

have a

# Nageela Shabbos

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

## The Name Game

by Rabbi Dani Locker

Do you ever wonder about names? Most of us have last names that have got nothing to do with who or what we are. Maybe they're the city where an ancestor lived, or something completely random. A good friend of mine told me his last name means "horse thief". I haven't been spying on him, but I don't think he's got a secret livestock burglary ring. Besides, it's hard to hide a stolen horse in your bedroom, "Hey Mike, is that a hoof under your pillow?"

Back in biblical times, of course, people didn't have standard last names. Titles were given because they made sense.

Moshe Rabbeinu means Moses our Rabbi. That makes sense!

Sarah Imainu is Sarah our mother. I get that.

Yosef, 11th son of Yaakov, and Vice President (or something like that) of Egypt is known in Jewish writings as Yosef Hatzadik, or Joseph the righteous man. Reading this week's and the next two week's Torah portions, it becomes clear that Yosef was a great person, but so were thousands of others. Why does HE get the title? Can I get in touch with his PR agent?

Let's take a quick look at Jewish history (okay, that's probably not quick, but let's do it anyway). As far as I know there's only one other person mentioned in the 24 books of Tanach (that's the Hebrew word for all of biblical literature, the Torah, books of prophets, and writings)

who is referred to with the title of Tzadik, and that is Mordechai. Yup, Mordechai, the hero of the Purim story is also called Mordechai Hatzadik, the righteous man. Was it just a last name he inherited from his father along with a stamp collection? No, that was not a family name, it was a title. What did both of these great men have in common?

They were Jewish?

You're gonna have to try harder than that.

They had beards?

Umm, maybe. Let's try, "What was unusual about them that they had in common?"

They were both major political leaders in non-Jewish countries. Yosef, of course, was the second in command to Pharaoh, King of Egypt, a country that was not known for its kindness or morality. Mordechai became second in command to Achashveirosh (speak about names, what were his parents THINKING?) who was at best a fool and pretty immoral himself. A man who had his wife executed because she didn't show up when he called (I would hate to have been his UBER driver).

I bought a used a car a few years back. Car worked great, the price was right, so I paid and took it home. When my excited family got in, they all ran out holding their noses. It seems that a while back, a smoker

had owned the car, and even though it had been years since the car had been smoked in, it still smelled. We took it to get the seats professionally cleaned, bought all kinds of air fresheners, and would leave the windows open 24/7, but nothing we did really worked. When something smells, everything nearby gets permanently affected.

It's tough to be a good person. It's much, much tougher to be a good person around people who are less-than-great. Yosef and Mordechai both spent their time in the company of corrupt people. They had important work to do, but still, it would have been easy for it to get to them, and to start thinking and acting just a bit like those people.

We give these two giants the title "Hatzadik" to praise how righteous they stayed even in a smelly situation. Definitely better than being a horse thief.

**VERY PUNNY**

**HOW DID THE CHANUKAH CANDLE FEEL WHEN IT WENT OUT?**

**DELIGHTED!**

**HAVE REALLY CORNY PUN? EMAIL IT TO DLOCKER@NAGEELAWEST.ORG**

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# have a Nageela Shabbos

## STUMP THE RABBI



Dear Rabbi,

I know that lighting the Hannukah Menorah is because of the miracle of oil burning in the old Menorah in the temple. What I don't understand, is why was there a menorah in temple if there was no Hannukah yet?

Thanks,  
Olliver Voyle

Dear Ollie Voil,

So basically what you're asking is, "We light the menorah because we lit the menorah, because we lit the menorah, because..." well, you get my point. The truth is, we were lighting menorahs a thousand years before the Chanukah story! In our holy temple, the Beit Hamikdash, in Jerusalem, and in the Mishkan, the portable temple that we carried in the desert. We didn't light that Menorah because of Chanukah. In fact, it wasn't lit in homes. There was just one, really big, solid gold menorah, lit every day of the year. Why?

One of the reasons given in ancient Jewish writings tells a story of a blind man wandering in the forest. Someone finds him and helps him out, guiding him for hours through the tricky paths, tangled roots and muddy swamps. When they make it back to the city, the blind man is really grateful and wants to do something for his hero.

"What can I do for you?" He asks.  
"Oh, the light switch is right near you, could you please switch it on for me?"

The blind man smiles at the thought of helping his new friend, and happily turns on the light. This guy can see. He does NOT need the blind guy to turn on the light for him. But he realizes that when someone is good to you, it's important to do something back for that person. It was for the blind man's benefit that he asked for the light to be switched on!

G-d takes amazing care of us. He took us out of Egypt, took us in as his special people, and gave us our everlasting home in Israel. We want to do SOMETHING for him. He asked us to light one menorah, to "turn on the lights" in His special house, the Holy Temple.

That's why it was so important that the Menorah be lit after the Chanukah battle was won. When a miracle happened and the oil lasted longer than it should have, it was decided that each family would participate in lighting candles during Chanukah. Now, we've brought the light switches into our own homes.

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### DID JEW KNOW

The original menorah in the Beit Hamikdash was not just made from solid gold. It was made from one solid piece and carved into its final shape. It was so difficult that Moshe himself couldn't figure out how to do it.

**HAVE A COOL JEWISH FACT? EMAIL IT TO DLOCKER@NAGEELAWEST.ORG**

Stump the Rabbi is a forum where kids can ask ANY Jewish question. Have a question? Please send it in to [stump@nageelawest.org](mailto:stump@nageelawest.org)

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

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snapshot (dec 25-31)

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