

# have a Nageela Shabbos

A Kid Friendly Weekly Publication of Nageela West Coast Joyfully Jewish Experiences

Candle Lighting:

Phoenix 5:24

Las Vegas 5:33

San Diego 5:45

N.Lake Tahoe 5:47

Los Angeles 5:48

Tarzana 5:49

Season 3  
Episode 6

## Food for the sole

by Rabbi Dani Locker

**A**braham and Sarah lived at a time when most of the world did not believe in ONE GOD. Rather, they believed in all kinds of pagan deities and rituals. Over their lifetime, they succeeded in educating many, many people, creating a large group of followers who understood the truth. How did they do it?

**W**as it Abraham's viral YouTube videos where he gave brilliant lectures about the Torah? Was it Sara's gigantic challah bakes where thousands of women learned about Shabbat? Nope. It was food.

**H**ere's a true account (that I made up) of something that may have actually happened. Or not. It's hard to tell.

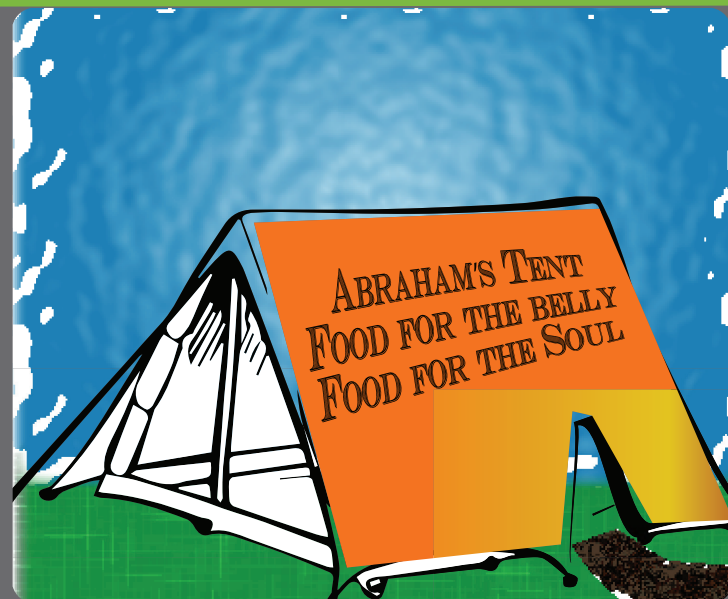
**A** traveler named Gurlagg enters Abraham and Sarah's tent, tired, hungry and upset (he's tired and hungry because he's been traveling. He's upset because his parents named him Gurlagg. I don't really blame the guy).

**Abraham:** Did you know there's only one God and everything comes from Him?

**Gurlagg:** LOL (which probably stands for Lots of Lords, in this case). That's silly. Everyone knows there are like a million gods. Haven't you ever read Rick Riordan?

**Abraham:** Well, have some food and a place to rest. Sorry I can't do anything about your name, though.

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*Abraham and Sarah feed Gurlagg a banquet fit for a king.*

**Gurlagg:** Mmmm, Abraham, this food is delicious! I MUST have the recipe!

**Abraham:** I'm glad you enjoyed it, but I'm not the one you should be thanking.

**Gurlagg:** Oh? Then please thank your wife for the scrumptious meal!

**Abraham:** That's appreciated, but even my wonderful wife is not the true source of this food.

**Gurlagg:** Seriously? It's delivery? Does your tent even get Grubhub?

**Abraham:** There's only one God. All things come from him. Let's thank God together. I'll teach you the bentsching song.

**Gurlagg:** Totally, I understand now. There's definitely only one God. Don't know why I didn't

see it before!

**S**eriously?

**W**hy didn't he just talk to them about God? Why did there have to be food and thanks? As silly as the above story sounds, Abraham somehow felt that giving people food was a more effective way of getting them to see God's existence. I think it's because we humans have a natural need to show gratitude. To say thanks. If we get something and we can't show appreciation, it bugs us. Abraham could have tried to convince people about God the 'old fashioned' way. But the people he was speaking with were much more open and ready to hear about it when they already owed God gratitude for something good they'd gotten.

