

have a Nageela Shabbos

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

Moshe and the Silent Disco

by Rabbi Dani Locker

Have you ever heard of a silent disco party? No, I haven't been to one. Apparently there's this huge fad, where there can be hundreds of people attending a dance party, except there are no speakers or amplifiers anywhere! Everyone's got their own pair of wireless headphones, and dances to the music without anyone else hearing it! Walking into one of these parties can be really weird, because everyone is dancing, but you can't hear anything. You only get it if you're wearing equipment set to the right frequency.

The Jews in the desert did not exactly have silent discos, yet the kinda had the technology...

The Torah describes how G-d communicated with Moshe. When the time was right, he would enter the sanctuary of the Mishkan, and G-d would speak with him. Nobody outside the sanctuary could hear it, just Moshe.

The great sage Rashi points out that this was not because G-d's voice was soft or weak. On the contrary, G-d's voice is magnificent and powerful by nature. Miraculously, it would stop, like the curtain walls of

the mishkan were noise cancelling BOSE headphones.

What was the point of a booming voice that stopped? Why was it important enough for G-d to perform a miracle to prevent others from hearing it? Did the neighbors complain that the loud music was waking up their babies?

One explanation given is that truly anyone could have heard G-d's voice had they been on 'the right frequency'. Entering that sanctuary connected Moshe to G-d in a way that was greater than anyone standing outside. The volume was loud enough, but people just didn't have the right equipment to hear.

Sometimes, G-d speaks to us very directly, and we don't hear

because we've shut off our equipment or because we're listening to the wrong frequency. We have certain tools that can help us find the right channel. Shabbat is one of these tools. Through careful and meaningful observance of Shabbos, we reduce the interference and static of the world and are able to pick up G-d's frequency much better. I'm not sure how many of us spend our Shabbat trying to see the whole (or, rather, hear the world) in a clearer way, but if we would take a few moments this Shabbat... actually, right now is probably a good time, to think about the things going on in the world and our lives, we'll undoubtedly connect to G-d's frequency.



QUICK FIX

The first word in this portion, Vayikra, is written with the final letter shrunk (in every Torah). The word declares that G-d called to Moshe, which is pretty amazing! Yet Moshe was so humble that he wanted to minimize the emphasis, so he inserted a small letter. Talk about deflate-gate!

VERY PUNNY

WHAT IS PESACH CALLED IN AUSTRALIA?

PASSUNDER

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STUMP THE RABBI



Dear Rabbi,

I'm trying to keep kosher, but I'm confused by all the different symbols! OU, OR, OK, K, lots of little Hebrew words... what do they all mean? Why can't the product just say, "Kosher" on it? Why do there have to be a gazillion different symbols?

Thanks,

Kevin O. Shore

Dear K.O.Shore,

It sure can be confusing, and let me tell you, it's incredible that you're taking this journey! No matter how much you learn, you'll probably still have some questions. It's worth having someone knowledgeable to text quick questions to, like: "Hey, I'm about to buy some food with a ~ on it. Does that make it Kosher (the answer, by the way, is a resounding "NO")?" Or "Hey, Rabbi, is octopus kosher? Oops." Once you have that down, let's go over a few basics. In theory, all you need to know a food is kosher is for a reliable and knowledgeable person to say, "It's Kosher." Problem solved, we can go home... right???

The challenge is that the marketing department of any company could write kosher on the package and nobody can stop them! In fact, the letter "K" on a package basically means just that; the company feels that the product is kosher. Of course, the company may not know how to tell the difference between a kosher pickle and a ham sandwich. We also don't know that any given company's marketing department is honest (gasp, could it be?). That's why, you should generally not rely on the letter "K" alone to determine an item's kosher status (with a couple of exceptions, like Kellogg's cereal, and bottled Starbucks frappes, which are known to be fine while carrying a K).

So what do we do? How can a company ensure that their customers know their product is kosher? They hire a Rabbi, or a group of Rabbis to supervise and put their name on the package. So when you see an item with a U inside a circle, you know that the Rabbis who run the Orthodox Union have checked, and approve this product. When you see a K inside a star, you know that the Baltimore based Star-K organization stands behind the product's kosher reliability. Why are there so many? Simple, really. Mostly is geography. If my factory is in San Diego, it usually makes sense to use a group of Californian Rabbis, complete

with surfboards (I completely made that last part up). Sometimes, companies choose particular kashrut organizations because they have a reputation for being very reliable, or for some other reason as well.

While this can all be confusing, we are fortunate to live in a technologically advanced age, and it's pretty easy to get information. The Chicago Rabbinical Council (crcweb.org) and kosherquest.org both have lists of recommended Kosher symbols. And, like I said, have someone you can call or text with your questions.

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 (April 1st-8th)

SAT	SUN	MON
ONEG AND HAVDALLAH LAS VEGAS @ THE LOCKERS 7-8:30PM	MODEL SEDER LAS VEGAS - 10AM MODEL SEDER BEVERLY HILLS 10AM	SAN DIEGO CAMP INFO SESSION 3:30-5

Nageela West provides social and educational programs for Jewish children across the west coast.
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