

*Yevamos Daf 24 is Dedicated*

לרפ"ש ל'שמואל יעקב בן עטא זלעטאע

וחנה רחל בת יענטה



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## Daf Hashovua Yevamos Daf 24

In this daf we find the interesting sugya of geirus sheloh l'shem shomayim, conversions done for ulterior purposes. The Tannaim disputed if they are valid, and the Gemara concludes that they are.

The big question on this is, *why* is it valid, if it wasn't done intending to join the Jewish faith? The Rishonim and Achronim discussed this at length.

The **Ritva** maintains that although done for some personal gain, we assume they accepted Judaism sincerely.

On the other hand, the **Hagahos Mordechai** (Daf 47) demands that we see them carrying out the mitzvos. If not, they are not valid converts.

The **Rambam** seems to be a middle ground. In Hilchos Issurei Biyah (13:14-17) he elaborates on the conversion process: When a non-Jew approaches us to convert, we must first investigate his or her reasons for converting. Only if we establish that their intentions are pure do we proceed to the next stage of informing them about the severity of mitzvos and aveiros. "If they accept and don't give up, and we see they turn away [from their former religion] out of love, we accept them."

The Rambam explains that the wives of Shlomo Hamelech and Shimshon, although converted before they married them, did so only to achieve personal gains and that is why they eventually showed their true colors. They worshipped idols and built shrines for them, and Shimshon's wife betrayed him. However, the Rambam concludes, if one did become a ger for external purposes, he is a Jew, a Yisroel mumar (apostate).

These three sources in the Rishonim have been debated by the Achronim down to our times!

Rabbi Chaim Ozer Grodzeski in his **Achiezer** (Vol. 3:26) was asked about the following geirus case. A Jewish man got married to a non-Jew r"l in America, and then came to Europe, requesting that his wife be converted. The writer noted that if the Rabbis were to refuse, the couple would probably go to a Reform Rabbi, who would do a conversion not halachically acceptable. Rav Grodzeski gave his approval for the geirus, basing it on a landmark teshuva of the Rambam. Although conversion for purposes of marriage is not allowed, in extenuating circumstances it may be permitted. These include if they threaten to leave the faith entirely, or in times of war and upheaval. In this case, where they were already together, the conversion was not "in order to get married" – they already were! – but simply to improve the situation. And even though it seemed apparent she wouldn't keep the mitzvos, there was not an explicit resolution of defiance.

However, the **Dvar Avraham** (Vol. 3:28) took issue with his hetter. The Ritva we quoted does say that geirim probably will accept Yiddishkeit earnestly, but the paradigm for his concept is the sugya of "telyuhu v'zavin," when someone is coerced to sell his item. There, explains the Dvar Avraham, the circumstances are such that the seller knows he can't do anything about it (the buyer is too influential or powerful to fight with him), and so he sells it in a permanent way. But by geirus, there is no pressure to keep the mitzvos, in our day and age! Perhaps in earlier generations, when Jewish courts enforced kiyum hamitzvos, we could assume geirim would do them. Today is vastly different, so there is no basis to assume acceptance of the mitzvos – and the geirus is not valid.

**Teshuvos Imrei Yosher** (Siman 176) refuted the other sevara, that they were already married so it was not considered sheloh l'shem shomayim. The fact that the man wanted her converted obviously indicated that he would gain by it: he could live with his wife in propriety. That, too, is an ulterior motive!

**Rabbi Moshe Feinstein** penned a letter while still rav in Europe stating emphatically that unless one accepts to fulfill the mitzvos, geirus is totally invalid. Even if he says he accepts but we understand he is lying, it is not a geirus (Igros Moshe Y.D. 1:157). In another teshuva (Even Ha'ezer 4:7) he cites the Rambam's opinion that if geirus was done, even if kabalas mitzvos wasn't ascertained, it stands b'dieved. (The story there was also of a gentile woman married to a Jew, and after her conversion she seemed to keep the Torah until some years later when she threw off all vestiges of Judaism. The question was if the husband needed to give her a get, or was the conversion never valid? Rav Moshe ruled that it was, and he must give her a get.)

One last teshuva is from the **Minchas Yitzchak**, who was sought out by the Rabbi of Buenos Aries, who bemoaned the spiritual situation there, where many Jews were marrying non-Jews. Could geirus be done for them to at least solve that problem, or is the fact that they were totally irreligious preclude it? The Minchas Yitzchak mentions differing opinions about the propriety of converting people who will certainly not keep the Torah. Although they will be punished for their aveiros, at least eventually they could enter Gan Eden. On the other hand, for the husband, it is more severe to be married to a Jewess and not adhere to family purity, than to be married to a goy.

In this case, though, he dismisses the advantages of geirus, because without an honest kabalas mitzvos it is not a geirus. Tosfos implies as such when he explains that Kusim are not real geirim since they were worshipping idols all the while – and even though they said they would do the mitzvos! Unfortunately, he could not procure a hetter (Vol. 6:107).