



## On the Air with Rav Aviner ~ #80

From Ha-Rav's weekly radio program in Israel

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### Naming a girl "Hagar" (from Ha-Rav's video blog)

Q: Is it permissible to name a girl "Hagar"? Rabbis are divided on the issue. On the one hand, she was righteous and the wife of Avraham Avinu. On the other hand, she is the mother of Yishmael, our bitter and eternal enemy. How then can there have been a Cohain Gadol named "Yishmael"?

A: We do not name children after evil people (Yoma 38b). Tosafot therefore point out that a certain Rabbi in the Gemara is named "Avshalom" and not "Avshalom" (Tosafot to Yoma 38b and Ketubot 104b). Ashkenazim and Sefaradim therefore do not name their children "Avshalom" but Yemenite Jews are not concerned. They thus have many children with the name "Avshalom." They explain that the only important factor is the name itself and the name "Avshalom" (father of peace) is a beautiful name. Why should one evil individual with that name ruin it for everyone else. The name "Yishmael" (may G-d hear) is also a nice name and there were many Torah scholars with that name. The reason is that Yishmael repented (Baba Batra 16b and Rashi on Bereshit 25:9). The Zohar also says that Hagar repented and became righteous, and she married Avraham after Sarah's death (see Bereshit 25a and Rashi). Since Yishmael and Hagar repented, their names are no longer the names of evil individuals and it is permissible to use those names.

### Geniza and Recycling

Q: Because of the plethora of parashah sheets and photocopies from holy books, there is so much that must be put in the Genizah (a storage area for holy materials which may not be discarded). Wouldn't it be preferable to recycle them? If we do not, isn't it Bal Tashchit (wanton destruction)?

A: The solution of recycling is a problem since it is forbidden to erase holy works. There are some authorities who permit erasing such works in order to recycle them and to print other holy works. This is considered as erasing in order to write. But it is not certain that recycling paper is less expensive. One needs to remove all of the staples, which is a lot of work, then erase all of the ink and the erasing agent is then deposited in the earth which causes pollution and damage. Furthermore, when they create paper, it is not from regular forests but special forests planted for paper, so it is not Bal Tashchit. The Genizot are certainly packed and we need to find a way to bury them in a manner than does not take up a lot of space.

### Tzitzit inside at work (from Ha-Rav's video blog)

Q: My boss asked me to tuck in my tzitzit claiming that the tzitzit negatively affect my outer appearance. I do not have any additional work opportunities and they will fire me if I do not comply. What should I do?

A: We do not commit a transgression even if we will loss our livelihood. But a person is not obligated to loss his income in order to fulfill a mitzvah. This is mentioned in regard to purchasing an etrog that one should not expend more than a fifth of his resources to purchase a beautiful etrog (Rama, Orach Chaim 656:1). In our case, he will fulfill the mitzvah of wearing tzitzit but not in its fullness since he will not wear them out. In such situations, we do not require one to lose his support of income. Therefore, he should compromise and put the tzitzit out a little in a non-conspicuous manner. For example, he can wrap them around his belt. After all, the authorities write that we should wear our tzitzit out but they do not specify how much. People often have to eat straw to earn a living.

Special thank you to Fred Casden for editing "On the Air"



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