

Mikeitz 5781  
December 18<sup>th</sup>, 2020

# NAGEELA SHABBOS

Have-a

SEASON 5 EPISODE 9

a kid friendly publication of Nageela West Coast Joyfully Jewish Experiences



## Going with the flow

by Rabbi Dani Locker

"I really need a new god," muttered Allan, as he trudged through the knee high snow toward his apartment, his head and body soaked and freezing. Let's rewind a little bit and find out a little about Allan's problem.

It all started at the start of soccer season in late summer. Allan had been trying to make the team, but years of frustration had taught him not to expect success when it came to athletics. Then one of his friends had given him Quzbrgh. Without a doubt, Quzbrgh had become Allan's favorite god. When soccer tryouts came along, he kept the little statue in his backpack, and he made the team! The best part of Quzbrgh is that it was easy to understand his divine instructions.

had to squeeze the little doll's belly, and a recorded voice would give a command. There were only a few pre recorded statements, and they were usually things like, "Stand on your head", "Move three steps to the right" (both of which, incidentally, helped him succeed as goalie), "Eat the first thing you see" (made his Mom happy), and "Do 50 jumping jacks right now" (coach was thrilled with that one; the downstairs neighbors- not so much).

Allan spent Autumn singing the praises of his new patron god, and even tried converting a bunch of seventh graders to his new religion. Quzbrgh had helped him so much! Yet today, there was a foot of snow on the ground, and Quzbrgh had instructed him to eat

Allan simply

the



continued on next page



Candle lighting

Henderson	4:10
Las Vegas	4:11
Reno/ Tahoe	4:19
San Diego	4:27
Irvine	4:27
Los Angeles	4:28
Oakland	4:34
Park City	4:42
Scottsdale	5:04

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snow, which was a bit muddy and extremely cold. Then, the diminutive divinity (that means small god in I-THINK-I'M-SMARTER-THAN-YOU-NA-NA-NA-NA-NA language) called out the commandment to move to his right, which put him directly in the path of a gigantic snowball fight. Just when Allan thought he'd had enough, and he was in the deepest part of the snow, that \$\*&%\$#@# Quzbrgh told him to stand on his head. Allan tossed Quzbrgh into a nearby snowdrift and slogged his way home, deciding it was time for a new god. Maybe one with less rules in its religion. Maybe Allan would become a god himself. Yeah, that sounded good.

The Egyptian king Pharaoh was similar to Allan in several ways. Firstly, he liked soccer, but wasn't particularly good at it. More importantly, he believed in his gods, only when it was convenient for him. The portion of the Torah we're gonna read this week (unless you're reading this late, in which case you're probably done with Torah reading) features Pharaoh dreaming, and then describing his dreams. In the dream, Pharaoh is standing, literally, on top of the river. Yet when he tells Joseph the dreams, he changes the story and says he's standing alongside the river. Many Egyptians counted the great Nile river as one of their primary gods (along with the god of walking sideways and the god of



# WHAT WAS THE BEST THING BEFORE SLICED BREAD?

*continued from page 1*

really pointy buildings). By changing this detail in his dream, Pharaoh is sending a message that he might be 'under' the god's power, or he might be 'on top' of the river god. This would depend on how the dream was interpreted. If he liked the message the gods were sending him, he would continue to follow them. If he did not approve, he would simply find new gods, or maybe become a god himself.

The message for us is to remember that truth is truth. Sometimes truth is convenient and fun. Sometimes it tells you to stand on your head in the snow. Our decisions of what we believe and what we follow should only depend on truth, and not what 'works for us' right now. Even when the right thing to do causes us discomfort, it may still be the right thing. Hang on, I think I have to go, there's a voice calling to me from the snow outside... something about jumping jacks...

## CHAI LIGHTS

### CHANUKAH AROUND THE WEST COAST WAS REALLY EPIC!

Challah baking in LA- City  
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 2 huge, exciting virtual events, attracting nearly 100 middle schoolers



# PICKLE



galactically syndicated comic strip

WHEN YOU PUT AWAY YOUR MENORAH FOR ANOTHER YEAR



WHEN YOU REMEMBER THAT PURIM IS UP NEXT



# HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

Raphael Berrebi  
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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.



# #151

## Divine Dr. Cue Mint

Dear Rabbi,

I was having this discussion with a few of my friends and I'd like to hear your thoughts. One of my friends said that she didn't believe the Torah was written by God but it is a great work of wisdom and morality and we're guided by it. Is it reasonable to present that argument to people who don't necessarily believe in God, to help them appreciate the Torah as a wonderful document?

Thanks,  
Donna Cument

Dear Do Cument,

Trigger alert. Your friends might not like what I'm about to tell you. But what can I say? I've gotta speak the truth. What would you say about the following scenario: I am starting a weight loss business! My pitch is, "Lose 100 pounds in 30 days with no dieting and no exercise, guaranteed! For only \$999 you can join this special program and reach all your goals! You'll get better jobs, have an easier time dating, stay healthier

and live longer! Not only that, but you'll fit into whatever clothes you want! What do you have to do? Well, I can't tell you until you pay the \$999, can I?

