Henderson 4:40 Las Vegas 4:40 Reno/Tahoe 4:51 San Diego 4:55 **Irvine 4:56** Los Angeles 4:57 Scottsdale 5:32

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

Season 4 Episode 10

To Be(lieve) or Not to Be(lieve)

by Rabbi Dani Locker



FOLLOW US ON TWITTER @NAGEELAWEST

Or to kind of believe?

When Moses returned to Egypt to help free his people, he gathered the people together and performed miracles for them. He changed his stick into a snake, turned his hand white, pulled a rabbit out of his hat (scratch that last one) and turned water to blood. They believed him. They really did! Wanna know how I know? The Torah says, "And the people believed him, and they heard...'

Well that's funny. No, I don't mean the rabbit thing. That wasn't so funny. What's funny is the complete turnaround. Right after Moses and Aaron speak to Pharaoh and he rejects their bid for freedom, at the beginning of this week's Torah portion, the Torah tells us that the Jews did NOT believe Moses. That IS funny. Not like "haha funny." More like "This milk tastes funny." The Jews clearly believed Moses sincerely in the beginning, or else the Torah would not have told us they did. What changed and when did it change?

et's go to the booth for an instant replay (see, even Lthe Torah had instant replay before Major League Baseball). Moses and Aaron gather all the elders of the Jewish people (4:29). They show the signs (4:30). They trust Moses and Aaron (4:31). They all go together to speak with the King... wait, rewind and play that part over again. Oh no, it's different in slow motion. They don't all go together. Moses and Aaron alone go and speak with the King (5:1). When did they all disappear? The Midrash tips us off. They all set off as a

group toward Pharaoh's palace, but as they drew closer, the crowd thinned. Elders who had been part of Moses' entourage escaped in small groups. By the time Moses and Aaron reached Pharaoh's palace, they were all alone.

T f everyone believed Moses and trusted God, why were ■they frightened enough to leave? Why did it get so bad that after Moses spoke to Pharaoh and got bad news, they didn't even believe him anymore?

■ ave you ever done something that you KNOW will be fine, but you're still nervous? I recently took my kids for flu shots. Before we go there, we discussed that it would hurt a bit, but that it wasn't dangerous at all. Some of the older children began reassuring the younger ones that it barely hurt, and it just felt like being poked in the arm. Yet when we got there, these same confident, unconcerned children began to fall apart. Just a bit. Afterwards they all agreed it was no big deal, yet next year, they'll be just as nervous. OK. I was kicking and screaming, too. Not really but I felt nervous, and I've gotten plenty of shots.

brains, ■ear does not live in our but in our emotions. They knew the shot wouldn't be a big deal, but they (read: we) were still nervous. The Jews DID believe Moses, but they had an internal emotional fear of Pharaoh. As they approached the palace, that fear began to

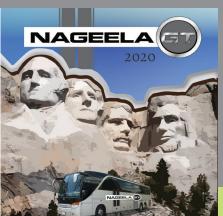
bubble up inside them. Once Pharaoh denied their original plea, all bets were off. The fear had taken root.

It's important for us to recognize that just knowing something isn't always enough. We have deep rooted emotional baggage that sometimes stops us from growing or being who we

could be. The best strategy is to constantly reinforce the things we believe in, reminding ourselves over and over and over. With enough work, it is possible to overcome built in fears and other negative emotions. Or pull a rabbit out of a hat. That might work, too.







Photos of the Week

JEWNIOR WINTER REGIONAL!

Last week, 80 Middle School students from Arizona to Portland and places in between gathered for a pumping and inspirational Shabbaton in the San Francisco area!

150

172

DAYS TO CAMP NAGEELA WEST GIRLS SESSION DAYS TO CAMP NAGEELA WEST BOYS SESSION

Find out about our Grand Tour 2020 and see photos from GT2019 at nageelawest.org

Now is a great time to contact us 6 find out more info about our incredible Grand Tour featuring Mount Rushmore!

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Happy Birthday to Nageela Family members celebrating this week!

Ariella Bernheim Sam Leytes Ari Freeman

Eve Wellish Noa Agatstein

HAPPY UNBIRTHDAY TO EVERYONE ELSE!



