

have a

Nageela

Shavuos

Parshas
Bamidbar/
Shavuos

5778

A Kid Friendly Weekly Publication of Nageela West

Coast Joyfully Jewish Experiences

Pass the Cheesecake

by Rabbi Dani Locker

Matzah. Menorah. Honey. Sukkah. Marror. Megillah. Afikoman. Lulav. Latkes. Hamentaschen. Pickles. Shofar. Fasting. Costumes. Donuts. Charoses. Esrog. Pickles. Bonfires. Seder. Hakafos...

Which of the above holiday observances apply to Shavuos?

That's right. Exactly none of 'em. **SHavuos** is one of our major holidays, but it has little in the way of detail. As with all of our biblical festivals (meaning the 3 listed in the Torah plus the high holidays), we don't work on Shavuos. We make kiddush, and have special

prayers. Other than that, there is **ZERO** that the Torah tells us to do during this holiday. A few customs have popped up over the years. I can think of three off the top of my head:

1. Greens and flowers: Whenever adults use the word "greens," kids automatically shut off their hearing, assuming that the conversation is going to shift into healthy eating. Some adults even have the strange idea that green M&M's aren't healthy. They're green. Duh. But I'm not talking about eating these greens (unless you're a cow). Mount Sinai is in a desert. Mountains in a desert are brown or red (or gray or beige, but definitely **NOT** green). In honor of the occasion of God giving the Torah to our



grandparents, 3,300 years ago, the mountain grew green with plantlife and colorful

continued on page 4

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Stump The Rabbi

Conversationsational

Hi Rabbi,

I heard (from you, actually) that the Jewish population of the world is shrinking. That really scares me. I was thinking about it, and I have a great idea. Instead of telling people not to convert to Judaism, why don't we try to get more people to convert? There are so many people in the world, we should be able to increase our numbers with outreach to people who weren't born Jewish. I really feel like this would help.

Thanks

Cindy Seer

Dear Cin Seer,

You ask a great question. The pure numbers should Let me first help our readers with a little background.

Jews are different from pretty much every other religion in the world in two important ways.

We love bagels.

We don't try to convert people to our religion (okay, there may



be more than two important differences, but we're talking about conversion, and bagels are always relevant).

A fundamental belief of every major religion that I'm aware of is:

"The only way you can achieve (choose your favorite afterlife)

- Nirvana
- Paradise
- Valhalla
- Ice cream

is by following our religion. Otherwise you're doomed (insert demonic laugh)." That's why many religions missionize, spending lots of time and money buying bicycles and neckties to convince people to convert to their religion.

We respectfully disagree. Judaism does not claim to be the only path to ice cream (that was my pick). Someone who is not Jewish can earn a reward in the afterlife by living a kind and moral life, and following a few very basic rules (like having a system of law, not stealing and not washing whites together with

VERY
PUNNY

Why were all the Jews at Sinai overweight?
They'd just spent seven weeks living in the dessert!

Why was Sinai humble?
He never thought he'd amount to much!

dark).

So why WOULD someone want to convert?

You can take a look in the Stump the Rabbi archives at nageelawest.org where I talk about this in Nageela Shabbos, Season 1, episode 4. To make a long story very short, Jews have a special relationship with God, and we have to pay for it with much more complex rules, and unhealthy food. So if someone wants to convert to Judaism, we have always allowed people to join, yet we've never encouraged it. Guess where we learn this from?

On the holiday of Shavuot, we read the story of Ruth. If you haven't read it, I highly recommend you put down your copy of Magnus Chase and pick this up instead. When Ruth, a wonderful, kind woman decided to join the Jewish people, she was told to go home! It was only after she had fought for the chance, insisted on joining, that she was allowed to become a Jew, and then welcomed with open arms, as she became the great grandmother of King David and ancestor of our future Messiah.

This story (which is not JUST a story, but a part of TANACH (the Hebrew acronym for our bible) teaches us that we don't encourage or recruit converts. It also teaches us that when someone converts sincerely, they become a full fledged, honored member of the Jewish people. If that's the case, why don't we take converts more often?

Have you ever really wanted something and then gotten tired of it? I see it all the time. A kid

wants to learn ballet. Begs her parents for ages. They pay for the slippers, tutu, the whole deal. Get her lessons. She's into it for a year or so, and eventually loses interest. Kid decides he wants lessons in tennis, or piano, or crocheting (really?) or DJing. A few thousand dollars later, the hobby has faded into a distant memory. This doesn't only happen with kids. How many adults buy golf clubs, sewing machines, racing bikes, yoga equipment... this list goes on... and after the excitement fades, find they're not so into it anymore? People even get bored of their jobs and switch careers.

