



## *Parshas Shoftim 2020, live with intention*

*This week's Parsha Perspective is dedicated to the memory of Shlomo Ben Edward. May his soul be uplifted and his memory a blessing.*

Our Parsha outlines the leadership structure for the Jewish nation. We begin with the commandment of appointing judges and law officers to maintain peace and order in each city. Moshe then details specific laws for judges against corruption and perversion of justice. As the Pasuk says (16:20), *“Tzedek Tzedek tirdof - You shall surely pursue justice.”*

Moshe continues and gives over regulations for kings, such as not having many wives or acquiring excessive amounts of wealth. He relates why Kohanim will not inherit any portions in Israel, for G-d is their inheritance. Although they were scheduled by family to work in the Beis Hamikdash, a Kohen always has the right to offer his sacrifices personally.

Moshe then explains rules and regulations against going and listening to sorcery or witchcraft. He describes how to differentiate between a genuine or false Prophet and punishing those who falsely claim that G-d spoke to them.

However, a question comes to mind: When Moshe gives the Mitzvah of anointing a king, he said (17:15), *“you shall surely set a king over yourselves that is chosen by G-d. Be sure to set a king over yourself from your own people; you must not let a foreigner rule over you or one who is not your brother.”* But why did Moshe say two of the same words, *“Som Tasim - You shall surely place,”* when giving the commandment about kings?

Furthermore, when the Jewish nation asked Shmuel HaNavi to place a king over them, he got upset and had to ask G-d for guidance.

As it says (Shmuel 1 8:6), “*Shmuel was very displeased that they said, “give us a king to govern us, and prayed he prayed to G-d.”* Why was Shmuel HaNavi clearly unhappy when the Jewish people asked him for a king if it was a clear Mitzvah to anoint one?!

The Malbim on this Pasuk writes that Moshe used a seemingly extra word is to teach us that once the kingship is established when a king dies, a new king must be placed in his stead. Because it’s a continuous Mitzvah once the Jewish nation settles in the land of Israel and establishes a monarchy.

The Malbim continues in Shmuel 1 (8:6) that Shmuel HaNavi was not upset that the Jewish people asked for a king but rather because it was not the correct time for a king. As the Gemara in Sanhedrin explains (20b), once the Jewish people settle in Israel, they must eradicate Amalek's nation and establish kingship.

However, the Rabbeinu Bachya gives a deeper and more profound explanation. He writes that the cause of Shmuel HaNavi’s anger when asked to anoint a king, was that the Jewish people wanted a king for the wrong reason. They wanted a king “*to judge us like the rest of the nations.*”

They lacked in belief in G-d, that He is the ultimate judge and arbitrator. Hence G-d responds to Shmuel (8:7), “*listen to the demands of the people and everything they tell you. For it is not you that they have rejected; it is Me they have rejected as their king.*”

The Rabbeinu Bachya continues that Moshe’s extra word was to teach the Jewish people that if they wanted a king to fight the wars of G-d. They should certainly establish a monarchy. However, suppose they want a king just to fit in with the rest of the world. In that case, they should unquestionably and absolutely **NOT** appoint a king.

In our daily life, it is imperative that we understand that the intention behind our actions matters. Whether we are praying G-d, giving charity, or even smiling at another person, our intent makes all the difference. Because when your intention is pure, even the smallest of good deeds can go a very long way.

***“Intentions of a man reflects in his actions.”***

*Have a meaningful Shabbos,  
Rabbi Sholom Yemini*