

Shayla: Aren't you worried about naming God?

Extended question: I notice that you often use Hebrew names of God that you have gotten from various passages in the Bible. In fact, when I went to your website I saw that you have a collection of them! I see that you are Messianic but in Judaism they don't believe in naming God. They don't even spell God but write G-d instead. Aren't you worried about naming God?

Meforshim:

I know of no injunction against naming God. In fact, we are given numerous examples of Old Covenant saints naming God or of God introducing Himself with a different name that suited a given situation.

When Moses was called¹ God introduced Himself in a rather vague and general way as “the God of his ancestors”.² After receiving the commission from God to deliver the Israelites from Egypt and the promise that they would serve God by offering sacrifices at Mount Horeb (Sinai) after their deliverance from Egypt, Moses asked God for His name.³ In response, God gave Moses the name YHWH. By way of explanation, He added a couplet couched in legal terminology: This is My name in perpetuity and this is My remembrance from generation to generation. After receiving the name, Moses was told to use it to proclaim deliverance to the Israelites and to demand their release by Pharaoh for sacrificial worship.⁴

In Exodus 6, Moses complained to *YHWH* that the use of the holy name had not obtained the release of the slaves. In response to this, the Lord presented Himself directly to Moses with the remarkable words of self-introduction: 'I am *YHWH*'.⁵ After explaining that He had previously revealed Himself to the patriarchs as *El Shaddai*,⁶ He assured Moses that He would grant the Promised Land to the Israelites, and then commissioned Moses to present Him to them by the same formula of self-introduction. He was therefore to speak to the people as if he were God himself.

The pagans believed that their gods chose particular sites for their temples, where they 'put' their idols, so that they could 'dwell' there.⁷ In contrast, the Israelites believed that *YHWH* had chosen to 'put' His name first in the tabernacle and then in the temple,⁸ that He could 'dwell' there⁹ as His name 'dwelt' there.¹⁰ So, instead of building a temple for an idol, Solomon built a temple for the name of *YHWH*.¹¹ The name 'was' at the temple in Jerusalem.¹² By His name He was present with His ears to hear prayer, with His eyes to receive his people, and with His heart to respond to their needs.¹³ By His name His presence was given.

Did Jesus not teach “Whatsoever thing you ask IN MY NAME”?¹⁴ Every time we pray “in Jesus' name” we are naming God. What we must be careful of is not misusing *YHWH*'s name.¹⁵

¹ Exodus 3:13-15

² Exodus 3:6

³ Exodus 3:13

⁴ Exodus 3:16-18

⁵ Exodus 6:2; cf 6:29

⁶ **God Almighty** Genesis 17:1; 28:3; 31:29; 35:11; 43:14; 48:3; 49:24-25; Exodus 6:2-3, 31; Ruth 1:20-21; Job 35:12-14; Psalm 91:1-2; Proverbs 3:27; Isaiah 60:15-16; 66:10-13; Micah 2:1

⁷ cf 2 Chronicles 33:7

⁸ Deuteronomy 12:5,21; 14:24; 1 Kings 9:3; 11:36; 14:21; 2 Kings 21:4,7; 2 Chronicles 6:20

⁹ Deuteronomy 12:5

¹⁰ Deuteronomy 12:11; 14:23; 16:2, 6, 11; 26:2

¹¹ 2 Samuel 7:13; 1 Kings 3:2; 5:17,19; 8:17-20, 44, 48

¹² 1 Kings 8:16,29; 2 Kings 23:27; 2 Chronicles 6:6; 7:16; 33:4

¹³ 1 Kings 8:29; 2 Chronicles 7:16

¹⁴ John 14:13-14

¹⁵ Exodus 20:7; Leviticus 18:21; 19:12

We should not be like slick salesmen who think that by simply using your name they will have a relationship with you and can thereby manipulate you into buying something. Just because we name God, or call on one of Hashem's¹⁶ aspects we are not guaranteed to get what we want. He is not a vending machine.

When we pray:

- We must pray in the name of Jesus¹⁷
- We must pray with pure hearts¹⁸
- We must pray in faith believing He will do what is right¹⁹
- We must pray according to His will²⁰

¹⁶ The Name Leviticus 24:11; Psalm 23:3; 3 John 1:7

¹⁷ John 1:12; 14:6, 13-14; 16:23-24

¹⁸ Psalm 66:16-19; 139:23-24

¹⁹ Matthew 21:22; Mark 9:23; John 12:46; 20:29

²⁰ Ezekiel 36:27; John 16:13; 1 John 5:13-15