## have a

## Nageela Shabbos

A weekly publication of Nageela West Joyfully Jewish Experiences

# First Last Impressions

by Rabbi Dani Locker

First impressions are important, right?

What if I told you that the great Joseph wanted his family to make the worst first impression possible?

Yuh-huh.

Joseph was one of the top guys in Egypt, second only to King Pharaoh. When his family, the children of Israel (later called Jews, but that name didn't exist yet) arrived in Egypt, they would have immediately become important, influential members of Egyptian society. They probably would've gotten floor seats at all the Cairo Clippers games. Instead, Joseph purposely tried to make sure his family made as bad first impression on Pharaoh. Hey, what?

It was a big family, and Joseph only brought half his brothers to meet the king. The odd thing is that he purposely brought the weaker, less impressive brothers! He also told them to announce that they were shepherds, which in ancient Egypt was a pretty embarrassing job. Why would he do this? Didn't Joseph want his brothers to have honor and comfort in their new country?

Sure Joseph wanted his family to be comfortable, but it was more important to him that they be good. Let me explain what I mean. Ancient Egypt was a great civilization. They made great progress in construction and science (for back then, anyway. I doubt they knew what would

happen if you combined Diet Coke and Mentos). They were also a civilization that did not share the values of the Torah. Joseph knew the dangers of his family, the ancestors of the Jewish people, getting too friendly with their Egyptian hosts, and so he made sure the Egyptians



would want his family to live in a private area, away from mainstream Egyptian culture. The great Rabbi known as the Chofetz Chaim points out, based on this story, that Joseph felt it was worth making his family uncomfortable in order to preserve our values.

Many cities, throughout Jewish history have enforced laws that made

#### shabbos info:

Candle Lighting: Las Vegas 4:23 Los Angeles 4:41 Phoenix 5:17 San Diego 4:39

Jews live in a certain area of the city. In some areas that was called a "Jewish Quarter" and in some, a ghetto. Some of these places were violent and dangerous places, and the Jews in these cities were made very uncomfortable by their inability to live where they chose. But looking back, it was these small communities, where Jews had to shop with other Jews, go to school in private Jews institutions, and live in close proximity to one another that helped a great deal in keeping our people alive! Joseph realized that a society in which Jews live completely together with everyone else and share the same streets, schools and hangouts, is a society where Jews start forgetting that we're Jews.

Nobody wants to make a bad first impression. But what's really important is that it doesn't turn into the last impression.

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THEY ALL KNOW JEW-DO

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## Nageela Shabbos





Hi Rabbi.

I've been learning about the mitzvot, and trying to do more. Most of my friends are not Jewish; should I try to convince them to keep mitzvot as well? Should I try to get them to become Jewish? Is that even possible? It feels weird to be doing something when my friends are doing different stuff.

Thanks,

Jennifer Tyler

Dear Jen Tyle,

Sounds like you're a really motivated, committed person! I'll try to answer your questions one at a time (you asked a few). First of all, it is possible for someone to become Jewish. In fact, some of the greatest Jews in history didn't start out as Jews. My answer today will not go through the details of how that happens, and if someone you know is interested in converting, the question should be brought directly to a Rabbi.

It's not necessary, though. Jews believe that you don't have to be Jewish to be good, or to earn a place in the next world. If a gentile (that's the correct terminology for someone who isn't a Jew) lives their lives as a good person,

isn't a Jew) lives their lives as a good person, then it's not needed for them to keep all of the commandments. For example, if you are committed to keeping Kosher, let's say, so you would never eat octopus (not that octopus is something I'm itching to try), your gentile friends can eat all the octopus their stomachs and intestines can handle. The same applies to Shabbat, and most other commandments: They're Jewish responsibilities and anyone who isn't Jewish doesn't' need to keep them.

The Torah outlines seven rules that gentiles

are supposed to keep. Basically, they should not kill, steal or get involved in inappropriate relationships. They need to set up court systems, avoid worshipping other gods, be respectful to the One and Only G-d, and not engage in extreme cruelty to animals. That was a very, very shortened, and simplified version, but the seven rules I just mentioned are known as the Noachide Laws. That means that all people who come from Noah (duh, that's everyone) is required to keep these.

Not only don't Jews require gentiles to convert, we try to discourage it! Being Jewish is a great privilege, but it comes with responsibility. Someone who's truly committed may join, but they need to really, really

As far as your friends, though, it's usually best not to try to convince friends to do anything. If they respect you, they'll try to make life less awkward. If you're sensitive to it, maybe they'd agree to only eat kosher food when you're around. Then you be tempted to eat that octopus. Poor octopus.

Have - a- Nageela Shabbos

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 (jan 8-14)

SUN	MON	WED	THU
WINTER BREAK HEBREW SCHOOL LAS VEGAS 10AM JIL BEVERLY HILLS 10AM	NAGEELATTE	NAGEELATTE	NAGEELATTE
	SUMMERLIN	LA VALLEY	GREEN VALLEY
	6:45	6PM	5:30

