

naGeela

Shabbos

SEASON 7, EPISODE 7

HaveA

A Kid Friendly Torah Magazine by NaGeela West Coast

The Shady Tree

by Rabbi Dani Locker

DVAR TORAH

What's the best gift you could ask for?

I did some high level research online and I'm between a cockroach

stuffed animal, a weight loss kit and a solar powered flashlight. Ohhhh, BEST gift? Pickles of course! Why even ask.

So surely when the great Abraham was deserving of reward, God gave him lots and lots of pickles. That must be how it went. Actually, if you read the section of the Torah where God makes His promises to Abraham, He says, "Look at the sky and count the stars, if you can count them. So shall your children be." Beautiful, yet it's always bothered me a bit. Is Abraham's big blessing that we'd be a large nation with a lot of people? I mean, it's kind of nice to have a good sized nation, but the population isn't that important. In fact, we Jews aren't really that big when compared to many other nations. Surely if being numerous was God's main reward for Abraham, we'd have billions of people! We'd be the biggest, and there-

fore the best! So, no, I don't buy it. There must be an underlying message and reward in God's words.

The Talmud (also quoted here by the Midrash) tells a story. A space traveler was skimming across a dusty space road (whoever wrote this Midrash must have been into scifi) with an anti gravity jet pack. The jet pack was solar powered, and his planet had 4 suns, so it wouldn't take long to recharge but he did have to stop for a bit to get a full tank. Because of those 4 suns, he made sure to stop somewhere with lots of shade. Finding a globatran tree (as everyone knows, globatran trees give high UV protection), he propped up the jet pack in an upper branch, and laid against the tree trunk to rest. The soft bark of the tree provided a comfortable cushion, and he started to relax. The shade was magnificent and the trunk was comfy, but he was still thirsty. Luckily, this particular subspecies of globatran dripped with a sweet nectar which was both refreshing, and tasted oddly like herring (which was consid-

I'd tell you about all the blessings & rewards you'll get, but then you might lose out on some of the merit! Would you consider sponsoring an episode?

ered a great delicacy on this planet). He drank, he rested, he relaxed. When it was time to get up, he bowed to the tree (which was customary) and said, "Oh dear globatran. I want to bless you, but you've already got everything a tree could possibly want. You have everything, so how can anything I wish upon you help you in any way?"

The man scratched one of his heads, then nodded and said, "I bless you, oh globatran tree, that all baby globatrans you make should be as awesometastic as you!"

Abraham was about as amazing as a person could be. In an insane world, he developed a belief in God and a recognition of good and

evil all by himself. He became a prophet, ran an extremely successful bed and breakfast operation, offering kindness, hospitality and life coaching to all passersby. He convinced many people of the truth of monotheism. With what can such a person be blessed?

Let's look back at God's words, "So shall your children be," In other words, your children should be as awesometastic

as you. Abraham's awesomeness was his own actual best gift. In a way, WE are Abraham's gift. If we want to make sure Abraham's gift lives up to its promise, then we should start being a little bit more like him.

