a part of an old one. Nope. They called it what it is, a fence- a barrier and protection against violating the Torah. There always were and always will be only 613 Torah commandments. There are thousands of Rabbinic rules.

Just to make sure I'm being understood: It is not OK for anyone to create new laws and claim they are Torah laws. It is OK for people to make their own boundaries to help them keep the Torah's laws, as long as they don't blur those lines. 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

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Participate in Stump The Rabbi live online!

This Tuesday at 6:30pm. On Instagram @lockerroom and at tinyurl.com/selfietorah

VERY PUNNY

Sidewalks are very good for society.

They keep kids off the streets!"

Ouch. Have a better pun?

Send it in to dlocker@nageelawest.org

have a Nageela Shabbos

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

