



# Yeshivat Ateret Yerushalayim

From the teachings of the Rosh Yeshiva

Ha-Rav **Shlomo Aviner** Shlit"a

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Parashat Ki Tzetzei - #295      Ask Rav Aviner: [toratravaviner@yahoo.com](mailto:toratravaviner@yahoo.com)  
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On the Parashah...

## Accepting Converts from Amalek

[Iturei Cohanim #155]

Question: In the Mechilta (on Shemot 17:16), our Rabbis prohibit accepting converts from Amalek, but the Gemara (Gittin 57a) mentions that the descendants of Haman learned Torah in Bnei Brak. Don't these two sources contradict one another?

Answer: Quite simply, it is a dispute. According to the Mechilta, we do not accept converts from Amalek, though the Babylonian Talmud does not forbid it. The Rambam ruled like the Gemara, since he did not mention in the "Laws of Converts" that it is forbidden to accept converts from Amalek. He must therefore explain the problem of how King David killed the Amalekite convert who claimed he killed King Shaul, even though there were no witnesses (Shmuel 2 1). According to the Mechilta, we do not accept converts from Amalek and a non-Jew can receive capital punishment based on self-incrimination, but the Rambam followed the Gemara that we can accept converts from Amalek and it is forbidden to kill a Jew based on his own testimony. The Rambam thus explained that King David's action was a temporary ruling or part of the unique powers given to a king (Rambam, Hilchot Sanhedrim 18:6). According to this explanation, there is a dispute between the two sources. It is possible, however, to resolve this contradiction in various ways:

1. There is a different version of the Gemara which reads: "The descendants of Na'aman" instead of "The descendants of Haman" (see, for example, Ba'al Ha-Turim on Shemot 28:2).
2. It is forbidden to convert them but if they converted of their own volition, they are considered converts (Megillat Sefer, Lo Ta'aseh 115). This resolution is

difficult to accept, however, since the Mechilta seems to hold that we do not accept converts from Amalek at all.

3. It is permissible for them to convert and to be Jewish for all purposes but we do not marry them (Megillat Sefer *ibid.*). This is also difficult since the Mechilta is discussing conversion and not marriage.
4. We do not convert them from the outset, but if they convert they are considered converts after the fact (Shut Beit Yehudah. Resisei Lailah of Rabbi Tzadok Ha-Cohain Mi-Lublin #32 and 58). This is also difficult since the Mechilta implies that they are not considered converts even after the fact.
5. While Haman was from Amalek, he was a slave to Mordechai and slaves do not have "yichus" (are not related to anyone), i.e. his descendants are not related to him and are not considered Amalek (Kli Chemdah on the Torah).
6. If an Amalekite woman marries a non-Amalekite, the offspring are not considered Amalek, since the genealogy of non-Jews is patrilineal (Yevamot 78b). According to this explanation, the "descendants of Haman" is not to be taken literally but that they were descendants of women in the Amalekite line (Gilyon Ha-Shas, Gittin 57a and Chazon Ish, Yoreh Deah Gerim 157). This explanation follows the opinion of the Rambam in Moreh Nevuchim (3, 50) that the obligation to destroy Amalek does not apply to women.  
This is still difficult, however, since the Mechilta there writes that Hashem swore not to leave a grandchild or a great-grandchild of Amalek and this potential convert is a great-grandchild of Amalek! Some explain that even though this potential convert is not an Amalekite, since he is from the offspring of "Amalekite women," we should still reject him since he is connected to Amalek in some manner.
7. According to the Rambam, if Amalek makes peace, there is no longer a mitzvah to eradicate them (Hilchot Melachim, chap. 6); i.e., he is no longer an Amalekite and it is then permissible to convert him (Mishpat Ha-Meluchah of Rav Gershuni, Hilchot Melachim, chap. 5). While it is forbidden to convert directly from Amalek, it is possible for one to convert in another manner.

Additional sources: Shut Maharsham 3:272, "Sefer Michlol Ha-Ma'amarim" *erech mi-bnei*, Shut Mishneh Halachit 6:220, Sefer Hasidim 1019, Kedushat Levi – Kedushat Revi'it p. 124b (Sefer Haichei David 560), Seridei Eish 2:104 (*ibid.* 564).

Rav Aviner on...

### Don't Take Accursed Money

[Be-Ahavah U-Be-Emunah – Shoftim 5773 – Translated by R. Blumberg]

Don't take accursed money. Don't take money from Christian organizations, missions, or those either directly or indirectly connected to missions. I am certainly not saying that if you take the money you, G-d forbid, will become a Christian. Others will, however. After all, giving money is their entrance ticket into the Jewish People to convert them. Already in his time, Maran Ha-Rav Kook wrote (Igrot Ha-Re'iyah, Volume 2) that it is wrong to accept medicines from Christians, even where life is in danger, because as a result the gates will be opened to their converting other Jews.

We know them well. If you don't believe me, look up the links on the Internet and see for yourself. We have known them already for two thousand years. At first they wished to convert us, and once they did not succeed, they tried to annihilate us, yet that didn't succeed either. So then they tried to expel and trample us, and G-d saved us from them. Then they decided to persecute and humiliate us. When none of these things succeeded, they decided to conquer us through the pocketbook, and then the "Money Crusade" began.

