

# HAKHEL AND THE PARSHA OF THE KING

*Why was “the Parsha of the king” in Parshas  
Shoftim read at Hakhel?*

*A fascinating connection between the king’s  
obligation to write a Sefer Torah and the  
Mitzvah of Hakhel*

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## DO YOU NEED A KING FOR HAKHEL?

The Mitzvah of Hakhel is found in Parshas Vayeilech<sup>1</sup>.

*And Moshe commanded them as follows, At the end of seven years, at the set time of the Shemittah year, on the Festival of Sukkos, When all Yisrael comes to appear before Hashem your G-d in the place that He will choose, you shall **read this Torah, before all of Yisrael**, that they may hear it.*

*Gather the people - men, women, children, and the strangers in your communities, that they may hear and that they may learn to fear Hashem your G-d and guard to observe every word of this Torah.*

### NO KING REQUIRED

These Pesukim do not mention that the Torah must be read by the king. The Torah simply says "you must read this Torah before all of Yisrael", without identifying who this 'you' is.

Prior to this passage, Moshe was addressing the Kohanim and the Zekeinim (elders), instructing them to take the Sefer Torah that he had written and given to them and to place it in the Aron<sup>2</sup>. Immediately afterwards, the Torah introduces the Mitzvah of Hakhel "and he commanded them saying at the end of seven years...".

This would seem to suggest that the directive to read the Torah at Hakhel was referring to one of the Kohanim or Zekeinim and not to a king.

Indeed, there are many commentators and Halachic authorities who write that in the

Mitzvah of Hakhel, the Torah does not need to be read by the king and could be read by someone else, such as the Kohanim<sup>3</sup> or elders.

The Ralbag writes that the Torah was read either by the king, the Kohen Gadol or the Nosi. Abarbanel writes that the Torah is read by the Gadol of the nation, either a king or a Shofeit (judge).

The Minchas Chinuch<sup>4</sup>, on the Mitzvah of Hakhel writes; "I do not know whether the requirement that the king read is a Halacha L'Moshe Misinai (an oral tradition) and if there is no king, there is no Mitzvah, and if so, the Mitzvah was not observed until the time of Shaul. Or, perhaps the king is not necessary, but merely the greatest person of the generation..." He concludes "and this makes more logical sense".

In his work Antiquities of the Jews<sup>5</sup>, Josephus records the laws taught by Moshe before his passing, including the Mitzvah of Hakhel. He records that the reading was performed by the Kohen Gadol.

*"When the multitude are assembled together unto the holy city for sacrificing every seventh year, at the feast of tabernacles, let the high priest stand upon a high desk, whence he may be heard, and let him read the laws to all the people; and let neither the women nor the children be hindered from hearing, no, nor the servants neither; for it is a good thing that those laws should be engraven in their souls, and preserved in their memories, that so it may not be possible to blot them out; for by this means they*

*will not be guilty of sin, when they cannot plead ignorance of what the laws have enjoined them. "*

One of the questions used to support the understanding that the reading of Hakhel need not be done by the king, is that if the king is required to read at Hakhel, how was the Mitzvah observed throughout the period of the Judges, the first king was anointed<sup>6</sup>?

### **A KING IS REQUIRED**

In contrast to this position, most of the authorities and codifiers seem to be of the view that the Hakhel reading had to be done by the king.

In his commentary on the Torah, Rashi writes "the king was the one who would read". Rashi explains the simple (literal) understanding of the verses, suggesting that the requirement of a king is clearly understood from the verses of Hakhel themselves<sup>7</sup>.

The Mishna<sup>8</sup> calls the reading at Hakhel "The Parsha of the king"<sup>9</sup>. The Mishna describes how the Sefer Torah would be given to the king and how he would read from it. The Mishna also describes the Hakhel reading by king Agripas, the last king from the Hasmonean dynasty before the destruction of the second Temple<sup>10</sup>.

It seems that Chaza"l understood that the reading at Hakhel had to be performed by the king and that it was a Mitzvah entrusted to him.