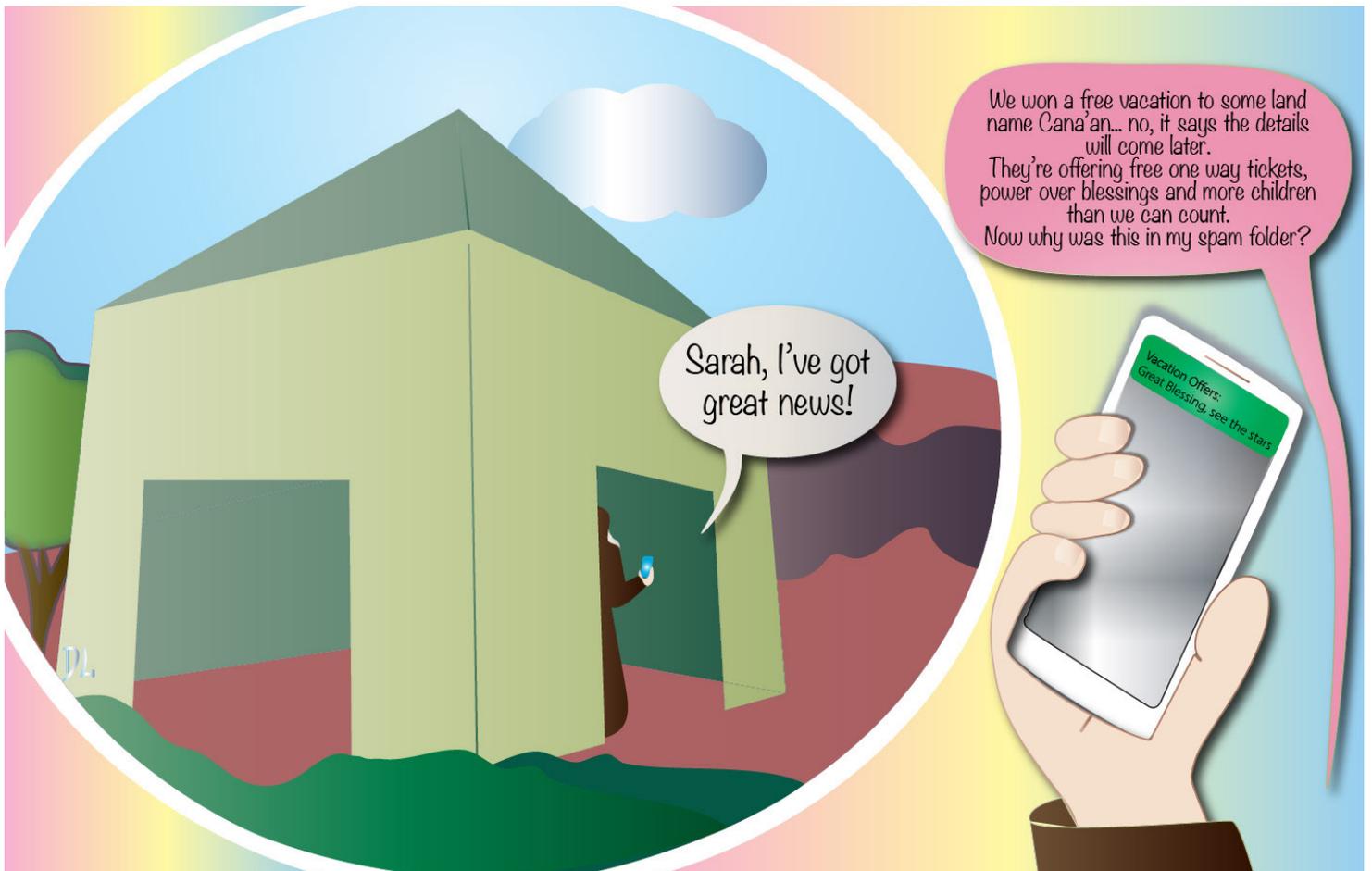
**IN A WAY,
WE ARE
ABRAHAM'S
GIFT.**

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

PICKLE JEWS

GALACTICALLY SYNDICATED COMIC STRIP

by Dani Locker, 2022



STUMP 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

(Most) questions here are real. Names and some wording have been changed.

Note & Disclaimer: 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. The answers here should not be taken as halachic decisions. You should always ask a competent Rabbi personally.

#219

Dog Years

Hi Rabbi,

**I learned that people in ancient times had extremely long lifespans. I'm curious. Did animals back then also have long lifespans?
Thanks,**

Lev Span

Dear Lev,

Mesushelach, the oldest man ever, lived until 969. What's that in dog years? I'm fascinated by your question. Honestly, I've never thought about it, and I'm not aware of any Torah sources directly discussing it. So let's use our brains and figure this out together.