This is their new approach. Check on the Internet. At the start of the Return to Zion, the Muslims and Christians got together. The Muslims said, "Kill them!" The Christians said, "Strangle them with a hug," and such, indeed, is their approach. We've had a protracted war against paganism, starting from Avraham until today. Rambam in his Guide to the Perplexed explained that the entire Torah has a single message: we face a war against idolatry, in which we shall be increasingly victorious and idolatry shall increasingly disappear. True, numerous idolaters remain in the Far East, but at present, they do not constitute a serious threat. It is not so with Christianity, however, which has two billion proponents.

It is true that officially, Christianity does not consider itself idolatry, and if you ask a Christian if it is he will deny it vigorously. Yet if you ask him, "Do you pray to Jesus, the Christian?" he will answer "Of course".

You might then ask, "If so, you are worshipping flesh and blood. Isn't that idolatry?" "No," he will explain. "That man is not a man. He is God. God from God. Light from light."

You could then respond, "In that case, it is certainly idolatry."

As far as turning a man into a god, what can that be if not idolatry?! We are not dealing here with the question of whether or not according to Jewish law "Dualism", the worship of G-d and of something else with it, is included in the prohibition against idolatry as it applies to non-Jews. According to Rambam it is, but according to one opinion brought in Rabbenu Tam it is not. For ourselves, however, it is certainly idolatry. Just peruse the halachic codes dealing with our lives, Shulchan Aruch or Kitzur Shulchan Aruch. These contain the detailed laws of idolatry.

If so, when it comes to Christians, just who are we dealing with? And what about the cross? What role does that have?

We wage a war against idolatry, while the Christian religion wages war against the Torah in every possible way, openly and surreptitiously. Each year in Israel, the Mission pours hundreds of millions of dollars into purchasing our faith and breaching the pathways to our hearts, whether directly or through Jewish organizations.

In Israel there are thousands of missionaries earning a salary, and tens of thousands more working as volunteers, everywhere possible, very deftly disguised. One serves as a Chabad rabbi, another gives Bible lessons to women, a third is a lieutenant colonel with a knit-Kippah who was a resident of Gush Katif, and as a result was ousted from the army, turned to the High Court of Justice and was rejected. Still another is a religious Zionist couple who are really missionaries. "Small-fry" missionaries include a yeshiva high school graduate and a girl who graduated from a religious "Ulpana" all-girls' school. And there are more. And they do all of this just to break the ice. Otherwise, how can we explain that when they provide a welfare department with money for the poor, the gift is conditional on their receiving the names and addresses of the recipients?

Therefore, the greatest Sages have forbidden taking money, the illustrious Ha-Rav Avraham Shapira and Ha-Rav Mordechai Eliyahu forbade it, the rabbinical court of

the “Eida Ha-Chareidit” in Meah Shearim forbade it, the rabbinical court of Chabad forbade it, and many more.

It’s absolutely forbidden! All the same there are some who do take the money, because money attracts, because money blinds the eyes of the wise, and distorts the words of the righteous. Unless you immediately answer “no”, you will be swept up and fall into the trap.

The following is a true story. Thirty years ago, a pleasant man from America approached me with an irresistible offer: he told me that because of the proximity of Yeshivat Ateret Cohanim-Ateret Yerushalayim to the Temple Mount, he could raise one dollar a year from fifty million people – and he would donate it all to the Yeshivah. He asked me if I would agree. Do you know what I answered him? One word: “No!”

That American, and many more like him, truly love the Land of Israel, the People of Israel, the State of Israel. And they truly help us a great deal on the political level. But they also love our souls, and they wish to transfer our souls to their side. Therefore, with those Christians we can say yes to politics, yes to business dealings but no to friendship and no to their “charitable donations”.

Because they are the enemies of our souls. Sworn enemies

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

#### Visiting Free Museums on Shabbat and Yom Tov

Question: This year Rosh Hashanah is a 3-day holiday – Thursday and Friday are RH and then Shabbat. Is permissible to vacation in Washington DC on Rosh Hashanah and Shabbat where one can attend an Orthodox Shul and then visit the free museums and national monuments?

Answer: In general, it is forbidden to visit a museum on Shabbat in Israel – whether it is free or one for which you can purchase a ticket before Shabbat (like the Israel Museum) because of the Chilul Shabbat for Jews involved. In this case, however, outside of Eretz Yisrael, it is theoretically permissible to visit a museum since the majority of visitors are non-Jews, and there is no extra effort for the Jews. However, there is a problem of Uvdin De-Chol. While this is a difficult concept to define, it basically means being involved in weekday activities, the performance of which impinges on the holiness of Shabbat. Therefore, one should refrain from doing so, and this is indeed the opinion of the Rabbis of America.

And this is the rule for a regular Shabbat. It is certainly forbidden all the more so on Rosh Hashanah which is a serious day, a day of Teshuvah, a day of self-reflection and not a day for entertainment and vacation.

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