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LIMITED PARTNERSHIP: MAY ONE JOIN THE WICKED TO DO GOOD?

Adapted from the writings of Dayan Yitzchak Grossman

Among the questions that arose during and after President Biden's total withdrawal from Afghanistan was whether and how the U.S. should cooperate with Afghanistan's new government, given that the country is now ruled by Taliban terrorists. Gen. Mark Milley, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said weeks ago that it is "possible" that the United States will coordinate with the Taliban in fighting against the Islamic State.¹ (The Taliban, for their part, recently rejected any such cooperation.²) A key aspect of the issue is whether America ought to work with an organization it has long con-

sidered "evil";³ similar questions arose with regard to America allying with Stalin's USSR in World War II. In this article, we consider the question of cooperation with evildoers.

Divrei Hayamim (II 20:35-37) records:

Afterwards, Yehoshaphat, king of Yehudah, allied himself (*es'chabar*) with Achaziah, king of Yisrael, who acted wickedly. He joined forces with him (*vayechabreihu*) to make a fleet to go to Tarshish, and they built ships in Ezion Gever. Eliezer son of Dodavahu of Mareishah prophesied about Yehoshaphat, saying, "Because you have allied yourself (*kehis'chabercha*)

¹ Rachel Pannett, Ellen Francis, Miriam Berger, Sammy Westfall, and Paulina Villegas. U.S. could work with Taliban against terrorists, Pentagon says. The Washington Post. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/2021/09/02/afghanistan-kabul-taliban-live-updates/>

² Kathy Cannon. Taliban say they won't work with US to contain Islamic State. AP. <https://apnews.com/article/business-taliban-islamabad-middle-east-islamic-state-group-4d419bb70259f93f7165169889d05ff>.

³ President George W. Bush. President Outlines War. Effort Remarks by the President to the George C. Marshall ROTC Award Seminar on National Security, Cameron Hall, Virginia Military Institute, Lexington, Virginia. Apr. 17, 2002. <https://georgebwBush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2002/04/20020417-1.html>.

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105 River Ave. #301, Lakewood NJ 08701
1.888.485.VAAD (8223)
www.baishavaad.org
info@baishavaad.org

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PARSHAS VAYEIRA

MILAH BEMILAH

Excerpted and adapted from a shiur by Rav Moshe Yitzchak Weg

And Avraham circumcised his son Yitzchak when he was eight days old, as G-d had commanded him.

Bereishis 21:4

Yitzchak was the first person to undergo bris *milah* on his eighth day, but not all of Avraham's descendants were circumcised before *yetzias Mitzrayim*. The Rambam (*Isurei Biah* 13:2) writes that none of the Jews in Egypt had performed a bris *milah* before that time other than *sheivet Levi*. Before departing Mitzrayim, Klal Yisrael required *milah* for the purpose of forming the Jewish people (similar to conversion; see *Krisos* 9a). Given this, was *sheivet Levi* (or Yitzchak, had he been alive) required to perform an additional bris *milah* at the time of *yetzias Mitzrayim*?

The Ritva (*Yevamos* 46b) writes that *sheivet Levi* did not require an additional bris or *hatafah* (drawing of blood). It is true that a non-Jew who was already circumcised and then converts requires *hatafah dam* bris according to the Bahag (which is the accepted (continued on page 2)

About Face

At a recent wedding, I danced but didn't eat. Would I be considered *panim chadashos* at one of the *sheva brachos*?

Sheva brachos may be recited only if *panim chadashos* (a new face) is present, because the advent of a new person increases the joy of the gathering. The Shulchan Aruch (E.H. 62:7) cites three views of who qualifies:

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with Achazyahu, Hashem has wrecked your undertakings!" The ships broke down and did not succeed in going to Tarshish.⁴

Accordingly, Nitai Ha'Arbeili exhorts (Pirkei Avos 1:7): "Do not associate (*v'al tis'chabeir*) with the wicked." Avos deRabbi Nassan (9:4) elaborates:

This teaches us that a person should not associate with a bad person, nor a wicked person. For so we find with Yehoshaphat, that he joined Achav and went up with him to Ramos Gilad, and Hashem's rage came upon him. Then he joined Achazyah...

