

Vayigash 5781
December 25th, 2020

NAGEELA SHABBOS

Have-a

SEASON 5 EPISODE 10

a kid friendly publication of Nageela West Coast Joyfully Jewish Experiences



At Home but Always Away

by Rabbi Dani Locker

Ready for math class? Here goes:

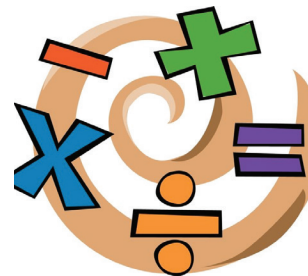
$$\begin{array}{l} \text{Joseph} \\ + \text{Dreams} \end{array} = \frac{\text{Brothers}^{10}}{\text{jealousy.}}$$

$$\begin{array}{l} \text{Israel} \\ + \text{No food} \end{array} = \begin{array}{l} \text{Jacob's family} \\ + \text{hunger.} \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{l} \text{Egypt} \\ + \text{Lots of food} \\ \text{stored} \end{array} = \begin{array}{l} \text{Joseph's} \\ \text{brother}^{10} \\ + \text{travel.} \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{l} \text{Joseph} \\ + \text{Political} \\ \text{Power} \\ + \text{Invitation} \end{array} = \begin{array}{l} \text{Jacob} \\ + \text{Family (sons} \\ + \text{grandchildren} \\ - \text{deceased} \\ \text{spouses)} \\ - \text{Israel} \\ + \text{Egypt} \end{array}$$

If you understood that, you're a serious math whiz and you're ready for the SAT (Silly Association of Torah) exams. If you didn't, you're probably better off. Next thing you know, I'll start



publishing with a weekly rebus.... Hey... back to the matter at hand.

There was no food, pretty

much anywhere, except Egypt, because Joseph had planned for a rainy day. Or more accurately, for a very unrainy day. After telling his bros who he actually was (his exact wording was, "Have you ever heard of the Carbonaro effect?" Maybe), he invited them to come down to Egypt where he would take care of them. Jacob brought everyone down to Egypt; and extended family numbering 70 people. Then they all lived happily ever after. I said that as a joke, but they kind of did.

While Joseph and his



Henderson	4:14
Las Vegas	4:14
Reno/ Tahoe	4:23
San Diego	4:31
Irvine	4:31
Los Angeles	4:32
Oakland	4:38
Park City	4:46
Scottsdale	5:08

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continued on next page

brothers were still alive, the Egyptians didn't start any real persecution. They were quite friendly to the Jews. They provided some of the best valued property in Goshen for Jacob to settle his family. And then the hunger and thirst ended. There was once again, plenty in the land. And Jacob picked up his family and moved back to Israel.. right?

No. That didn't happen. The hunger ended, there was plenty, and then Jacob lived for another 17 years in Egypt. He did not bring his family back home. Why not?

I posted this question on Facebook a couple of days ago. I'd love to share with you some of the answers I got.

Maybe sometimes you get used to where you are, and don't want to change, even if the change would be an improvement.

1d Like Reply

Because they established yeshivos in Goshen and Klal Yisroel's "homeland" is the Torah, not Israel.

1d Like Reply

Hashem said to him on the way to Mitzrayim that this is the preliminary step to Golus Mitzrayim. He had no choice but to stay.

1d Like Reply

Why would he go back? He had his entire family together and was comfortable and taken care of. G-d had also told him that "Joseph's hand shall close your eyes" (Sefaria translation). Clearly, Joseph wasn't leaving Egypt even after the famine. It would seem to me to be a bigger question if he did go back.

1d Like Reply

Just a guess... The famine did not last a full 7 years as Joseph's dream predicted. The famine ended when Jacob and family went to Egypt to see Joseph. Pharaoh viewed them and Joseph as good luck and did not want to lose them. Great things happen when Jews populated Egypt, right? Joseph was under the tutelage of Pharaoh and had to get permission to bury his father in Canaan; Pharaoh granted permission and had an entire army accompany them so they would return to Egypt. It was the beginning of our enslavement in Egypt.

