

Makom Kavua

Praying in the same seat in the same synagogue on a daily basis is commonly thought as the optimal manner of praying. The Talmud Bavli (Berakhoth 6b) encourages on designating a place for his prayer (כל הקובע מקום לתפלתו אלהי אברהם בעזרו). However, ambiguity remains as to the meaning of “place”. Does it refer to the Synagogue itself or a place (seat) in the Synagogue.

The Talmud Yerushalmi, by contrast is clear that the reference with “place” is to a place within the Synagogue itself: אמר ר' תנחום בר חנינא צריך אדם ליחד מקום בבית הכנסת להתפלל (ברכות ד:ד).

Mahazor Vitri (pg. 21), and Rabbenu Asher rule explicitly according to the Talmud Yerushalmi. Sefer HaPardes (pg. 929) from the School of Rashi cites the Talmud Yerushalmi and that would appear to be its ruling.

Rambam (Ahava, Laws of Prayer, 5:6) who states: וקובע מקום לתפלתו תמיד appears to preserve the ambiguity of the Talmud Bavli as he does not define “place” (מקום), but *Hagahoth Maimoniyoth* attributes to him the interpretation of the Talmud Yerushalmi.

However, diverging from the consensus of opinions, Rabbenu Yonah maintained that only committing to a specific place is required while sitting in a designated place within the synagogue has no meaning. His reasoning is that the entire Synagogue by dint of it being a place of prayer is already designated for prayer.

The law, as per the Talmud Yerushalmi requiring one to pray not only in a designated Synagogue but also in a designate place therein is codified in Tur (90) and Shulkhan Arukh