

HALOCHOSCOPE

This week's question:

Someone was given a Hebrew name without a *bris*, because *bris milah* was outlawed in his birth country. When he had his *bris milah* later in life, he kept the same name. It was later revealed to him that he could have added a name at the time of his *bris*. Had he known then, he would have added the name of a grandfather who has no-one named after him. May he adopt the added name now, and if so, how should it be done?

The issues:

- A) *Shaim kodesh*, the Hebrew name
- B) Naming a child at his *bris milah*
- C) Adding a name later in life

A) *Jewish names* [excerpted from Halochosope XVII:11.]

The word we use for G-d, Hashem, means 'the name'. We may not utter His holy names unnecessarily, so we use the word for name, with a definite article. Everything has a name. The ultimate name is that of the First Cause of everything. We cannot fully fathom His names, but the meanings of their usage in the Scriptures has been passed down to us. Each of those names has a different meaning, that is meant to connect to His specific 'attributes' in that context. The first mention of calling something is when Hashem called *ohr 'yom'*, light being called day. The first mention of names in the Torah is in reference to rivers. The next mention is in reference to the naming of the animals by Adam. Hashem left it to Adam to decide the names of the animals. This then became the 'name'. This needs to be explained, as we shall see. In another context, Hashem names every star in the heavens. In the same context, Hashem also counts the stars, or according to some, He gives each star a number. This, too, must be explained.

In any language, the term 'name' means a number of different things. It identifies the person, so that he or she is no longer an unknown entity, that almost does not exist. It also identifies the person specifically, since the whole purpose of the name is to distinguish between this person and that person. This could be done with a number, but the use of a name has more personal meaning. 'A name' also means 'famous or well-known', even on a small scale. It also refers to a reputation, as in a good or bad name. In most contexts, it also represents the essence of something. That is, the name might be some linguistic form of another word or words, perhaps contracted or changed. These might mean a specific quality or they might be connected to events, people, phenomena or the like. The purpose is to impart a sense of the item, place or person.

To answer the earlier questions, we know that Hashem created the world with ten utterances. These were in the Hebrew language, the holy tongue. Before he created anything, he created the language, beginning with the *alef-bais* and the vowels, and progress-

ing to the words, including names for everything. Thus, when He said “let there be *ohr*”, light, He uttered that word, and it came into existence. Accordingly, he created each animal using its name. Adam called them all by a name as well. Either Hashem had a reason to change the names to what Adam thought of, or He was showing the level of intelligence that Adam had in understanding the nature of every animal, or He showed that Adam's intelligence led him to name the animals exactly as He had named them. In any event, this incident shows how deeply the name used by a human is connected to the original nature of the being that Hashem had in mind from its creation. Each name of a river can also be understood to have been created before humans called it by that name. The names were then handed to Adam. Or that the Torah acknowledges names given by humans with the same type of divinely inspired intelligence. Thus, when a name is given, it clearly has a measure of divinely inspired intelligence. The number or purpose of stars is well beyond human comprehension. The verse teaches us that though we might not be able to count the stars, nor number them, Hashem has His reasons and purposes for them. Furthermore, each of them has its own essence embodied in its name.

This inspiration is given to those who name a child. As he or she develops, the name will become synonymous with the identity and spiritual calling of that child. The Jewish name is called the *shaim kodesh*, holy name. This is the term used in *halachic* contexts for Hashem's names used in the Scriptures as opposed to mundane uses of a similar word. When the Israelites were counted, it was by their names. The names of the tribes of Yisroel were engraved on the vestments of the *kohain gadol* when he served in the temple. We have a tradition that every Jew's name is to be found somewhere in the Torah. Thus there is a holiness to the name, and the person naming him or her is actually tapping in to the source of that holiness.

The Midrash says that one has three names: one that is given by his parents, one that he is called by others and one that is 'written in the book of his creation'! Some maintain that one has seven names, all connected to his soul: Ploni the son of his father's name; P. the son of his mother's name; P. the son of his father and his mother's names together; P. son of his father, son of **his** father (the grandfather); named with the great-grandfather; named with the tribe/family; named for his occupation; name as he is commonly known.

Generally, the parents name the child. There are exceptions, such as Moshe being named, apparently, by the daughter of Paroh, and Oved, son of Ruth, named by her neighbors. Sometimes, Hashem names a person, but He tells the parent to formally do it, as we see in the cases of Yitzchok and Yishmael. While it is divinely inspired, the parents choose the name and are responsible for it. The *Midrash* says that in earlier times, names were based on events, because there was no need to record lineage. Nowadays we need to preserve lineage. Therefore, we name after ancestors.

As a name has meaning in the language used, names were originally Hebrew. During the various exiles, other languages were spoken, introducing names in those languages. These include Greek names like Klonymus, meaning a good name (subsequently changed to ShemTov), Latin names like Benedict or Bendit, Phoebus or Feivish, French names like Leon, Arabic names like Maimon, Spanish names like Vidal or Reyna, German names like Wolf, and so on. Sometimes, a name in one language morphed into a

name in another language, such as Feivel from Phoebus, or Shprintze from Esperanza.

