

have a Nageela Shabbos

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Don't Tell Me What to Do

by Rabbi Dani Locker

"Can you people just make up your minds already?" This may have been a thought running through the mind of our great leader Moshe, toward the end of the week's Torah reading. Here's what happened.

As the Jewish nation was getting close to entering Israel, the people started getting nervous.

"What if the armies are too strong for us to defeat?"

"What if the food tastes bad?"

"What if I can't get wifi?"

In order to help them feel better, Moshe allowed them to send twelve scouts to check the land out (apparently, Google Earth wasn't a thing). When the scouts returned home, most of them were very grumpy and jet lagged, and 10 out of the 12 insisted that it was too dangerous and we could not conquer the land. The people completely freaked out! People were crying outside their tents, everyone was angry at Moshe and someone started a hashtag campaign #backtoegypt. Things were bad, and God decided that these people were not worthy of going into Egypt and decreed that the entire nation (except the two scouts who gave a positive

report) would die out over a period of forty years before they could enter the land.

Suddenly a group of people decided that they wanted to go to Israel after all. They didn't listen



Hey, have you heard the scouting report on that new batter?
Yeah. Ten scouts gave a negative report...

to Moshe's warnings to stop and they started marching toward Israel. We'll, that wasn't a good idea either, since Moshe had told them they'd lost their chance. It did not end well for them. Let's get something straight.

The Jewish people must have

been really concerned about entering Israel. I mean, they defied Moshe, complained about God... they really thought they were all going to die! So how could they suddenly have been so confident and excited about going to Israel that they'd risk their life to enter? I don't get it!

Both behaviors- refusing to go and then insisting on going- have something in common. They were both contradicting what they were told. We humans have a problem with being told what to do. They didn't want to go because they were commanded to go. Then they wanted to go because they were being told NOT to go! As kids, I think we can relate to this really well.

Jake is about to clean his room, when he hears, "Jake, clean your room right now!"

"No! I'm busy!"

Does that sound familiar? We naturally want to do our own thing and we don't like to listen to what people 'command' us. As kids, we need to remember this. Next time we want to say NO to an instruction, let's take a moment to think about why we're refusing. For adults, remember this lesson when you want your child to exhibit or desist from a certain behavior. You might be served better by an indirect approach, rather than saying "Do this now!"



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IF THE SHOE FITS...

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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

Questions here are real. Names and some wording have been changed

Hi Rabbi,

I know someone who is pretty sick. Still, every time someone asks him how he's doing, he responds, "Thank God!" If you believe that God gives you everything you have in life, then how can you thank God for something bad or painful?

Thanks,

Agnes Riva Tedford

Dear Ag. Riva Ted,

You hit the point exactly when you used the terms 'bad' and 'painful'. Do you know the difference between the two? Many things that are bad are not painful (drugs, stealing, sleeping until noon) and many things that are painful are not bad (oral surgery, school, broccoli). Can you understand thanking someone for doing something painful but good? I had knee surgery three years ago. The procedure and the months of physical therapy afterwards were incredibly painful, but I thank the doctor for doing it, because it's made my life much better in the long run.

The Talmud says "The same way we bless for good, we bless for bad." That's because when we trust in

God's love for us, we realize that nothing He does in the universe is actually bad. Lots of it is painful, but none of it is bad. There are many reasons why God might cause something painful to occur, but always, always, always, it's for our good.

This friend of your sounds incredible, because it isn't easy for people to recognize that their pain is part of God's plan. I wish him a full recovery soon!

Loads of ancient religions, like those of the Greeks, Romans, Egyptians and Norse (I think I read Rick Riordan way too much) fabricated the concept of many gods partly because they had trouble understanding how fire and water, love and war, happiness and pain could all come from one God. Blessing God for the painful things in life reaffirms to ourselves and others that we get it: God loves us unconditionally, and any discomfort that comes our way is necessary for our benefit.

Thank God you sent me such a great question! It wasn't even painful.

Have -a- Nageela Shabbat,

the Rabbi