

A MITZVA DILEMMA FOR THE SHABBOS TABLE



ANITA MINYAN

By Rabbi Yitzki Weiner

This week's Parsha discusses how the Jewish people were counted. One daily mitzvah in which we need to count the number of participants is the obligation of davening with a minyan of ten men. This leads us to the following real story:

In 2009, 47,000 people came to the Major League Baseball All-Star Game in Busch Stadium in St. Louis, Missouri. Dovi and his family had been season ticket holders for the St. Louis Cardinals for decades. Sadly, Dovi's father had passed away only months earlier. Ever devoted, Dovi always made sure to say Kaddish three times each day. Between his hectic work schedule and his reliance on finding an evening minyan, Dovi found himself giving away most of his Cardinals game tickets that summer. But the All-Star Game was a unique event. He and his boys did not want to miss that. Dovi had heard much about a minyan for Maariv that always gathered at a designated place in Busch Stadium during the seventh-inning stretch. He felt confident that he would be able to find a minyan and say Kaddish there.

Dovi and his sons enjoyed the game. When the top of the seventh rolled around, he and two of his sons headed to that vending area, hoping to assemble a group of ten men. Unfortunately,



FILLING THE WORLD WITH KEDUSHA

Our Sages teach that although the Mishkan carried the Presence of HaShem and was the source of the revelation of His Presence, nevertheless, construction of the Mishkan was not permitted on Shabbos. The implication is that the sanctity of Shabbos precedes the sanctity of the Mishkan. In fact, the sanctity of Shabbos is so great that one who transgresses her sanctity receives capital punishment. It is therefore noteworthy of the following drasha in this week's Parsha regarding the limitations of Shabbos's sanctity.

Moshe tells his people, "However, you must observe Shabbat because it is a sign between Myself and them for their generations, to know that it is I, HaShem, who sanctifies them." The word 'however' implies a limitation of the mitzvah of Shabbat. In other words there are circumstances when we should not observe the Shabbat. Those circumstances are for pikuach nefesh, for the sake of saving Jewish life we must transgress the Shabbos.

Behold! Take note of the hierarchy of sanctity as follows. The Mishkan is the vehicle by which HaShem's Presence is revealed. However, the sanctity of Shabbos is still greater than the Mishkan. That is why we may not build the Mishkan on Shabbos. In spite of the great sanctity of Shabbos which is greater than the Mishkan, when Jewish life is at risk we must give precedence to that life over the sanctity of Shabbos.

Why is this so? From where does the sanctity of the Jewish neshama come?

The Malbim explains that just as a diamond is able to refract the ray of light

many of the regular attendees of this minyan were no-shows that evening. Many had sold their tickets to that game because they could get such a high price for them. Only six were on hand to be counted by the middle of the seventh inning. The men stood waiting for almost 15 minutes. They found a seventh, but not the required ten.

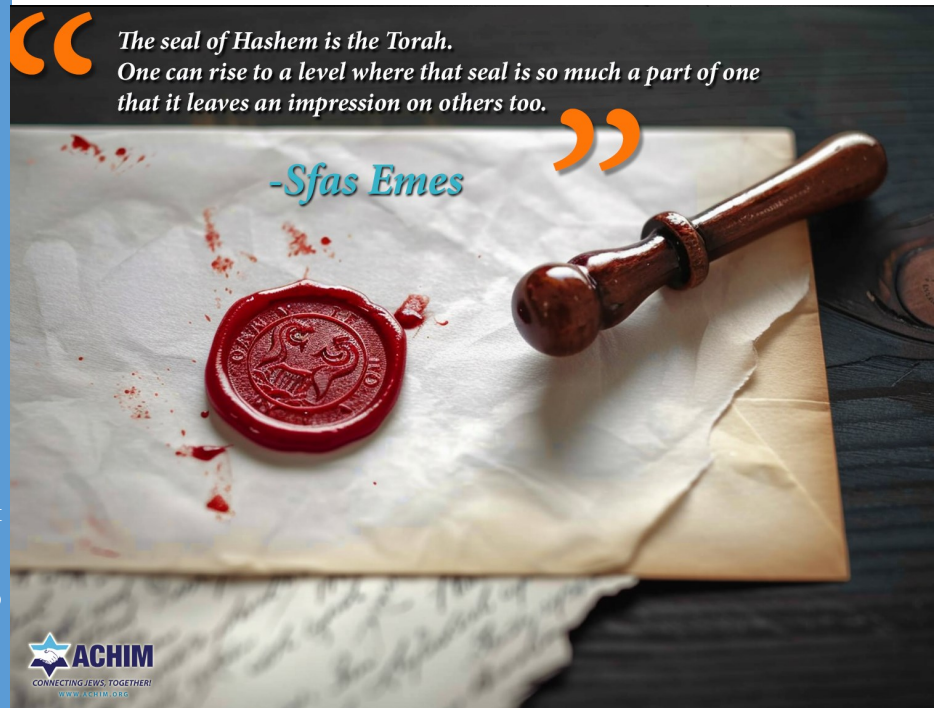
Dovi looked at the players on the field. Amazingly, he counted three Jewish players. More for the minyan! Jason Marquis who was a pitcher from the Colorado Rockies, Ryan Braun (who would go on to become the National League MVP in 2011), and Kevin Youkilis who was from the Boston Red Sox.

