

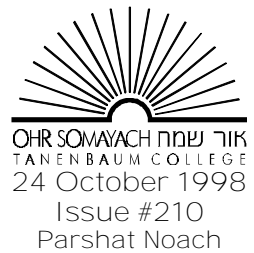


Ask The Rabbi

Researched at Ohr Somayach, Jerusalem

This Issue Contains:

1. Kaddish Without A Minyan
2. The Bible's Code
3. Shabbat Hospitality
4. Who Knows Twelve?
5. Swan Vs. Giraffe
6. Yiddle Riddle
7. Public Domain



OHR SOMAYACH תנוח טאנענבאום קאלעדזש
TANENBAUM COLLEGE
24 October 1998
Issue #210
Parshat Noach

KADDISH WITHOUT A MINYAN

Gary from NYC <garyl@uninet.net> wrote:

Dear Rabbi,

My mother died three months ago. I am not affiliated with a synagogue. I go to synagogue on Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur. My children were bar-mitzvahed and I have a deep feeling of Jewish identity. I have been saying kaddish for my mother in the morning and evening alone in my house. Recently, some Torah-observant colleagues have attempted to explain to me that kaddish should be said in the presence of a minyan (ten Jewish men) and I understand the reason for that. However, I am not able to make the commitment to go to synagogue every day for a year, and generally feel awkward and uncomfortable walking into a synagogue as a stranger. Therefore I intend to continue to say kaddish for my mother in my house. My question is this: Is saying kaddish in the house, not in the presence of a minyan, meaningless? Thank you.

Dear Gary,

Kaddish is the public sanctification of G-d's Name. If kaddish is said in private, then by definition it is not kaddish.

You say you are unable to attend synagogue every day for a year. Can you go every other day? There is tremendous value to kaddish even if it is not said every day. You also mentioned that you have Torah-observant colleagues. Can you gather ten such people at your home or work-place? If so, then you can say kaddish for your mother without going to synagogue.

On the days that you can't say kaddish with a minyan, you should ask someone who attends a minyan to say it instead of you. You should tell him your mother's Hebrew name. If you can't find someone locally, Ohr Somayach offers such a service. Write to info@ohr.org.il for more information.

Saying kaddish for a parent is a fulfillment of the commandment "Honor your father and your mother." The soul of the parent is rewarded for having reared a son or daughter who continues in the proper path. Other commandments, too, are a merit for the departed parent. So rather than recite kaddish in private, do a mitzvah; for example, say the daily Shema, give charity or do acts of kindness in her name. These will serve as a merit for your departed mother's soul. May the Almighty One comfort you among the mourners of Zion and Jerusalem.

THE BIBLE'S CODE

Aaron Hock <millyhock@aol.com> wrote:

Dear Rabbi,

What are the similarities and differences between the Code of Hammurabi and Jewish Law expressed in the Torah? Thank you for any help you might offer.

Dear Aaron Hock,

Hashem taught the Torah to Moshe on Mount Sinai; therefore, the Torah can't be compared to any legal code of human origin, even to legal codes which "predate" it as Hammurabi's does.

That having been said, there are a number of differences between Judaism's legal system and the Sumerian Code of Hammurabi (18th century BCE). For example:

- Hammurabi's Code is only consequential law; i.e., if you do X then Y will happen to you. The Torah on the other hand gives moral pronouncements; i.e., "You shall not..." — as well as consequences.
- Hammurabi's Code contains no positive obligations toward others. The Torah on the other hand is replete with directives of love, kindness, lending, charity, etc.
- Hammurabi's Code protects the nobility and land-owners as privileged classes. The class of people

If you have E-Mail and a question, you can submit it to Ask The Rabbi for possible inclusion in a future edition. Just write your question using your E-Mail program, set the subject to "Ask The Rabbi" and send it to info@ohr.org.il. Or use our form at <http://www.ohr.org.il/ask/page/ask.htm>. We can't include all questions submitted, but we do try to respond to everyone.

Ask The Rabbi is written by Rabbi Moshe Lazerus, Rabbi Reuven Lauffer, Rabbi Reuven Subar, Rabbi Avrohom Lefkowitz, Rabbi Mordechai Becher and other Rabbis at Ohr Somayach Institutions / Tanenbaum College, Jerusalem, Israel.