1d Like Reply

Dani Locker I guess that's the question. At least on the surface it seems like there were definitely some superficial reasons why they stayed, but that doesn't mean there wasn't also something deeper.

1d Like Reply

Absolutely fantastic question!!!

- 1) Yosef wasn't allowed to work remotely even during a famine since he was an essential worker, so why would he do so now?
- 2) Yaakov is old. It was probably hard enough for him to go down to Egypt, all the more so going back to Eretz Chana'an.
- 3) As Rashi says on וַיֵּשֶׁב, Yaakov finally found some tranquility where he previously had not.
- 4) Pharaoh himself commanded Yosef to tell the brothers to bring the whole family down. The Artscroll Humash quotes several people who pretty much say that Pharaoh wanted such an established family to come down so as to keep Yosef there and/or to conscript Yosef's family to work... See More

1d Like Reply

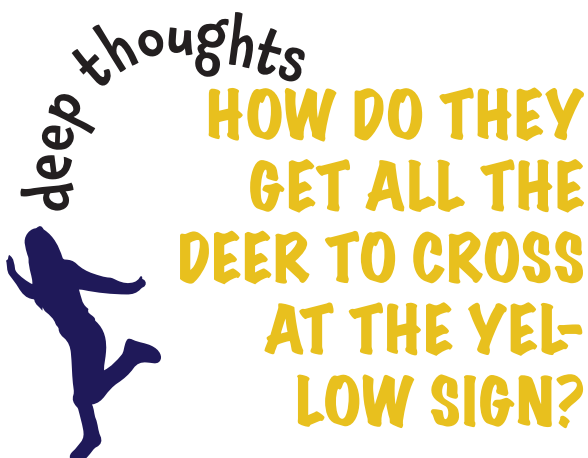
Not entirely an unrelated vein, but is there room to say he didn't go back simply because he was never commanded to? G-d had told him to return home after living with Lavan, and He had also told him He would be with him going down to Egypt. Maybe he just wouldn't have returned unprompted?

Thanks to everyone who contributed to this wonderful Torah discussion on Facebook! There is a lot of debate and many more suggestions on the actual facebook thread. Take a look there!

Here are a few observations of my own:

There seems to be some hint that Jacob knew he would be staying for a while. God commanded him to go down to Egypt, and promised he would 'bring him back up' yet many commentaries seem to feel that Jacob understood this was part of the earlier prophecy that Jews would be strangers in a strange land for a long time.

Yet the Hagaddah, y'know that long book you zip through at the seder? The Hagaddah tells us Jacob didn't go in order to 'stay' in Egypt, rather to be temporary residents. That doesn't sound like he planned on staying. Could it be both, that he planned on staying and didn't plan on staying? I think perhaps, Jacob knew he was going to stay. Yet he tried very hard not to feel that way. We've been in exile now for two thousand years, yet some of us feel like we are at home in our surroundings, and some few, very special people, recognize that whatever land we Jews find ourselves, we're not actually home. This is an attitude we can learn from Jacob. Be successful, live where you need to live, raise a happy and healthy family there. Yet always remember that it isn't home. Be a temporary resident. Even if you're there for two thousand years.



Mazel Tov to Nageela West Head Counselor Yehuda and Rochel Leiter on the birth of a baby boy this week!
Mazel tov to big sister Toby, CNW aunts and uncles, Aharon, Tzvi, Aryeh and Chaya!



Tal Hirsh
Yossi Koppel
Peyton Schwitters
Ilan Lieberman
Nadav Weiss

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.



#152 What Milah Worry?

Dear Rabbi,

I've been wondering about the Jewish practice of having a bris. I heard that it's healthier. Is that true? Why else would we do it?

Thanks
Ashton Theodore Dayle



Dear A TH Day(le)

Here's a story that happened to the great Rabbi Akiva. Some of the details may have been slightly changed. A Roman Governor who used to like annoying Rabbi Akiva. He came to the Rabbi one day and asked him, "What's better, things that God created or things that people create?" [What would you say?] He was expecting Rabbi Akiva to tell him that God's creations were better, but that is exactly the opposite of what the Rabbi did.

