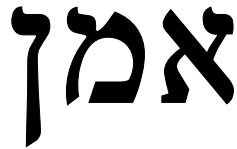


THE SANCTITY OF THE SYNAGOGUE AND THE AMEN RESPONSE # 17



DOES YOUR SYNAGOGUE HAVE A KOSHER MECHITZA?

**IN THOSE SYNAGOGUES WHERE YOU CAN SEE WOMEN
THE YETZER HARA RULES IN THE SYNAGOGUE**

LEGAL DECISION OF 71 GREAT RABBONIM 140 YEARS AGO REGARDING THE MECHITZA

71 Gedole Israel Rabbanim and Tzaddikim wrote regarding the Mechitza 140 years ago as brought in the Psak Din Year 5626 in the city of Miholowitz and among them were:

The Divre Chayim ha Kaddosh mi Tzanz

Rabbi Shlomo Ganzfried, Baal Kitzur Shulchan Aruch

The Tzaddik and Mekubal Itzik Isaac mi Tzedechov

These are a few of the things they decreed:

- a- It is forbidden to enter to pray in a synagogue where there is not a full Mechitza so that men are able to look at women.
- b- If the Mechitza is not good it is forbidden to enter and pray there even if there are no women.
- c- It is better to pray alone than to pray in such place even in Rosh ha Shana and Yom Kippur.
- d- It is forbidden to pray in a synagogue if the Bimah is not in the middle of the synagogue.
- e- It is forbidden to neither introduce innovations nor change anything as regards to the way synagogues are built.

And as the Divre Chayim wrote: "All the things already mentioned are forbidden according to the Poskim and the Shulchan Aruch and it is forbidden to change any

tradition and Minhag of Israel regarding the construction of the Bet ha Knesset or any other tradition we have received from our forefathers and from prior generations”.

The legal decision in which great Rabbis both Ashkenazim and Sephardim participated has been published many times and it was received in all the Bate Dinim both in Eretz Israel and the Gola

If a handbreadth of a woman's body [is revealed] in a part which is usually covered, even if she is one's own wife, it is forbidden to recite the Shema' in her presence. If the hair of a woman's head which is usually covered [is visible], it is forbidden to recite the Shema' in her presence (even if she is one's own wife)...One should beware of hearing a woman singing while he recites the Shema (Shulchan Aruch Or. Hayyim 75, 1-3).

One has to be very particular that the Mechitzah of the Beit Hakeneset will separate men and women. And according to many Poskim, there is an issur midoraita on a mixed tefillah. The Mechitzah has to be made in a way that men will not be able to look at women. (Kitzur Shulchan Aruch ha Rav Chapter 16, Kedushat Bet ha Knesset, Halacha 8)

(See further Rosh ha Shana Page 21, Rambam Hilchot Maamarim Perek Beit) See also the Rama Shulchan Aruch Choshen Mishpat Siman14 who wrote thus: “He who says that he cares not for the decrees of the Bet Din or the Sages even if he presents himself to the Bet Din we place him on Niddui and this is considered Apikorsus. See Siman 334”

WOE TO HE WHO LEADS OTHERS TO SIN

He who leads others to sin and particularly on this sin of mingling men and women or in leading men to look at women, this person is not given the chance to do Teshuvah and he is worse than the one who kills his fellow for he takes the life of those he leads to sin not only the life of this world but also the life of the world to Come. And this person that brings many to sin has no share in the world to Come (See Rambam Hil. Teshuva, Chap. 3) And if he is the cause of mixing men and women in one place he transgresses also the prohibition of Not to walk in the ways of the gentiles.

(Sefer Tikkun ha Brit)

IT IS MORE PLEASURABLE LOOKING AT WOMEN THAN THE ACT ITSELF

“Better is the sight of the eyes than the wandering of the soul” (Kohelet 6:9) Resh Lakish said it is more pleasant the sight of the eyes than the actual act of sexual transgression (Talmud Yoma 74b) The Maharam Ben Chaviv wrote that the intention of Resh Lakish said was to warn men, that since there is more pleasure in looking at a woman than in the act itself, therefore a man must separate in order to be holy and modest and not look at women. (Tov Ayn)

And even if everybody ridicules him and shame him and say things to cause him anguish and remind him of his evil deeds, he should not abandon his piety because of the jesters, and he should think that this will constitute a great merit for him and it will be considered for him as Tzeddaka from being ashamed, and through this the Fear of G-d which is pure enters his heart and purifies his heart and body of all evil things, and he is helped from heaven to strengthen his fear of G-d and arrange things for him to do a complete Teshuvah. (Sefer Chassidim, Siman 7)

**NOW THERE ARE FOOLS WHO ALLOW THEIR SYNAGOGUES
TO HAVE A MECHITZA WHERE YOU CAN SEE WOMEN! NOT
ONLY ARE THEY NOT DOING A MITZVAH BUT ON THE
CONTRARY THEY CAUSE MANY PEOPLE TO STUMBLE IN SIN**

MAYBE YOU NEVER HEARD YOUR RABBI TALKING ABOUT THESE THINGS FOR IT MAY NOT BE IN HIS BEST INTEREST TO TELL YOU. SO EVEN IF YOUR RABBI RIDICULES YOU FOR KEEPING THE SHULCHAN ARUCH YOU SHOULD BE STRONG AND GO AHEAD FOR IT MAY BE THAT YOUR RABBI BELONGS TO THE EREV RAV AND HE JUST DOES NOT WANT YOU TO KEEP THE TORAH AS IT SHOULD BE FOR MAYBE HE WOULD BE EXPOSED AS A FAKE IN THE EYES OF THE OTHER CONGREGANTS WHEN THEY SEE THAT A COMMON PERSON KEEPS THE SHULCHAN ARUCH TO A GREATER EXTENT THAN THE RABBI. AND WE ARE NOT TALKING ABOUT PIOUS PRACTICES BUT WE ARE TALKING HERE ABOUT KEEPING THE SHULCHAN ARUCH, SPECIFICALLY CONCERNING THOSE AREAS WHERE THE RELIGIOUS LEADERS OF OUR TIME ARE LAX ABOUT. FOR EXAMPLE, TALKING IN THE SYNAGOGUE IN THE MIDDLE OF PRAYERS, DURING THE KADDISH, GIVING TORAH LESSONS TO MEN AND WOMEN WITHOUT A MECHITZA, HAVING A DEFICIENT MECHITZA IN SHUL, LOOKING AT WOMEN WHICH IS SOMETHING FORBIDDEN, ETC