

A SHORT VORT

BY RABBI CHANOKH YERES
RAV, BEIT KNESSET BEIT YISRAEL, YEMIN MOSHE

ואמרת אשימה עלי מלך (יז:יד)

לבלתי רום לבבו מאחיו ולבלתי סור מן המצוה ימין ושמאל (יז:כ)

"And you shall say "I will set a king over me"" (17:14)

"That his heart be not lifted up above his brothers and that he turns not aside from the commandment, to the right or the left." (17:20)

While describing the intrinsic qualities of a king, why are the characteristics of strength and bravery not at the forefront? Why the need to emphasize where his heart lies towards his subjects? The Ramban (Rabbi Moshe ben Nachman 1194-1270, Spain-Acco) points to the prohibition against arrogance. If the Torah alludes that even a king must restrain his feelings of conceit and haughtiness, how much more so, we who do not have such status and prestige. As king, one might assume the necessity of acting with prominence and eminence. Nevertheless, vanity and egotism are reprehensible qualities to G-d in all his people including a king. The lofty ideas of greatness and glorification are reserved only to G-d himself. As stated in the Book of Mishlei (16:5) "Every man that is proud in heart is an abomination to G-d." - Shabbat Shalom

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