

מצות מינוי מלך

MITZVAS MINUY MELECH



ALLIN

COMPREHENSIVE ESSAY BASED
UPON SOURCES IN NIGLEH ON
THE TOPIC OF

KABOLAS
HAMALCHUS

THE MITZVA OF APPOINTING A
JEWISH KING.

KABOLAS P'NEI MOSHIACH TZIDKEINU

ACCEPTING *the* KING

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...MAIMONIDES
ESTABLISHES
THAT WE HAVE
TO IDENTIFY
THE POTENTIAL
MOSHIACH OF
OUR TIME...

...BUT
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AND NOT
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Foxes in and out of the Temple area. The ancient prophecy of Zecharya, fulfilled in modern times. Moshiach –what can I do to make this cosmic shift, longed for since the beginning of time, happen now?

The prophet Hoshea promises

that the redemption will come when all the people will gather and accept upon themselves one head, appointing a leader from the house of Dovid.¹

The Malbim explains that the revelation of Moshiach will occur when the Jewish people accept

¹ Hoshea 2,2

upon themselves as king the Dovidic leader of the generation of redemption. ²

Sefer Hachinuch questions the commandment of appointing a king. A commandment necessitates something people do. But Hashem already chose Dovid and his descendants forever; the commandment was fulfilled. Sefer Hachinuch clarifies that the command is a mandate for us to establish the sovereignty of the descendent of Dovid.³

Maimonides establishes that we have to identify the potential Moshiach of our time.

But why is the process of revelation in this fashion, and not directly from Hashem?

Dovid's sovereignty is within every fitting male descendent. When Moshiach will emerge, his kingship is already intact;

² Malbim Amos 9,11

³ Sefer Hachinuch Mitzvas Minuy Melech 497

it is Dovid's kingship that has continued and is expressing itself through him. Dovid's appointment is embedded in every one of his descendants.

Seemingly, we are appointing the king who was already appointed some 3000 years ago.

If we look into Dovid's journey to the monarchy, we will understand. We will actually see the same process.

Dovid was anointed by the prophet Shmuel, through Hashem's direct command. Maimonides rules that from the moment of his anointment Dovid merited to the crown of sovereignty, but he didn't immediately become king. Even after the passing of the then king Shaul, Dovid still did not become king. He needed an additional anointment by the people, first the people of the tribe of Yehuda, where he initially led only his

tribe, and then seven years later by the elders of the entire nation, to become ruler of the Jewish people.

The people acknowledged Dovid after the former chief-general of Shaul, Avner, pledged allegiance to Dovid and committed to bring the people to accept Dovid as king. We see in the verses of Shmuel the discussion of Avner with Dovid concerning this plan, Dovid's agreement and Avner's fulfillment of his self-appointed mission.⁴

Dovid, anointed by the prophet from the direct word of Hashem, needs a campaign manager and an election platform.

Avner even stated that just like Hashem promised Dovid, so I will do to him. Metzudos explains: just like Hashem promised to make him king over all the Jews, so I will help Dovid with this issue

⁴ Shmuel II chap 3

of the sovereignty.⁵

Hashem promised. He needs Avner's help to fulfill?

In a sense, because the people needed to accept him. Dovid didn't become king through Divine wonders. Only through Avner's efforts did the people decide they wanted Dovid to be their king. Then the elders, representing all the Jews, said, "behold we are your bones and your flesh" expressing how fused the people desired to be with the king.⁶

The reasoning behind this seeming incongruous disparity, that Hashem's words and the prophet's anointment didn't cause the kingship, but Avner's popular campaign did, is based on a principal of our Sages, "there is no king without a people." A king only exists by

⁵ Metzudos Dovid Shmuel II 3,9

⁶ Shmuel II 5,1

virtue of people believing in him as such.⁷

Dovid was anointed three times, by the prophet Shmuel, by the tribe of Yehuda and by the elders of the Jewish people. According to Jewish law it is forbidden to anoint a king with the special anointing oil who has already been so anointed. Here it was permissible because the first two times didn't make him king as he didn't have the popular acceptance of the people. He only became king with the people's coronation. Shlomo also had two anointments because the first time was exclusively with the people of Yerushalayim. To be king he needed the entire Jewish people, and that is what happened by the second anointment. In both of these cases, the people's acceptance is creating a legal situation that did not exist previously.