THIS WEEK:

Monday: LV Summerlin:

We're Baaaack! 5:45 for 4-6 grade

7-8 for grades 7-8

Monday, Tarzana LNL

Thursday: Irvine Jr. LNL 6:15pm

Thursday:

Los Angeles City Jr. Paint Party 5pm

UPCOMING EVENTS:

Las Vegas Girls Shabbaton

Jan 31st-Feb 1st

Orange County Laser Tag event

Feb. 13th

Gravadu All Nighter - Las Vegas

Feb. 15th, 11:30pm

Troats for Troops- Arizona

Feb 20th

San Diego 7-8-9 SHabbaton

March 27-29

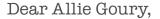
Made Up True Story

Hi Rabbi,

I don't know what to think! The Torah is full of surprising, impossible sounding things. There are all kinds of miracles and supernatural events. I've heard stories of talking animals, and giant creatures that couldn't possibly exist. Are these things true? How could they be? Are they meant to be taken literally?

Thanks

Allison Goury



"Let me tell you a true story I made up." I often use that line when I tell a story. Usually a wildly exaggerated or completely made up story. So why do I call them true stories? Because their core is true. The lessons and values they represent are true. Before anyone gets the wrong idea, let me clarify.

The written Torah consists of 24 books. divided into the Torah (also called Chumash or the five books of Moses, these are the contents of a Torah scroll), the Prophets and the Holy Writings. The Torah is meant to be taken literally. Yes, there are some remarkable miracles. The sea splitting, and Bilaam's donkey giving a soliloquy, the

ten plagues and bread falling from heaven. We understand that God is really, really, eally, really, really powerful and that He has performed spectacular miracles. In the Holy writings, however, there

are some portions which are symbolic, and not to be taken literally. For example, there's

whole man named

Iyov (Job). According to some Talmudic opinions, he may have never existed. Even some parts of the books of the prophets may not be meant to be taken literally.

book about



Stump the Rabbi is a forum where kids can ask ANY Jewish question. Have a question? Please se'nd it in to stump@nageelawest.org

Questions here are real. Names and

some wording have been changed.

Then there's Midrash. Midrashim are a compilation of stories, legends and explanations mostly written around the same time as the Talmud (roughly 1500-2000 years ago). They tell the backstories of many of the Torah's episodes. In a way, the Midrash is the 'deleted scenes' section of the Torah. I'm guessing that much of your

question is based on some pretty wild pieces of Midrash which tell extremely hard to believe stories. That's because they're not meant to be believed. Even though they're true.

Now I'm confusing you... I hope.

According to Maimonides, Maharal and many others,

all Midrash, as a part of the Oral Torah, is based in absolute truth. It's there to teach us a valuable, true lesson. The exact

In a way, the Midrash is the 'deleted scenes' section of the Torah.



Why do horses make such great bets?

They're extremely stable.

OUCH! GROAN! got a better joke? Email it to dlocker@nageelawest.org

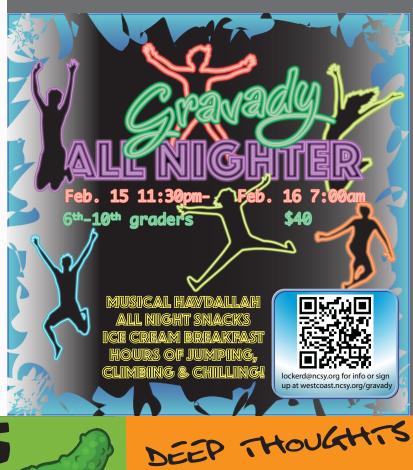
details of the story may not have actually happened, though. It's kind of like a secret code. In fact, that's one of the reasons why Midrash will often use sketchy stories. It's to throw off people who aren't ready to fully understand the deeper meaning of the truth behind the lesson. Another reason, of course, is because sometimes a good story helps us understand stuff better.

So did the unusual stories in Midrash actually happen? Not necessarily.

But they're still true.

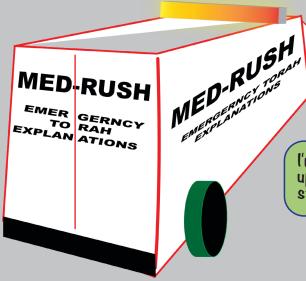
Have-A Nageela Shabbat,

the Rabbi





GALACTICALLY SYNDICATED COMIC STRIP



Here come the parshamedics!

I'm so glad they showed up. This parsha was starting to confuse me.

Nageela JOYFULLY JEWISH EXPERIENCES

Nageela West 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.

Why does 7-1

on the doors

have locks

Our "questions encouraged" mindset makes Nageela a comfortable learning and growing environment for Jewish children of all backgrounds.



To Daniel Tamir who celebrated his Bar Mitzvah last week!



To Jacob Sundberg who is celebrating his Bar Mitzvah this week!



to Camp Nageela West counselor Mimi Kurtz upon ber engagement to Aron Gutman!