

Shoftim

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Light points

FROM THE TEACHINGS OF
THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE ON THE
WEEKLY TORAH PORTION

Lightpoints
לזיכרון ולעילוי נשמת
הרה"ח הרה"ת
הר"ר ישעי' זושא
ב"ר אברהם דוד ע"ה ווילהעלם
גלב"ע ביום ד' שבט ה'תשפ"ב
תנצב"ה

לזכות
הילד חיים צבי שי'
לרגל תספורתו בשעטו"מ



נדפס ע"י הוריו שיחיו
יה"ר שיזכו לגדלו לתורה, לחופה ולמעשים טובים
מתוך בריאות, נחת והרחבה

לזכות
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בן הרה"ת מנחם מענדל וזוגתו מרת נחמה דינה שיחיו
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לרגל תספורתו בשעטו"מ ביום ט' אלול ה'תשפ"ה
יה"ר שיזכו הוריו לגדלו לתורה, לחופה ולמעשים טובים
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שפטים *Shoftim*

טז:יח | 16:18

שִׁפְטִים וְשֹׁטְרִים תִּתֵּן לָךְ בְּכָל שַׁעֲרֶיךָ

*You shall set up judges and law-enforcement officials
for yourself in all your cities.*

Counseling Law

The Torah instructs us to set up court systems in every city where Jews live, comprising judges who determine the law and officials who enforce the judges' rulings. We find, however, that regarding the era of the future Redemption, G-d says, "I will restore your judges as at first, and your counselors as in the beginning."¹ The verse makes no mention of law-enforcement officials, only judges who will determine the law and counselors who will advise the people how to conduct their lives.

¹ Yeshayahu 1:26.

This is because in the era of the Redemption all evil will be annulled,² including the *yetzer hara*, the negative inclination we have within us, thereby eliminating the need for police to enforce the law. Instead, counselors, whose task will be not to enforce laws or give orders but to advise, will complement the judges' authority.

Advice, by definition, is *offered*—i.e., it is a suggestion, not a command. The person advising speaks as though to an equal, in a manner that the recipient does not feel compelled, but can come to understand that this advice is truly in his best interest.

This will be the role of the “counselors” in the era of Moshiach: they will help people recognize the value of adhering to the Torah's laws on their own. Consequently, in the time of Moshiach we will not only observe the laws of the Torah (taught by the judges) obediently, we will do so with inner drive.

—*Sefer Hasichos 5751, vol. 2, pp. 780–785*

2. Zechariah 13:2.

 17:15 | י"ז:טז

שׁוֹם תָּשִׂים עָלֶיךָ מֶלֶךְ

You shall appoint a king over you.

The Real King

From a historic and halachic perspective, it seems that a basic component of every new king's inauguration involved anointing the king with oil.³ Yet, surprisingly, though the Torah explicitly outlines in detail how the mitzvah of appointing a new king is to be carried out, the verse makes no mention of the anointment with oil.

Moreover, the first Jewish king anointed with oil was Shaul, who was appointed by the prophet Shmuel.⁴ We know, however, that Yehoshua had the halachic status of a king,⁵ yet he received his appointment through *semichah*—by Moshe's "leaning his hands upon him."⁶ Granted, the authority to transmit the Torah is conferred through *semichah*,⁷ but the authority to rule the nation is conferred through anointment. So why did Moshe not anoint Yehoshua with oil?

The Rambam defines the purpose of the Jewish monarch:

His purpose and intent shall be to elevate the true faith and to fill the world with justice, destroying the power of the wicked and waging the wars of G-d. For the entire purpose of appointing a king is to execute justice and wage wars.⁸

3. Mishneh Torah, Hil. Melachim 1:7–12.

4. I Shmuel 10:1.

5. See Mishneh Torah *ibid.* 1:3.

6. Bamidbar 27:18–23.

7. Mishneh Torah, Hil. Sanhedrin 4:1.

8. *Ibid.*, Hil. Melachim 4:10.

As is evident from the Rambam's words, the Jewish king's role is not only to govern and lead the nation's material affairs, but *primarily* to promote the ways of the Torah. As such, though the king's reign over the nation is his exclusively, at the same time the monarchy is in essence an extension of the Sanhedrin—the body of authority entrusted with transmitting the Torah.

Yet the monarchy and the Sanhedrin remain distinct branches of government, and each is conferred its power differently and independently.

