

The Schmooze Stories with a Yiddish Twist

“MINYAN,” “MINYAN-SHLEPPERS” AND “FILLET MINYAN”

by
Marjorie Gottlieb Wolfe



Syosset, New York

10 persons are required by Jewish law to be present to conduct a communal religious service. Traditionally, the 10 Jewish males must be over 13 years of age.

“Minyonshleppers” are those charged with the duty of dragging/schlepping a quorum of ten ritually adult males (a minyan) into the synagogue so that the morning service can begin.

And what do you call steaks ordered by 10 Jews? “Fillet Minyan.” :-)

The Jewish Insider reported on Facebook that a “minyan” gathers at every New York Rangers game played in the evening at Madison Square Garden. Dan Benor tweeted, “Another reason to love NYC. Just learned there’s a Minyan at every @NYRangers eve game b/w 2nd and 3rd periods at same designated spot at MSG.

Senor’s revelation then prompted a Twitter discussion on the role of religion in sports games.

“Maybe too many players attended the Minyan?,” commented billionaire J. B. Pritzker. Senor answered sarcastically, “Good point. Next season: Mandatory Tefillah [prayer] for all Rangers players.” Note: Last week the Rangers were knocked out of the Eastern Conference Finals by the Tampa Bay Lightning.

Minyan Car

Aaron R. Katz, who made aliyah in Oct. 2014, wrote about the opportunity to pray the Shacharit service each morning on a train from Beit Shemesh to Tel Aviv with a moving minyan. He wrote, "During the morning the train is filled with people from all walks of life, but the back of the train is unofficially designated the "minyan car." It quickly fills up with those who wish to pray their morning services on their commute to work. Men busy themselves putting on their tefillin and wrapping themselves with their tallit. Once the train doors close, the riders in the minyan car set their hearts towards the east as the train heads to the west."

Source: Tabletmag.com, "A Moving Minyan on the Commute to Tel Aviv," by Aaron R. Katz, 3/17/15.

Minyan on an airplane ("aeroplan")
Rabbi Jonathan Blass was asked:

- Q. Assuming the airline doesn't have a problem, is it better to daven alone or with a minyan on a plane, where the latter will cause discomfort to other passengers?...
- A. The minyan on the plane is already an accepted phenomenon that is recognized by seasoned travelers...In general, the minyan is located where it interferes as little as possible with others.

Minyons have been held at The White House, in prisons, and in small, makeshift synagogues. The following minyan story was told on Beliefnet.com:

WAITING FOR THE 10TH MAN

In a small, makeshift synagogue not far from the Twin Towers, Orthodox Jewish Professionals regularly meet early each morning for daily prayer services. Usually there is no problem rounding up a minyan, and the cramped quarters often overflow with worshipers. But on the morning of September 11, there was an uncommon dearth of available men.

Perhaps they had decided to remain at their resident shuls for the important selichos services that precedes the high holidays.

But whatever the reason, the congregants were faced with a problem: Only 9 men were present, and time was marching on. These were serious men, professionals, and all had to be at their desks at the World Trade Center well before 9 A.M.

“What should we do?” they asked each other, impatiently tapping their wrist watches, as they paced the floors. “This situation hasn’t happened in ages! Where is everybody?”

“I’m sure a tenth man will come along soon,” someone said. “We have to be patient.”

The men waited, restless and tense. Some of them were already running late. Finally, when they had all but given up and were going to resort to individual prayer (instead of the communal one), an old man whom nobody had ever seen before, shuffled in the door.

“Did you daven (pray) yet?” he asked, looking at the group?

“No, sir!” one shouted jubilantly. “We’ve been waiting for you.”

“Wonderful,” the elderly man responded. “I have to say Kaddish for my father...I’m so glad you didn’t start.”

Under normal circumstances, the men would have asked the gentleman polite questions: What was his name? Where was he from?, How did he come to their obscure shul? By now, however, they were frantic to start and decided to bypass protocol.

They hastily handed the man a siddur (prayer book), hoping he would prove himself to be the speedy gonzales of daveners. The old man proved to be anything but.

He seemed to rifle the pages of the siddur in agonizingly slow motion. Indeed, every gesture and movement that the man made seemed deliberately unhurried, protracted and prolonged. The worshipers were respectful but definitely on “shpilkes” (pins and needles) to get to work.

“OY!” someone smacked his forehead in frustration, “Are we going to be late!”

That’s when they heard the first explosion: the horrible blast that would forever shake their souls. They ran outside and saw the smoke, the chaos, the screaming crowds, the apocalypse that lay before them.

“It should have been us.” After the initial shock and horror, consciousness dawned on them quickly. They realized they had been rescued from the jaws of death. Each and every one of them worked in the Twin Towers. Each and every one of them was supposed to be there before nine.

Had it not been for the elderly man and his s-l-o-w motion morning services, they probably would have been killed.

They turned to thank him, this mystery man who had saved their lives. They wanted to hug him in effusive gratitude and find out his name and where he had come from on that fateful morning.