Many of the earliest codifiers of the Mitzvos write that the king was the one who had to read. Some even listed this as a separate

Mitzvah to the gathering of the people. These include; the Yereim<sup>11</sup>, Baal Halachos Gedolos<sup>12</sup> and Rabbi Saadiah Gaon<sup>13</sup> all write that the king was the one who had to read the Torah at Hakhel.

In his outline of the Mitzvah, the Sefer Hachinuch<sup>14</sup> writes "we are commanded for the Jewish people to gather... and to read before them from the Book of Mishneh Torah," without mentioning that the king would read. But in the details of the Mitzvah he writes "the king was the one obligated to read". He further writes that if he did not, he was nullifying the observance of the Mitzvah.

The Rambam records the Mitzvah of Hakhel in the laws of Chagigah. In the first Halacha<sup>15</sup>, where he defines the essence of the Mitzvah, he does not mention that the king reads the Torah. But in a subsequent Halacha he writes that the king would read from the Torah.

### **WHAT IS THE SOURCE FOR REQUIRING A KING?**

As stated above, the Torah does not specify who should read the Torah at Hakhel. If anything, it seems that Moshe was addressing the Kohanim and Zekeinim. So from where do the sages and the authorities quoted above derive that the reading must be performed by the king?

One possibility, as suggested by the Minchas Chinuch, is that it is a Halacha Lemoshe Misinai – an unwritten oral transmission as taught to Moshe Rabbeinu.

The Sefer Mitzvos Gadol<sup>17</sup> writes that we derive this from the Neviim. The Sefer Mitzvos Katan explains that it is derived from the



Book of Kings<sup>18</sup> recording of king Yoshiyahu's public reading of the Torah;

*"And the king sent forth and all of the elders of Yehuda and Yerushalaim gathered to him and the king ascended to the House of Hashem... and all of the people from small to old and he read in their ears all of the words of the Book of the Covenant that was found in the House of Hashem".*

A subsequent verse describes how the king stood upon a platform and exhorted the people to observe the commandments. These verses are very similar to the Torah's description of Hakhel and it is suggested that this was indeed a Hakhel gathering.

The difficulty with this explanation is how can we derive the interpretation and application of a Biblical Mitzvah from the later writings of the Neviim and Kesuvim. How would we have known this requirement before the Neviim were recorded?

In his commentary on the Mishna, the Tosfos Yomtov writes that the requirement that the king read the Torah can be derived from Parsha of the Mitzvah of Hakhel itself. Even though Moshe was addressing the Kohanim and Zekeinim, the word תקרא - "**You** shall read" is written in singular form. Prior to addressing the Kohanim and Zekeinim, Moshe had addressed Yehoshua;

*"Then Moshe called Yehoshua and said to him in the sight of all Yisrael: "Be strong and resolute, for it is you who shall go with this people into the land that Hashem swore to their fathers to give them, and it is you who shall apportion it to them".*

Presumably, when reverting to singular form in his instruction to read the Torah at Hakhel, Moshe is addressing Yehoshua. Yehoshua was a king. Even though he did not have the title of Melech, as the ultimate leader of the generation, in his time, he had the status of a king<sup>19</sup>.

From this we can derive that the reading at Hakhel had to be fulfilled by Yehoshua's corresponding counterpart in future generations, i.e. the king.

### **THE PARSHA OF THE KING**

In his commentary on the Gemara, Rashi writes that we learn that the king must read from the Sifri on "the Parsha of the king", which reads *את משנה התורה הזאת*<sup>21</sup>.

"The Parsha of the king" in Rashi refers to the passage in Parshas Shoftim<sup>20</sup> which details the Mitzvah of appointing a king and the Mitzvos that apply to him. One of these Mitzvos is for the king to write a Sefer Torah which he would keep with him at all times.

*"When he is seated on his royal throne, he shall have (a copy of) this Mishneh Hatorah written for him on a scroll by the Kohanim Haleviim. And it shall be with him and he shall read in it all his life, so that he may learn to fear Hashem his G-d, to observe faithfully every word of this Torah as well as these laws."*

The verse uses the term "Mishneh Hatorah". Mishneh Torah usually refers to the Book of Devarim. The Sifri notes that the king had to have a copy of the entire Sefer Torah, not just the Book of Devarim. We learn this from

the later verse which says "every word of this Torah". So why does the earlier Pasuk refer to the king's Torah as Mishneh Torah?