General Editor: **Rabbi Moshe Newman**
Production Design: **Eli Ballon**

Ask The Rabbi is available from several sources:

- World Wide Web: Our address is <http://www.ohr.org.il>
- Fax and Mail in Israel and US-MAIL in America. Send us a note requesting a subscription in Israel, or call 800-431-2272 in the US for details.
- E-Mail via InterNet. To subscribe, send the message "sub ask (your full name)" to listproc@virtual.co.il

☎ 22 Shimon Hatzadik Street, POB 18103, Jerusalem Israel

☎ 972-2-581-0315

☎ 972-2-581-2890

✉ info@ohr.org.il

☎ 38 East 29th Street 8th floor, New York, NY 10016, USA

☎ 1-212-213-3100

☎ 1-212-213-8717

✉ RZCorlin@aol.com or estern@aol.com

☎ 613 Clark Avenue West, Thornhill, Ontario L4J 5V3, Canada

☎ 1-905-886-5730

☎ 1-905-886-6065

✉ Somayach@MSN.com

"protected and favored" in the Torah are the widows, the orphans, the poor and the strangers.

Whatever similarity Hammurabi's Code bears to the Torah may be attributed to the following: Before the Torah was given at Sinai, Mankind already had seven categories of laws in the "Noachide Laws" which G-d had commanded to Noach. These laws were passed down from generation to generation, and these laws were the subject of study in the ancient Academy of Shem and Ever. I once heard from Rabbi Simcha Wasserman, *zatzal*, that Hammurabi most likely absorbed some ideas from this academy.

SHABBAT HOSPITALITY

Noam from Columbus, Ohio <noam@primenet.com> wrote:

*Dear Rabbi,
If everyone in Israel did teshuva [became Torah observant],
then how would hospitals be run on Shabbat?*

Dear Noam,

Better than they are now. You see, the Torah views the saving of a life as a mitzvah of paramount importance. This is seen reflected in emergency health care services run by Orthodox Jews, which have a faster average response time than others. In fact, there are already hospitals in Israel that are run according to Jewish law — for example, Shaarei Tzedek Hospital in Jerusalem and Laniado Hospital in Netanya.

The Torah commands us to break Shabbat in order to save a life. Therefore, there is no contradiction between working in a hospital on Shabbat and observing Jewish law. Actions that do not pertain to saving life are done after Shabbat. (For example, filling out forms.)

WHO KNOWS TWELVE?

Joyce Belford <joyce@sbetc.des.state.mn.us> wrote:

*Dear Rabbi,
I am wondering if you could tell me what the meaning of the different numbers are, such as five, twelve, eight, nine...etc. Actually, I am wondering about the numbers from 1-12.*

Dear Joyce Belford,

The answer to your question is found at the end of the Passover Haggada in the song "Echad Mi Yodea." There, each number is related to a concept; each concept is

the main principle symbolized by its co-related number. In short:

- 1 The Unity of G-d
- 2 The covenant between G-d and the Jewish People.
- 3 The merit of our Patriarchs: Abraham Isaac and Jacob.
- 4 The merit of our Matriarchs: Sara, Rivka, Rachel and Leah.
- 5 The Written Torah, expressed in the Five Books of Moses.
- 6 The Oral Torah, expressed in the Six Orders of the Mishna.
- 7 The Creation of the physical existence in seven days.
- 8 The spiritual sphere — symbolized by circumcision.
- 9 Reproduction and fruitfulness — expressed by the nine months of pregnancy.
- 10 The Ten Commandments — an elaboration on the covenant between us and Hashem. Ten generally symbolizes completeness, the unification of disparate parts.
- 11 The heavenly bodies. As 10 represents completeness, 11 represents infinity, expressed by the seemingly infinite universe. Eleven is also associated with the number of planets in our solar system, including the sun and moon.
- 12 The Jewish People as expressed by the 12 tribes; the 12 tribes also parallel the 12 months and the 12 signs of the zodiac.
- 13 The 13 Divine Attributes of Divine Mercy.

SWAN VS. GIRAFFE

Harvey Margolin <ponytail3@juno.com> wrote:

*Dear Rabbi,
Here's two "wildlife" kashrut questions: Is the swan a kosher bird (if properly slaughtered)? And what about the giraffe? A chef whom I know, and who was born in Morocco but raised in Israel, has told me that the giraffe is a kosher animal but could never be eaten because the shochet (ritual slaughterer) would not know where to make the cut. Does this make any sense at all?*

Dear Harvey Margolin,

The swan is kosher, provided it is kosher-slaughtered. The giraffe is also kosher, in theory. The reason we don't eat it is *not* because we don't know where on its neck to slaughter it; rather, we don't eat giraffe because there is no continuous tradition that giraffes have been eaten by Jews throughout the generations.

