

Halacha Highlight

Davening in a shul that is more distant

Mishnah Berurah Siman 90 Seif Koton 37
טוב לילך להרחוקה כי שכן פסיעות יש

It is preferable to walk to the distant one since it generates reward for the additional steps

Mishnah Berurah (סייק לייז) writes that if there are two *shuls* in a town it is preferable to *daven* in the more distant *Bais HaKnesses* since by doing so one earns more reward for the additional steps. Teshuvos Levushei Mordechai (שו"ת לבושי מרדכי תניינא לוייה סי כ"ב) asserts that the prohibition against passing an opportunity to perform a *mitzvah* – על שמצוות – does not apply if one passes the opportunity to perform a *mitzvah* in order to do that same *mitzvah* in a more beautiful manner. Therefore, since walking to the more distant *Bais HaKnesses* involves greater effort, the *mitzvah* is enhanced and thus the prohibition against passing an opportunity to perform a *mitzvah* is not violated.

Rav Dovid Pardo (פרי דבי רב פרשת ראה) writes that the value of walking to a more distant *Bais HaKnesses* does not apply for someone who is a Torah scholar who spends all his time studying Torah. For such a person it is better to *daven* at the *Bais HaKnesses* that is closest to his home so that he should not lose valuable learning time walking to the more distant *Bais HaKnesses*.

Teshuvos Divrei Malkiel (שו"ת דברי מלכאל ח"ה סי י"ט) challenges the principle that walking to the more distant *Bais HaKnesses* should carry greater reward. The *mitzvah* that will be performed is *davening* in the *Bais HaKnesses* so why should walking to a more distant *Bais HaKnesses* generate any greater reward? If someone sends an agent to a nearby location and the agent takes a longer route than necessary could he seek additional reward for the extra distance that he traveled? Obviously not, therefore, he suggests that the Gemara that is a source for this ruling (Sotah 22) refers to a circumstance where the widow established her place (קובע מקום) for *davening* at the *Bais HaKnesses* that was distant from her home before the *Bais HaKnesses* that was closer to her home was built. Even though there was now a *Bais HaKnesses* that was closer to her home she continued to *daven* in the one that was more distant from her home since that is the place that she established as her place for *davening* and this is related to *davening* for which the additional trip will generate additional reward.

Stories to Share

A Bad Neighbor?

שייע סי צ', י"א: "נקרא שכן רע"

A certain man loved to daven at sunrise. He moved to a place without a minyan for *vasikin* and wondered if he could pray on his own. Although *davening k'vasikin* trumps *davening* with a minyan, he still was unsure whether to daven in shul or at home. Since there was no minyan for *minchah* or *maariv* in his area, this meant that he would not be in shul any weekday. He wondered if he would be considered a "bad neighbor" if he did not go into shul the entire week.

When this question was brought before Rav Yosef Shalom Eliyashiv, ז"ל, he ruled in favor of the more ideal time of prayer. "If a person davens *k'vasikin* regularly, he can daven alone as we find in the *Bur Halachah* in siman 58. He can even daven at home if need be, since *vasikin* takes precedence."

קובץ תשובות, ח"ג, סי ט"ו

A certain person often, but not always, prayed early and lived somewhat far from shul. It was clear that he was not obligated to drive to shul, but he wondered if it was preferable to daven in shul at seven A.M. After all, he was missing all of the recitals and readings that can only take place with a minyan. Perhaps one of these important parts of the *tefillah* should

Overview

Siman 90 Seif 10:

When one is together with a *tzibbur* it is prohibited for one to *daven* ahead of them unless the time will pass and the *tzibbur* will miss the time for *davening* due to the extended amount of time spent reciting *piyutim* or some other reason. (If the time for *davening* will not pass one should read the *piyutim* and supplications with the *tzibbur* and not isolate himself from the *tzibbur* even to study Torah see above *siman* 68.)

- ❖ It is disparaging to the *tzibbur* to *daven* ahead of them and the Gemara implies that this applies even if one wants to *daven* ahead to study Torah. Bach writes that if one must *daven* ahead because he must leave on a trip he should leave the *Bais HaKnesses* and *daven* at home and it is possible that the same course of action could be followed if one wants to study Torah. (M.B. 34)
- ❖ There is a disagreement whether walking out of the *Bais HaKnesses* removes the prohibition leaving just the issue that one will not *daven* with the *tzibbur*. (M.B. 35)
- ❖ Shulchan Aruch implies that when the time for *davening* may pass one may even *daven* ahead of the *tzibbur* in the *Bais HaKnesses* but Bach writes that this applies only if one does not have time to return home and *daven* there. If one is ill or some other *ones* he may *daven* ahead of the *tzibbur* in the *Bais HaKnesses*. (M.B. 36)

Siman 90 Seif 11:

Someone who has a *Bais HaKnesses* in his town and does not attend is called a "bad neighbor" and causes exile to himself and his children.

- ❖ If there are two *Batei Knesiyos* in town it is preferable to *daven* at the one that is more distant. (M.B. 37)
- ❖ Later authorities indicate that one is called a "bad neighbor" even if there is no *minyans* but Pri Megadim is uncertain about this *halacha*. (M.B. 38)
- ❖ If one *davens* with a *minyans* in his house he is not called a "bad neighbor" but he has not fulfilled his obligation to *daven* in the *Bais HaKnesses* unless there is a designated room for *davening* in his home. (M.B. 38)
- ❖ One who wakes up early and stays late to go to the *Bais HaKnesses* merits length of days. (M.B. 39)

Siman 90 Seif 12:

It is a *mitzvah* to run to the *Bais HaKnesses* or to perform any *mitzvah* even on Shabbos when it is prohibited to take large steps. When leaving the *Bais HaKnesses* it is prohibited for one to run.

One should not talk with a friend about mundane matters on the way to *shul* since it commonly leads a person to miss *borchu* and *kedushah*. (M.B. 40)

- ❖ Prisha explains that one should run when he is near the *Bais HaKnesses* so it is recognizable that he is running for the *mitzvah*. (M.B. 40)
- ❖ One should run until he gets to *shul* but once in *shul* it is prohibited to run since one must conduct himself with awe while in the *Bais HaKnesses*. (M.B. 41)
- ❖ One may run when leaving the *Bais HaKnesses* if he is going to the *Bais HaMidrash*. (M.B. 43)

take precedence over his early davening?

When this question reached Rav Elyashiv, he explained that there is a difference between days when the Torah is read and regular weekdays. "On a day when there is a Torah reading it is better to daven with a later minyan than to daven *vasikin*. One who davens later also fulfills the *mitzah* of *tefillah*, but the person who misses the Torah reading misses out on that entire *mitzvah*!"