The Sifri answers it is because in the future it will change - עתידה להשתנות - relating the word Mishneh to the word Lehishtanos, meaning to change. Others (Acherim) say that it is because at Hakhel, we only read from the Book of Mishneh Torah (Devarim).

Presumably, the first answer "that it will change in the future", refers to the change in the script of the Sefer Torah in the times of Ezra, as recorded in the Gemara<sup>22</sup>. This is in accordance with the opinion that the Torah was initially written in Ksav Ivri (ancient Hebrew) and later, Ezra the scribe instituted that the Torah should be written in Ksav Ashuri (square letters in the form of how we write the Sefer Torah now). This change is alluded to in the Torah, which refers to the Torah of the king as Mishneh Hatorah.

The answer of Acherim is a different explanation of why the king's Torah is called Mishneh Hatorah and that it is an allusion to the fact that all of the passages read at Hakhel<sup>23</sup> come exclusively from the Book of Devarim.

The Meiri<sup>24</sup> quotes a different Girsah (version) of the text of the Sifri, that the king's Sefer Torah is called Mishneh Hatorah because עתידה להשתנות, that in the future it will be taught. According to this version, the word Mishneh is related to the word שינון, meaning to teach, as in the verse in the Shema ושנתם לבניך "and you shall teach it to your children". This itself is a reference to the public reading of the Torah at Hakhel.

Based on this version, the Acherim in the Sifri are adding a further allusion to Hakhel from the fact that the king's Torah is called Mishneh Torah.

With this we can understand Rashi's commentary on the Gemara that the requirement for the king to read at Hakhel is derived from the Sifri on "the Parsha of the king", which reads את משנה התורה הזאת. Chaza"l connect these words that refer to the kings' Sefer Torah, to the public reading at Hakhel.

### **IF THERE IS NO KING**

The obvious ramification of this debate is whether the Mitzvah of Hakhel could be observed in the absence of a king.

This question would have been relevant in the years before Shaul was anointed as the first king. It would also have been relevant during the greater part of the second Temple era, where there was no king until the miracle of Chanukah when the Chashmonaim reinstated a monarchy<sup>25</sup>. It was also a point of discussion in the various campaigns to re-establish a Zecher Lehakhel in modern times.

Another question that needs to be addressed is how the authorities who write that a king is not required reconcile their position with the Mishna which calls the Hakhel reading "the Parsha of the king" and describe how the king would receive and read the Sefer Torah?

### **THE REBBE'S CHAKIRA**

Even according to the authorities who write that the king should read the Torah at Hakhel, it is still possible to argue that it was

not integral to Hakhel and that the Mitzvah could be observed in the absence of a king.

The Lubavitcher Rebbe<sup>26</sup> presents the following Chakira (a term used to refer to an investigation into the nature or dynamic of a subject being analysed) on the reading by the king at Hakhel, which could be viewed in one of two ways;

Is it a requirement of Hakhel that the king read the Torah or is it a requirement of the king to read the Torah at Hakhel?

The practical outcome of this Chakira is whether the king is integral to Hakhel or not. If it is a requirement of the Mitzvah of Hakhel itself, then the king is essential and without a king the Mitzvah could not be fulfilled. If it is a requirement of the king i.e. that he should be the one to read, then it is not integral to the Mitzvah of Hakhel and the Mitzvah could still be fulfilled without a king by having someone else read.

The Rebbe explains that the answer to this Chakira depends on the source from which we derive the king's obligation to read.

One possibility is that we derive the requirement from the passage of Hakhel itself. As discussed above, when the Torah says "you shall read" Moshe is addressing Yehoshua who has the status of a king. Based on this, the requirement that the king read the Torah is an integral element of the Mitzvah of Hakhel as it is learned from the Torah's command of the Mitzvah of Hakhel itself.

This appears to be the understanding of Rashi on the Torah. Rashi's commentary is

Peshuto Shel Mikra - the literal understanding of the verse being explained. When Rashi writes "the king was the one who would read", he is reading this understanding from the Pesukim themselves.

