

NAGEELA SHABBOS

Have-a

Vayechi 5781
January 1st, 2021

SEASON 5 EPISODE 11

a kid friendly publication of Nageela West Coast Joyfully Jewish Experiences



Soft-Serve Slavery

by Rabbi Dani Locker

When did it all begin? How did it happen? What made it start? Let me set this up for you:

Scenario 1: Joseph is basically the head honcho of Egypt. He's a rock star (I heard he was in a band called Yosef Chai, together with his niece Serach- but I can't confirm this). Jacob and the rest of his sons (and grandchildren) are living in the luxurious suburban community of Goshen estates, where they have the best school district and tough zoning laws. It's an idyllic life.

Scenario 2: The Jews of Egypt are slaving away in high security forced labor camps. The name Joseph has been erased from the history Hieroglyphic walls, and they're working so hard they have no time to think. The king has even started bathing in the blood of Jewish children,

as his soldiers seek out every male baby to get rid of them. I'll repeat my questions: When did it all begin? How did it happen? What made it start?

If you look at the historical accounts as recorded in Talmudic literature, the Jews were in Egypt a total of 210 years. Yet the actual slavery didn't begin until 94 years later, when Levi, the final remaining son of Jacob passed away. 116 years of brutal slavery. How did it go from scenario 1 to scenario 2 in less than a century?

The great Rashi notices something unusual about the way a Torah scroll is written. Usually there are a bunch of spaces between the end of one parsha and the beginning of the next. Yet this week's Torah portion begins immediately after last week's ends, with no break at all. It's



Candle lighting

Henderson	4:19
Las Vegas	4:19
Reno/ Tahoe	4:28
San Diego	4:35
Irvine	4:36
Los Angeles	4:37
Oakland	4:33
Park City	4:51
Scottsdale	5:13

A tremendous thank you to those who contributed to this week's Year-End scholarship campaign!
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continued on next page

closed off. Sealed. Rashi continues by telling us that Jacob's death (the theme of this week's parsha) closed the eyes and hearts of the Jewish people. They lost hope, since the pain of slavery began upon Jacob's death.

Wait a second. Jacob lived for 17 years after he first came to Egypt (see last week's episode for more on that). That means the slavery didn't actually start until 77 years after Jacob's death, so why would Rashi say that it began when he died?

Interestingly enough, the Egyptians had a great strategy. They asked the Jews to volunteer for community building projects. Even Joseph with his high position (he outlived his father by 54 years) couldn't prevent this since the Egyptians were volunteering, too. Yet the Jews knew what was coming. Sure, the actual labor wasn't too bad for the first few decades- even a couple of generations. They theoretically could have stopped working at any time. Yet the knowledge that this was the start of their long exile (there were prophecies passed down in the family), meant that even this soft tyranny pained them. This is how major changes happen. With a small inconvenience that doesn't seem to hurt too much. Then when you're so used to it you don't

