

The Power of Ten (Kedoshim)

An individual can make a difference, but a team can make a miracle.
-Doug Pederson

When I'm at a daily prayer gathering, it often happens that we are missing the tenth man that makes up the required quorum (minyan) to start communal prayer. There is a certain anxiety that sets in, in anticipation of the tenth man showing up.

In that context, one might think that prayer, which is generally a highly private, individual matter, is better, or at least equally good when done in solitude. It would be so much easier and perhaps even more conducive, to pray, where and when we wanted, without having to coordinate our schedule with at least nine other people.

However, Judaism does not seem to agree with such a view, especially regarding regular scheduled prayer.

There are a variety of Jewish rituals that require ten men in order to proceed. Rabbi Shlomo Ephraim of Prague, the *Kli Yakar* (1550-1619), highlights this fact from Leviticus 19:2:

“Speak unto all the congregation of the children of Israel, and say unto them: You shall be holy; for I the Lord your God am holy.”

The *Kli Yakar* explains that ‘congregation’ refers to a minimum of ten men, and that a ‘holy’ act requires this number. Not only is this number required for ritual efforts, but ten Jewish men, united by one noble purpose, create holiness. There is some intrinsic otherworldly power in the gathering of at least ten men for divine service.

May we avail ourselves of such gatherings when we can.

Shabbat Shalom,

Ben-Tzion

Dedication

To Israel's upcoming Yom Hazikaron (Memorial Day) and Yom Ha'atzmaut (Independence Day). We have much to remember and much to be grateful for.