

# have a Nageela Shabbos

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

## Faith is Overrated

by Rabbi Dani Locker

Jews left Egypt, Pharaoh lost his slaves. Game Over. Right?

Nope. The Egyptians didn't give up easily. Badly damaged and depleted, they followed their king on a high speed chase using golden chariots and sports cars. Too bad for them they didn't use boats or helicopters, because the sea came crashing down upon their heads. When the water logged Egyptians floated to shore and the Jewish people saw their former jailers finally beaten, they were understandably relieved. The Torah says, "And Israel saw the great hand that G-d used against Egypt... and they believed in G-d."

Wait, didn't they already believe in G-d? Think about the miracles they'd seen in Egypt. If there would've been an official independent survey done ("Hello, sir. Please don't hang up. I'm calling from the International Data Dissemination Institute of Technology and I'd just like to ask you a few questions. It will only take about 900 minutes of your time."), the entire Nation would have proudly announced that they had faith in G-d! SO why does the Torah say that NOW they believed?

Imagine someone who's never tasted pizza (take deep breaths, I know it's shocking, but try and calm

down). Now try to convince them that it's delicious. They may believe you. Now if someone else comes along and convinces them that pizza is disgusting, they may believe that person instead! If you've tasted pizza, though, and you know you love it, then nobody can ever convince you that you don't love it.

A great Rabbi once asked his students if they had faith in G-d. "Rabbi, of course we do! What kind of crazy question is that?"

"Well," he responded, "I don't have faith in G-d."

That kind of surprised them, cause, y'know, he was a Rabbi and all, so they asked him what he meant.

"Do you have faith that this is a table?" He asked, while pointing to the table. "Not really. You know this is a table with all of your confidence. If I would give you an hour lecture proving logically that this is not a table, you'd still know that it is a table."

I don't have faith that there's a G-d. I know and understand based on my life and experiences, and it's not subject to proof or argument."

Sure the Jewish people had faith in G-d along. At the sea, they saw such an awesome display of G-d's greatness, power and love that

it went well beyond faith. It was knowledge, clear and strong. They knew it like I know the bumps on a pickle.

How can we help ourselves develop this clarity and knowledge of G-d? One way to start is by looking at all the amazing wonders of this world, both in nature, and in our own bodies. If we spend some time thinking about how incredible it is that each tree grows, that the Earth orbits the sun and that our heart pumps all the nutrients our body needs through tiny tunnels inside of us, we will start to realize how real and obvious G-d's hand and existence is. Now - stop reading for a moment, and do it. Think about the things I just mentioned. Now, have yourself an awesometastic Shabbat! 🌟

### DID JEW KNOW

Moshe led the entire Jewish nation in song after the Egyptians were defeated in the sea. But naturally, he had no instruments. Only Miriam had such strong trust in G-d that she had brought instruments with her from Egypt! She played the tambourine during her song.

**HAVE A COOL JEWISH FACT? EMAIL IT TO  
DLOCKER@NAGEELAWEST.ORG**

This week's edition of NAGEELA SHABBOS is sponsored by the Gelb family in memory of Moshe ben Yaakov

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# STUMP THE RABBI



Dear Rabbi,

A friend of my family recently got a tattoo with a Jewish star on it. I remember hearing that Jews should not get tattoos, but why? What's wrong with it? Is it better if it's in Hebrew or a Jewish symbol? Is it true that Jews with tattoos can't get buried in a Jewish cemetery? It seems to have become very common.

Thank you in advance for your answer,  
The missing Ink

Dear DellNKquent,

When I was a kid, I loved drawing. Ok, I still love drawing, but as a kid I was a little less responsible about where I did my drawing. One school year, after who knows how many of my textbooks had been doodled in with various pictures of "The Simpsons" characters and geometric shapes, my mother bought me a notebook for drawing during class. She explained that even though she wasn't thrilled that I was drawing in class, she understood that I did it out of habit, and would prefer I use the proper place instead of damaging books. I used similar logic years later with a student of mine who had been using spray paint to tag public walls and subways (he was pretty good, and even taught me some tricks). I tried to find him a legal place to do his artwork, and his parents agreed to let him paint the walls in his room. Today he has a respectable job in graphic design.

In "G-d's Guide to the Galaxy," AKA, the Torah, there are a whole bunch of instructions which can be difficult to understand, and this is one of them. It's important that we realize that our body is a gift from G-d, and He expects that we care for it a certain way. That includes physical care and spiritual care. So what exactly is it about tattoos that's negative?

Some say it's because many ancient religions used tattoos in their worship. Others say that since G-d gave us the bris, circumcision, as a permanent mark on our body, it's kind of insulting to make a different permanent mark. Imagine your best friend moves to a new house. You visit and see there's a large picture of you up on their wall. Feels good right? Now you come back

the next day, and guess what: there are hundreds of photos of random people up on the same wall, to the point where your photo isn't noticeable at all! How does that feel? If we make our own permanent marks on our bodies, it makes the bris seem less important. My favorite explanation can be summed up with this statement (which I didn't make up, but it's smart, so I'll tell it to you anyway), "A tattoo is a permanent reminder of temporary insanity." It's very, very permanent. There's nothing in your life, no design, no sports team, rock band or even friend of whom you can say with confidence, "When I'm 80 years old, I want that picture on my skin." People can't even keep the same cell phone for more than six months before wanting a new one, you really think a permanent design on your body makes sense? Its FOREVER! In a sense, the rule against tattoos helps remind us that nothing in life is truly permanent. This world, our bodies, all of it, is temporary (whoa, heavy stuff, I know). By the way, once the Torah says not to do something, you don't earn extra credit by ignoring instruction while humming hava nageela. So getting a Jewish star tattoo definitely does not make it OK. If anything, a bit more 'in your face' insulting to the Torah. You should know, however; that having a tattoo does not prevent someone from being buried in a Jewish cemetery. Follow this rule: Think before you ink!

Stump the Rabbi is a forum where kids can ask ANY Jewish question.

Have a question? Please send it in to  
[stump@nageelawest.org](mailto:stump@nageelawest.org)

Questions here are real. Names and some wording have been changed

VERY PUNNY

What Key did  
Miriam sing her  
song in?

C, OF COURSE!

HAVE REALLY CORNY PUN?  
EMAIL IT TO [DLOCKER@NAGEELAWEST.ORG](mailto:DLOCKER@NAGEELAWEST.ORG)

## nageela week snapshot (Feb 12-Feb 18)

| SUN                                                                 | MON                             | THU                                | FRI                                      |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|
| HEBREW SCHOOL<br>LAS VEGAS 10AM<br><br>JIL<br>BEVERLY HILLS<br>10AM | NAGEELATTE<br>SUMMERLIN<br>6:45 | NAGEELATTE<br>GREEN VALLEY<br>5:30 | NAGEE LA<br>SHABBATON<br><br>LOS ANGELES |

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