Another view is that we derive the king's obligation to read at Hakhel from the Mitzvah for the king to write a Sefer Torah as found in Parshas Shoftim. This is based on the interpretation of the Sifri as discussed above, that is brought by Rashi as the source for the king reading at Hakhel.

According to this view, where the king reading at Hakhel is not derived from the Pesukim about Hakhel, but rather from the laws of the kings, it could be argued that the king's reading at Hakhel is not a requirement of the Mitzvah of Hakhel itself. Rather it is one of the king's personal Mitzvos, like the his Mitzvah to write a Sefer Torah and the prohibitions of amassing too much wealth, marrying too many wives and acquiring too many horses.

This would mean that if there was a king, he would have the personal Mitzvah to be the one to read, but not as an integral element of the Mitzvah of Hakhel itself.

This would also explain why the Mishna refers to the Hakhel reading as Parshas Hamelech, as opposed to Parshas Hakhel, highlighting that it was a Mitzvah of the king.

## **WHICH TORAH SCROLL?**

The Rebbe<sup>28</sup> suggests another practical difference that would arise based on which

passage we use to derive the king's obligation to read the Torah at Hakhel.

If we derive the requirement from the Parsha of Hakhel itself, then it would appear that the king would read from the Sefer Torah written by Moshe Rabbeinu, which is the Torah referred to immediately before the Mitzvah of Hakhel. Moshe instructs the Kohanim to "take this Sefer Hatorah and place it in the Aron". This Torah is known as the Sefer Haazarah<sup>29</sup>.

If we derive the king's reading as a personal obligation from the passage of the laws of the king, then it would seem that the king would read from his personal Sefer Torah<sup>30</sup> at Hakhel - the one that is referred to as "Mishneh Hatorah" which alludes to the reading of Hakhel as discussed above.

### **AN AMAZING CHIDDUSH ON THE KING'S MITZVAH TO WRITE A TORAH**

In his scholarly work on the Sefer Hamitzvos of Rabbeinu Saadiah Gaon, Rabbi Yerucham Fishel Perlow (Poland 1846-1934) writes a novel explanation on this topic. Not only does he assert that the king would read from his own personal Sefer Torah at Hakhel, he writes that the entire purpose of the Mitzvah for a king to write a Sefer Torah is to have it for the Hakhel reading and that they are the one-and-same Mitzvah<sup>31</sup>.

He points out how the Mitzvah of Hakhel and the Mitzvah for a king to write a Torah scroll employ similar terminology. Both passages write that the Torah be to read in order to learn and to fear Hashem and to observe "all of the words of this Torah." When

the Torah says that the Torah scroll of the king "*shall be with him and he shall read in it all his life*", it is referring to the reading at Hakhel.

### **A CONTRADICTION IN THE RASA"G**

With this Chiddush, Rabbi Perlow reconciles a number of contradictions between two of the poetic works of Rabbeinu Saadiah Gaon, the Sefer Hamitzvos and the Azharos.

In his Sefer Hamitzvos, where he enumerates the 613 Mitzvos in Poetic form, Rabbeinu Saadiah Gaon lists two separate Mitzvos relating to Hakhel; For the king to read the Torah and for the people to gather.

In the positive individual Mitzvos<sup>32</sup> he writes והמלך יקראנה בלהקים "and the king will read it Belahakim". The word Lahakim is made up of the letters of the word Bekahalim - in gatherings (from the root קהל)<sup>33</sup>, referring to the time of the gathering of Hakhel.

Rasa"g writes expressly that the reading was performed by the king. He places this in the section of the individual Mitzvos because it is a personal Mitzvah of the king.

In the section of the communal Mitzvos<sup>34</sup> he writes והעם בתרועת מלך מועדים "and the people at the blowing (of the trumpet) of the king, will gather". This refers to the Mitzvah of the people to gather. They were gathered by the sounding of trumpets as described in the Tosefta<sup>35</sup>.

Rabbi Perlow makes a further observation. In the Sefer Hamitzvos, Rasa"g does not record the personal Mitzvah for the king to write his own Sefer Torah. This is strange because

it is an explicit Mitzvah in Parshas Shoftim that is counted in all other similar works as one of the 613 Mitzvos<sup>36</sup>.

