



## On the Air with Rav Aviner – #128

From Ha-Rav's weekly radio program in Israel and more

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### Choosing a Name for a Baby – part 1

Q: Should one seek advice from a Rabbi when choosing a name for a baby?

A: No. And in previous generations, people didn't seek such advice the way they do today. In any event, the Arizal says that when parents name the baby, they are infused with a spark of Divine intuition.

Q: Does the name influence one's personality?

A: No. Yishmael is a nice name (G-d will hear), but Yishmael was an evildoer, and it works the other way as well. What determines one's behavior is one's freely made choices later on.

Q: Does one's name influence one's fate?

A: No. What is meant when our Sages state that one can change an evil decree by changing one's name is explained by the Rambam (Hilchot Teshuvah 2:4) that by repenting in a serious way, a person's name gets changed. This means, "I seriously repented and I am no longer the same person." This certainly changes the decree of a person. Rabbenu Nissim – The Ran – has the opposite approach (Rosh Hashanah 3b in the pages of the Rif). He said that if I change my name and every time I mention the new name, it inspires me to repent, I can change my situation. The essence of changing one's name is not a trick. The point is to say: I am not the same person, I am someone new.

Q: The Torah states that Noach was called by that name because he was destined to "make man's life easier" ("yanchenu" in Hebrew). It appears that names do have an influence.

A: Our Sages explain that in those times people had Divine intuition. They therefore named their children for future events. We, however, who lack this ability name our children after parents and grandparents to honor them. Ashkenazim wait until the honoree has passed away. Sefardim honor him in his life time.

Q: Is it permissible to name somebody after an evildoer?

A: Ashkenazim and Sefardim generally do not do so. For example, the Tosafot (Yoma 38b and Ketubot 104b) remark that the name "Avshalom" (King David's rebellious son) should not be used. Yemenite Jews, however, are not concerned by this since the name Avshalom (lit. father is peace) is a beautiful name. If Ashkenazim and Sefardim are naming after someone and an evildoer also has that name, it is permissible to use the name since the family has the other context in mind.

### **Shut She'eilat Shlomo – Questions of Jewish Law**

#### Encouragement for Converts

Question: There are many people who converted and have lived many years as Jews only to find out recently that their conversions are not recognized by rabbinical authorities in Israel

and the US. What would you say to the people whom experience this and can you offer words of comfort or advice?

Answer: 1. We now understand why the Torah states 36 times: Do not oppress the convert. It is obviously forbidden to vex another person. So when we read over and over again "Do not oppress the convert" we think - we understand, enough already. Now we see that Hashem was correct in repeating this idea. 2. There is a new law that a Beit Din cannot nullify a conversion and only the Chief Rabbi has this authority. We hope that this will help to solve the problem.

## Text Message Responsa

Ha-Rav answers hundreds of text message questions a week. Some appear in the parashah sheets "Ma'ayanei Ha-Yeshu'ah" and "Olam Ha-Katan." Here's a sample.

Q: People say that I am a lost case. What should I do?

A: Encourage yourself. One should never despair. Everything will work out. If you want, call me.

Q: Why do we place stones on graves?

A: As a sign of respect that we visited (Shut She'eilat Shlomo 1:418).

Q: Is it permissible to buy from someone who refuses to give a receipt?

A: No, just as it is forbidden to buy from a thief.

Q: What if I already bought something?

A: Donate the amount of the tax to the State, i.e. the army. (Shut She'eilat Shlomo 2:375)

Q: If I am sick, which Rabbi should I visit to receive a blessing?

A: A Rabbi who knows you, as it is written: "A Sage in the city" (Rama Yoreh Deah 335:10 and Shut Shevet Ha-Levi vol. 3 Yoreh Deah #163).

Q: What should I do if I am obligated to be in a place where people are smoking?

A: Ask them to stop smoking. If they do not listen, put a handkerchief in front of your mouth and nose, it helps a little bit.

Q: If we are eating at someone's house, is it permissible to ask if the vegetables are free from worms?

A: G-d forbid! This is insulting. Eat or don't eat, but don't ask.

Q: How did the Jews put on Tefillin in the desert for forty years – the mitzvah was given at Mt. Sinai but part of the sections which are put in the Tefillin were given in Devarim?

A: Either they put on the Tefillin with the sections which were already given and they fulfilled the mitzvah because this was what was given or all the sections had already been given, since there is no chronological in the Torah. See Gittin 60 on whether the Torah was given section by section or all at once. Tosafot ibid. And Malbim on Shemot 10:13.

Q: I have prayers and the Tanach on my cell phone. Is it permissible to enter into the bathroom with it?

A: Yes. When it is not on the screen, it is covered, and this is not the type of writing which the Torah spoke about (Shut Igrot Moshe Yoreh Deah 1:173 and Shut She'eilat Shlomo 4:237).

Q: I read that one should marry at the age of 18 and at least by 20. Why then should one marry afterwards?

A: This is not precise. There is a mitzvah to get married – and to remain married, and to remain married happily, and many people are not ready at that age (Re'im Hahuvim chap. 4).

Q: Is it permissible for a woman to have a piercing in her belly button which will be covered by a shirt?

A: No. It is a practice of the non-Jews (See Shut She'eilat Shlomo 1:398 #2).

Q: Is it permissible to put meat and milk at different times on a child's highchair?

A: Yes, since the food is not scalding hot (which would transfer the taste). It just needs to be cleaned in between.

Q: Is it permissible to daven with one's hands in his pockets?

A: No, he must stand as before a king (Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim 98:1).

Q: Is it permissible to take a picture of Bircat Cohanim or is it forbidden just as it is forbidden to look at the Cohanim while they recite the blessing?

A: It is permissible to look at the Cohanim during Bircat Cohanim since they are covered by their Talit, but the custom is not to do so (Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim 128. Mishnah Berurah #29). There is thus no obligation to add on to the custom, and it is permissible to take a picture.

Q: Is it permissible to dress up as one's Rabbi on Purim?

A: No, it is shaming a Torah scholar. Our Rabbi, Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehudah, scolded someone who dressed up on Purim like the Chief Rabbi, Ha-Rav Shlomo Goren (Rabbenu p. 130).

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