Alright, I'll give you a sneak preview (disclaimer: this is a joke. Please don't actually try any of these things). It involves sleeping in very uncomfortable, upside down positions, wearing plastic clothes to sweat the water out, wearing rough wooden shoes, and getting large, painful tattoos of unicorns on your legs. It's guaranteed to work! I know this because I am a Doctor.

How would you define my new business? You might say it's cook-y or goofy. You might think I've lost my mind. I'll tell you what else it is: EVIL. Cruel. Sadistic. For me to ask clients to harm their body and their emotional wellbeing, not to mention to pay a large amount of cash for what is clearly a lie (based on a false doctorate, no

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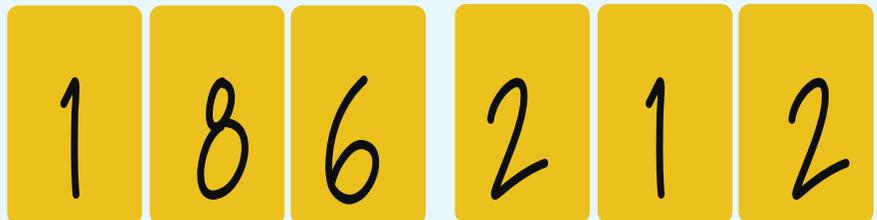


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DAYS TO CAMP NAGEELA WEST  
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# Stump the Rabbi; continued

less), is nothing short of sick. I'll repeat that last point because it's important. Asking people to hurt themselves to support your lie is evil.

The Torah makes many demands upon us. It severely affects our ability to make money, requiring a Sabbath day of no work (and loads of holidays, too), and requiring expensive charitable gifts, and at times, extremely expensive animal sacrifices. It affects our lifestyle because it actually tells us who to marry, what kind of foods to eat, when and how. It gives us rules about what we can or cannot wear, and even provides days when we can't wear certain shoes, or eat any food. Most extreme of all, it actually requires us to physically mutilate our bodies through circumcision. Why all this? Because if we listen, we'll get rewarded in a future world that nobody has seen.

I'm sorry if this all seems brutal... it's really not, because a real God gave us these actual rules, that will actually earn us unlimited awesomeness in the next world. Assuming the Torah is true, and it's an

actual divine document, then it's awesome, and it's worthwhile!

However, if you believe the Torah doesn't come from God, then what is the alternative? That it was written by man. Let's say Moses, for argument's sake. Whoever that person is, he or she was a cruel sadist. This person lied to us, claiming that this was all the word of God. Claimed that we had all received prophecy (an impossible claim if it didn't happen- but that's for a different week), and that we HAD TO do all these things in order to receive ultimate reward, and if we didn't listen, we would be punished. Why? I dunno. Maybe to get famous. Maybe it was just a power trip. Either way, this (hypothetical) scenario places the Torah squarely in the category of evil manipulation, rather than an epic book of wisdom and moral clarity.

The way I see it, there really are only two choices. Either the Torah is from God, in which case it's a beautiful, moral guide to life, or it's not from God, in which case it seems to me it should be exposed as a terrible lie and manipulative, exploitative plot. So

with apologies to your friends, I don't understand how their position makes any sense at all. Hope you're not too triggered, and hope you can help your friends understand the value in understanding the true origins of Torah and all mainstream morality on Earth.

Have a Nageela Shabbat,

*the Rabbi*

**summer  
info  
session**

**Sunday night, Dec.  
20th, 7:7:45pm**

**on zoom  
317-427-7225**

Did you hear about  
the bakery that  
burned down  
last night?



Their business is  
toast now.

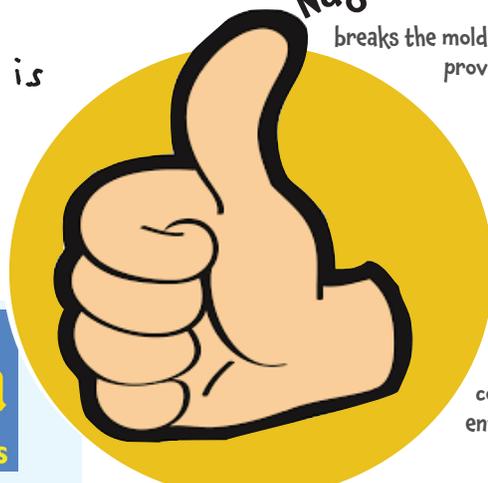
OUCH! GROAN!

Do you have a better joke? I sure hope so!  
Send it to [dlocker@nageelawest.org](mailto:dlocker@nageelawest.org)

DO YOU WANT TO RECEIVE THE NAGEELA SHABBOS IN YOUR INBOX EACH FRIDAY? EMAIL [DLOCKER@NAGEELAWEST.ORG](mailto:DLOCKER@NAGEELAWEST.ORG) WITH THE SUBJECT LINE, "SUBSCRIBE."

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breaks the mold of old school Jewish outreach by providing out-of-the-box social and educational programs for Jewish children across the West Coast. Through afterschool activities, weekend retreats and our signature summer camp, we engage elementary and middle school children in a fun and meaningful experience. Our "questions encouraged" mindset makes Nageela a comfortable learning and growing environment for Jewish children of all backgrounds.



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