Another work attributed to Rabbeinu Saadiah Gaon is the Azharos – a liturgical poem based on the Ten Commandments, that lists the Mitzvos written in the form of an acrostic of the letters of the Alef-Beis in forwards and reverse order.

Concerning the Mitzvah of Hakhel he writes; רב מהיר יקרא ספר במועד שמיטת עדני - "a swift master will read the scroll at the time of the Shemittah". Here Rasa"g does not mention that the reading is performed by the king as he does in the Sefer Hamitzvos, but rather that it is read by a master or sage.

In the Azharos, Rasa"g makes no mention of the Mitzvah of the people gathering.

In a further difference, in the Azharos, Rasa" g does record the Mitzvah of the king to write a Sefer Torah, writing השבעת לקצין לכתוב - "You have adjured the leader to write for himself Patshegen, but he should teach it to bring righteousness." Patshegen is a Persian term found in the Megillah which means a "copy", referring here to the Torah scroll of the king.

The addition of the words "he should teach it" alludes to Hakhel where the king would read from this Torah scroll before the Jewish people.

Rabbi Perlow explains that according to Rabbeinu Saadiah Gaon the Mitzvah of Hakhel is a communal Mitzvah for the people to gather for Hakhel where the Torah is

read. The gathering and the reading form one Mitzvah. The Mitzvah of Hakhel does not require the king per se, as indicated in the Azharos where he writes that a "master" should read.

There is an additional personal Mitzvah for the king to read the Torah at Hakhel which requires him to write a Sefer Torah for this purpose. As such, the personal Mitzvah for the king to write a Sefer Torah and for the king to read at Hakhel, is counted as a single Mitzvah.

This is why in each of the two works, Rasa"g only records two Mitzvos. In the Sefer Hamitzvos he records (1) the Mitzvah of the Hakhel gathering - for the people to gather and (2) the king's Mitzvah to read at Hakhel. He does not mention the separate Mitzvah for the king to write a Sefer Torah because this is included in the king's Mitzvah to read the Torah at Hakhel.

In the Azharos he records (1) the Mitzvah of the Hakhel by referring to the reading (which could be done by anyone) and at the time of Shemittah. Later he records (2) the Mitzvah of the king to write a Sefer Torah which is for the purpose of fulfilling his Mitzvah to read at Hakhel), as alluded to by adding the words "but he should teach it".

Based on this, we can also conclude that Rabbeinu Saadiah Gaon is of the opinion that the king reading at Hakhel is a personal Mitzvah of the king and not part of the actual Mitzvah of Hakhel, which could be fulfilled by anyone reading. As such, the Mitz-



vah of Hakhel can be fully observed without a king.

This understanding may also explain the Rambam's position. In the first Halacha<sup>37</sup>, where he defines the essence of the Mitzvah of Hakhel, the Rambam writes "the positive Mitzvah is to gather all of Israel... and to read in their ears from the Torah...". He does not mention that the king must be the reader. In a subsequent Halacha<sup>38</sup> he writes "the king would read from the Torah".

Perhaps, the Rambam is also of the view that the Mitzvah of Hakhel itself does not require a king and therefore he does not mention this requirement in the essential details of the Mitzvah. Later, when he mentions the king reading, he does not write that the king had to read, but rather that the king would read<sup>39</sup>, suggesting that this was a side detail, perhaps as the king's personal Mitzvah to read.

### **WHY IS THE PARSHA OF THE KING READ AT HAKHEL?**

The Mishna identifies the passages from the Torah that were read at Hakhel. *"He reads from the beginning of Eileh HaDevarim until Shema, Shema, Vehaya Im Shamo'a, Aseir T'aseir, Ki Sechaleh L'aseir, the Parsha of the King, the Blessing and Curses, until he finishes the entire Parsha."*

This is the prevalent version of the Mishna as recorded in our Shas<sup>40</sup>.

The purpose of the Mitzvah of Hakhel was, as indicated in the Parsha of Hakhel, to inspire the people in the fear of Heaven and the fulfilment of the Mitzvos of the Torah.

