

have a

Nageela Shabbos

ISSUE 6 - Parshat Toldot 5777

December 2nd, 2016

Candle Lighting:

Las Vegas 4:08

Los Angeles 4:25

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

Turning a Blind Eye

by Rabbi Dani Locker

Cain and Abel, Mufasa and Scar, Thor and Loki, Peyton and Eli... History and fiction are full of stories of epic struggles between brothers. Usually, one good and one evil, we love the drama these rivalries bring out. Jacob and Esau seem to be a perfect example. Literally from birth (and maybe even a bit before birth) Jacob is clearly the good brother, and Esau, the evil twin. The Hyde to Jacob's Jeckyl.

The Torah describes Jacob as a calm man who sat and studied. He was a hard worker. (Fourteen years of working to get married!), and really honest. Esau, on the other hand, was a murderer, a thief, and even worse - he had terrible table manners.

You wanna know what's weird? Their father, Isaac, seemed to love Esau more! When it came time to give the final blessing to his son and successor, he picked Esau. I mean, what's up with that? OK, Isaac was blind, but he was a wise man! How could he have been so unaware of who and what his son was? As soon as the brothers were born it was obvious. Esau was rough and hairy, he spoke rudely and he had serious street cred as a thug. He and his wives even worshipped pagan gods in his parents' home! How could our great forefather Isaac, who BTW was a prophet, not get that?

Rabbi Shlomo Carlbach was a musician, composer and spiritual leader who lived in New York City, and was known for his incredible love of all people. One Friday night as he was walking in the rough neighborhood he lived in, a scary looking, huge guy held a gun to his head and asked him for his money. Without missing a beat, Reb Shlomo answered, "My dear, holy brother, I love you so much! I'm so sorry that I don't have money for you, because it's my Sabbath, and if you kill me, I'll still love you!" The mugger lowered his gun and began to cry, sobbing that nobody had ever told him he was loved. They kept talking, and Reb Shlomo eventually helped the man clean up his life, get a job and become a productive, positive person.

Of course Isaac understood his son's problems. He knew very well that in Esau's current condition he wasn't worthy of much. But maybe, just maybe, with the jumpstart of the blessing passed down from Abraham, he could turn it all around. His love for Esau and his decision to give him the very special blessing was a way of saying, "Even though you've made poor decisions, I love you and I believe in you!" He may have acted like Hyde (and worn animal hide), but he had the potential to be Jeckyl.

Do you realize how important YOU are? Seriously, the entire universe, huge and awesome as it is was worth being made, just for you! G-d has an incredible amount of love for you, even if you've made serious mistakes (like sacrificing to false gods, or texting during class). If we all think about that, imagine how much potential it will unlock within us. Sometimes all people need is to be shown a little more love, to realize they're appreciated to become a 'holy brother'.

This week's edition of NAGEELA SHABBOS is dedicated by Simon Esfandi in memory of his father.

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DID JEW KNOW

The first of the Torah's 5 books, Bereishit, covers a period of more than 2,000 years. The second book, Shemot, a little over 200 years. Vayikra covers only one month! Bamidbar, around 38 years, and Devarim, around two months.

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WHEN TAKING CARE OF
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STUMP THE RABBI



Dear Rabbi,

Is it true that we're not allowed to embarrass challah? I heard that's why we cover it on Friday night. Is that a thing? Last I checked, bread doesn't have feelings. Can you please explain?

Thanks,
Braden L. Oaf

Hey Braden,

First, let me propose a toast to the bread. Oy, that was terrible. Let's start again.

Does bread have feelings? Well, Sometimes it gets this hallah, empty feeling inside... OK, OK. I'd better stop. These jokes are getting stale.

There are three reasons given (that I know of, anyway) for covering the challah at all Shabbat meals.

Our challah reminds us of the special bread, called Mannah which our great, great... grandparents ate while wandering the desert looking for a GPS signal. This special bread had a covering on top and on bottom, so we keep our challah covered on both sides as well.

When eating bread and drinking wine, the blessing for bread is supposed to come first. We don't follow that rule on Shabbat, because Kiddush

is the kickoff, so we cover the challah so we're not making blessings in a seemingly inappropriate order (I know that one's a little technical, sorry).

Because the bread is being passed over (I know, usually Passover involves matzah... stop confusing me) as we just mentioned in point 2, it's insensitive to the bread to rub it in that it's being skipped. Its like putting salt on a cut (oh, wait, we do that) so we cover the challah to be more sensitive.

This last reason is the troubling one because, as you so expertly pointed out, bread has no emotion. Here's an example that may help.

As a boy, I took karate for a bunch of years. I enjoyed it, but I hated practicing. One I'd learned a new move or kata, I'd practice until I remembered all the steps, and then go play around or talk to my friends (there were no smart phones back then, so I talked to people. Weird). The most annoying part of practicing was the slow-motion kicking. We'd do the exact same kick, but painfully slow, so the only person you could possibly hurt was yourself, by falling down. The reason, my sensei explained,

is something called muscle memory. If you do the exact motion hundreds, thousands of times, then when you're in a situation when you need to defend yourself, your kick will come out perfect, because your body knows exactly what to do. The kids who practiced this often, became really good (some went on to successful careers as ninja turtles).

Back to our doughy problem. Of course bread can't get embarrassed, happy, sad or feel the need to quack like a duck. The tradition of covering the challah is to train our emotional 'muscle memory' not to ever embarrass or hurt anyone. If we act toward an inanimate object with sensitivity, it's likely to have an effect on how we act toward our younger sister, or the janitor, or the dentist. Maybe even toward ourselves. If you want to know more, it's on a knead to know basis...

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

nageela week snapshot (dec 4-9)

SUN	MON	WED	THU	FRI
JIL 10-12 Beverly Hills Nageela Hebrew School 10-12:30 Las Vegas	NageeLette Summerlin 6:45-7:45	Torah Buddies- Beverly Hills 4:30-6:30 Valley Meeting 7:30-8:30	NageeLette Henderson 5:30-6:30	Boys Bubble Shabbaton Las Vegas

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