But they'll never know the answers to these questions that nag at them--when they turned around to embrace him, the man was gone. His identity forever a mystery.

Story No. 2 is told by Rabbi Avroham Rapaport, Chabad Atlantic County, NJ
(<http://rabbicandybox.blogspot.com/2012/09/story-taxis-minyan.html>)

A man living in Jerusalem was saying Kaddish for a parent who died. Each day he would say Kaddish at the daily services in the synagogue. It was his way of connecting to the soul of his loved one. Returning home one night at 3:00 a.m. from a wedding, he fell into bed exhausted. As soon as he had turned out the light, he realized that he hadn't prayed Ma'ariv, the evening prayer. He missed the Kaddish for his beloved mother. With tremendous effort, he dragged himself out of bed and started to dress.

Where to find a minyan at this time of the morning? 3 AM? No problem. As anyone who lives in Jerusalem can tell you day or night, you can always find a minyan at the shteibelach--the small synagogues in the Zichron Moshe neighborhood.

That night there was a miracle. Zichron Moshe was totally deserted; no one was there; nary a hobo, nada. Taking out his cellular phone he dialed the number of a large taxi company.

"Hello! Can you please send six taxis to the shteibelach in Zichron Moshe?"

"Adoni (my dear sir)! It's three o'clock in the morning! You think I have six taxis? What do you think I am, a magician?...I only have five."

"Okay. So send five!"

He dialed another number. "Hello, please send five taxis to Zichron Moshe..."

"You're crazy? Atah meshugah. I only have four!"

“Okay, so send four.”

Within twenty minutes, there was a procession of nine taxicabs parked neatly outside the shteiblach.

“Adoni” said one of the drivers. “Why do you need nine taxis? There’s no wedding here, no Bar Mitzvah, nothing.”

“I want you all to turn your meters on and come inside with me. We are going to pray together the evening prayer--arvit.” I will pay each of you just as if you’re giving me a lift. For every minute you are here, I will pay you.”

Dusty yarmulkes (skullcaps) mere from the glove compartment of the taxis, some woken from a hibernation that stretched back to their owner’s own bar mitzvah.

It wasn’t easy. Despite being obviously fluent in Hebrew, the drivers had no idea how to pray; what and when to answer; when they should pray aloud and when in silence.

It took them quite a while. But the Kaddish man, showed them exactly what to do. They had the most incredible, moving prayer at 3:30 AM in Jerusalem, and he said Kaddish after his mother.

When they had finished, everyone went out to the taxis; the meters in the cars were pushing upwards of 90 shekels each car. The drivers turned off their meters and the man pulled out his wallet. He would dish out around 800 shekel to all the drivers to pay them for their time.

“How much do I owe you?” he said to the first taxi driver in the line.

“Adoni, what do you take me for? Do you honestly believe I would take money from you who just gave me such an opportunity to help my fellow Jew say Kaddish?”

He moved down the line to the second driver. Identical reaction. “Do you know how long it is since I prayed?” You want me to take money from you?”

And the third and the fourth, all the way down the line to the ninth...
Not one would take a penny.

They embraced and they drove off to a new morning in the holy city of Jerusalem!

Search for Stories Beginning with the Letter

[A](#)

[B](#)

[C](#)

[D](#)

[E](#)

[F](#)

[G](#)

[H](#)

[I](#)

[J](#)

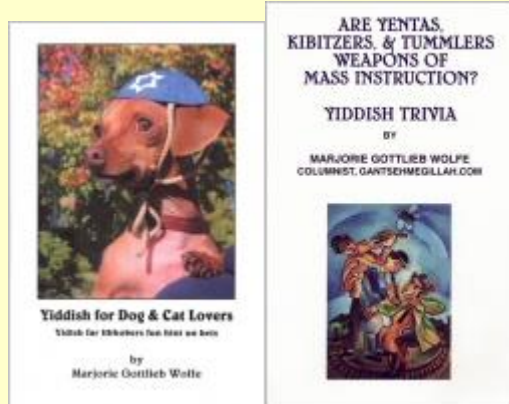
[K](#)

[L](#)

[M](#)

[N](#)[O](#)[P](#)[Q](#)[R](#)[S](#)[T](#)[U](#)[V](#)[W](#)[Y](#)[Z](#)

Marjorie Gottlieb Wolfe is the author of two books:



"Yiddish for Dog & Cat Lovers" and "Are Yentas, Kibitzers, & Tumblers Weapons of Mass Instruction? Yiddish Trivia." To order a copy, go to her website: MarjorieGottliebWolfe.com

NU, what are you waiting for? Order the book!



[Yiddish Stuff](#)
[Jewish Humor](#)
[Schmooze News](#)
[More Majorie Wolfe](#)

[Principle](#)
[Jewish Stories](#)
[All Things Jewish](#)
[Jewish Communities of the World](#)

Site Designed and Maintained by
 Haruth Communications