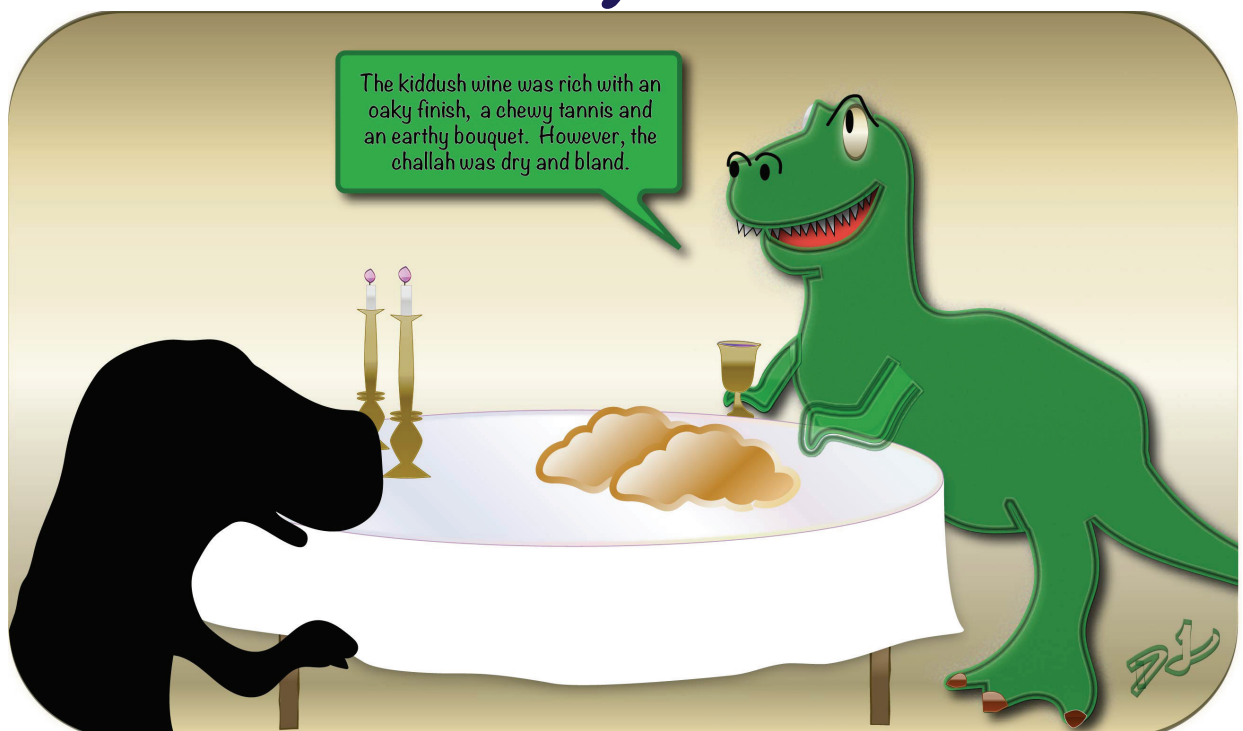
even notice, a slightly larger step. People are no different. Can you think of things that just a year or two ago you would have thought were impossible, but now seem normal? If you can't, ask, literally any adult. They will tell you of all the things that were unthinkable 10, 20, 50 years ago that are considered OK now. Small, easy steps. This is also a helpful way for us to improve ourselves. Does it seem overwhelming to study for a big test? Is it too difficult to exercise? Many challenges can be overcome by starting with a truly small step in the right direction. Then another incremental step, and then another. Pretty soon, we'll have reached the top of the pyramid.

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**WHY DO YOU WALK
DOWN THE ROAD,
EVEN WHEN THE
ROAD IS UPHILL?**

PICKLE JEWS



Shabbat with connosours could be stressful

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.

Stump the Rabbi

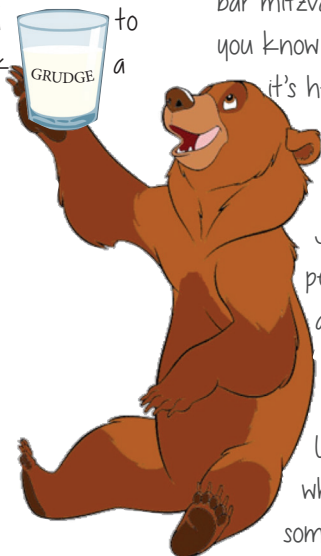


#153 Hold my Bear

Hi Rabbi,

I learned that there's a commandment not to bear a grudge against someone. To me that means that if someone does something wrong to you, you shouldn't hold it against them. Does that mean that you have to forgive everyone who does something wrong? What if it is really hard to forgive, does that break a Torah commandment?