The passages that were read were selected to facilitate this objective;

The beginning of Devarim are Moshe's words of rebuke to Klal Yisrael, which served to warn the Jewish people about following Hashem and not going astray.

The Shema is the acceptance of Hashem's Kingship - Kabbolas Ol Malchus Shamayim.

Vehaya Im Shamo'a, the second paragraph of the Shema, is about Kabbolas Ol Mitzvos, the acceptance to fulfil the Mitzvos of the Torah. It contains the reward for observance of the Mitzvos and a warning against turning away from Hashem and the punishment that would ensure for violating the Mitzvos.

Whilst not specifically related to the fear of Heaven, the two passages of Maaseros (tithes) were read because Sukkos is the time of gathering in the produce. Further, after the year of Shemittah when Maaser was not given, these Parshios were read as a reminder of the obligation of Maaser.

The Blessings and Curses were the acceptance of the Covenant of the Torah.

But why does the Mishna include the Parsha of the King - the Mitzvah to appoint a king and the laws that apply to him - as one of the passages that had to be read at Hakhel? Indeed, according to our version of the Mishna, the king would read *Aseir T'aseir*, then skip to *Ki Sechaleh L'aseir* which also discusses Maaser, and would then go back to read only "the Parsha of the king" before skipping forward to the Blessings and the Curses. Why was it so important to read

“the Parsha of the king” that warranted jumping back and forth?

Based on the discussion in this article, we now understand the special connection between Hakhel and “the Parsha of the king” in Parshas Shoftim.

Since the requirement or personal Mitzvah of the king to read at Hakhel is derived from “the Parsha of the King” which records the Mitzvos of the king, including the Mitzvah to write a Sefer Torah, it is appropriate for this Parsha to be read at Hakhel. This is especially so according to the Chiddush of Rabbi Yerucham Fishel Perlow that the entire purpose of writing the Torah scroll was in order to read from it at Hakhel.

Accordingly, it is possible that this Parsha was only read if the king was the one reading at Hakhel. In the absence of a king, when another leader would read the Torah, this passage may have been omitted.

### **WHY THE KING?**

The Rambam<sup>41</sup> writes that the king is an agent to make known the word of G-d. As the Shliach of Hashem, by hearing the king read from the Torah, it is as though they heard it directly from Hashem. This unique distinction of the king is related to the teaching of the Mishna<sup>42</sup>, which describes the king as someone “whom there is no one above him except Hashem his G-d”. This explains the role of the king at Hakhel based on his relationship to Hashem.

The king is also instrumental because of his relationship to the Jewish people. In the

laws of kings<sup>43</sup>, the Rambam writes that the king is the heart of the Jewish people. Abarbanel writes that the king reads the Torah at Hakhel because he is the collective soul (נפש הכללי) of the Jewish people. As such, when the king reads, it is considered as though all of the people had read the Torah.

Many of the commentators<sup>44</sup> write that the reason why it was important that the king be the one to read at Hakhel, is because this would magnify the impact of the objective of Hakhel. When the people would see how even the powerful king humbles and surrenders himself to Hashem and to His Torah and Mitzvos, they will learn by Kal Vachomer how much more they need to humble themselves with the fear of Heaven. Further, the king reading would add to the grandeur of Hakhel, so that it would make a deeper impression on the participants and instill a greater sense of awe.

The Tzemach Tzedek<sup>45</sup> explains the reason for the Mitzvah of appointing a king according to Chassidus. The king was someone who had a deep Bittul (surrender) to Hashem. Through his deep personal Bittul to Hashem, he would inspire Bittul and awe of Hashem in the people who were subservient to him.

With this, we can appreciate the importance of the king at Hakhel, because the objective of the Mitzvah of Hakhel is synonymous with the inner meaning of the Mitzvah to appoint a king, to inspire the people to attain the fear of Heaven.

May we merit the coming of Melech Hamoshiach, the “king who will arise and restore the dynasty of David... (when) the observance of all of the statutes will return to their previous state... according to all of

the details described in the Torah<sup>46</sup>, including the Mitzvah Rabbah of Hakhel.

