

VERY
PUNNY

Ouch. Have a better pun?
Send it in to dlocker@nageelawest.org

Four fonts walked into a fancy coffee shop.

The barista said, "Get lost! We don't want your type in here."

SEASON 2
EPISODE 30

April 28th, 2018

Candle Lighting:

Phoenix 6:50

Las Vegas 7:07

San Diego 7:09

Los Angeles 7:16

Lake Tahoe 7:31

have a

Nageela Shabbos

Parshas
Acharei Mos

5778

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

The Makeup Test

by Rabbi Dani Locker

I had a very loud argument in public last night.

I was just finishing up a NageeLatte program in Green Valley, when a bunch of missionaries walked up. For those of you who might not know what a missionary is, a missionary is someone who goes around trying to convince people that his or her religion is right. Anyway, at least three Christian missionaries walk up to this public outdoor eating area where people are enjoying their drinks, and in a loud voice, their leader begins to announce to everyone there

(most of whom happened to be Jewish) why they should believe in his lord and master.

I won't walk you through the entire discussion which ended with my own very loud, public announcement and mic drop (I was holding a bag of jelly beans instead of a mic, so the effect was somewhat lessened). Perhaps we'll save that for another time. I do want to share with you one part of the conversation.

"Do you ever sin, or are you perfect?" he asked me.

"Of course I mess up. Everyone does."

"So how can you, a sinner, ever get forgiveness?"

You can only get forgiveness through Jesus!"

"Actually, the Torah outlines for us a system called teshuva by which each individual can be forgiven for his own actions, without relying on someone else. That system was announced, by God, in the Torah, at least 1000 years before Jesus was born."

You see, to this guy, it was impossible to understand how "a sinner" can possibly connect to God on his own, or fix the problems he makes on his own. The absurdity is that in his mind, it's more logical that you can get forgiveness without apologizing or fixing your problems, just by believing in some guy who died 2000 years ago... that makes more sense to

continued on back

This week's edition is dedicated in memory of Rav Aharon Yaakov ben Aryeh Leib Halevi, Z"L

Rabbi David Zaback, author of "Question of the Week"

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Stump The Rabbi

Pet Cemetary

*Trigger alert: This article deals with death and cremation. Don't read it if these discussions make you uncomfortable.

Hi Rabbi,

Are there any special rules for the burial of pets? Can a goldfish be sent down a drain, like in *Finding Nemo*? And what about the kind of pets that we're more emotionally attached to? Can pets be cremated, or do they have to be buried?

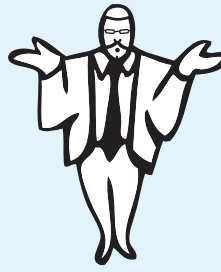
Thanks,

Robert E. Mainz

Dear REMainz,

Just about two weeks ago, my kids and I spent Sunday afternoon at Red Rock Canyon, a beautiful hiking and rock climbing area just outside Las Vegas. Instead of simply hiking, we decided to do a bit of Geocaching. For those of you who are muggles, geocaching is a massive international scavenger hunt, where people hide treasure boxes, or chaches, pretty much anywhere, and geocachers use GPS devices to try and locate them. They can be hidden anywhere, from the bush in front of your dry cleaners to the top of a remote mountain. There are more than 3 million caches hidden throughout the world! Red Rock canyon has quite a few caches, so we spent some time searching for (and finding) a few, and we even stashed away one of our own.

Before I continue the story, it's important to explain that you



never know what the box will look like. It could be a metal ammunition box, a plastic tube, or a tiny metal cylinder. I hid my new cache in a travel coffee mug (yes, I know). We were scrambling over rocks, searching in crevices, and my GPS told me we were closing in on a particularly elusive cache when my daughter called out, "I think I got it!"

From a distance (I was hiking with the 4- year- old, so we were a bit behind) I saw she had found a wooden box with a latch. She opened the box, and was dismayed to find there were no treasures or trinkets inside, just a yellow slip of paper and something dark and hard. She picked up the item and started examining it, unsure of what it was. By that time I had caught up and took a look myself. The yellow paper was a certificate of cremation from a pet cemetary. Apparently, the dog whose remains my daughter was now holding really loved red rock, and so they had left the charred remains in a wooden box, dangerously close to a hidden box of trinkets... We respectfully put the box back, and used A LOT of hand sanitizer.