Source:

- Mazon Kasher Min Hachai, Rabbi Yisrael Meir Levinger pp.19,22

Yiddle Riddle

Last week we asked: What is the shortest word in the Torah?

Answer: The word is "ha." It is one letter, and appears in the book of Devarim 32:6. In most texts of the Chumash the masoretic note in the margin reads "Hey rabasi, v'hee teiva l'atzma" — "large hey, and it is a word unto itself."

Riddle submitted by Shmuel Bendel <sybendel@hotmail.com>

THE PUBLIC DOMAIN

*Comments, quibbles, and reactions
concerning previous "Ask-the-Rabbi" features*

Re: Which Way to Pray at the Wall (Ohrnet Devarim):

Regarding whether one should face the golden dome when praying at the Western Wall, I refer you to the illustrated Beit Hamikdash Hashlisli (The Third Temple) by Shalom Dov Steinberg. The author brings very convincing evidence that the Beit Hamikdash did not stand on the present site of the golden dome, but rather was situated between the golden dome and the silver dome. This area lies directly behind the Western Wall, so that by facing the Wall one is praying straight towards the Temple site. Rabbi Moshe Sternbuch, shlita, in his responsa (3:39) agrees with this conclusion, and relates that the Belzer Rebbe, Reb Aharon, zatzal, when visiting the Wall would search for a certain protruding stone. He would pray at that spot, explaining that his father, Reb Yissachar Dov, zatzal, had told him that this stone was directly opposite the Kodesh Hakodashim (Holy of Holies).

Elozor Barclay, Neve Yaakov, Jerusalem

Rav Moshe Sternbuch, shlita, proves that the site of the Kodesh Hakodashim was not, as is widely believed, under the Dome of the Rock. One proof is from electro-magnetic scans under the Temple mount that reveal very deep hollows consistent with those described as having been under the Temple — these hollows however are not under the Dome of the Rock, rather they are under the clear unbuilt section of the Temple Mount, directly behind where the Kotel now stands. This was foreseen by the Zohar, which says that there will never be a building built on the site of the Sanctuary except for the Temple! Rav Sternbuch concludes that the correct direction to face is forwards, directly towards the wall when standing in the open-air Kotel-plaza. By Divine Providence, this is the part of the Kotel that has been revealed to Jews, where Jews have prayed for centuries!

Yitzchok Jaeger, Jerusalem

Take part in

THE PUBLIC DOMAIN

Send your comments to: info@ohr.org.il

You can submit your questions to
Ask The Rabbi
with your web browser from the page:

www.AskTheRabbi.org

Or if you want to use e-mail, address it to: info@ohr.org.il

If you have E-Mail and a question, you can submit it to Ask The Rabbi for possible inclusion in a future edition. Just write your question using your E-Mail program, set the subject to "Ask The Rabbi" and send it to info@ohr.org.il. Or use our form at <http://www.ohr.org.il/ask/page/ask.htm>. We can't include all questions submitted, but we do try to respond to everyone.

Ask The Rabbi is written by Rabbi Moshe Lazerus, Rabbi Reuven Lauffer, Rabbi Reuven Subar, Rabbi Avrohom

General Editor: **Rabbi Moshe Newman**

Lefkowitz, Rabbi Mordechai Becher and other Rabbis at Ohr Somayach Institutions / Tanenbaum College, Jerusalem, Israel.

Production Design: **Eli Ballon**

Ask The Rabbi is available from

• World Wide Web: Our address is <http://www.ohr.org.il>

• Fax and Mail in Israel and US-MAIL in America. Send us a note requesting a subscription in Israel, or call 800-431-2272 in the US for details.

☎ 22 Shimon Hatzadik Street, POB 18103, Jerusalem Israel

☎ 972-2-581-0315

☎ 972-2-581-2890

✉ info@ohr.org.il

☎ 38 East 29th Street 8th floor, New York, NY 10016, USA

☎ 1-212-213-3100

☎ 1-212-213-8717

✉ RZCorlin@aol.com or estern@Aol.com

☎ 613 Clark Avenue West Thornhill Ontario L4L 5V3 Canada

☎ 1-905-886-5730

☎ 1-905-886-6065

✉ Smavach@MSN.com