Being Jewish is an amazing privilege, and it's open for anyone to join, but it's so easy to get inspired, join, and then lose interest. That's why we try to make it a little bit more difficult and annoying. Yes, we make it annoying on purpose. This way we know, when someone does go through with a complete conversion, they are the real deal, and they're committed for life.

Would having more converts help the Jewish population? Sure, but only truly committed converts. There's no way to promote or advertise that. It can only come through time and effort.

Have - a- Nageela Shabbat and Shavuot,

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



#NAGEELAWALK

50 MILES IN 50 DAYS



THANK YOU!

**To all those who walked in support of Nageela scholarships,
and to those who contributed!**

continued from page 1 with flowers. Some people have the custom to bring plants and flowers into their synagogues and homes for this holiday.

2. All Night Party: What? Did I write party? Oops! I meant to write study! Editor, could you please change that to “study?” Well, if you study with the right people, it feels like a party... speaking of which, I’ll be hosting a live stump the rabbi session Shavuot night from midnight on for ages 10 and up at the Las Vegas Kollel.

We had a rule about toys when I was growing up. All toys had to be shared, except for the first day you got them. On the first day, you were so excited about your new toy, you just wanted to play with it all day. We are so excited with the idea of having the Torah, a GPS to help us live our lives better, that we just can’t put it down. **And so**, many people spend all night on Shavuot studying Torah.

3. Dairy: Or simply, cheesecake. For a number of complicated reasons, Jews over the generations have developed a custom to eat milk and dairy products on this holiday. I want to share with you a beautiful thought I read recently, which may or may not be a true reason for eating dairy, but which I found to be inspiring:

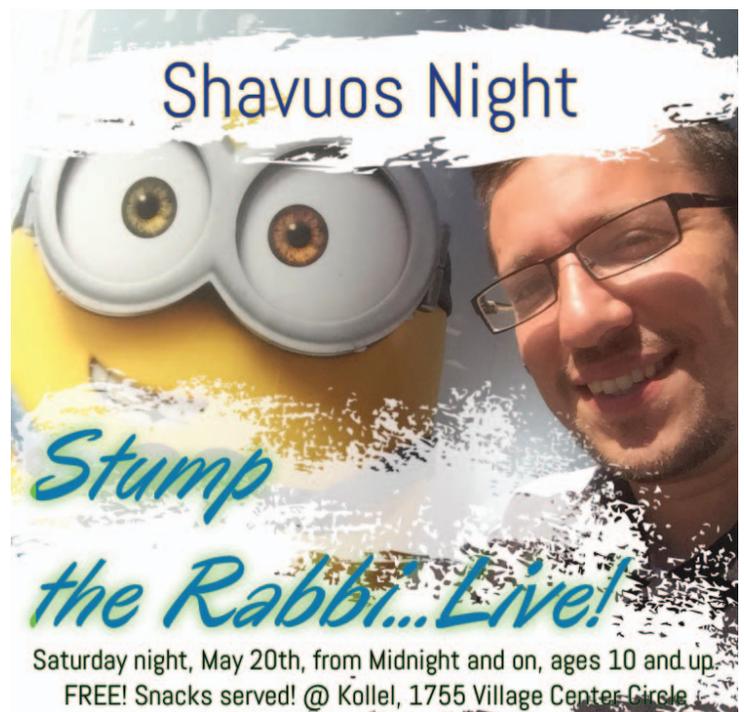
What is special about milk? Aside from the obvious benefit, which is milk moustaches, of course. Milk is what all baby mammals drink to survive their infancy. But it’s super cool how it works. As a grown kid

or adult, you need to eat different foods to get different health benefits. We know we’ve got to eat vegetables (there we go again with the greens. LA, I’m not listening!) for the nutrients they have. We’ve got to get our protein and calcium, we need fiber from other foods like fruit, and on top of everything else, many people still need to take vitamins to get what they need. But milk... milk is different.

When a baby cow, or kangaroo... or human drinks its mother’s milk, it’s literally getting every vitamin and nutrient it needs. Not only that, it contains antibiotics to help the baby fight off infection. Milk is the quintessential (i love that word) example of perfect nutrition. It’s appropriate that we have milk and dairy on Shavuot, the holiday when we celebrate our connection to the Torah. Torah, like milk, has everything we need. It teaches us morality, and helps us make decisions in life. It promotes happiness, and improves our relationships and self esteem. Basically, the Torah is **OUR** milk. Also like milk, if we leave it around for too long.... Let’s make sure not to let it spoil.