Back to your question. The Torah instructs us to be kind to animals, feeding our pets before we feed ourselves, and never performing procedures on them that are cruel or painful. We also believe that people should be buried, and not cremated. Your question makes the logical assumption that those two things go together, and cremating a pet would be a problem. They don't though. Let me explain.

Why do we bury people instead of cremation, which is far cheaper and easier? Here are two reasons (although there are probably many more): Jewish tradition tells us that eventually people who have passed away will return to life. That is only possible, according to some sources, if the body is still intact and useable. Presumably that's because even when performing great miracles, God tries to keep things as close to natural as possible (Zombie apocalypse, anyone?). Therefore, burial is the best way to ensure that, and cremation, or any form of destroying the body could prevent resurrection. This does not apply to pets, since we don't believe that righteous pets will come back to life.

Here's another important reason for burial.

What was the first Hybrid? The Prius? The Lohner-Porsche? Nope. It's the human. You see, human beings have a physical body, much like animals (like Disney's walking, talking animals, I suppose), and a spark of God, a spiritual entity we like to call a soul. I'm NOT gonna try to explain a soul today. We don't have enough pages. Yet a soul is something amazingly special. Once a body has housed a soul, that makes the body special, too. It's kind of like the home of a great person, which is converted into

a museum. You respect the home because of the person who once lived there. In 2012, a Yankees jersey worn by Babe Ruth sold for four and a half million dollars. I doubt the reason was because it's a really well-made jersey. It's because once it had been worn by the Bambino, someone with a lot of extra money decided that it was now and forever special (some insanity may have been involved. I wouldn't have paid more than 4.2 million). We respect a human body and give it every honor, because it used to be the home to something incredible. Animals, especially pets can be very important to people. They can be physically helpful, and even develop emotional attachments. Yet when that animal dies, there's no longer anything special about that animal. An animal's usefulness and value is during its life. Therefore, we don't feel the need to make a special honor for an animal after death. It's OK to send a fish down a drain, and it's fine to cremate a dog. But please, please, don't leave the remains in a National park!

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

Question of the Week

Answer on back page

Question of the Week is adapted with permission from the book "Question of the Week" by Rabbi David Zaback z"l

We are told that our ancestors, the patriarchs and matriarchs of our nation were careful to keep all the laws of the Torah. In fact, the Midrash tells us that Abraham even ate matzah on Passover! Yet, when it comes to the brit milah, or circumcision, Abraham did not have a brit until he was 99, when God commanded him directly to circumcise himself.

Why did Abraham wait until age 99 to perform the mitzvah of brit milah?

Answer of the Week

question on page 3

CAUTION:

Don't read this answer until you've read the question on page 1!

DON'T CHEAT!

HEY, STOP LOOKING!



Need help understanding, or have a different answer? email dlocker@nageelawest.org

(Midrash Tanchuma 17, Bereishit Rabbah 46:2, Vilna Gaon) that:

Abraham knew that in the future there would be people who would need to undergo a circumcision later in life (adult converts, or Jews who are returning to Torah). Abraham wanted to make sure these people had a precedent to make them feel more comfortable, that no matter how old they were, someone had already been there, done

continued from front

him than our loving God giving us a process to fix our own mistakes.

Our parsha talks about the Yom Kippur service. Yom Kippur, as the most serious, important day of the year, is often viewed as being a sad day, but it's really not. It's the day when God allows us...NO, commands us, to fix our mistakes and return to him. To me, that doesn't sound sad. Sure, it's serious. It's a chance to take an important make up test. Think about this example:

You were lazy and didn't study for your test and you got a lousy grade (Hey, lazy=lousy. I just thought of that).

An irresponsible teacher might just let it go and give you an A.

A cruel teacher might give you no way out and let you fail.

A kind and responsible teacher might give you a chance to study hard and take a makeup test.

Only a foolish teacher would say, "You messed up badly, but I'll give you a good grade because I had a student ten years ago who got a really good grade on this test."

That's the key to Yom Kippur, and, indeed, the key to a responsible,

accomplishing life. We have to be able to make our own mistakes, and clean up our own messes. God allows us, through the process of teshuva (which we'll describe a different week) to do just that. It's not only Yom Kippur. Life is about doing our best, making mistakes and being strong enough to admit our shortcomings and fix them.



Jelly bean drop.

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Mazel Tov!

to our awesome veteran counselor and Night activity director

BARRY POLATOFF
upon his engagement to
MALKA ALIZA STOLPER

Happy Birthday!

to Nageela family members celebrating their birthdays this week!

Maia Zelkha
Orin Cohen
Asher Dubowsky
Asher Fanebust

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

