

# TORAS AVIGDOR

AUTHENTIC TORAH THOUGHT FOR LIFE

RAV AVIGDOR MILLER ZT"L

## PARSHAS SHOFTIM

WITH

RAV AVIGDOR MILLER ZT"L

BASED ON HIS BOOKS, TAPES & WRITINGS OF TALMIDIM

### OUR KING

#### CONTENTS

Part I. Without a King - 1

Part II. With a King - 4

Part III. With The King - 7

## Part I. Without a King

### The Conditional Mitzvah

In *Parshas Shoftim* we read about the mitzvah of **שׁוֹם תָּשִׂים עָלֶיךָ מֶלֶךְ** – *You should place a king over you (Shoftim 17:15)*. And it's interesting to note that this mitzvah seems to be different from all other *mitzvos*. Because it doesn't just say, "You should place a king over you" – instead it comes with an introduction.

It starts like this: **וְאָמְרָת אֲשִׁמָּה עָלֶיךָ מֶלֶךְ** – *And if you, the Am Yisroel, will say, "Let us put a king over ourselves," שׁוֹם תָּשִׂים – *then you should appoint one for yourself*. It's a condition for the mitzvah – you have to ask for it. But if you wouldn't say anything, there's no mitzvah.*

And the truth is that many years passed before the Am Yisroel asked for it; for hundreds of years the nation had no king. **בְּיָמִים הָהֵם אֵין מֶלֶךְ בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל** – *In those days there was no king for the Jews (Shoftim 17:6)*. All around them, all the nations and even the smallest cities and towns had kings. *Melech Sedom, Melech Amora, Melech*

*Yericho* – a long list of kings (*Yehoshua 12: 9-24*). But the Am Yisroel? Nothing.

### Defunding the Police

Now, there are some writers, smart alecks, who say the Jewish people were a backward nation, an unsophisticated desert tribe that wasn't advanced enough to develop the concept of a monarchy until much later in their history. They read the *posuk*, "*And these are the kings who reigned in Edom before a king ever reigned over the Bnei Yisroel*" (*Bereishis 36:31*), and they thought it meant that Edom was more enlightened than the Jewish nation.

You know what the Torah is really saying? It's telling us that in Edom they *needed* a king! Otherwise, they would cut each other's throats.

Don't you see today, when the government is weak – they don't punish crime – so even if you have policemen, it won't help much. Even the policemen are afraid.

I saw two policemen on Church Avenue in East Flatbush. I said to them, "You know, when I see you I feel confident. I feel safe."

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“That’s good,” one of them said, “because we don’t.”

That’s two of them!

Nobody is safe if there is no king and so the gentile tribes *needed* a king, an authoritarian and strongman, to enforce law and order. You’re going to let the people run around and do whatever they want? What do you think they’re going to do? Build *yeshivos*?

### **We Already Have a King**

But among the Bnei Yisroel it wasn’t needed! We didn’t appoint a king of flesh and blood because Hakadosh Baruch Hu was all of that and much more. He was sitting on the Throne watching and managing. He was dispensing punishment and reward. And so He was *the* authority and all royalty belonged to Him!

You remember at the very beginning of our history when our forefathers at the *Yam Suf* all shouted *יְהוָה לְעֵלְמָם וְעַד*? It wasn’t just a pious expression like we say today. Today we repeat it because it’s in the *siddur*; they said it because it was in their hearts. Hakadosh Baruch Hu was the real *Melech*; He was the government and His Torah was the constitution. Every Jew felt in his heart of hearts that Hashem was sitting on the Throne guiding the national fortune of the nation *as well as the life of every individual*.

### **A Ridiculous Idea**

And therefore the Am Yisroel never even *thought* about appointing a king over them. Such a thing was absurd to them. “We already have a King!” That’s why among the Am Yisroel nobody ever entertained ambitions of becoming a *melech*. And if someone was caught contemplating such an idea, that was the worst. Not because people were envious; not because they begrudged him glory. It was because he was a usurper! He was

taking away the Throne of the *Melech Yisroel*! You have the audacity to think of making a coup and seizing power? You’ll take it away from Hakadosh Baruch Hu?!

Now, it’s hard for us to imagine such an objection. “We’re not taking away power from Hashem,” we say. “*Chas v’shalom!* We just want a king!” That’s because after all these centuries of being accustomed to sublimating the idea of *Hashem Melech* and using it only in allegorical form, it’s hard for us to understand that there was once a time when our forefathers actually visualized, they actually felt, that Hakadosh Baruch Hu was sitting on a Throne and managing the affairs of the Am Yisroel.