Seeing three Jewish men on the playing field below inspired Dovi. He headed to the lost and found and told the stadium personnel by the security window that he was looking for his missing sister. Her name: Anita Minyan. Once the bottom of the seventh inning had been completed, an announcement went out over the stadium PA system: "Anita Minyan, please report to the lost and found on Level Two. Anita Minyan." It wasn't long before the group of seven became ten, and then 14. The men hurriedly huddled next to a concession stand and recited the evening prayer. Dovi managed to fulfill his Kaddish requirement for the night in grand family tradition — with a bit of improvisation and ingenuity. Anita Minyan was happily discovered.

Later Dovi wondered if what he did was really permitted. Was he allowed to tell the lost and found people that he was looking for his sister Anita Minyan? Was that small fib permitted for the sake of gathering the minyan for him to say Kaddish for his deceased father? Presumably the lost and found didn't mind because they were helping so many people.

Or perhaps it was wrong. Perhaps he was tricking them, and if they found out, they would be very upset and it might cause a Chilul Hashem. If it was not permitted, should he perhaps go back to the lost and found and apologize?

What do you think?



that it receives and multiplies it many times over, so it is with the neshama of Jew. It, too, receives a ray of kedusha from HaShem and it refracts it many times over into this world. He explains the role of our people is to bring that light of kedusha into this opaque world of physical material. The function of the Mishkan is to direct the focus of our people to one location. Through this common focus which is shared by the hundreds of thousands of members of klal Yisroel, we light the world up and HaShem's Presence fills the world.

Malbim offers the following insight which illuminates this understanding. He explains that within Man lies all the energies of the world. Every single person, is a microcosm of the entire world and Man's microcosm directly corresponds and affects the copy in the macro version. Hence, when a person follows the Torah he brings fulfillment to the entire world inasmuch as he is a copy of the world.

When Man falls short of his responsibilities the entire world is affected as well.

Shabbos is the day that is designated to bring kedusha to the world. This is realized when her people observe her properly. When a person rests on Shabbos and allows the kedusha to penetrate his neshama, the kedusha of Shabbos becomes a reality for that individual. Once it becomes a reality for him the entire world experiences that kedusha since that individual is a microcosm of the world. His resting on Shabbos allows the kedusha of Shabbos to penetrate the entire world.

Given the Malbim's insight we can appreciate how the life of a Jew takes precedence over the kedusha of Shabbos for it is only the Jew who can bring the realization of that kedusha to the world. It also explains how the kedusha of the Mishkan is lower than that of Shabbos, for the Mishkan is only the medium of focusing the kedusha of her people to a single location. It is the people who generate the kedusha through their observance of Shabbos and it is they who provide the resting place for the Shechina.

Have a wonderful Shabbos.

Paysach Diskind



SHABBOS: CELEBRATING HASHEM'S CREATION

THE STYGIAN OWL

Have you ever seen a black owl, with red eyes, and “horns”? Please meet the fascinating Stygian owl. The Stygian owl (*Asio stygius*) is medium-sized, 15 to 18 inches long, and weighs 14 to 24 oz.

It is found in Mexico, parts of Central America, Cuba, Hispaniola, and 10 countries in South America. The Stygian owl inhabits a wide variety of landscapes from sea level to 9,800 ft of elevation, including montane pine, pine-oak, and cloud forests, thorn scrub, cerrado, pine plantations, and even urban parks. The Stygian is wholly nocturnal and only operates at night. The largest part of its diet is birds, bats, some other mammals, frogs, and insects.

The Stygian owl is dark with sooty-brown upperparts and heavy dark barring on its chest and belly. Its bill is blue-black to blackish, and its feet are dark grayish or brownish pink.

