

NAGEELA SHABBOS

Emor 5781
April 30th, 2021

Have-a

SEASON 5 EPISODE 27

a kid friendly publication of Nageela West Coast Joyfully Jewish Experiences



Cutting Corners

by Rabbi Dani Locker

Any farmers here? Didn't think so. Well in case you ever meet a farmer, you can let him know about an interesting law presented in our Torah portion. It's called Pe'ah, or "corner". Here's how it works. Let's say you've got a field of chocolate bars (I LIKE that idea). Or, on the off chance your farm doesn't produce chocolate bars, we'll have to make due with wheat. When it comes time to harvest these bars (or stalks) you're supposed to leave a bit of the field, in the corner, untouched. This way, the poor people can come get their chocolate.

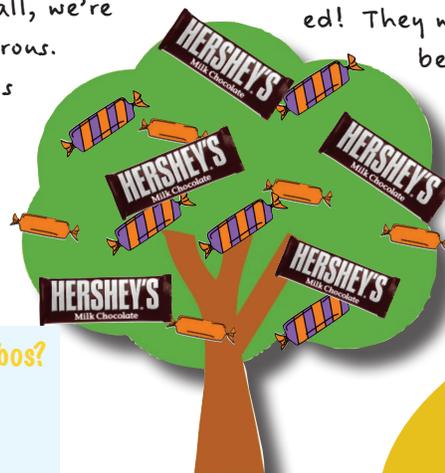
Makes sense; after all, we're supposed to be generous. But why do it in this strange way. We already know we're supposed to give a certain percentage of our money

to charity. Why does the Torah ask us to participate in this unusual playacting, leaving the corner for the guy to harvest? If anything, it would be much more convenient for the poor people if the farmer would harvest it all, and leave a donation!

Rabbi Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld was the leading Rabbi in Jerusalem around 100 years ago. Once, some guests asked to stay at his home for Passover, excited to spend the holiday with such a great Rabbi. They offered to pay him for his hospitality, and surprisingly, he accepted! They were kind of shocked, because hosting guests is a great mitzvah, and they'd expected him to turn down the money. Still, they had an awe-

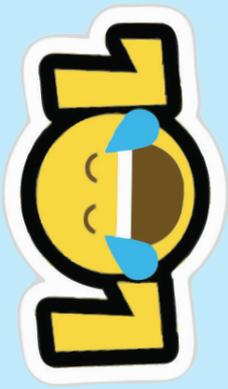


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Scottsdale	6:52
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Las Vegas	7:09
San Diego	7:11
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I practice archery with both hands...

It's good to be am-bow-dextrous

OUCH! GRRRRROAAN!
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some holiday, and really enjoyed the seder. After Passover they went to wish their host goodbye. Rabbi Sonnenfeld handed them the original envelope they'd given him with all the money in it.

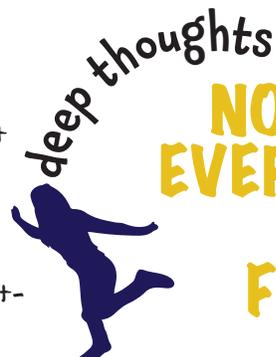
"Why did the Rabbi accept our money if the plan was to return it in the end?"

The Rabbi explained, "It was my pleasure to have you as guests, and I would never accept payment for such a great mitzvah! However, I knew that you would not be completely comfortable and feel at home as my guests unless you

thought you were paying for it. So I temporarily took the money so your visit would be more enjoyable!"

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The idea is similar to the corner of our chocolate field (I'm getting hungry just thinking about it. Someone should really invent a chocolate field. Instant success!). Sure, you can always give charity, but it's a bit embarrassing to be on the receiving end of charity. Harvesting the corner of the field on his own allows the recipient to feel like he's the farmer. For just a few minutes, perhaps he can imagine that instead of taking other people's generous handouts, he's harvesting his own Nestle Crunch.



NOTHING IS EVER REALLY ON FIRE. FIRE IS ON THINGS.

PICKLE

JEW'S

GALACTICALLY SYNDICATED COMIC STRIP



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.