Today the pious Jew will tell you, “Certainly Hashem is *Melech*! What’s the question!” But actually it’s a very big question for him. Because he’s thinking maybe about tremendous galaxies, about *מְלֵא כָּל הָאָרֶץ כְּבוֹדוֹ* – *His glory fills all of space*. He’s out in space somewhere. It’s a wrench of the intellect to pull Hakadosh Baruch Hu out of space and seat Him on a Throne in our midst and make Him *Melech* in the most tangible sense of the word.

### **A Perfect King**

Now, I use the word *melech* deliberately because the English word ‘king’ doesn’t do any justice at all to the *lashon kodesh* word *melech*. It’s related to the Aramaic word *milka* which means counsel, advice. Anyone who learned a little knows that in the language of the *mishnah* the word *nimlach* is used for one who changes his mind; *nimlach* means ‘he took counsel with himself’, and *melech* denotes, ‘the one who knows how to take counsel with himself and manage the affairs of a people.’ In Torah language, the *melech* is not just a king but a king who is capable of ruling.

And therefore when we say *Hashem Melech*, we're saying Hakadosh Baruch Hu is wisely conducting the affairs of the world. Everything is under control. There are no accidents or injustice. There's no chaos. There's always a *din v'cheshbon*. Because there is a King sitting on a Throne.

### **Coronate the King**

It's a good idea by the way to practice that once in a while; to try and raise yourself up to what our forefathers felt. We can't do it all the time but that doesn't excuse us from the obligation altogether. So let's say you're walking in the street tomorrow. So what will it cost you if you make a donation of your time, one minute, to think these words, '*Hashem Melech*'.

Better yet, you can say it. No harm; nobody is listening. As you're walking on the avenue and the train is riding overhead or the cars are making noise, honking, there's so much din. No one will hear you; shout "*Hashem Melech!*" Proclaim at least to yourself, the best audience, that Hakadosh Baruch Hu is in charge of the whole universe. And even though you're trying your best to get rich, you're trying your best to be healthy, you have to know that He is the One who is doing everything and He knows best how to do it. That's the meaning of *Hashem Melech*.

And that's how the Am Yisroel said "*Hashem Melech*" in the ancient days. When they spoke about Hashem as King, it meant to them something more than it means to us today. Even for the ordinary Jew, the most simple Jew, it wasn't a mere form of speech; it was a living reality, a remarkable awareness of a Hashem managing his affairs.

### **Gideon's Refusal**

Now, I understand that this may seem to you an exaggerated ideal but I'll show you that our forefathers really lived with it. Because you know

there was once a Gideon who was a champion of the Jewish people. Gideon did a great service for the Jewish people; he fought on their behalf and he won many victories and finally he rescued them from their enemies.

After Gideon's victory over Midian, the people were so grateful that they approached him with an offer. They said to him, "You should be our king; and your son after you" (Shoftim 8:22). Now, you have to know what that means that the Jewish people said that. It was the most extreme expression of gratitude.

So how did Gideon respond? He said "ה' יְקַשֵּׁל – You have a King already. I can't be your king" (*ibid.* 23).

### **The Humble Jewish President**

Now to us it would seem like a rejoinder; a wisecrack, or exaggerated humility. Suppose the Jews in America decided to choose a man to be, let's say, the President of the Jewish Nation in America. They came to a certain person, a capable fellow, and they want to appoint him president of all the *yeshivos*, of all the orthodox *kehillos*, all the *shuls*. So they come to him with a crown, a *kesser Torah*, and they ask him to please accept the honor.

So he stands up and he says, "Hashem is your King!" Ooh wah! Everybody would applaud that noble sentiment! Of course, they know it means nothing. He's a fine man, a humble man, but the words are only a poetic expression. And we appreciate that! At least he says it; that's also something! But then he takes the crown. He accepts the appointment.

But when Gideon said, "I won't be a *melech* over you," he meant it. He wasn't just saying nice words so that the newspaper could make a write-up about him. He meant it from the bottom of his

heart. “You don't need a king,” he said. “There's a better One already in office.”

So what happened? The Am Yisroel listened to Gideon and went back to their tents chastened, reminded of the great principle that *Hashem yimloch l'olam va'ed*. And that's how it remained for many more years.