In order to determine if animals in ancient times had elongated lifespans, we first need to examine how and why people had such long lives. There are a few different opinions on why this happened.

Opinion 1 (Maimonides): Most people did not have exceptionally long lives. There are people the Torah mentions who lived 4,5,600 or even 900 or more years, but they were the unique special people who God miraculously gave longer life spans because of the important contributions they would make to the world. According to this idea, since most people lived normal length lives, animals would also have lived normal length lives.

Opinion 2 (Nachmonides): Have you ever bought a knockoff product that just doesn't work as well as the original? Or a used laptop that's been refurbished? Usually, when a mas-

ter crafter or quality manufacturer makes something, it holds up well and lasts really long. Buy the cheapo version that was 3D printed in China, or try to use the repaired electronic device that was accidentally put in the washing machine along with 3 dirty tissues, 2 nickels and an old receipt for the pants that don't fit you and you're for sure going to return as soon as you get the chance [and a run on sentence that is fully as long as a biblical lifetime], and your item's longevity decreases. God made Adam and Eve. Original packaging, mint condition. They were built to last. But they don't make 'em like they used to. Each subsequent generation got somewhat weaker. When the flood came, something about the Earth fundamentally changed. The factory equipment became faulty (Nachmanides talks about the air being bad after the flood), and people's lives were reduced to what they are now.

Option 3 (Abarbanel): There was a great need in early days for people to live long lives to accumulate knowledge and expertise. You can work your whole life to learn a subject, and then that knowledge is lost before you can get to the next level. Imagine if you could perfect a skill or study a subject for 500 years. You'd be able to

LOL

I'M REALLY GOOD AT SLEEPING.

I CAN DO IT WITH MY EYES CLOSED.

THINK YOU CAN DO BETTER? YOU'RE PROBABLY RIGHT.
SEND YOUR JOKES IN TO [DLOCKER@NAGEELAWEST.ORG](mailto:dlocker@nageelawest.org)

QUESTION OF THE WEEK

NAME 2 PEOPLE IN THE TORAH WHO WERE NAMED BEFORE THEY WERE BORN.

NO CHEATING
ANSWER ON PAGE 4

DEEP THOUGHTS

THE FIRST PERSON TO BE SARCASTIC MUST HAVE HAD A HARD TIME EXPLAINING IT.

really excel! The Torah describes people who perfected music, farming, weaponry and many more advancements. It would take several natural lifespans for any one person to start from scratch and become a master in any of these areas. Of course, now that these sciences have been studied and mastered, it's much easier for a student to use what's already known and become great faster.

Opinion 4 (Kabbalistic/ mystical explanation): The first people had 'big souls' whatever that means. In later generations, we only have 'soul fragments' so our lives are naturally shorter. No, please don't ask me to explain that one.

Now what about animals? According to Nachmanides' opinion (that naturally lives should have been longer, but the flood damaged the air), it is reasonable to propose that animals would also have had a longer lifespan. This was nature, and nature changed for the worse,

decreasing the physical quality of all creatures. However all the other opinions I've quoted (for the record, I don't claim that these are the only opinions- these are just the ones I'm familiar with) include something special about human souls, or possibly even specific human souls. According to all of these opinions, animals would likely have lived pretty average lifespans, even in the earliest generations. Except dragons. Dragons live realllllly long lives.

Have a Nageela Shabbos,
The Rabbi

ANSWER OF THE WEEK

QUESTION ON PAGE 3

YISHMAEL, AND YITZCHAK (ISAAC), BOTH MENTIONED IN THIS WEEK'S PARSHA, THERE ARE 3 MORE IN OTHER BOOKS... LMK IF YOU CAN FIGURE THOSE OUT!

HBD

We'd like to wish a happy birthday to:

TALIA ZARGARI
MAOR KOHEN
MYLES MARKS
ELIE BENZAQUEN
JACK UNITAN
AARON LEITER
IVONNE COHEN
MATAN STOCKMAN

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