## קהל גדול ישובו הנה

1. Devarim 31:10-12
2. Devarim 31:9
3. Netziv
4. On Sefer Hachinuch Mitzvah 612
5. Antiquities of the Jews book 4 chapter 8. As a source on religious matters, the work of Josephus is questionable as we find a number of descriptions and statements that run contrary to the sages – for example the dimensions of the Beis Hamikdash
6. Tiferes Yisroel Sotah 7:8
7. See below an explanation how this can be deduced from the verses
8. Sotah 41b
9. This is in contrast to the previous Mishna which discusses the reading of the Torah on Yom Kippur by the Kohen Gadol. That Mishna does not call this “the Parsha of the Kohen Gadol” but merely the “blessings of the Kohen Gadol”. This suggests that the Mitzvah of Hakhel requires that the reading be by the king
10. Perhaps this was the last Hakhel
11. Rabbi Eliezer of Mitz (12th Century, France), Mitzvah 289 and 290
12. Mitzvos Aseh 162, Parshios Mitzvah 65. The authorship of this work is disputed. Some attribute it to Shimon Kayyara. Others attribute it to Rav Yehudai Gaon
13. 9th/10th Century Babylon. Mitzvos Aseh 16, Parshios 10
14. Mitzvah 612
15. Hilchos Chagigah 3:1
16. Hilchos Chagigah 3:3
17. Mitzvas Aseh 230
18. Melachim 2 23:1
19. See Rambam Hilchos Melachim 1:3. This was also the understanding of the Chizkuni that as the leader of the generation, Yehoshua was the king. Presumably this was the basis for Rashi’s commentary on the Chumash.
20. Devarim 18:14-20
21. See Tosfos Yomtov who writes that he did not understand the derivation from the Sifri.
22. Sanhedrin 22a
23. Mishnah Sotah 41a
24. Sanhedrin 22a
25. It is generally accepted that once Shemittah was no longer a Biblical Mitzvah (after the Exile of the two and a half tribes from the Eastern-side of the Jordan when Yovel ceased), Hakhel, which is connected to Shemittah, was also no longer a Biblical Mitzvah. If so, the Mishna’s account of Agrippas’ Hakhel would have been Rabbinic.
26. See Likutei Sichos volume 19
27. Rashi Sotah 41b
28. See Likutei Sichos volume 19
29. See Rashi Bava Basra 14b that the Sefer Haazarah written by Moshe Rabbeinu was read at Hakhel. Tosfos writes that this was only when the Mishkan stood in Shiloh and Nov. In the Beis Hamikdash they could not go into the Kodosh Hakodoshim to take out the Sefer Torah for this purpose. See Tzafnas Paneach on Parshas Vayeilech for an alternate understanding
30. See also Tzafnas Paneach on Parshas Vayeilech
31. He points out how the Mitzvah of Hakhel and the Mitzvah for a king to write a Torah scroll employ similar terminology; to learn and to fear Hashem.
32. Mitzvos Aseh 16
33. We find other words in Loshon Kodesh where two words with the same letters but interchanged share the same meaning, such as **נשב** and **בשב** which both mean a lamb.
34. Parshios 10
35. The Tosefta (Sotah 7:8) describes how the Kohanim would go out into the open spaces of Yerushalaim and blow golden trumpets to call the people to Hakhel. From the Sefer Hamitzvos it seems that this was done by the Kohanim as agents of the king.
36. Baal Halachos Gedolos, Rambam Sefer Hamitzvos, Sefer Hachinuch, Yereim
37. Hilchos Chagigah 3:1
38. Hilchos Chagigah 3:3
39. Unlike the Sefer Hachinuch. See Likutei Sichos volume 34 Vayeilech Sicha 1, note 20
40. Rashi, Tosfos Yomtov, Bartenura and Tiferes Yisrael. This is in contrast to the version that the Rambam would have had, where after Asair Te’aseir, the king continues to read the Torah in order until the end of the blessings and curses in Ki Savo. In this version, the Parsha of the king is not singled out.
41. Chagigah 3:6
42. Horios 9a
43. 3:6
44. See Malbim on the Torah
45. Derech Mitzvosecha - Mitzvah of appointing a king, the
46. Rambam laws of kings 12:1



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