The reign of Yehoshua was the exception. On the one hand, Yehoshua exclusively was tasked with transmitting the Torah to his generation⁹—a power normally granted to the Sanhedrin (as a group). At the same time, Yehoshua was also king, charged with implementing the Torah's teachings within the capacity of his kingship.

It was therefore unnecessary for Yehoshua to be anointed with oil. Since Yehoshua held both branches of Jewish leadership exclusively, the *semichah* that endowed him with his spiritual authority—*of which the monarchy is merely an extension*—was sufficient to establish his kingship as well.

Accordingly, we can understand why the Torah does not explicitly mention the requirement of anointing a new king with oil. For the Torah's ideal form of monarchy, as embodied by Yehoshua, is one in which the king is the Torah authority as well, in which case anointing with oil is unnecessary.

—*Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 23, pp. 190–197

9. See Avos 1:1.

 כ:ח | 20:8

מִי הָאִישׁ הַיָּרֵא וְהַיָּדָאֵלֶּה וְיָשָׁב לְבֵיתוֹ
וְלֹא יָמַס אֶת לִבָּב אָחָיו כְּלִבָּבוֹ

*“Is there anyone [here] who is fearful and fainthearted?
Let him go and return to his house, lest he cause his
brothers’ hearts to melt like his heart.”*

A Little Remorse, A Lot of Merit

Just before a Jewish army goes out to battle, the leaders announce that anyone who is afraid should return home, lest their anxiety spread to their fellow fighters.

The Sages of the Talmud¹⁰ debate the nature of the “fearful and fainthearted” addressed here. Some interpret this as reference to those who fear because of their sins —i.e., they recognize their shortcomings in Torah observance, and fear they are thus unworthy of G-d’s protection during battle. According to this opinion, all who were simply fearful of the battle presumably returned home earlier, when the Kohen addressed the soldiers, saying: “Let your hearts not be faint; you shall not be afraid, and you shall not be alarmed...”¹¹

Rabbi Akiva, however, insists that this final announcement addresses those “who cannot stand in the closed ranks of battle and look upon a drawn sword.” As the battle draws nearer, even those who felt confident earlier might now be overcome with fear, and are encouraged (again) to return home.

Rabbi Akiva’s rejection of the alternative explanation indicates that those who “fear because of their sins” can in fact

10. Sotah 44a.

11. Devarim 20:3

still go to war with confidence, and therefore do not pose any risk to the army's morale.

What was Rabbi Akiva's reasoning?

The Talmud states elsewhere¹² that out of his immense love for his fellow Jews, Rabbi Akiva always sought angles from which the Jewish people would be judged favorably and meritoriously. Now, a person who "fears because of his sins" recognizes that his conduct was objectionable, believes that G-d can and will hold him accountable, and hopes to be spared that Divine retribution. Thus, even if he lacks the inner strength to actually implement change in his behavior, he still regrets the sinful ways that brought him to this point, and in Rabbi Akiva's view, this "contemplation of repentance" alone makes him worthy! Rabbi Akiva therefore held that he can go off to battle with confidence, assured of Divine protection and deliverance.

—*Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 9, pp. 128–129

12. Sanhedrin 110b.

 כ"ט | 20:19

כִּי הָאָדָם עֵץ הַשָּׂדֶה

Is then man the tree of the field...?

Planting Smart

According to its simple meaning, this verse rhetorically questions the logic of wantonly destroying a fruit tree when you are waging war against a city's inhabitants: "Is man the tree of the field, such that the tree too is your enemy?" The Talmud,¹³ however, interprets this verse as a matter of fact: indeed, man is like the tree of the field.

This comparison teaches us an important lesson regarding the significance of how we educate our children in their formative years, which can be compared to caring for a tree in its earliest stages. An injury in a fully grown tree is not ideal, but it is unlikely to significantly impact the tree's future. A developed tree is strong enough to recover from the damage, and can continue to grow healthily and fruitfully. In a seed or young sapling, however, even the smallest scratch can be devastating, and possibly ruin the prospects of the tree ever growing straight and tall.

The same is true of our children: compromised standards are undesirable even for adults, but compromise in the education of children can be absolutely devastating! In order to nurture and raise a generation of Jews who are spiritually fit, we must ensure that our children receive a healthy and

¹³. Taanis 7a.

undiluted Jewish education, especially during their early, formative years.

—*Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 1, p. 82; *Igros Kodesh*, vol. 2, p. 82

לזכות

הת' **יחזקאל הלוי** שי'
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בן ר' **חיים אלישע** ע"ה
שרייבער
נלב"ע ז' אלול התשע"ט
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