

An Alternative Halakhic Story of Mechitza

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Abstract:

The article deals with the topic of mechitza – the Jewish religious spatial practice of physical separation of women and men in synagogues. Mechitza is a common feature of synagogue architecture, especially in Orthodoxy. However, its practice, or some of its forms, are sometimes perceived as discriminatory against women, who are thus unable to participate actively in the religious life of their community, even though they would like to.

By applying the concept of alternative halakhic stories as proposed by Israeli scholar Ronit Irshai, this article attempts to show how an alternative halachic story of mechitza could be constructed in such a way that mechitza practice does not discriminate against or marginalize women.