

have a Nageela Shabbos

A weekly publication of **Nageela West** Joyfully Jewish Experiences

Furniture for the Soul

by Rabbi Dani Locker

Forty years is a long time for a road trip. If you had to be on the road for so long, what would you take along?

A laptop? Food? Deodorant?

For our ancestors in the desert, the answer was a small, yet special building (more of a tent really) dedicated to prayer and service of G-d. There were many important parts of this Mishkan, which somehow translates into TABERNACLE, like that's helpful. The most important was the Aron- the Holy Ark which contained the divine tablets Moshe brought down from Sinai. This Aron represents the soul of the Mishkan, and everything else centers around it. You'd think that the most time and effort was put into building the Aron, and not the other items which made up the furniture. Yet the Torah spends much more time discussing the construction and placement of the Shulchan (special bread table), the Menorah and the Incense Altar.

In a lecture given, of all places, in Shanghai, China, Rabbi Yechezkel Levenstein explained the lesson here.

Imagine taking an incredible painting from one of the greatest renaissance artists, and hanging it in a filthy, moldy, bug infested shack. It doesn't work. First you've got to decorate the house respectfully, and then you can hang the artwork.

In order to perfect our souls, we can't try to perfect our souls. We have to make sure our souls are surrounded with the proper housing. We must work hard to have a kind and generous home, a wise and inquisitive mind, a pure and gentle tongue.

Then our soul will naturally thrive.

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candle lighting:

Las Vegas 5:20
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STUMP THE RABBI



Hi Rabbi,

I just had my Bat Mitzvah and I got a whole bunch of presents 🤑

Someone told me I have to give away a bunch of it to charity 😞

Is it true? Do I have to give charity? Why doesn't G-d just take care of the people? Why does he need me?

Thank you,

Claire Harity

Dear C Harity

First of all, Mazel tov!!! A Bat Mitzvah is a great time to join the Jewish tradition of giving. In fact, the very origins of the Jewish people are strongly connected with giving. Abraham and Sara, our great ancestors earned a reputation for kindness. They went so far as to keep openings on all four sides of the tent (which would've been funny if their tent was an octagon) to show people passing by that they were welcome. The Torah has a whole bunch of commandments that instruct us to give to different types of people at different times.

This week's Torah portion is Terumah. In it, the Jews are told to give donations to help build the Mishkan, which was basically the lego version of the Holy Temple, if lego was life sized and included gold, silver and ornate tapestries. People came forth and donated all kinds of valuable things, and didn't get anything in return. Why did G-d ask them to do this? If He wanted a temple, couldn't He have just magically made one appear without taking the people's stuff? Um, yeah. That was a rhetorical question. Of course He could have. So why did we have to contribute? Let's take a look at a quote in the Talmud which might help us understand.

A Roman governor once asked the wise Rabbi Akiva, "If your God loves the poor, why does He not provide for them? For example: Suppose a human king was angry with his slave, imprisoned him and ordered that he was not to be provided with food and drink; and then a person goes and feeds him and offers him to drink. When the king hears of it, won't he be angry with him?" This is our question. G-d could have taken care of a poor person. If He didn't, that should tell us that person is not deserving! Rabbi Akiva's answer is awesome (not that he needs my approval)!

He replied, "If a king imprisoned his own son, and then a person feeds him and offers him drink. When the king hears of it, will he be upset? Of course not, he'll reward him!" Rabbi Akiva also explained to this governor that the reason G-d does not provide for poor people is in order to give us the privilege of taking care of them. Sure G-d could've built the Mishkan all by Himself. But He wanted to give us the chance and the privilege of doing it for Him.

During one of our first years at Camp Nageela West, we had no stage for our plays, so I bought wood and tools and built a somewhat flimsy, but useable stage. My son must have been about two years old, and he wanted to help me. I gave him a light wooden hammer and he 'helped' me by banging the wood in random spots. Trust me, it wasn't actually helpful, but it was good for him to 'help' Dad. G-d does not need our help to take care of all the problems in the world. World hunger?

Easy peasy. Tsunamis and earthquakes? Piece of cake. Poverty? No problem at all... He doesn't just fix all these problems because He wants to give US an opportunity to 'help' Him. To be His partner in fixing the world, in creating a better place to live. When we do this, we become more like Him. As the Talmud says, "More than the rich person does for the poor person, the poor person does for the rich person." That means, the giver just gives up a few dollars, or a few minutes of his time. What he gains is a lifetime of meaning, and an eternity of bliss.

Jewish tradition has always promoted the idea of giving ten percent of our earnings to charity. The type of charity is up to you! Use some of

it to support Torah study by giving to a Jewish school or synagogue. Use a portion to help support families who don't have enough to eat. Perhaps some of it should go to paying for medical bills for seriously ill children. There are so many opportunities for G-dliness out there! Take advantage and make yourself even more awesome!

The truth is, in life, there are givers and there are takers. It is far more satisfying and more meaningful to plant

yourself in the first category. Be like G-d. Be a giver.

Have - a - Nageela Shabbat

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

nageela week snapshot (Mar 5-March 11)

SUN	MON	TUE	FRI
NAGEELA HEBREW SCHOOL - LAS VEGAS - 10AM JIL BEVERLY HILLS - 10AM	SUMMERLIN NAGEELATTE 6:45PM	CAMP STAFF INTERVIEWS - LA 3:00PM EVENING TO BENEFIT CAMP NAGEELA WEST 8:00PM	NAGEELUNCH @ ADELSON 12:30

Nageela West provides social and educational programs for Jewish children across the west coast.
801-613-1539 ~ www.nageelawest.org ~ info@nageelawest.org
155 N. Detroit St., Los Angeles, CA 90036