⁷ Pirkei DiRebbe Eliezar chap 1; Rabbeinu Bichayeh Vayeshev 38,30

This entire example with Dovid is relevant, and especially when we recognize how Moshiach and Dovid are so intertwined. All aspects of Dovid are a microcosm of Moshiach. This is the reason Maimonides, in writing the laws of Moshiach, quotes verses containing two phrases. In each, the first phrase refers to Dovid and the second to Moshiach. By Dovid in a small way, by Moshiach in a complete fashion. Dovid's inability to rule until the people's acceptance of him, despite being chosen by Hashem, is a powerful message about our need to accept Moshiach, to enable him to redeem the Jewish people and the entire world.

Moshiach already has the 'crown of sovereignty' which Dovid received through his anointment by the prophet Shmuel and the appointment to kingship which was given to Dovid when he was further anointed by the Jewish

people. But in order to reveal the sovereignty of Moshiach in actuality, there must be the acceptance of his rulership by the people of that generation.

Dovid was appointed by the people, yet his successors need to have the people's acceptance of their reign.

We see historically it's a necessary component. Creating a critical juncture in the line of the Dovidic kings, Queen Asalya tried to wipe out every descendant of Dovid, to destroy his line and become the sole ruler of the Jews without any fear of competition. She almost achieved her diabolical goal, but there was one child, a year-old baby, Yoash, that was hidden from her murderers. Asalya's brother in law, the high priest Yehoyada, smuggled Yoash and his nursemaid into the temple, and for six years Yoash was hidden

with his nursemaid in the attic area of the Holy of Holies. When Yoash was a seven-year-old child, Yehoyada made a covenant with the high officers that they would do whatever they could to restore Yoash's rule, and then they all declared together, "Yechi Hamelech," "Long live the king." This was a mindful prerequisite. Yehoyada knew that they needed to do an action that expressed their nullification to Yoash's rule. Though this seven-year-old child was innately king as the heir of Dovid's line, and he is referred to in the verses as 'king' because he was the king before anyone even knew of his existence, but for his kingship to be actualized, he needed the people's nullification to him. Yechi Hamelech was the traditional expression of the people's nullification to the king's rule. Therefore, Yehoyada and the officers proclaimed this to seven-year-old Yoash, to actualize his rulership by their formal

acceptance of it.⁸

Similarly with Shlomo, Dovid declared that Shlomo would be his successor. Then Dovid said that the people should proclaim “Long live the king” to Shlomo.⁹ This act of acceptance of his reign by the people made Shlomo the king in actuality. Dovid’s statement was not enough.

We see that Dovid’s successors need acceptance by the people, even though they are innately king by virtue of Dovid’s rule. In the commandment of the appointment of the king there are two dimensions. The first is the appointment the first time of Hashem’s king, as happened to Dovid when the elders of the Jews accepted him as king over the Jewish people. The second aspect is the future generation’s acceptance of the sovereignty of Dovid’s descendants.

⁸ Kings II chap 11

⁹ Kings I 1,34

Most significantly we see this with Moshiach himself. Since the completion of his kingship is through the people accepting his authority, Rabbi Akiva proclaimed Bar Kochva as the Moshiach.¹⁰ He realized Bar Kochva fulfilled the criterion of Moshiach; his proclamation impacted the process of revelation. Based on this, when we identify a leader from the line of Dovid who has all the attributes of Moshiach, we too should acknowledge him as such. As the nation identifies the Dovidic king and accepts his authority, this is the beginning of his revelation from a legal perspective- and Maimonides describes for us the criterion by which we can identify Moshiach. Criterion are only needed before the official reign. Then we need them to determine the man who is the Moshiach, to fulfil our obligation of appointing the king.

¹⁰ Talmud Yerushalmi Taanis chap 4, halacha 5

When we identify the person who fulfills all the criterion, we know the time has come for us to accept his sovereignty.

This explains why Maimonides, in his magnum opus dedicated exclusively to law, enumerated the criterion of Moshiach. The criterion have legal status because of our Torah obligation to identify Moshiach by these signs.