The poskim debate whether these were originally accepted, or became accepted with the passage of time. Some say that words were taken from the language and turned into names by Jews. Originally, a single name was given. Sometimes, a Hebrew name is given with its translation or explanation in another language. Women's names are not as well documented in *Tanach*, so most women's names are in the spoken language. Many women's names are simple identification methods. A girl with golden hair would be Golda, with yellow hair, Gella. Alta could come from a Romance language and could mean tall. Some names in the foreign language are actually translations of the Hebrew, such as Zalman for Shlomo, from Salomon. Some are contractions or corruptions of the Hebrew, such as Aba or Abish from Avraham. Some Hebrew names are translations of the foreign name. For example, Leon was connected to Yehuda, the lion. This became Aryeh. Clearly, a *shaim kodesh* need not appear in the *Tanach*, can be in any language, and can be fashioned from scratch. It is still considered the person's holy name. [See Parshas Bereishis 2:19-20 Shemos 3:13-15 Bemidbar 1:2 Tehilim 147:4, commentaries. Brochos 7b Yuma 83b. Koheless Rabasi 7:3, 41. Tanchuma Haazinu 7. Sefer Yetzira Perek 2-4 etc. Tur, BY, Sh Ar EH 129, commentaries. Yosef ometz, end. References in Sefer Habris, Mekor Ubiur Halacha 10. Bais Aharon II, end. Igros Moshe EHIII:35.]

B) Naming at the *bris milah*

The name is also used when we wish to pray for the person. Indeed, this is the first time the name is used. At the time of the *bris milah*, a name is given to the boy in the middle of a *tefilah*, and for a girl, a *tefilah* is made in *shul* over a *sefer Torah*. The name allows a person to be mentioned in the heavens. Obviously, one cannot name a girl at a *bris*, but even boys might have been named historically at other times. According to some, when the rulers insisted on a German name, it was given on *Shabbos* with a *mi shebairach*. The Hebrew name for a boy was then added at the *bris*. Thus, even when complying with the decree, and even when reluctantly using a non-Jewish name, it was given as part of a *tefilah* in *shul*, and in the presence of a *sefer Torah*.

Thus, if a boy cannot undergo a *milah*, but *tefilos* are recited for him, the name may be given at that time. In addition, some say that part of the *tefilah* at the *bris* is that Hashem should consent to the name. We have already mentioned that there is an element of divine inspiration present. Why name him at his *bris* when he enters the covenant? At the first *bris milah*, Avram's name was changed to Avraham on his becoming perfect by the removal of his *orlah*. Similarly, a boy undergoes this process, which also purifies his soul, and is given his *shaim kodesh*. Some cite the juxtaposition of Avraham's naming Yitzchok with his circumcising him as a source for the two being connected. A girl could be named immediately. Some have this practice. Others wait for *Shabbos* or a defined number of days, based on various considerations. The common *minhag* is to give the name when the father is called to the Torah, and to include it in a *tefilah*, as mentioned.

Accordingly, one who is circumcised later in life should be given his *shaim kodesh* then. If he already had a Hebrew name, it would seem logical to change the name, or add a name. If his earlier name was already a *shaim kodesh*, it would depend on the various reasons mentioned. At the very least, it would appear that adding a name would be ac-

ceptable. [See Sh Ar YD 265:1 4, commentaries, Sefer Habris 52-53. Nitei Gavriel, Bris Milah 69 70. Kedushas Levi, Kutr. Ach. 36.]

C) Adding a name

Since the name is divinely inspired, it would be inappropriate to change it. The Talmud maintains that the *mazal* of a person is connected to his name. One way to change one's *mazal* is by changing his name. This is also based on Avraham. Avram's *mazal* was such that he could not have children, but Avraham could have them. We also mentioned that it is appropriate to change or add a name at a *bris* for an older person. In our case, the name was not changed at the *bris*, due to lack of knowledge. The question is whether the name may be added at a later date. Based on some of the reasons mentioned, it seems that this is indeed appropriate. The name before the *bris milah* was also Hebrew, and might have been given with a *tefilah*, and was certainly used later when the person was called to the Torah. However, the *bris milah* did indeed perfect the soul. Accordingly, an additional name is in order. Since it was not given at that time, it may be given later on.

How should a name change be made? When a child cannot be circumcised and is given a name, he is often circumcised when he is older. At that point, some say a name is added. We could use that *tefilah*. However, that name is given with the *bris tefilah*. In our case, the name was not added at the *bris*. The poskim discuss situations where a mistake was made when giving a name to a child. A common suggestion is to refrain from calling the child by the mistaken name for thirty days. Then that name is deemed to have been lost. In our case, the problem would be that this additional name will probably be used only when he is called to the Torah. One solution could be to have people make *mi shebairach* including his name as the new name. Nonetheless, in order to be able to recognize it as the name of this man as opposed to someone else with this name, there is a need to formally change his name in some context.

When one is given a new name to change his *mazal*, a special *tefilah* is recited. This *tefillah* is not appropriate in our case. The reason for the new name is not to change the *mazal*, but to symbolize the perfection attained with *milah*. Accordingly, it would appear that the *tefilah* used should be similar to that used when naming a child. The *tefilah* should include his former name, saying '... whose name before he was circumcised was ___ and now that he is circumcised, may his name be called in israel ___ ___ ...' The fact that time has elapsed since the circumcision should not be mentioned. [See Rosh Hashanah 16b, Poskim. Rambam Teshuva 2:4. Rema YD 335. Nitei Gavriel, Bris Milah, 70:2 71 72. Sefer Habris, Kuntres Shaimos 31.]

In conclusion, a name may be added. A *tefilah* should be recited to this effect. Subsequently, his family and friends should use this name in *tefilos* and *mi shebairach*.

On the parsha ... His name will be called in Israel “the house of the one who had his shoe removed” [25:10] The mitzvah is for bystanders to call him “he who had his shoe removed” [Rashi]. If the bystanders call **him** by this name, his **house** will thereby be called “the house of ...” [Gur Arye]. For a name to stick, others need to call him by it. Everything else just follows.

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