

Overview

Siman 90 Seif 4:

One must open doorways or windows towards Yerushalayim so that one could *daven* facing them. It is appropriate for there to be twelve windows in a *Bais HaKnesses*.

- ❖ One should be careful about this *halacha* even when one is *davening* in a *Bais HaKnesses* and certainly when one is *davening* in his house. (M.B. 8)
- ❖ The windows may face any direction. (M.B. 9)

Siman 90 Seif 5:

One should not *daven* in an open area like a field since when *davening* in a private place one will experience awe of the King and will sense a broken heart.

- ❖ It is preferable to *daven* in a place without windows than in an open area. (M.B. 10)
- ❖ Zohar implies that one should *daven* specifically in a structure. Travelers may *daven* in a field but if there are trees it is preferable to *daven* amongst the trees if that will not prove too difficult. (M.B. 11)
- ❖ One may *daven* in place that has walls even if it does not have a roof. (M.B. 12)

Siman 90 Seif 6:

One should not *daven* in a broken down building since it raises suspicion, may collapse and has demons.

- ❖ It is preferable to *daven* in a field than a collapsed building. (M.B. 13)
- ❖ If the collapsed building is in a field or if one is with one's wife there is no concern for suspicion. If the collapsed building is strong there is no concern that it may collapse. If two people enter together there is no concern for demons. (M.B. 14)

Siman 90 Seif 7:

One may not *daven* behind a *Bais HaKnesses* if one does not face the *Bais HaKnesses*. "Behind the *Bais HaKnesses*" is the side with the entrance and is opposite the direction that people face when *davening*. Some explain in the opposite manner and one should be concerned for both opinions. Even if one *davens* near one of the other walls of the *Bais HaKnesses* one should be stringent to turn towards the *Bais HaKnesses*. These *halachos* apply when it is evident that one is turned away from the *Bais HaKnesses* but if one is *davening* in a house that is adjacent to a *Bais HaKnesses* one should face Eretz Yisroel with one's back to the wall of his house that is adjacent to the *Bais HaKnesses* since it is not evident that he has turned away from the *Bais HaKnesses*.

- ❖ Teshuvos Yad Eliyahu asserts that this issue is limited to when one will recite *shemone esrei* at the same time the *tzibbur* is *davening shemone esrei*. (M.B. 15)
- ❖ According to the first opinion the issue is when a person *davens* facing a direction different than the *tzibbur*. (M.B. 16)
- ❖ According to the second opinion even if one faces the same direction as the *tzibbur* he is considered wicked if he has his back to the *heichal*. If, however, while standing on the east side of the *Bais HaKnesses* if he turns towards the *heichal* it is acceptable even though he faces the opposite direction from the *tzibbur*. (M.B. 17)
- ❖ It is best to stand on the west side of the *Bais HaKnesses* and face east but unless it is a pressing circumstance one should *daven* inside the *Bais HaKnesses*. (M.B. 18)
- ❖ When facing other walls is mentioned Shulchan Aruch refers to a circumstance in which one is not able to face east but if that was not the case it is preferable to face east. (M.B. 19)
- ❖ If one is standing on the east or west side of the *Bais HaKnesses* one may not face north or south. (M.B. 20)
- ❖ If one is in a separate room it does not appear as though one's back is to the *Bais HaKnesses*. (M.B. 21)
- ❖ When building a *Bais HaKnesses* it is preferable to avoid putting a room on the east side of the *Bais HaKnesses*. (M.B. 21)

Halacha Highlight

Davening in an open area

Shulchan Aruch Siman 90 Seif 5
לא יתפלל במקום פרוץ כגון בשדה

One should not *daven* in an open area like a field

Shulchan Aruch (סעי' ה') rules that one should not *daven* in an open area, for example, a field. The rationale he gives for this *halacha* is that when one *davens* in a place that is closed one will have more awe for the King and will have a broken heart which is advantageous for *davening*. Mishnah Berurah (סי'ק י"ב) writes that if a place is surrounded by walls it is an acceptable place to *daven* even if there is no roof. Shulchan Tahor (מבא דבריו בחיי משה) maintains that *l'chatchila* one should *daven* in a place that has a roof in addition to walls. However, if the walls extend ten *tefachim* higher than the average person's height one could *daven* there in a pressing circumstance. Eshel Avrohom adopts a more lenient approach and contends that it is sufficient if there is a wall in front of the person *davening* even if there are no walls on his sides. He also adds that this requirement is only for *shemone esrei* but for *pesukei d'zimra* one may even *daven* in an open area.

Sefer Toras Chaim (סקי"ז) asserts that this *halacha* applies when someone *davens* by himself but it is acceptable for a *tzibbur* to *daven* in an open place since the experience of *davening* with a *tzibbur* will cause him to have a broken heart and awe of the King. Kaf HaChaim (אות ל"א) cites Ritva who rules that if a *minyan* is *davening* together this issue does not apply. Sha'arei Teshuvah (סקי"א) implies, however, that this issue applies to a *tzibbur* the same way it applies to an individual. Rav Chaim Kanieviski (נקיות וכבוד בתפלה עמ' קצ"ג) writes that when *davening* at the Kosel HaMa'aravi there is no difference whether one is surrounded by walls or not. His rationale is that the entire place is sanctified as a designated place for *davening*. Shulchan Tahor suggests that since Yerushalayim is near the place of the *Bais HaMikdash* one is permitted to *daven* even in an open area.

Stories to Share

Wide Open Spaces

שי"ע סי' צ', ה': "לא יתפלל במקום פרוץ..."

A certain man rushed to *daven* Maariv but missed borchu. Naturally, he wished to *daven* with a *minyan* that was just beginning so that he could answer borchu in the beginning of the tefillah. There was another Maariv which began a few minutes later, but the *minyan* was outside the sanctuary, in a place without walls. This man wondered what he should do. On the one hand, he knew that it is preferable to *daven* in a place with walls as we find on today's amud. On the other hand, he was loath to miss borchu.

When this question reached Rav Yosef Shalom Eliyashiv, zt"l, he ruled that *davening* in the shul with walls is preferable. "Even if you will miss borchu it is still better to *daven* inside. Even though the *davening* outside is complete with borchu, *davening* without mechitzos is less than ideal."

אבני ישפה, תפילה, פ"א, ס"י, ובהערה ז'

In another place they would pray Minchah in a largish stairwell. Although a *minyan* always stayed inside, some of the people would wind up joining them outside the building. Since there were no functional walls out of doors, one of the group protested.

"The Shulchan Aruch rules that it is forbidden to *daven* in a place without mechitzos. It is therefore b'dieved to *daven* outside."

But those who stood outside disagreed. "As long as you are part of a *minyan* which *davens* inside it shouldn't matter what you yourself do. It is not as though I have less kavanah, so why assume that inside is superior for every individual?"

When this question reached Rav Yosef Shalom Eliyashiv, he ruled that they should indeed pray with the *minyan* inside. "Those who *daven* in a stairwell should remain together inside, and not have some people *davening* inside the building while others are outside."

תפילה כהלכתה, פ"ב, הערה פ"ה