

Lech Lecha 5782
October 15th, 2021

HAVE-A NAGEELA SHABBOS

SEASON 6 EPISODE 2

a kid friendly publication of Nageela West Coast Joyfully Jewish Experiences



B.L.A.

by Rabbi Dani Locker

“How does she do it all?”
“What a special person!”
“I’ve never seen anyone do so much good with her time!”
Everyone was talking about Toby’s schedule, because it was remarkable! On Tuesdays, she spent 3 hours after school volunteering at an animal shelter. On Wednesdays and Thursdays she coached sports for disabled children, and on Fridays she would spend the entire afternoon baking cakes to distribute to senior citizens. Weekends were dedicated to cleaning up beaches, cemeteries and parks, and any given day, Toby could be seen helping, carrying, drawing, writing, donating, collecting and doing a tremendous amount for pretty much anyone who needed help. People were in awe of both her energy and her selflessness. There wasn’t a volunteers committee, charity group or com-

munity project that Toby didn’t head up. She never asked for anything in return; she genuinely cared about people and the world. She was a true inspiration. Some parents in the neighborhood even printed tee shirts for their kids that said, “One day I’ll be like Toby, and my parents will finally be proud of me!” Another popular slogan read ‘BLT (Be Like Toby).’ That’s why everyone was so surprised to see Toby one day, sitting in detention, looking rather sad.

Toby’s friend, Melissa approached her. “OMG! I think the world must be ending! Toby, what happened to you? This must be a totally unfair plot against you, or something.” Toby shook her head slowly. “There’s no plot. I have detention every day for the rest of the school year PLUS I have to do summer school. All because I don’t do any school-work!”



Candle lighting

- Scottsdale 5:35
- Honolulu 5:48
- Henderson 5:45
- Las Vegas 5:46
- San Diego 5:57
- Irvine 5:58
- Los Angeles 6:00
- Reno/ Tahoe 6:01
- Oakland 6:13
- Park City 6:27

Did you know you can sponsor a week of Nageela Shabbos for a birthday, anniversary, or just because you like Jews? Contact dlocker@nageelawest.org for details

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“You mean, you, like, missed an assignment?”

“No. I meant I don’t do ANY schoolwork. I feel like the things I do for people are so important, that I don’t have time for petty things like tests, homework or research papers. After I ditched my history midterm to sort recyclable bottles and cans, it all came crashing down on me.”

Let’s leave Toby and Melissa to commiserate for a few moments while we talk about our great ancestor, Abraham. At the tender young age of ninety- years- old, Abraham

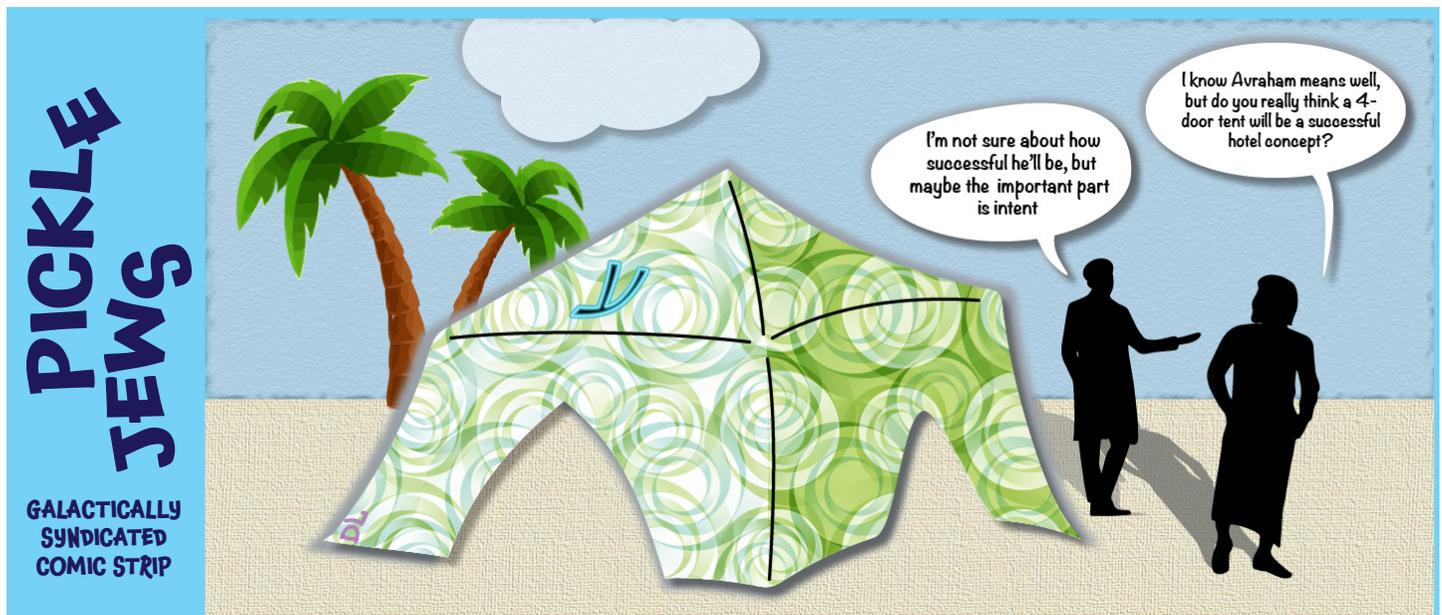
Taking care of our obligations are way, way more important than doing extra good stuff.

