

## Rabbi's Article II

### Jewish Monarchy

In this week's Torah-portion (-Deuteronomy 17:15), we have the first of the last three mitzvot commanded in the Torah: "When you come to the land the L-rd, your G-d, is giving you, and you possess it and live therein, and you say, 'I will set a king over myself, like all the nations around me.' You shall set a king over you, one whom the L-rd, your G-d, chooses; from among your brothers, you shall set a king over yourself..." However, upon the actual historical events (-Samuel I, Chapter 8) of appointing our first king, there is a question (-Abarbanel (-Link) on our portion, and many more commentaries): The Jewish people asked Samuel the Prophet, "Give us a king," but, "And the thing was displeasing in the eyes of Samuel." More so, this did not find favor in the eyes of G-d, as G-d told Samuel, "For they have rejected Me..." Why?! They were but doing what G-d had commanded them to do! Especially according to our sages (-Sanhedrin 20b), "Three mitzvot were commanded to the Jewish people upon their entrance into the Land (of Israel), to establish a king for themselves..." which from this teaching it is understood that this mitzva is superior, even to the other mitzvot that depend upon being in the Land of Israel?! On the other hand, if their asking for a king in that era was undesirable, then why did G-d command Samuel, "Listen to the voice of the people, according to all that they will say to you"?

Chassidus (-Sefe Hamitzvos of the Tzemach Tzedek (-Link), Mitzvas Minue Melech, Chapters 1 & 3; you can read the original teaching [here](#) ) gives us the explanation. There are two intentions to the mitzva of appointing a king:

(a) The simple reason (-Ethics 3:2), "Were it not for the fear of its king's sovereignty, a man would swallow his neighbor alive." That the king enforce upon all subjects to behave appropriately.

For even though it is logical to behave appropriately, nevertheless, being that (-Rashi, Numbers 15:39), "The eyes see and the heart desires..." therefore, one's own logic isn't enough, and we must also have fear of the king, to keep our behavior appropriate.

(b) In a state where the people consistently have, "the mind rules over the heart," and we don't need a king for the abovementioned reason, nevertheless, there are issues that the people do not know how to deal with, being that it is beyond their intellectual capacity, while the king, being (-Samuel I 9:2), "from his shoulders and upwards he was taller than any of the people --Mystically this refers to the kings intellect being above and beyond that of his subjects," understands what to do in these situations, he commands the people how to behave, and the people do it only because the king has commanded them to. This is the internal essence and root of Jewish monarchy. For the *Master* and *King* of the Jewish people is G-d, and the king of flesh and blood is but to be an intermediate and revelation of G-d's kingship to Israel.

Jews are believers on their own, and they understand and feel that their life-force comes from the kingship of G-d, and this in itself needs to arouse within them a self-nullification before G-d. However, when they are in a state that this self-nullification before G-d is lacking, they are then in need of a king of flesh and blood, which through their fear for the king of flesh and blood, they are aroused to the fear and self-nullification before the *King of kings*, G-d.

However, when the Jewish people *behave appropriately and* they have *self-nullification before G-d*, of their own accord, the influence they receive through appointing a king is of a far superior manner, perceiving and having revelations of *Divine Levels* far above and beyond their own capacities, through the king's, "from his shoulders and upwards he was taller than any of the people," who draws these superior levels upon, and influences his subjects to live in a far superior state of fear and self-nullification before G-d.

With this we can now understand the answers to the abovementioned questions:

- (i) Samuel wanted the Jewish people to have fear and self-nullification before G-d on their own, without need of a king of flesh and blood. This way, the king of flesh and blood will serve to draw upon, and influence the Jewish people with *Superior Fear* before G-d. However, the Jewish people's request for a king of flesh and blood was for the purpose of, "to judge us like all the nations --to forewarn the, "a man would swallow his neighbor alive". Meaning that they were lacking in their fear of G-d. Hence, G-d said, "For they have rejected Me."
- (ii) Nevertheless, G-d commands Samuel to give the Jewish people a king of flesh and blood, for ultimately, when the Jewish people are lacking in fear of G-d, we must then do whatever it takes to imbue them with a fear of G-d. We cannot wait until Israel will awaken a fear for G-d within themselves. Rather, the Jew must immediately appoint upon himself a king, in order to help him and influence him to have fear for G-d, and to behave appropriately. With time, the Jew will then eventually arouse this within himself on his own, and with this, to the *Higher Fear* that he receives through the king.

*The Lesson:* While, in exile we do not have Jewish monarchy, nevertheless, on a spiritual level, our sages state (-Gitten 62a), "Sages are called kings... As it is written (with regard to the Torah (Proverbs 8:15)), 'Through me kings rule.'" And our sages command us (-Ethics 1:6 & 16), "Appoint (lit. *Aseh*; forcefully make) for yourself a master (lit. *Rav*; rabbi)." Now, there are those who think that this only concerns far loftier matters, but not to bother the rabbi with simple matters, and rather, for these await for an arousal from above, and to then deal with them on his own. Hence, the mitzva to appoint a king tells that even when we are in a state of, "For they have rejected G-d," and are dealing with simple matters of, "a man would swallow his neighbor alive," appoint a king! Likewise, those who feel that they cannot find a *rav* for themselves, must know that this is but the works of their *evil inclination*, for (-Jeremiah 51:5), "Israel is not widowed," and there is definitely one worthy of being his *Rav*, --to teach him the portions tht the king reads to Israel, the *Shema*: acceptance of G-d's Kingship, *V'haya*: Acceptance of G-d's mitzvot, and that the, "and you shall gather your produce," is dependent upon this. Rather, what is needed from him is but the, "Aseh - Forcefully make," for yourself a *Rav*! By doing this we shall merit the coming of Moshiach (-Link), who serves both as a teacher (rabbi) and a king!