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## Part II. With a King

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### Make Me Your King

Now, what happens when a nation knows that Hashem is the King? So He is the King! He acts like a King; He takes care of his subjects. That's a *klal gadol*, an important principle – the more you make Him your King, the more He will be your King.

That's what it means when it says in Mesechta Rosh Hashanah (16a), אָמְרוּ לְפָנַי מַלְכוּת, – *Say before Me on Rosh Hashanah, malchiyos; proclaim Me your King, בְּרִי שְׂתַמְלִיכוּנִי עֲלֵיכֶם* – *in order that you should make Me a King over you.*

It means a reward. ‘Say before Me *pessukim* of *malchiyos*, statements in which you declare Me to be your King, and I'll be your King. I'll take over and show you that I'm your King. You'll feel that it's so.

It's a principle not only for Rosh Hashanah – all the time; on an ordinary Tuesday afternoon remind yourself, ה' מֶלֶךְ ה' מֶלֶךְ ה' יִמְלֹךְ לְעֹלָם וָעֶד, Say the words out loud: “Hashem is King! Hashem always was King! And He'll be my King forever and ever!” You accomplished something big right now. בְּרִי שְׂתַמְלִיכוּנִי עֲלֵיכֶם – *He'll become your King now.*

### Ideals and Rewards

It's one of the big principles by which Hakadosh Baruch Hu conducts the affairs of men; that's how this world is managed – the more you

trust in Hashem, the more your trust is requited. That's what the Navi Yirmiyah says. בְּרוּךְ הַגֹּבֵר אֲשֶׁר יִבְטַח בְּהַשֵּׁם וְהָיָה הַשֵּׁם מְבֹטָחוֹ – “Fortunate is the one who trusts in Hashem and Hashem becomes his trust” (17:7).

Because the *possuk* has a *reisha* and a *seifa*, two parts, and each part is telling us something. The beginning states, ‘Fortunate is the one who trusts in Hashem.’ He'll be more happy, more content. Absolutely, he's fortunate.

But that's not all. Because what is his reward going to be? וְהָיָה הַשֵּׁם מְבֹטָחוֹ – *Hashem turns out to be his trust.* Which means that the more one has faith, a confidence, that Hakadosh Baruch Hu is conducting His affairs, the more it actually turns out so!

And that's why the earlier generations, before they said אָשִׁימָה עָלַי מֶלֶךְ and asked for a human king, they lived *b'derech pele*; they lived in ways that were beyond natural.

### An Exceptional Era

You remember when the Bnei Yisroel thought they were finally free from Pharaoh's oppression and then they saw Mitzrayim chasing them? So Moshe Rabbeinu told the people הַשֵּׁם יִלָּחֵם לָכֶם – *Hashem is going to fight for you.* That's how he encouraged them.

So we make a mistake and we think that it was a one time event at Kriyas Yam Suf. “Look now at what Hashem does to the Mitzrim in the sea.” Oh no; it was only the beginning. Moshe Rabbeinu was saying, “Today we're going to proclaim Hashem our King” – at the Yam Suf, that's when they all together cried out ‘Hashem yimloch l'olam va'ed’ – “and therefore from now on, Hashem your King, הַשֵּׁם יִלָּחֵם לָכֶם – *He's going to wage all your battles for you.*” If you make Him your King, He's going to be your מֶלֶךְ חָמָה, your

Man of War. He's going to be your General, and your Captain and your Lieutenant.

And that's how it was from the time of Moshe and Aharon down through the time of Shmuel. It was an era when Hashem answered whenever He was called upon. If you study all the incidents of the *Tanach*, from that moment of *Kriyas Yam Suf* up until the days of Shmuel Hanavi, you will see that their battles were won *b'derech pele*. It was a mysteriously wonderful way that they overcame their enemies: **קְרָאִים אֶל ה'** – *They cried out to Hashem, וְהוֹא יַעֲנֵם* – *and He answered them.*

### Feeling His Presence

Now, you have to understand that it wasn't for nothing that Hashem fought their battles. It means these generations from Moshe and Aharon through the days of Shmuel were a special kind of people. And in what way were they special? The answer is that **קְרָאִים אֶל ה'** – *they called out only to Hashem* because they all recognized that *Hashem Melech!* And that's why, in their battles, **וְהוֹא יַעֲנֵם** – *Hashem fought for them.*

“If you know that I'm your King,” said Hashem, “then I'll be your King!”

