

Long Live the Constitution (Vezot Haberachah)

“There is something behind the throne greater than the King himself.” -William Pitt The Elder Chatham**

Since the beginning of civilization, kings and rulers have been a necessary part of the hierarchical and organizational structure of society. Once a community, society or country reaches a certain size and sophistication, there needs to be someone charged with leading it. For the majority of history, that person was a King.

However, being American-born and mostly American-educated, I have a special affinity and even love for the U.S. Constitution. It enshrines and codifies the supremacy of principles over personalities and has largely protected the country from the excesses that can accompany unchecked power. There is something greater than the appointed ruler.

Ibn Ezra on Deuteronomy 33:5 makes a related connection. The Torah in the verse speaks of a King, but Ibn Ezra explains that it is really alluding to the Torah itself. Not only the majesty, the nobility, the grandeur, the necessity and the requirement of having, respecting and honoring the Torah, but also the supremacy that Torah should have in our lives. The Torah stands above individual leaders and authorities. Its principles and instructions are the ones we need to follow, more so than any appointed official or royal personality.

May we find the kingly principles of the Torah that apply to us and pay them proper homage.

Shabbat Shalom and Chag Sameach,

Ben-Tzion

Dedication

To 18 years of writing and sending out these Torah Shorts. This one is my planned last one. Other things likely to come in the future. Thanks to all of the subscribers, supporters and cheerleaders throughout the years, and especially to my mother, who reviewed almost all of them throughout all these years.