

SICHA POEM

PROJECT LIKKUTEI SICHOS | 5783 - YEAR OF HAKHEL



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One of the fundamental mitzvos as part of entering the Holy Land
Is the mitzvah to appoint a king – it is Hashem’s command
“Som tasim alecha melech” – in this pasuk we see
That we must appoint a king and establish a functioning society

Yet, when the Yidden asked Shmuel Hanavi to appoint a king
Hashem was dismayed at the request, it was not a good thing
Nevertheless, Hashem fulfilled their request and instructed Shmuel
To appoint Shaul as the very first king of Bnei Yisroel

But if appointing a king is a mitzvah, as the pasuk does attest
Why was Hashem disappointed in the people’s request?
And if their request was improper and it should have been recanted
Why did Hashem fulfill it and why was their wish granted?

Chassidus explains that a king can serve two different functions:
At the basic level, a king enforces laws and injunctions
The threat of the king’s power curbs the worst impulses of the population
And reigns in any potential violence and corruption.

But when the people can self-govern because they are more refined
A king serves a loftier purpose of another kind —
He imparts to the nation a level of Divine awareness, an awesome thing
A level higher than they are capable of reaching without the king

Shmuel wished the people on their own would reach to where they can get
 And then ask for a king so they can attain Divine levels loftier yet
 So when the Jews said "All the nations have kings, we want one just like them"
 Shmuel and Hashem were disappointed at the people's lack of submission to Hashem

Nonetheless, Hashem heeded their disappointing request
 And granted them the king they wanted just to be like all the rest
 Because they still needed a king to serve that basic, first role
 Of ensuring peace and morality, and lawfulness as a whole

Although we do not currently have a king, a lesson from this we should take
 Pirkei Avos instructs us that "A teacher for yourself you must make"
 "The rabbis are our kings" and thus the standards of kings we can apply
 To when we appoint for ourselves a mentor and to improve ourselves we try

It is common for people to assume that they don't need a mentor or guide
 For the basic, elementary decisions in life, and to help with their basic spiritual side
 Yet, from the story of Shmuel's appointment of a king we can explain
 That we all need a mentor even before we reach a Divine lofty plane

Even when still on level one, we must appoint a "king"
 And the basics of law and order to our personal lives it will bring
 Precisely when there's not enough awe of the Almighty inside us
 Is when we must actively search for a mentor who can guide us

A practical lesson for employers can be gleaned from the above
 That charity gifts be given - as an act of love
 All employees and workers, the Rebbe recommends
 Should receive some charitable gift when their employment ends