That's why when the Plishtim came to attack, what did the Bnei Yisroel do? You remember, they didn't even have any metal weapons and now suddenly they're confronted by a *sakanah*. So the people said to Shmuel, “Cry out to Hashem for us! He should rescue us from the Plishtim!”

### Fighting With Miracles

What did Shmuel do? He took and offered up a *korban olah*. That's all he did, a *korban olah*; a *korban olah* is a prayer. And then he cried out to Hashem, “Please Hashem help Your people.” And Hashem answered him.

How did He answer? As the Plishtim approached to make *milchamah*, all of a sudden

great blasts of thunder came from the sky and the Plishtim were frightened to the roots of their hearts. The roots of their hearts! A tremendous thunder! And a great confusion fell upon the Plishtim!

Now the Bnei Yisroel were not prepared for physical battle. They did nothing – they were only spectators and they saw all of a sudden that the Plishtim were muddling around in confusion. When they saw that, they gathered courage and picked up sticks and stones and clubs and ran after them and they began killing the Plishtim. And they pursued them for a long distance and killed them as they were running away.

That's how they lived during those hundreds of years when there was *ein melech b'Yisroel*, when there was no king in Yisroel except for Hashem. The Am Yisroel did battle by turning to Hakadosh Baruch Hu. It was the great era of **ה' יִלָּחֵם לָכֶם** – *Hashem will fight for you.* The job of the Am Yisroel was only to demonstrate that they were aware of *Hashem Melech*, that He's our King.

But after very many years, that great era came to an end. When Shmuel was already advancing in age an undercurrent of fear began to set in among some of the people. “Shmuel Hanavi is getting old. What's going to happen when he passes away?”

### Modern Attitudes Seep In

And the Torah nation remembered the mitzvah in our *parsha*, ‘And if you will say, ‘Let us put a king over us,’ then **שׂוֹם תָּשִׂים** – *a king you shall appoint.*’ And so, they approached Shmuel Hanavi and said **שִׁימָה לָנוּ מֶלֶךְ** – “Please give us a king” (Shmuel I 8:5).

Now, was Shmuel satisfied with the request of the people? After all, it's a mitzvah – **שׂוֹם תָּשִׂים**. Not at all; he was outraged! **וַיֵּרַע הַדָּבָר בְּעֵינֵי שְׁמוּאֵל** – *It was wicked in the eyes of Shmuel.* “What's

this?!" he said. "What do you mean 'Give us a king!' You're rejecting Hashem! Hashem is your King!"

Shmuel was talking the language of the ancient people, the nation who understood that there was a King sitting on the Throne guiding their affairs. But the styles had begun to change now. Some of that awareness of *Hashem Melech* had begun to dissipate and the people had begun to descend from their old greatness.

### **A New Era Dawns**

Now don't make any mistake about it; they still said *Hashem Melech*. But at that time, a tremendous change set in; the era of **הַשֵּׁם לְהַחֲמִיץ** came to an end. No more would Hashem fight on our behalf like He did in those days. "You want a king?" says Hashem. "So let *him* fight for you!"

And now, once they asked for it, it became a mitzvah. Because when your old-time trust in Hakadosh Baruch Hu is not as vibrant as it used to be and you begin to think *k'chol hagoyim*, like all the gentiles, it's a big change. You want now to live a more natural life? So live naturally, with a natural king. When you sink to that level, *v'amarta*, and you'll say, "I need a king"; now it's a mitzvah.

Once you already have put your head into the halter, you have to keep on pulling away. Once you open your mouth and you make yourself a victim who is subject to naturalism then you have to live naturally. It's not a sin; it's a tragedy.

### **Living Off Of Nothing**

It's like a *kollel* man. A *kollel* man gets married and he lives off the air. He and his wife are idealists; he has to study Torah and she realizes it, and so they live off of nothing. Even nothing costs something but it comes from somewhere. As long as they're very strong in the quality of *bitachon*, it keeps on coming.

And the *tzaddikim* lived that way all their lives. Rav Simcha Zissel *zichrono livracha*, for example. It was *erev yomtov* and they hadn't shopped at all. There was no money in the house. He had a family. The wife was also very pious, but she was looking at him. And he was looking at Hakadosh Baruch Hu. He was walking back and forth in the house and humming a *niggun*. I'm sure the words were something like this: *Ashrei adam oz lo bach* – *Happy is the man whose strength is in You*. He was walking back and forth and humming those words. If his wife was humming, I don't know – that's not mentioned in the story – but I'm sure that she had confidence too. And then all of a sudden, a letter comes from America just before *yomtov* with a big banknote and it was enough to cover everything.