"The creations of man are way better!" said Rabbi Akiva.

"What now? Why? How?"

Then Rabbi Akiva walked over to the fridge and removed two items. One was an ordinary stalk of wheat. The kind you

only see in pictures but have never met unless you live on a farm. In his other hand he held a box.

"Do you want to see what's in the box?," asked Rabbi Akiva.

"Please show me," replied the governor. "All at once it smells so delicious and savory, yet so unhealthy and painful."

With a slight grin, Rabbi Akiva opened the box to show a dozen fresh glazed Krsipy Kreme donuts, fresh off the conveyor belt (don't ask me why he went to the fridge). "What do you think is better now? Things made by God (the wheat) or made by man?"

"Wellllll... That depends. May I have one?"

Rabbi Akiva was showing a key idea that we believe in. God has made this world

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Stump the Rabbi; continued

for people to improve. The world has all the materials we need, but it's our job, both physically and spiritually to perfect it. The Romans believed the human form is perfect. There was no need, in their view, to work on improving ourselves, or really trying to make the world a better place either.

One of the ideas of Bris Milah is that God made people almost exactly the way He

wanted them, but he wants us to put the finishing touches on. By giving our children a bris, we are showing our belief that we need to be active partners with God in making ourselves and the world great. I am no doctor, so I can't tell you whether medically having a bris is healthier. No idea. Frankly, I think the medical world is unsure, too. Yet whether it's healthy or not, we have a vital reason for continuing the important goal

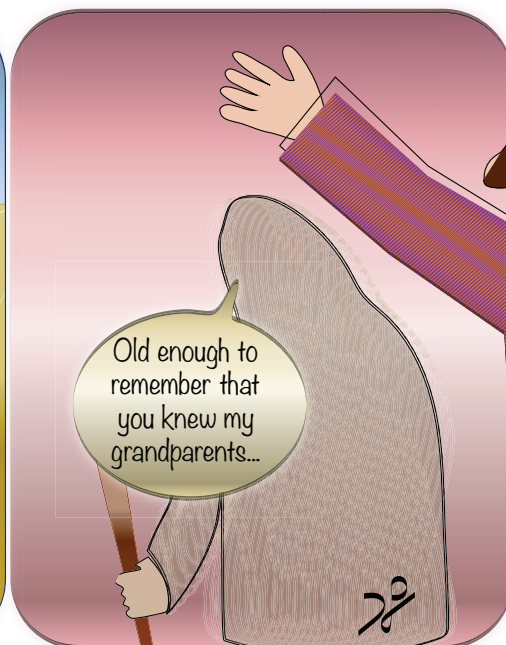
of 'helping' God perfect ourselves.

Have a Nageela Shabbat,

the Rabbi

Credit to Rabbi Mordechai Becher from whom I got the main idea behind this answer, some 20 years ago

PICKLE JEWS



Someone swung a guitar really close to my head.

I feel like that was a fret.

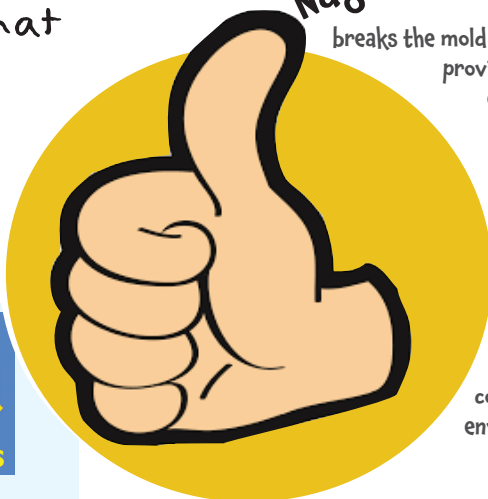
OUCH! GROAN!

Do you have a better joke? I sure hope so!
Send it to dlocker@nageelawest.org

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