Thanks,
Logan C. Taur



Dear Lo C Taur,

This is so my perfect opportunity! I am going to make a ridiculous joke about bears (the animal) and grudges. Maybe I'll even make it a comic. Nah. Nothing funny comes to mind. The moment has passed. Now onto your question. First of all, good question. Second of all, mazel tov on your bar mitzvah next week! Third of all, do you know where I put my wallet? I know it's here somewhere. To answer your question, first some background information:

Jewish law tells us that if one person does something wrong to another, there is absolutely no way to get forgiveness without the victim granting forgiveness. Usually the way this works is when the person who has done something wrong says sorry, and the

other person saying, "I forgive you." There's another strategy I've tried which includes pretending nothing happened and hoping the person will forgive you on their own. I haven't had great results on that one yet, but who knows, maybe in 30 or 40 years. This forgiveness is called 'mechila.'

One of the Torah's BIG 613 (that just sounds like a very large college football conference) is "Thou shalt not hold a grudge." I don't know anyone named Thou, but if you see him, please let him know to drop the grudge schtick. This is a pretty unclear commandment, so I'll give you the example given by many commentaries to explain what it means to hold a grudge:

Jerry and Nick are tough guys hanging out in the dangerous part of town, passing around a drink.

"Yo Jerry, lemme hold some o dat choco

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7

2

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9

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Stump the Rabbi; continued

milk you drinking."

"No way Nick, you had all da juice boxes, and I need dis milk to get me some healthy bones!"

The next day Nick is holding a beer [silly auto correct. He's holding a bear, as in the stuffed kind].

"Nick-eeee. Man, Can I play with that bear for a few minutes? I'm feeling insecure and dis is gonna help me."

"Grumble. FINE Jerry. Whatever. I'll give you ma bear. Just remember that you skimmed on dat milk da otha day. I am low-key so much cooler than you, man."

Nick did not take revenge on Jerry. He passed him the bear. Yet he spoke in a way that makes it clear he resents Jerry's

historic lack of calcium generosity. He clearly bears a grudge. Yes! I did it! I got in the corny bear joke. You thought I wouldn't but I made it happened.

Here are a couple of reasons these concepts aren't the same:

First of all, you do not have to forgive someone who hurt you. Most of the time it's a good idea and it's worth it to forgive and make peace. But not always. Particularly if someone owes you money, there's absolutely no obligation to forgive it. It's also important to make sure you're not being taken advantage of by someone who will just assume your forgiveness. It is not against the Torah to demand someone fix their mistake- that's unforgiving. That's not the same as bearing a grudge, which involves negative feelings toward the person, and perhaps even hatred.

The second point is that it's possible to bear a grudge about something that doesn't actually

actually has nothing to do with you. He still is not allowed to hold a grudge against Jerry. So we see that grudge holding isn't the same thing at all as lack of forgiveness.

There are some authorities who also say that in order to violate 'Lo Sitor- Don't hold a grudge,' you'd need to verbalize your grudge. It would have to be an action. Being unforgiving isn't an action.

As I mentioned earlier, it's usually a really good idea to be the type of person who doesn't hold on to things too tightly (unless you're a running back. Then you've gotta protect the rock). Keeping track of all the times people have done something wrong to you is a recipe for a very resentful, unhappy life. A good way to tell if you should be forgiving or not is to ask yourself, "If I was the one who did it, would I want to be forgiven?"

Have a Nageela Shabbat,

the Rabbi

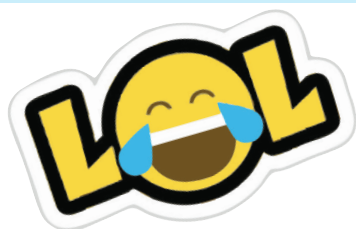
require forgiveness. Think about it. Jerry didn't have to share his milk with Nick. Nick

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HAPPY BIRTHDAY!



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Samuel Garrel
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What did Miss Muffet say to the spider?

"Get out of the whey!"

OUCH! GROAN!

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

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Nageela West Coast

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. Through afterschool activities, weekend retreats and our signature summer camp, we engage elementary and middle school children in a fun and meaningful experience. Our "questions encouraged" mindset makes Nageela a comfortable learning and growing environment for Jewish children of all backgrounds.