### **Forced Out of Kollel**

But let's imagine now this *kollel* man. After a while, his uncles and his aunts have dinned into his ears – and his wife's ears especially – they've preached to him for so long, "*Ad masai?* How long can you keep on with this business already?" And so after a while, he's influenced and he's no longer what he used to be. He begins to think *k'chol hagoyim*, like all of his aunts and uncles. And then finally the day comes when he has to walk out of the *kollel* and look for a job.

He *must* look for a job now because there's nothing to rely on. He has no *bitachon* anymore so hurry up and get a job! Now that he has descended from that *madreigah*, so Hashem is not his *Melech* in the same degree as before. And so he has to leave the *kollel*; now it's a mitzvah to work.

What does that mean? It means that as long as a man achieves a high *madreigah* of trust, or genuine *bitachon*, then Hakadosh Baruch Hu requites his trust. Now, how exactly it'll happen I can't tell you – I'm not Him. But Hashem has His

ways of managing the world and managing your life. That's what it means 'Melech' - He's the Manager - and so you can be sure that He'll requite your trust one way or another. As long as you make Him your King - it means that you're not relying on the *kollel* check or the *gevir* who supports the *kollel* - then He'll make Himself a King over you.

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## Part III. With The King

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### The Secret of Bitachon

And so we're learning now the secret to the famous subject which is known by the name of *bitachon*. Because the mitzvah of acquiring a confidence that one's affairs are being properly administered by Hakadosh Baruch Hu is not just in a general sense. *Bitachon* means understanding that whatever happens to you is only from Him; that everything is being directed by the King.

It's an idea we say in *ahavah rabah* every day. *Avinu*- Our Father, *av horachamon* - the merciful Father; and then we add, *hamerachem* - the One Who has mercy. It seems to be repetitious: 'The merciful Father, the One Who has mercy.'

### The Only One

But actually each word has a separate meaning; each word when you say it is another chapter of a *mussar sefer*. Only you have to know what you're saying; otherwise it's useless. It's almost nothing.

Number one, Hakadosh Baruch Hu is *av horachamon* - He's our *merciful Father*; that describes Him. Not only He's a Father to us, but He's a merciful Father.

So what does *hamerachem*, 'the One Who does merciful things', mean? It means only He! It's like this. Suppose you went out rowing in Coney Island and accidentally you let go of the oars and

they drifted away. So you're in a little boat on the ocean being buffeted by the waves. You try rowing with your hands. Nothing. You start calling out for help. Nothing. And now you're getting closer and closer to Ireland.

And because you're desperate you cry out, "Hakadosh Baruch Hu! You are the *Av Horachamon*; You are the Merciful One! *Rachem aleinu!* Please save me!"

### The Savior

Then, all of a sudden you hear the whirring of a propeller and there's a Coast Guard helicopter coming down. Ah! What a wonderful sound that is! He comes down from the side of the helicopter and he lowers a ladder to you. You seize it and climb up and you hug him; you kiss him.

He says, "Mister! Please let go of me. I have to fly this thing! Let me drive." But you keep hugging him anyhow; he extricated you from danger! He's your savior!

At that moment you're in great danger because even though you're a big *tzaddik* and you won't forget for a moment that Hakadosh Baruch Hu is merciful, but you're thinking also that there are other merciful causes in the world. Hashem is the *Av Horachamon*, yes, but it was this Coast Guard man who was the *meracheim*; he's the one who had mercy on you. He put his life on the line to lift you up from the water.

Oh, is that a big mistake! It means you haven't learned *bitachon* yet. Because not only is Hashem a 'Merciful Father' but He is *the meracheim*. He's *the only One Who is meracheim*. Forget about anyone else or anything else. If anybody has mercy on you, it's Hakadosh Baruch Hu Who is doing it!

## Higher and Higher

Of course, you have to be grateful to the Coast Guard man. You have to be grateful also to his superiors who sent him out. But you should always remember what it states: *כִּי גְבוּהָ מֵעַל גְבוּהָ שְׁמֵר* – *there's a High One above the high one.* There's an Official over this official.

