

have a Nageela Shabbos

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See No Evil

by Rabbi Dani Locker

candle lighting:

Phoenix 7:06
San Diego 7:25
Las Vegas 7:26
Los Angeles 7:33

Ya can't fix all the world's problems.

Matt and Greg hurried along the crowded downtown street. They'd just managed to exit the stadium ahead of the main crowd, and were hoping to catch the bus home before it got too squishy. A teenager in front of them loudly slurped the last bits of his super-duper- ginormous gulp and lazily chucked the cup on the sidewalk, which was already littered with candy wrapper, cigarettes, and inexplicably, cherry tomatoes. "Hey!" Matt called out. "You dropped something." Matt leaned and scooped up the supersized soft drink container and handed it to the teen, who muttered something under his breath that sounded like "annoying kid" and found a garbage can. "Why did you bother?" Asked Greg. "Do you see this sidewalk? It's a disaster! Picking up that one piece didn't even make a dent!"

The Torah discusses a time when slavery was a common practice, and commands us, "not to let a slave owner mistreat a slave in front of your eyes." This means (see

Rashi) that even though we can't control what people do behind closed doors, we still should make sure it does not happen in front of us. See no evil.

I see two valuable lessons we can learn from these words. *Foist* of all: We know we can't fix all the problems in the world. Sometimes we're tempted to give up on what we can change because the problem is overwhelming. "So what if I prevented this guy from beating his slave at the car wash. He'll just beat him when he gets home!" Our lesson is not to think that way. If we can stop a tiny bit of a problem, then that's what we've gotta do. Sure, there will always be things we can't fix, but if we take care of the things we can, the world will be a much better place for it.

Secondly, we are greatly affected by our surroundings. All things that go on in the world change us somewhat, but the things we see tend to have the greatest impact. If we are surrounded by people

who act cruelly, that is sure to change the way we act toward our fellow. By making sure we are not outwardly exposed to evil, we can minimize the damage caused to our souls.

Will the sidewalk outside the stadium become a gleaming tribute the great public servant Matt? Idunno. Probably not. Yet in changing what happend in front of him, Matt took a step toward helping himself and the world. And Big Gulps everywhere will thank him for it. ✨

VERY PUNNY

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KEEP HIS ARMIES?**

IN HIS SLEEVES!

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have a Nageela Shabbos

STUMP THE RABBI



Dear Rabbi,

This might be a funny question to ask a, um, a Rabbi. But why do people get blessings from Rabbis? I have a cousin who goes to some big Rabbi all the time to get his blessings. What's the purpose? Do these blessings really work?

Thanks,

Beth Lester

Dear BLester,

Just this past week, I had a really interesting Uber ride. My driver was a pretty religious Christian, and former military man. He had a chain hanging from his rear view mirror with the word "ISRAEL" imprinted colorfully above a metal 'Hamsa' (another Jewish symbol). During the ride to the airport it became clear that he is a huge fan of Israel, and a supporter of the Jewish people in general. He explained his reason to me. "G-d told Abraham, 'I shall bless those who bless you, and those who curse you I will curse.'" He explained to me that he believes this means that the world had better be nice to the descendants of Abraham (that's us, folks!), because we have the power of blessing. While I realize that my very nice Uber driver may not be the world expert on philosophy, I think he's onto something!

Here's how it works. People don't have powers. We can't speak magical incantations and make stuff happens. When we are loved by God, though; He wants our words to come true. When any Jew blesses someone, he or she is proclaiming "I want good to come to this person." God often fulfills that kind of implied prayer. The greater a person becomes, the more God-like in the way they act, speak and live, the more likely it is for God to accommodate their

wish. That's why you'll find lots of people visiting great Rabbis for blessings instead of visiting Bob (no offense, Bob).

Rabbi Finkel was a great scholar who lived in a small town called Slabodka. When he would walk through the streets of the town on Shabbat, he would often call out to the homes, "Have a good Shabbos! Have a good shabbos!" His students asked, "um, Rabbi, there's nobody there?" He explained to them that he wanted to bless the people who lived in those houses, even though they weren't around. Wishing "Shabbat Shalom" isn't just a greeting, it's a blessing, and we hope God will indeed help these people have a good shabbos!

Anyone can say kind words, and provide blessings. And as my driver accurately quoted, Jews do have the power of blessing. The greater a person you are, the more power your blessings have. So don't just be a taker of blessings, give 'em out whenever you can! It's also good to hang around holy people. Just visiting a great Rabbi, spending time with him, and learning from the way he interacts with people can add goodness and blessing to our lives. Remember, the people you hang around can greatly impact the person you become!

Here's an important point to remember. Sure, blessings do work, but the greatest blessings we can receive are the ones that come through our own growth and improvement. If you want to get a blessing from a Rabbi, that's great, but don't let that interfere with your own growth. It may be a better blessing for you to skip the trip to the Rabbi and to instead try to do a mitzvah better, or study a bit more Torah.

MAY YOU BE BLESSED with a wonderful Shabbat full of happiness, relaxation and personal growth.

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

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