

A Letter From England From The Beth Din, London: Court of The Chief Rabbi
To whom it may concern:

The question of the permissibility of mixed pews has been submitted to my Ecclesiastical Court from various communities.

These communities have been informed that mixed pews are forbidden, as the sitting together of men and women during Divine Service in Synagogue is contrary to Jewish Religious Law. **ISRAEL BRODIE**, *Chief Rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregations of the British Commonwealth of Nations*

Statements From the Holy Land By The Late Chief Rabbi,
Isaac Halevy Herzog of blessed memory

This is to state that the seating together of men and women in the synagogue is contrary to Jewish law and practice, dating in fact from the times of the Holy Temple in Jerusalem, which had its men's court and its women's court.

The segregation of the sexes in the House of Prayer and their separation by a mechitzah (partition) are mandatory by Jewish religious law. Mixed pews are strictly forbidden.

I plead with my brethren everywhere to help maintain this essential requirement in their synagogues.

ISAAC HALEVY HERZOG, *Chief Rabbi of the Holy Land*

Other Statements From the Holy Land By The Late Chief Rabbi,
Abraham Isaac Kook of blessed memory

According to the Talmud (Megillah 29a) synagogues are to be looked upon as sacred Temples-in-miniature. It is therefore our duty to exalt them to the same level of holiness as our Holy Temple (may it be rebuilt soon in our day). Indeed, our fathers, in establishing two separate divisions for men and women in the House of Prayer thereby continued the system inaugurated in the Temple.

We reiterate as strongly as possible: mixed seating in the synagogue during hours of prayer is a matter proscribed by Mosaic Law.

ABRAHAM ISAAC KOOK, *Chief Rabbi of the Holy Land*

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS ON THE TORAH SYNAGOGUE REGISTER

A violation of the first three of our requirements (those concerned with physical features of the synagogue) would prevent a Torah Jew from praying in such a synagogue. Violations of our last three requirements may not necessarily prevent a Torah Jew from praying in such a synagogue, especially when no other one is available, but these transgressions represent grave violations of Halacha which are causing great harm to the Jewish people and therefore the last three requirements were included in our list of requisites for the Torah Synagogue Register.

Upon compilation of such a listing of congregations, one copy will be deposited with the Chief Rabbinate of Israel and another copy will be sent to all congregations that have registered. It is anticipated that such a listing will be periodically updated. Such a compilation has received the support of leading rabbinical authorities. Understanding Jews are requested to bring this to the attention of their congregations. It is hoped that those congregations that can meet the requirements of the Torah Synagogue Register will fill out the enclosed form or duplicate such a form where necessary and mail to:—Irving Pollack, 121 East 182nd Street, The Bronx, N. Y. 10453.

Please Note:—Since we are attempting to contact all applicable congregations through the use of various sources, it is possible that some may receive more than one request and in such instances we ask for indulgence and understanding.