That's why we say *טוֹב לְהַדוֹת לַהֲשֵׁם* – *it is good to give thanks to Hashem,* *וּלְזַמֵּר לְשִׁמְךָ* – *to sing to Your Name,* *עֲלִיּוֹן* – *the One Who is most high* (Tehillim 92:2). Why is Hakadosh Baruch Hu called 'the Most High'? Because He is *גְבוּהָ מֵעַל גְבוּהָ שְׁמֵר* – *He is the One Who does everything. He's the King pulling all the strings* (Koheles 5:7).

And so when the helicopter finally lands at the Coast Guard Station at Floyd Bennett Field and you start thanking the Coast Guard man again so he points to a building and he says, "Look kid, thank my boss in the office over there. It was the lieutenant there who sent me out. I was just following orders."

So you visit the lieutenant in the office to thank him but he says, "Mister, I'm only doing my job. I take orders from the Coast Guard headquarters."

### Does The President Know?

So imagine you're a persistent fellow and you want to thank the one in charge. So you travel to the headquarters near Washington D.C. and finally you get into the office in the Pentagon. But they send you to the White House. "The President is my boss." That's what the Admiral of the Coast Guard tells you.

So you go to President Carter and he says, "Look my friend, I have nothing to do with this. I'm appointed by the Most High and He is the One Who saved you."

Now, he probably won't say that because he doesn't listen to these lectures; among the many

things he doesn't know, add this to the list. But whether the President is wise enough to say it, that's the truth. And that's what we're supposed to remember at all times; *Hamerachem* – He is the one who has pity on us; only Him.

### Misplaced Trust

Whatever the means, natural or supernatural, they are all triggered by the will of the Most High. And the moment we forget that – let's say you're fifty years old already and you've been saying that word, *hamerachem*, in your *davening* every day but you never yet paid attention to it, so what's going to happen?

All the subordinates begin to misbehave. The President will forget to give orders. Maybe the Pentagon will shirk its duties or the Coast Guard headquarters won't keep tabs on their branches, and the lieutenant will be asleep when the time comes. Or the sergeant who went out in the helicopter to find you will look in the wrong place. And you'll continue on your journey to Ireland.

Of course, sometimes Hakadosh Baruch Hu has His purposes. Even though you ignore Him, He'll bring you home and then you'll have to face the music in a different way, worse than going to Ireland. It will catch up with you because by hook or by crook sooner or later you have to learn this important lesson of *Melech Keil Elyon* – The King Who's Above All. Hakadosh Baruch Hu wants to teach us because success or failure in this knowledge spells success or failure in one's entire life.

### Safety in Him

That's why the safest man, the most secure person, is the one who doesn't trust in anything but the *Melech Elyon*. Because when you transfer your *bitachon* from Hakadosh Baruch Hu to a person or to an object, sooner or later something



is going to happen to teach you a lesson that you made a mistake. And it's a fortunate thing when it happens.

It's like when a man trusts in his ten fingers. The Chovos Halevovos relates that a man once said, "As long as I have my ten fingers, I am assured of *parnassah*."

So what happened the same day? His fingers were caught in the machine and he lost them.

And that's not a punishment. It's a lesson for him – a sad lesson – to take back the trust from his fingers and restore it to Hakadosh Baruch Hu.

### **Rosh Hashanah is Coming**

That's the *seichel* that we especially have to acquire this time of year when we're preparing to make Hashem King over us again. And that's why we repeat every day the words of Dovid Hamelech, **ה' אֹרֵי וְיִשְׁעֵי** – *Hashem is my Light and my Salvation* (Tehillim 27:1).

You have to understand what Dovid was saying here. It wasn't only like we think, that when things look ominous and dark, when you're waiting for the doctor to call you back with the results, or maybe Yom Hadin is coming and you're worried about your pile of sins, so you call out to Hashem, "You are my Light and my Salvation." That's true too but that's not it. Because Dovid said those words in the midst of his success.

### **My Salvation**

You know when Dovid said these words? While he was smashing heads in battle; as he ran into battle brandishing his mace and smashing heads. Dovid was a strong character; he was famous as being a lionhearted man. **לְבוֹ כְּלֵב הַלֵּוֹי** – *His heart was like the heart of a lion*. And as he rushed into battle swinging a battle ax, crushing skulls and backbones, he was a terror to look at. He put fear into the enemy. And as he was

swinging his mace at the cowering enemy soldiers, he said "I'm not afraid because Hashem is my Light and my Salvation."

