

Holy Alliance

Excerpted and adapted from a *shiur* by Rav Moshe Yitzchok Weg

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<https://baishavaad.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/Parshas-Vayichi-Mikdash-Miat.mp3>

Yaakov lived in the land of Mitzrayim seventeen years; and the days of Yaakov—the years of his life—were one hundred and forty-seven years.

Bereishis 47:28

Some *mefarshim* question how Yaakov was permitted to leave Eretz Yisrael permanently. Some answer that Yaakov retained the *kedushah* of Eretz Yisrael with him even in *galus*. In *galus* today, we build shuls to serve as a *mikdash me'at* in the absence of the *Bais Hamikdash*.

The Shulchan Aruch (O.C. 152:1) says that destroying a shul violates the prohibition of *lo sa'asun kein laShem Elokeichem* (Dvarim 12:4). If one plans to build a new shul in the place of the one he will destroy, he does not violate the prohibition, but the Gemara (Bava Basra 3b) still forbids such destruction, because the *tzibur* will not have a place to daven between the destruction and the reconstruction. And even if they have an interim substitute location, we are concerned that the permanent building will never be completed due to negligence or mishaps. If the entire congregation can daven in the meantime in a different shul, the Taz says the shul may be demolished, but the Magein Avraham disagrees.

We can suggest an explanation for the Magein Avraham based on a *teshuvah* from R' Moshe Feinstein (Igros Moshe O.C. 2:46) that shuls may not merge, because of *afushei kedushah* (increasing holiness), by which he might mean that having multiple shuls and extending Hashem's presence via *mikdash me'at* to multiple locations is preferable to having a single shul. Perhaps that is why the Magein Avraham says not to destroy a shul even if the entire *tzibur* can be temporarily accommodated in another.