Where is the King?

Written by Rabbi Yaakov Asher Sinclair

I. Radio Drama

The year is 1943. In a farmhouse of a remote French village, two shadowy figures struggle to move aside a fake stove. Behind the stove sits a primitive but powerful radio, covered in newspaper.

One of the figures bends silently over the radio and with well-practiced hands coax it into life. Its vacuum tubes start to glow dully, and the sound of airwaves, of static, can be heard escaping from his large baerelite headphones. Suddenly the hissing and popping of the static clears and the unmistakable sound of a lone timpani drum quietly fills the room.

Quietly, ever so quietly, it sounds out a letter in Morse code: Short, short, short, long. Short, short, short, long. ...—, ...—. The letter is the letter "V". "V" for victory. Then a voice: "The night is your friend. The V is your sign..."

The Free French government was in exile in London. In its stead, a puppet regime ruled, but the people were loyal to their leader even though he was far away.

Nightly, they listened, hoping for a few words, a message of encouragement from their leader. For, however far away he was, they would never desert or be unfaithful to him. They longed for the day when he would emerge from exile and free them from their oppressors.

II. A Brief History of Kings

Where have all the kings gone?

As part of the Creation, Hashem wanted there to be a tangible symbol of His Kingship. From this symbol we would be able to catch the smallest glimpse, the most distant echo of the Glory of Heaven, its Awesomeness and its Majesty. For this reason He created kings.

A few hundred years ago, kings ruled with absolute authority in their lands. More recently, nations have been unwilling to give to their rulers unbounded dominion; rather the king has been placed under the rule of the state.

With the advent of the republic, the notion of kingship has been virtually extinguished. There remain but a few nations where he may enjoy a broad power-base, he must expend vast amounts of time, money and energy flattering the spectrum of political interests to assure his re-election.

The tenure of a president is transitory. Even in countries where he may enjoy a broad power-base, he must expend vast amounts of time, money and energy flattering the spectrum of political interests to assure his re-election.

Since monarchy was created only to give us a microcosmic semblance of the Heavenly Kingship, how should we understand this ebbing of the power of kings? In other words, if the earthly monarchy is no more than a reflection of Hashem’s Kingship, and a means to make it easier for us to accept His Dominion upon ourselves, why has the power and the status of monarchy been allowed to wane?

Hashem relates to us through ‘measure for measure.’ When the world at large believed in G-d, we were afforded an ever present representation of Hashem’s Kingship in the form of the rule of kings. When the world turned to atheism, there was a concomitant withdrawal of the power of kings.

The basic tenet of Judaism is that Hashem is One. When a king united his people he was also the symbol of their unity. Today, on the other hand, political parties by definition stand for diffusion and separation. This is but a mirror of the fact that the world has turned its back on Hashem’s Oneness.

Only when the world perceives the Oneness of Hashem will kingship return to mankind.

III. The Return of the King

For some two thousand years, the Jewish People has been ‘sitting by its radio,’ listening attentively, waiting for the return of the King.

The false monarchy of atheism, the puppet regimes of hedonism and materialism seem to rule unchecked, but from His exile, the King still rules.

He is in hiding. We do not see Him. But we continue an unremitting guerrilla war against His enemies. We will never be subjugated to them, never accept their rulership.

And He continues to rule, even though we do not see Him. He rules in secret, in hiding. And we sit by our ‘spiritual radios’ — our Holy Torah, receiving instructions from Him.

We long for the day when He will return to us and the world will acknowledge Him as Ruler. When kingship will return to the House of David and there will come a Rosh Hashanah when we will crown Him, not in exile, but revealed for all the world to see.

• Based on Alei Shor, Vol. 2 M Achichuyos, by Rabbi Shlomo Wolbe.

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