

HAVE A

NAGEELA SHABBOS

A Kid Friendly Torah Magazine by Magenta West Coast

DVAR TORAH

Want to Want
by Rabbi Dani Locker

What did one little firecracker say to the



other?

My pop is bigger than your pop!

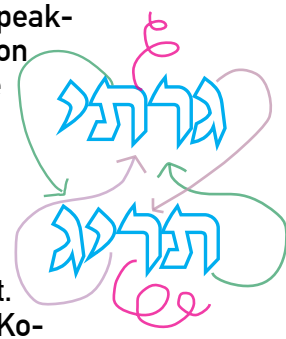
Kids like to show off their skills or muscles, or whatever to other kids, and adults do the same thing, just with different words and actions. People show off what they have in order to intimidate or convince someone. "Hire me for this job, because I'm really good at it." "Be my friend because I give great gifts." "Hang out with me because I'm more fun than the other kids."

Jacob actually does this with his brother Esau when they met after decades of separation. Esau shows up with an army of vikings. They weren't actually vikings, but that's how I imagine Esau's followers. Long beards and tankards of ale. I'm not even sure what a tankard is, but it sounds very large. Esau brings these guys to threaten Jacob, and maybe to do more than that. Jacob responds, "I temporarily lived with Laban, and I've survived until now." What was Jacob trying to say?

One

explanation is Jacob was trying to be as non-threatening as possible. "Don't hate me or be jealous of me. I don't even own a home, I've just been crashing on Laban's couch. Don't worry about me." Another idea mentioned by Rashi is that Jacob was 'bragging' about his mitzvah observance (not for the sake of bragging, but to show Esav that Jacob would have God's protection). The Hebrew word for 'temporarily lived' is גרתי. If you switch around the letters, that spells תריג, which equals 613, the number of commandments. Jacob is telling Esav, my God is bigger than your God- in a manner of speaking. I kept all the mitzvos, so God's on my side. "I lived with Laban, and the 613 commandments I guarded."

I've got a problem with this. Well, we know that Jacob couldn't have kept all the commandments, because it's impossible for one human to do that. He'd have to be, at the same time, a Kohen, Levi, Israelite, single, married, divorced, rich, poor, a judge, a thief, a king and a pickle. What we mean when we say someone kept all the commandments, is that he kept all the ones that applied to him, and didn't violate any of them. But the problem is, he didn't keep all the commandments that applied to him. First of all, he did not keep the



As our family in our homeland continues to struggle for our very existence, we dedicate any learning or inspiration gained in this publication to the merit of protection for the hostages and members of IDF.

continued on two, too.

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commandments of honoring his parents (yes, he did go to Laban's house on their instruction, but he could have come back sooner, and it seems he was later punished for skipping this mitzvah). Even more clearly, one of the 613 commandments is to not marry two sisters. Last week we explained why it was OK for him to marry Leah and Rachel, yet he DID marry them. Granted he didn't do anything wrong, but isn't it a bit odd for Jacob to brag specifically with the number of the commandments when we know of at least one he didn't keep?

If your parents asked you to clean your room, and you didn't do it but it wasn't your fault (like of there was an absolutely irresistible sale you just HAD to be at). You may not be at fault. You still aren't gonna say, "Hey, look at my clean floor."

The answer may lie (according to a great commentator called the Chasam Sofer) in the next words of the statement. "And the 613 commandments I guarded." Guarded could mean more than one thing. In next week's parsha, actually, when Joseph announces his prophetic dreams about becoming a ruler, the Torah says, "His father guarded the matter." This means he anticipated it. He was excited to see how it would turn out. He LOOKED FORWARD to it. If we plug in this meaning of 'guarded', what Jacob is saying is

actually NOT that he kept all the commandments. He didn't. He is staying, "I looked forward to a time when I could keep all the commandments." This is his message to Esau. I'm not a perfect person. Nobody is. But I want more! I want to and anticipate being able to become greater than I am now. That's a power Esau can not defeat!

Being good can be tricky. Every time we learn something new, every time we are inspired to become a better Jew or a better person, we run the risk of getting down on ourselves. "I'm really not where I should be." We might feel inadequate that fellow Jews are risking their lives to fight for our safety and we're living comfortably. We may be frustrated when hear stories of truly great Torah scholars or giants of kindness, morality and virtue, and beat ourselves up because we're SO not there yet.

Jacob's teaches us that even if we're not where we want to be, the test of what will make us great, is do we really want it. Do we want to get there? If we don't, do we at least want to want it? It's OK to accept ourselves for who we are AND ALSO to really want to be better in the future. The difference is a plan. So love yourself. You are awesome, after all, and think about who you want to be in a month, a year, or 30 years. Then try to take small steps to get there!

LOLZ

**I TRIED GETTING MY BIKE TO
STAND ON ITS OWN...**

BUT IT WAS TWO TIRED

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