Let's now jump to the most famous and fascinating feature of this owl. The eye is shades of yellow, usually vivid, orange-yellow. However, when these eyes are illuminated with light, the eyes glow bright red. It has long, erect 'ear tufts' on its head that appear like horns, especially when the owl is alert or threatened. Between the black appearance, the horns, and the glowing red eyes, this owl looks almost 'devilish.' That's why in Brazil, the Stygian Owl is known as 'coruja-diabo,' or 'mocho diablo' — the 'devil's owl.'

Even the name 'Stygian' connects it to evil or gloom. The term 'Stygian' originates from Greek mythology and is used to describe anything related to the River Styx, the river that was supposed to be in the Underworld. The word literally means hateful and gloomy. The word has come to symbolize anything that is dark, gloomy, or hellish, often evoking images of a deep, impenetrable darkness that is both foreboding and mysterious. The Stygian Owl, with its dark plumage, horns, and haunting red eyes, embodies the eerie and mysterious essence

suggested by its name, evoking a sense of the nocturnal and the unknown.

Because of all of this, the association with the Devil and River Styx has given the bird an unfortunate connection to death and witchcraft. Some human observers associate this owl species with evil and witchcraft, and this has led the owl to unwarranted persecution.

The truth is, like all of Hashem's creations, the red eyes have an important purpose. The red eyes of the Stygian Owl, which operate only at night, help maximize the owl's ability to see in low-light conditions. The color and structure of their eyes are adapted to enhance night vision, allowing them to be efficient hunters in the dark. In some cases, its eye color can change with mood or health status. So, the brightness and hue of an owl's eyes may give clues about its health or stress levels. The intensity of the red color in the eyes of the Stygian Owl can also be an indicator of age and maturity. Younger owls often have lighter or different colored eyes compared to adults, whose eye color deepens and intensifies with age. Brighter eyes are also more attractive to potential mates.

What exactly causes this fascinating glow? The red glow observed in the eyes of the Stygian Owl when light is shone on them at night is due to a reflective layer behind the retina called the tapetum lucidum. This layer reflects visible light back through the retina, increasing the light available to the photoreceptors and enhancing the owl's night vision. The red glow is the result of the light reflecting off this layer. In fact, interestingly, the red comes from blood. There's a layer on the back of the eye called the choroid which is full of blood, causing the reflection color to be red.

THERE IS NOTHING MORE IMPORTANT THAN GOING TO STAND BY HIM

Reb Leizer Geltzhaler, a grandson of Rav Eliyahu Dessler, was a Rosh Yeshiva who tragically passed away very young.

Once his Yeshiva was in Canarsie, New York, an area that was sparsely populated with Jews. Reb Leizer was in the middle of delivering his shiur to his students when the terrible sounds of screeching brakes and shattered glass filled the room. Reb Leizer looked out the window for a moment and then excused himself leaving the room for a long period of time.

The talmidim looked out and saw that it was a relatively minor fender bender involving a Jew and a non-Jew, and they wondered why Reb Leizer felt it necessary to remain outside, waiting for the police to arrive and chatting with both parties. Why did he have to leave the shiur for that?

Forty-five minutes later, Reb Leizer came back into the room. A talmid asked Reb Leizer about the ostensible bitul Torah for a matter that did not seem very serious.

Reb Leizer looked around at the hoys and then delivered an extremely memorable shiur:

"If ever you see a Yid standing alone in an unfamiliar neighborhood, there is nothing more important than going to stand by him, making sure that he has a friendly face next to him. It wasn't the accident that was serious - it was the thought of leaving a Yid by himself."

(From Reb Leizer, By R' Yisroel Besser, Published by Judaica Press)



THE ANSWER

Regarding last week's question about returning the laptop bag, Rav Yitzchak Zilberstein (Upiryo Matok Vayikra 75) wrote that the person does not have to schlep all the way to return the laptop back to the owner. This is because when he saw his friend holding the laptop, he had every right to assume that it was really his friend's. Therefore, when it looked like his friend left the laptop behind, he had a mitzvah of hashavas aveida to bring it back to his friend. Since he was doing a mitzvah by taking it, he cannot be punished or have to schlep to return it because he was "anus al pi hadibur," forced by the Torah to take it to return it to his friend.

This week's TableTalk is dedicated in honor of the 29th birthday of our son

Yehuda

We are so proud of the man you've become

Lee Jay and Debbie Lowenstein



Brad E. Kauffman Esquire and Kauffman and Forman P.A.
specializing in corporate and construction law,
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