**I** think we can learn a lesson from here. It's sometimes hard to remember what's right and wrong. And also to remember how to spell wright and rong. We can spend a few moments each day thinking about the good things we have in our lives. This will help us realize that, hey, we have God to thank for these good things, and He gives them to us with LOL (Loads of Love).



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## Get Down, Gimme 20!

Dear Rabbi,

At gym class, my coach told us to get down on the floor and do push ups. That's nothing new. We've done that a million times. It just popped into my head that Jews aren't supposed to kneel or bow down, right? I wasn't sure what to do. Why don't we bow? And is it OK for me to kneel in gym class, or to help my baby sister in the bathtub?

Thanks,

Benjamin D. Owen

Dear Ben D. Owen,

You know, exercise and healthy diet are both really important. For exercise, I put a block of wood down on the floor and walk around it a couple of times. Then I can say I ran around the block. As far as diet, they say 'you are what you eat'. I use thin mints.

Bowing down is nothing new. For nearly all of human history, people have bent, kneeled, genuflected, prostrated, curtsied, and done obeisance for two meaningful reasons. Either to worship, or to show respect.

If you get a chance to read the Stump the Rabbi from Season 2, Episode 5 (you can always find every episode at [nageelawest.org](http://nageelawest.org)), we talked about the purpose of bowing during prayers,

which is something we do. However, that's just bowing your head and body, not prostrating yourself on the floor. The truth is, way back in the early days of our history, bowing all the way to the ground was a pretty common Jewish practice. In the Holy Temple, bowing fully was part of the service, and there are other examples throughout Tanach (biblical literature) and Talmud of great people prostrating themselves all the way.

We've pretty much stopped doing it for an interesting reason. Bowing to God is a powerful statement. If we pray like that and our prayers don't seem to work, that looks bad for us. It's like using Lex Luthor using kryptonite and still losing. Or having a cheatcode for your game and getting out anyway. It's embarrassing. So we just bow part of the way, bending our knees,

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and folding our back. It saves a lot of space this way. People take up less space standing up than we do laying flat.

Outside of the Holy Temple in Jerusalem, we're not allowed to bow on a stone floor, because it kinda looks like we're bowing to carved stone, like a statue. Many Jews have a custom to do the full bow on Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur, but even then, the custom is to put something on the floor (like a paper towel or a mat) so we're not kneeling directly on stone.

However, there's only a problem when you're trying to worship (or if you're facing the representation of something that is worshipped). If you're just getting down on the floor to stretch or work out your abs, or, as you mentioned, kneeling to help a kid in the bathtub... all these situations are totally fine. There's nothing wrong with bending down or laying on the floor if it's not in order to pray to a deity.

One thing to consider, though. Some martial arts studios or yoga centers may have statues of religious symbols. You should definitely avoid bending or bowing in the direction of any religious symbol at all, or to the picture of person who is thought of as a deity or god by his followers.

And think, if you kneel just right, Nike might sponsor you...

Have-A Nageela Shabbat,

*the Rabbi*



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## Mitzvah Minute

A quick intro to one of the Torah's 613 commandments

Study  
buddy!

### Source:

And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart, and you shall teach them to your children (Book of Devarim, chapter 6, verse 7).

### Details:

Did you know that it's actually a mitzvah- a positive commandment to study Torah and understand it?

The source of this mitzvah are the words "V'Shinantam l'vanecha- you shall teach them to your children." This teaches us that we have to understand Torah clearly and sharply enough to answer questions.

Part of the mitzvah is to teach what you know to your children.

This mitzvah is only fulfilled if you understand and can

remember what you studied. Mindless reading does not accomplish this.

One fulfills this mitzvah with every word of Torah study. A person speaks about 200 words per minute. Do the math.

### Lessons:

- One cannot expect to do the right thing just by trying. It's necessary to have knowledge and understanding, too.
- This mitzvah is equal in merit to all the other mitzvot combined. So an hour of Torah study is around 12,000 mitzvot, each one equal to all the other mitzvot combined. That's a lot of mitzvah mojo.

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