Another interpretation of "Do not associate with the wicked": even to study Torah.

Rabbeinu Yonah construes this as an actual prohibition:

It is prohibited to associate with the wicked person in worldly affairs, as it says, "Because you have allied yourself with Achazyahu, Hashem has wrecked your undertakings." ...And our Sages, of blessed memory, said in Avos deRabbi Nassan, "Do not befriend a wicked person, even in the context of a mitzvah."⁵

Perhaps the best known application of this principle in recent times was the position of the Satmar Rebbe that participation in the Israeli government, including voting in its elections, falls under the prohibition of associating with the wicked. The consensus, however, was that even insofar as the government is considered wicked, such participation is nevertheless permitted, because it is not voluntary but necessary for self-preservation, and it does not constitute an en-

dorsement of the wicked and their ways. R' Reuvain Grozovsky explains:

It is our opinion that with regard to sending our delegates to the Knesset, it is beyond any doubt that we are obligated to send them to stand guard and to fight in order that the wicked shall not swallow up the righteous. This does not constitute association (*his'chabrus*), endorsement, assistance, or submission, but rather defending our lives and doing everything in our power, in the most effective way possible within the natural order, and girding the remnants of our strength, to save the inheritance of Hashem, and to not relinquish the portion of control that remains ours and turn it over to others.⁶

R' Reuvain concedes that *his'chabrus* to Zionism does constitute *his'chabrus* to the wicked, and even *his'chabrus* to an ideology whose founders and leaders were infused with heresy, but he nevertheless maintains that

None of this is relevant to the elections to the Knesset, since the Knesset itself has no connection to doctrine, and participation in the government does not constitute participation in a doctrine and in an idea.⁷

(There are certainly other views of the State of Israel that have been held by gedolei Yisrael, but a discussion of that issue is beyond the scope of this article.)

Perhaps similar considerations would apply to security cooperation with evil regimes like the Taliban: It is merely a matter of pressing self-interest, and it does not constitute *his'chabrus* or an endorsement of their ideology.

6 Bava Batra 31b-32a.

7 Ibid. pp. 33-34.

4 Cf. Melachim I 22:49-50.

5 Sha'arei Teshuvah Sha'ar 3 #51. Cf. here.

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opinion), but in this case the original bris served as the geirus.

The Ramban (Yevamos 46b) explains the Rambam to hold that *hatafah* was performed for *sheivet Levi* as an act of *geirus*, but the Ramban's own view (similar

to the Ritva's) is that their original bris was sufficient and *hatafah* was not performed. But he eventually concludes that they had the same status as women, who convert without a bris because it is physically impossible. The Imrei Moshe (22:23) explains the Ramban to mean that *hatafah* was not done because the original bris fulfilled the *milah* obligation. Although a bris was still required for *geirus*

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Rambam: Someone who hasn't yet heard the seven *brachos* recited for this *chassan* and *kallah* may serve as *panim chadashos*.



DAYAN YEHOOSHUA GRUNWALD

Rosh: Someone who hasn't yet contributed to the *simcha* of the *chassan* and *kallah* during a meal may serve as *panim chadashos*.

Ran: A new person attending a *sheva brachos*, even if he doesn't eat a thing, may serve as *panim chadashos*.

The Shulchan Aruch (ibid.) cites an opinion that Shabbos and Yom Tov are like *panim chadashos*, so *sheva brachos* may be recited at the first two meals of any Shabbos or Yom Tov day without a new person attending. The common minhag accords with this view. (See Shulchan Aruch regarding *shalosh seudos*.) This opinion only fits with the Rosh and Ran, so its citation would indicate that we don't follow the Rambam.

Sefer Tziyunei Halacha writes that the halacha primarily follows the Rosh, and one only qualifies as *panim chadashos* if he a) eats and b) is the kind of person in whose honor an additional delicacy would be served. He needn't eat bread, only something substantial like cake. At the same time, he writes, one who danced at the wedding and thereby brought joy to the *chassan*—even if he didn't eat—cannot be *panim chadashos*, in deference to the Ran's view.

purposes, *hatafah* could not be used for this because the first bris was valid. For this reason, the Ramban compares *sheivet Levi* to women, who may convert without a bris because having one is impossible.

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