Exile began with the rejection of the Dovidic reign, and this will be rectified by the restoration of the Dovidic reign at the beginning of the redemption.¹¹ When the nation identifies and requests the revelation of Moshiach, fulfilling the prophecy of Hoshea, “and they will seek ... Dovid their king,” this is the beginning that allows the ultimate revelation with the redemption.¹²

11 Yalkut Shimoni II Remez 106

12 Hoshea 3,5

Concerning this verse of Hoshea, “and they will seek the Almighty their G-d and Dovid their king,” the Metzudos explains, they will seek Moshiach who comes from the seed of Dovid, and from him they will seek their request that he should rule them. This is critical is the process of the revelation of Moshiach.

Beyond the legal ramifications, the historical aspect and the prophecies, the concept of the Jewish people accepting Moshiach to enable him to rule is an expression of a deep kabbalistic truth. “There is no king without a people.” We allow Hashem’s sovereignty on the world by our coronation of Him. Our sages say, “Hashem requests, say before me the verses of malchios, sovereignty, to coronate Me upon you.”¹³ Kabbalistically, as explained by Rav Chaim Vital in the Prei

13 Rosh Hashana 16,1

Eitz Chayim in the name of the Arizal, the dimension of Malchus, sovereignty, has nothing of its own, constructing it is only through the acceptance of its authority by creations. On the eve of Rosh Hashana, Hashem's desire for creation retreats. Then, with the blasts of the shofar and prayers on Rosh Hashana expressing our self-nullification to Him and His reign, Hashem once again accepts our coronation and rules this world.

"The kingship of this world is like the kingship of Heaven."¹⁴ Therefore we see this pattern by the kingdoms of Dovid and Moshiach. Both in the Talmud Sanhedrin and in the Zohar, Dovid and Moshiach are referred to as "bar nafli," miscarriage, in a fallen state. Establishing the kingdom of Moshiach from its fallen state occurs when the Jewish people accept his

¹⁴ Brachos 58,1

sovereignty, causing his rule to be revealed.¹⁵

Kings on this world reflect Hashem's kingship. The third Lubavitcher Rebbe, the Tzemach Tzedek, explores the need for a king.¹⁶ Since we don't have the ability to be completely nullified to Hashem, we need to connect to the person who is truly nullified. At the same time this selfless person needs to be fitting as king, nullified to Hashem and connecting the people to Hashem. This is a human we can relate to, who is completely fused with Hashem and can help us come closer. We need a human king as for us Hashem is an abstract reality. When we accept this human as Hashem's representative, we can nullify ourselves to him and through him connect to Hashem Himself.

The human king is a

¹⁵ Sanhedrin 96,2; Zohar I 55,1

¹⁶ Derech Mitzvosecha, Mitzvas Minuy Melech

representative of Hashem's sovereignty. Since with Hashem we need arouse His will to reign, the same is with the human king. For him as well, "There is no king without a people." Therefore, our acceptance of the king's sovereignty is as critical for his kingship as is our acceptance of Hashem's reign every Rosh Hashana.

Additionally, Moshiach is the highest of the five comprehensive souls of all times, as explained by the Ramaz to the Zohar.¹⁷ There are five levels of soul, and there is one person who is the absolute embodiment of each level. Dovid nefesh, Eliyahu ruach, Moishe neshama, Adam chaya and the highest human embodying the highest aspect of soul- Moshiach yechida. Every Jew has in the core of each level of soul a spark of the comprehensive soul of that level; each of us has at the core

of our yechida, our highest level of soul, a spark of the soul of Moshiach.¹⁸ When a Jew accepts the sovereignty of Moshiach, he is gifting Moshiach with the power of his spark. Through this process, Moshiach is receiving his life as Moshiach and the ability to reveal the absoluteness of his sovereignty.

From all of the sources we have seen one unifying message: we empower Moshiach. Hashem has placed the key to redemption in our hands; He trusts us to use it. For the sake of every human on this planet, for the sake of every soul waiting above, for the sake of Hashem longing for this world to be His home- accept Moshiach now.

17 Ramaz on Zohar III 260,2

18 Mi'or Einayim end Parshas Pinchas