

PARASHAT SHOFTIM-2014, 5744

The Torah commands that the King of Israel, upon ascending the throne should write for himself a double copy of the Torah (17:18). According to Gemara Sanhedrin (21b) one copy was to be placed *B'vait Ginozauv*, in his private chambers of archives and the other was to accompany him at all times wherever he went. I once heard from Rabbi Hershel Kurzroch, that with this act, the king acknowledged that the Torah was meant for him too, and that he was not above the law. This conscientious faithfulness to the teaching of Torah was to be the hallmark rule of conduct for his entire life.

The Torah that was kept in his private chambers served as a constant symbolic reminder for his obligation to adhere to the Mitzvot of Torah even in the strict secrecy of his most personal and private life. As far as the other copy of the Torah is concerned, to accompany him wherever he went, The Torah elaborates (17:19) “He shall read from it all the days of his life, so that he will learn to fear HaShem his G-d, to observe all the words of this Torah and these decrees, and to perform them”, which Chatam Sofer interprets to mean, that the king must “read” and “see” in the Torah all that is happening to him and the events of his life are to be found within the words of the Torah. The king would have no need or desire to seek guidance or advice from outside sources.

R' Shimon states (Gemara Shabbat 67a) that “all Jews are considered as “*Bnei Melachim*”-princes- and of kingly stature. Every one of us, like the king, must strive to develop a Torah personality, to the extent that it will permeate every aspect of our life. This parasha, which is always read at beginning of Elul reminds us to faithfully and loyally practice the Mitzvot even *b'chadrei chadarim*, in the privacy of our personal life as well as our interpersonal relations, socially, and particularly, in the business world. Gemara Shabbat (31a) states, that at end of our life, when we are brought to face our judgment in Din we will have to answer the question, “Did you conduct yourself honestly in business?” This question is not limited to strictly business but refers to all interactions that we may have engaged in the world of society. We are, and pride ourselves as being “*Banim LaMakom*” Children of G-d, but that also places a great responsibility upon us, a reputation which we have to uphold.

Of course, to approach proper Torah living, knowledge of Torah is indispensable. To which the Gemara Berachot (63b) suggests, “Organize groups and study Torah together, for Torah is attained only through group study. *Limud HaTorah*, Torah study should be considered as much a religious experience as Tefillah-prayer. By incorporating *Talmud Torah Betzibbur*-group Torah study, the level of learning is enhanced. Each member of the group adds some enlightenment and depth into the subject of Torah, and *Berov Am Hadrat Melech*, every participant feels the uplifting of the group Torah dynamics.