The Chicago Center
Digest
Mishna Berura
THE DAILY RESOURCE FOR MISHNA BERURA YOMI
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סימן ק"נ סעיף ד'-ה'

Overview

Siman 150 Seif 4:

Someone who builds near a *Bais HaKnesses* must distance himself more than the standard four *amos* since the *Bais HaKnesses* requires more light.

- A *Bais HaKnesses* requires additional light so it establishes a *chazakah* that requires neighbors to distance themselves more than four *amos* and it would seem that eight *amos* is sufiicient. Pri Megadim is uncertain whether the *azarah* and *ezras nashim* also requires additional space, and it seems that there is no reason to add to the *halacha* as stated here. (M.B. 9)
- She'eris Yosef writes that if neighbors of a *Bais HaKnesses* have a bathroom that produces a detectable foul odor in the *Bais HaKnesses* the bathroom must be moved, even if the bathroom was there first, but the homeowner deserves to be reimbursed for the expenses of moving the bathroom. (M.B. 9)

Siman 150 Seif 5:

The entrance to the *Bais HaKnesses* should be opposite the direction that they *daven*. For example, if in that town they *daven* facing west the entrance should be on the east side of the building so that they can bow from the entrance towards the *aron* which is the direction they *daven*. The *bimah* is placed in the middle of the *Bais HaKnesses* so that the *ba'al koreh* could stand there during *krias hatorah* and everyone will be able to hear. The *shaliach tzibbur* should stand facing the *aron kodesh*. The seating arrangement is for the *zekainim* to sit facing the *tzibbur* and the rest of the *tzibbur* should sit in rows facing the *aron kodesh* and the *zekainim*.

- In those countries where they *daven* facing east the door should be on the west so that they could bow towards the *aron kodesh*. (M.B. 10)
- There should not be more than six steps to the *bimah*. (M.B. 12)
- Rema condensed the words of the Tur and it should say that when the *shaliach tzibbur* goes to *daven* he should stand on the ground before the תבה in front of the *aron kodesh*. (M.B. 13)
- One should not sit between the *bimah* and *heichal* with his back to the *heichal* and it is even prohibited since it will appear as though one bowing on the *bimah* is bowing towards him. (M.B. 14)

Halacha Highlight

The location of the *bimah*

Rema Siman 150 Seif 5

ועושין בימה באמצע בית הכנסת

And the *bimah* is placed in the middle of the *Bais HaKnesses*

Rema (סע' ה') writes that the *bimah* should be placed in the middle of the *Bais HaKnesses* so that the *ba'al koreh* could read the Torah from there so that everyone should be able hear. Accordingly, if a *Bais HaKnesses* is small and regardless of the placement of the *bimah* everyone will be able to hear *krias hatorah,* the *bimah* does not have to be placed in the exact center of the *Bais HaKnesses*.

Chasam Sofer (שו"ת חת"ס או"ח סי' כ"ח) suggests another reason why the *bimah* should be placed in the middle of the *Bais HaKnesses*. He explains that the *bimah* where we read the Torah is comparable to the mizbeach. This is why on Sukkos we walk around the *bimah* similar to the practice in the *Bais HaMikdash* of walking around the mizbeach. The mizbeachthat stood in the *heichal* was in the middle of the room, equidistant from the *menorah* and *shulchan*, therefore, the *bimah* should also be placed in the middle of the *Bais HaKnesses*. According to this explanation it is necessary for the *bimah* to be placed in the exact middle of the *Bais HaKnesses*; not east of center or west of center. However, if there is a compelling reason to move the *bimah* from the exact center, it is permitted. Thus, for example, if a *Bais Haknesses* has a balcony for the women that extends over the men's section and placing the *bimah* in the exact center would mean that the women would not be able to hear or see what happens at the *bimah* it is permitted to move it from the exact center (פסקי תשובות אות י"ג).

Even though there is an allowance to move the *bimah* from the exact center, the *Poskim* protested when the *bimah* was placed directly in front of the *aron kodesh*. This innovation was introduced by those who wanted to emulate the houses of worship of other religions and therefore it is prohibited to configure a *Bais HaKnesses* in such a manner (פסקי תשובות שם).

Stories to Share

Action Overrides Thought

ש"ע סי' ק"נ, ה': "וסדר הישיבה כך היא..."

On today's amud we find the proper seating order in shul.

Rav Raphael of Barshad, zt"l, was a very well known and respected personage, but this did not make him feel any arrogance at all. On the contrary, his every motion was filled with true humility. Every time he would enter a shul or gathering, he would sit in a common seat very distant from the coveted eastern wall.

One person felt that this was very strange and decided to ask him what was behind this odd practice. "With all due respect, I cannot fathom what is behind the rebbe's custom. Either way—if the Rebbe sits in the back because he has true humility, why not sit in the front? Surely, one can retain a feeling of broken-heartedness even while sitting in an honorable seat. And if the rebbe has problems with thoughts of arrogance, chas v'shalom, what does sitting in the back help? Clearly it is possible to be filled with self-inflated feelings while sitting in the back as well as in the front. On the contrary, it is possible to fathom how one would be filled with more thoughts of arrogance because he acts humble..."

Rav Raphael replied, "Listen to me, my brothers. In Kiddushin 59 we find that although action nullifies the intent in one's thoughts, mere thoughts cannot nullify action. If I, who is unworthy for the honor, were to sit in the mizrach, I would be doing an action of arrogance while trying to overcome this with thoughts of humility. But we see that this is an exercise in futility. However, sitting in the back is an action of humility which overcomes any thoughts of arrogance. Isn't it clear that this is the only option that gives me a chance of overcoming thoughts of arrogance?"

שלחן הטהור, דף ל"ב