Now, when we run into battle, we also cry out to Hashem. But it's a different type of cry – it's because we're stuck. Let's say a poor little fellow is drafted, *chalilah*, and he has to run into battle. And now his heart is melting – other things also are melting within him. And so in his last extreme, he turns his eyes to Heaven and he asks for help. Some people became pious, they became real *baalei teshuvah* in the foxholes as the bullets were whistling over their heads. It's easier then to become pious and to think of Hashem. You have nothing else you can do.

But Dovid didn't know what fear was. You know when Dovid went out into battle, he killed 800 opponents in one fray. Eight hundred men, he lay down in one fray! He was successful and accomplished! But he said, "It's not me. **ה' יִשְׁעֵי** My King is my Salvation."

### **My Light**

But first he said **ה' אֹרֵי** – *Hashem is my Light*. It means "Hashem is my *seichel*; He illuminates my mind." Because when you think about Him always, when you achieve that attitude that He is it, that He's your King, so your entire way of looking at the world is guided by the light of that *seichel*.

And because of that, that's why you know that **יִשְׁעֵי** – He's my salvation. Because I know that He's my King, that He's the *Melech Keil Elyon* and that whatever happens for good or for 'bad' is from Him, so I'm safe in His Hands. **אֲפֹהֵר** I have nothing to fear!

### **A Mind of Bitachon**

And so it's the *seichel*, the Torah attitude of *bitachon*, that stands by a person all his life. The

one who never says אָשִׁימָה עָלַי מֶלֶךְ – “I want a human king” he’s the successful one. *Hashem Malkichem!* Hashem is your King! When a person understands that there’s no boss, and there’s no *gevir*; that there’s no *rosh kollel* and no welfare office and no credit union. There’s no bankruptcy lawyer or judge who can save you – there’s only *Hashem Melech*; that’s the great success in a person’s life.

Exactly what type of success it will be, that’s His arrangement; that’s up to His perfect plans. But whatever it is, it’s the tremendous success of acquiring a Torah mind, a mind of *bitachon*. That’s what it means to acquire yourself a King. And as long as you think that way, as long as you live your life saying “*Hashem Melech*,” so your King will be there for you. He’ll be your King and requite your trust in Him.

### Have A Wonderful Shabbos

## Let’s Get Practical

### Learning to Feel His Kingship

In the early days of our people we felt Hashem’s presence among us as our actual King and as a result he requited our trust by coming to our aid again and again. It was only when we began to forget the true meaning of *Hashem Melech* that we were required to take a human king. This week I will *bli neder* follow the Rov’s advice and repeat over and over to myself sometime during the day, “Hashem is My King, He runs the world. My life is in His Hands” etc. B’ezeras Hashem when Rosh Hashana comes around I will have a more tangible feeling that Hashem Yimloch l’olam vaed.

This week’s booklet is based on tapes:

**31** – Hashem Is King | **49** – Reliance on Hashem | **77** – Perspective of History | **138** – Our King | **E-222** – Shmuel, Last of the Shoftim

Q&A WITH RAV AVIGDOR MILLER ZT”L



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### QUESTION

**How can a kollel couple live a normal life if his wife has to go out to work?**

### ANSWER

Now this you have to know is not an ordinary normal life. If you want to live a normal life, you usually won't be much. It's only people who are ready to sacrifice, to live with heroism, to become something exceptional, those are the ones.

Now, you're not required. A woman is not *required* to work to keep her husband in the kollel. Certainly not. But if she's *willing* to do it, it's a greatness and she is distinguished in our nation. She's distinguished in our history. But nobody is obligated to do it.

And certainly it's not a 'normal life'. But it wasn't a 'normal life' when Rabbi Akiva went away for twenty four years and he became the father of our nation in Torah. All the great people live abnormal lives. But it doesn't mean that we are obligated to do it. It's hard to be abnormal.

So let's live normal lives then and be *frum* Jews and be happy with Torah and *mitzvos* and have a nice family and celebrate Shabbos and Yom Tov.

If you're big enough to go a step beyond what's normal then *tavo aleichem brachah*. It's surely good. But see that you're happy when you do it! If you're doing it in unhappiness and you're yearning for what the so-called 'normal life' is then you're not doing it. If you're big enough to live a *kollel* life then you're great! But nobody can force you into it. TAPE # 250 (December 1978)