got the mitzvah of circumcision- the bris milah. That’s not something easy for an elderly gentleman, yet he did it- as he did everything God asked of him- with joy. I have a question, though. Jewish tradition tells us that Abraham, kept the entire Torah. In fact, when he was visited by angels (we’ll read about that next week), Abraham served them matzah because it was the date that would later become Passover! Whether it was prophecy, logic, or some other source, he apparently knew and understood the yet-to-be-instructed Torah and performed all the commandments. If that’s so, WHY DID HE WAIT until he was 90 years old to make a bris? Were all the bagel shops booked? Couldn’t find a catering hall? Though I saw a number of possible answers to this question, here’s one that stuck with me.

Since the Torah had not yet been given to the Jewish people, everything Abraham did was voluntary. Doing mitzvahs for extra credit is beautiful, and Abraham excelled at doing everything the Torah said (the Torah already existed, it just hadn’t been delivered yet). There is a big difference, Abraham understood, between doing something as a volunteer, and doing something because it is required of you. It might sound exciting, wonderful, righteous and saintly to go ‘above and beyond the call of duty’, and it’s certainly more glamorous than ‘doing as you’re told’. Yet in reality,

taking care of our obligations are way, way more important than doing extra good stuff. Doing something because God told us to is much more valuable than doing something God would want us to do, but hasn’t been commanded. This is the lesson Toby learned the hard way. It’s so awesome to be involved in extra acts of kindness and generosity when it doesn’t come at the expense of your responsibilities and obligations. Yes, it’s more important to do your homework than to volunteer at a charity event. Abraham knew that God would eventually command him to have his bris, so he waited on this one mitzvah, so that he could do it as a true mitzvah- commandment, rather than an extra credit project. So get your tee shirts ready and make sure they say “BLA”.
Be Like Abraham.

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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.



Having a Conversation

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
Cynthia Seer

Dear Cyn Seer,
You ask a great question. The pure numbers should support your suggestion. First 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.

1. We love bagels.
2. 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 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 neck-ties 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 darks).

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



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DAYS TO CAMP NAGEELA WEST BOYS SESSION

Find out about our summer 2022 and see photos from 2021 at nageelawest.org

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... the 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,

the Rabbi



Abraham and Isaac were buying a new computer together. "Dad, we need to purchase more memory."

"Don't Worry," Abraham answered. "God will provide the RAM."

OUCH! GROAN!

Do you have a better joke? I sure hope so! Send it to dlocker@nageelawest.org



IF YOU'RE WAITING FOR THE WAITER, DOES THAT MAKE YOU THE WAITER?

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

Ethan Kenwood
Samuel Katz
Eli Ephraim
Shifra Tabak
Tova Florans



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.

Want to stay in the loop? Text the word **NAGEELAWEST** to **22828**



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