Questioning the Status of a Halakhic Conversion is anti-Halakhic and Unethical

View PDF



Rabbi Yuter is the Rabbi of B'nai Israel, the Orthodox congregation of downtown Baltimore.

Question: What is the status of the 'extra' conversion immersion [tevila leHumra] demanded by some Orthodox rabbis?

Answer:

1. The minimum standard required by Jewish law is that the rabbinical court consist of three observant laymen. Once the convert is accepted by the court, the conversion takes effect and without cause, may not be called into question.

2. a. The converting rabbinical court may include Orthodox rabbis who are themselves converts. [Hoshen Mishpat 7:1] Rabbis need not go through hoops to forbid the permitted on the part of parochials who either do not know or do not accept Jewish law.

b. If one of the rabbis serving on the court is [1] strictly Orthodox in observance but [2] serves amixed seating synagogue, said rabbi is not to be disqualifed because if he was placed by RCA placement, which has the status of bet din, or with permission from his authority granting body, Even haEzer 17:58 would apply. Furthermore, mixed synagogue seating, while in violation of historical usage, is not a violation whereby bona fidesis forfeited. [See Hoshen Mishpat 34]

c. If the convert, after theconversion, lives as a Jew, the conversion maynot be questioned.

Questioning a conversion tempts the convert to sin. Those "rabbis,"institutions and communities that require "upgraded" conversions are violating Jewish and

should be denied communal support, their rabbis should notbe hired by modern Orthodox institutions, and the request mus tbe denied because Jewish covenantal lawis being wrongly disfigured, reformed, and reconstructed.

3. Once a Halakhic rabbinical court has accepted the candidate and immersion (and when appropriate, circumcision) has taken place

a. the conversion is complete
b. the conversion must be accepted
c. unless impropriety or fraud with regard to the conversion takes place, questioning the validity of the conversion calls the legitimacy of the questioners into question as per kol haPoseil pasul.