**Mazel
Tov!**

to all- star Nageela West
counselor
Shavy Weichbrod
upon her
engagement to
Yosef Weiss!



insert cartoon here

GREEN VALLEY NAGEELATTE



SUMMERLIN NAGLEEDA



NAGEELA HEBREW SCHOOL

**INSERT HEBREW SCHOOL
PHOTO HERE**

Mitzvah Minute <

Tzitzis and Tallis

a short weekly column introducing one of Judaism's 613 commandments



Source:

And you shall make for them fringes, on the corners of their garments... (Book of Bamidbar chapter 15, verse 38).

Details:

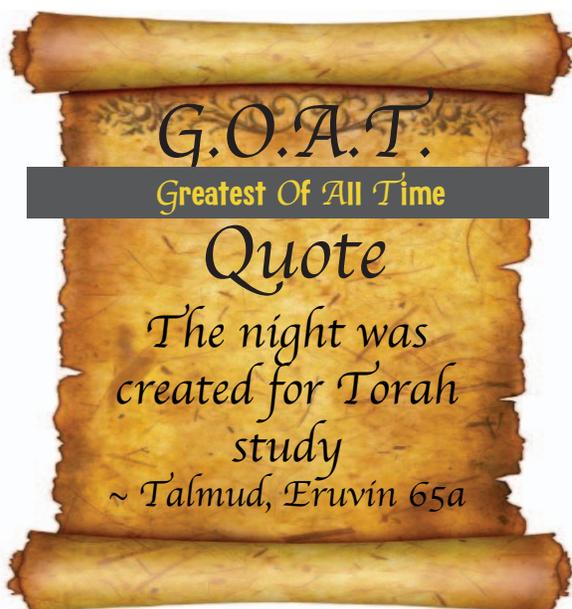
- This mitzvah is to tie specially made strings to the corners of a four cornered garment..
- According to the Torah, you've only got to do this if you happen to have a piece of clothing with four corners. Jews have accepted to wear garments with tzitzis (or tzitzit) every day to fulfil a Rabbinic rule.
- A garment is only used for tzitzis if it's large enough to be cover the upper body of a child. Something small like a bandana or a scarf should not be used for tzitzis or tallis.
- It's best if tzitzis and their garments are made of either wool or linen. If the garment is another material, that's OK.
- If you have tzitzis with torn or

missing strings, it's better not to wear them at all, until they're inspected by someone who knows the rules, and how to repair them.

- A bracha (blessing) is made when putting on a pair of tzitzis for the first time that day.
- As an added "prayer bonus" many Jews wear a larger tallis (or tallit) that wraps around their body during the morning prayer service. Ashkenazi Jews generally start this custom after marriage, while Sephardic Jews and some other communities start at Bar Mitzvah or even younger.
- There is a special blue coloring called techeiles that was used to color one string (of each corner) blue. We are unable to create this dye today, so most communities keep their tzitzis white. Some communities use a similar blue dye to remind them of the techeiles.

Lessons:

- We surround ourselves with the mitzos. Tzitzis remind us that Judaism is a fully immersive experience, not just stuff we say or eat.
- Tzitzis act as a Jewish uniform, much like a sports jersey, identifying us as God's nation
- The strings' numerical value remind us of all 613 commandments of the Torah (ask your local Rabbi to explain how)
- The blue techeiles dye reminds us of the blue ocean, which reflects the sky, which in turn should remind us of God.



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tinyurl.com/selfietorah

Subscribe to the Camp Nageela West YouTube channel for up to date Nageela content.
www.youtube.com/nageelawest

SAVE THE DATES:

SUN, JUNE 3 TAHOE/ RENO YEAR END EVENT	SUN, JUNE 10 LAS VEGAS YEAR END BOWLING EVENT	WED, JUNE 27 GIRLS CAMP ROAD TRIP START DATE
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WED, JULY 18 BOYS CAMP ROAD TRIP START DATE

Happy Birthday!

to Nageela family members celebrating their birthdays this week!

Jason Gloth
Ashley Sellen
Ilan Cohen
Yitzy Locker
Rina Greenberg
Ben Bialek
Dov Ber Kinn

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.