Note: We call this 'Stump The Rabbi' for fun, but that's not really the point. The goal is to learn something important in an interesting way.

Stump the Rabbi



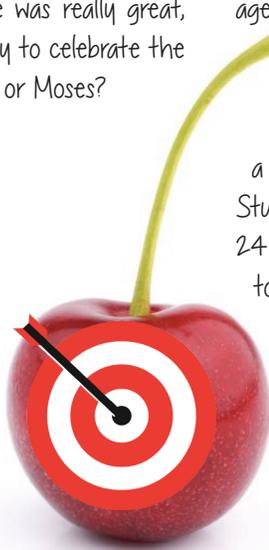
#169 Logging Out

Hi Rabbi,

I don't really understand why we celebrate Lag Ba'Omer. I understand that the students of Rabbi Akiva stopped dying, but isn't that because there were basically none left? He had 24,000 students, and 24,000 students died! I have also heard it's because it marks the passing of Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai. I'm sure he was really great, but do we have a day to celebrate the passing of Abraham or Moses?

Thanks,

Bonnie Feyer



Dear Bonfeyer,

Lag Ba'Omer is truly one of the most mystifying days on the Jewish calendar. First, a bit of back-ground for those who might not know:

Around 1900 years ago, the great sage known as Rabbi Akiva developed a following of 24,000 students. That's a lot. It could have been the beginning of a new golden age

of Jewish scholarship. Instead, they all died within a 33 day period, just after Passover. We mourn this tragic loss each year in a number of ways (for more info, see Stump The Rabbi archives Season 1 Episode 24 and Season 2, Episode 31). According to tradition, they stopped dying on the 33rd day, evermore called 'Lag Ba'Omer' (Lag when written in Hebrew has the number value of 33). Your question is excellent. On Tisha B'av we mourn the destruction of the Holy Temple. We don't have a holiday the

next day because the destruction was over! That would be weird. And inappropriate. And did I mention weird?

There are a number of answers to this question, but let's work with this one: What happened after the loss of Rabbi Akiva's students? The Talmud tells us that Rabbi Akiva found 5 new students who then became the intellectual and spiritual leaders of the Jewish nation. According to the Arizal, HE FOUND THESE STUDENTS ON LAG BA'OMER! In reality, the celebration is not simply that the death stopped. It was the beginning of a new era or Torah learning and growth. The sadness we feel for the loss of Torah leadership during the 33rd day is exactly the reason for our excitement on the day Rabbi Akiva started anew (might I point out at this point how absolutely incredible it is that this man who struggled so hard to study Torah, finally succeeded only to have all of his students die- found the strength and motivation to 'just keep swimming' and

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GIRLS SESSION

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7

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DAYS TO CAMP NAGEELA WEST
BOYS SESSION

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Stump the Rabbi

continued

not give up!!!).

Oh, and by the way, can you guess who one of these five students was? No! Not Dumbledore. Good guess, but no. It was Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai! According to this approach, Lag Ba'Omer isn't simply the day Rabbi Shimon passed on. It's also the day that marks his very greatness—the day he became a primary student of the legendary Rabbi Akiva.

While I'm at it, I'll take a minute to explain the odd custom of archery on

Lag Ba'Omer. BTW, if you've never tried shooting arrows while blindfolded... you don't know what you're missing. The Torah tells us that the first rainbow appeared after the great flood (everyone was high-fiving and saying, "Great flood guys!") That's probably why it's called the great flood) as a sign that God would never again destroy all life. If you view the rainbow like an archery bow, it's pointing AWAY from the world. Good sign, right? Kinda. The rainbow appearing is a reminder that God promised not to destroy us. That's not necessary if we're rocking and rolling

the way God wants us to. During RSBY's lifetime, no rainbows appeared. When he died, they came back. Therefore the use of bows on Lag BOWmer commemorates the greatness of RSBY.

A word of advice? Never have an archery competition against communists. They're really good Marx men.

Have a Nageela Shabbat,

the Rabbi

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NCSSU

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PIZZA, DISCOUNTS, QUESTIONS ANSWERED

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

Best wishes to our friends and family members celebrating this week...

- | | |
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Nageela West Coast

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.