

## Reading Tanakh as Tanakh Reads Itself

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### Tanakh Intensive 5786/2026

#### Sefer Devarim: AMBIGUITY & AMBIVALENCE in the Law of the King

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>דברים י"ז:י"ד-כ'</b></p> <p>(יד) כִּי־תָבֹא אֶל־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ נָתַן לָךְ וַיִּרְשָׁתָהּ וַיִּשְׁבֶּתָהּ בָּהּ וְאָמַרְתָּ אֲשִׁימָה עָלַי מֶלֶךְ כְּכָל־הַגּוֹיִם אֲשֶׁר סָבִיבֹתַי: (טו) שׁוּם תִּשִּׂים עָלֶיךָ מֶלֶךְ אֲשֶׁר יִבְחַר ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ בּוֹ מִקֶּרֶב אַחֲרֶיךָ תִּשִּׂים עָלֶיךָ מֶלֶךְ לֹא תֹכַל לָתֵת עָלֶיךָ אִישׁ נָכְרִי אֲשֶׁר לֹא־אֲחִיךָ הוּא: (טז) רַק לֹא־יִרְבֶּה־לוֹ סוּסִים וְלֹא־יִשִּׁיב אֶת־הָעַם מִצְרַיִם לְמַעַן הַרְבוֹת סוּס וְה' אָמַר לְכֶם לֹא תִסְפֹּן לָשׁוּב בַּדֶּרֶךְ הַזֶּה עוֹד: (יז) וְלֹא יִרְבֶּה־לוֹ נָשִׁים וְלֹא יִסֹּר לְבָבוֹ וְכֶסֶף וְזָהָב לֹא יִרְבֶּה־לוֹ מְאֹד: (יח) וְהָיָה כִשְׂבֹתוֹ עַל כִּסֵּא מִמְּלַכְתּוֹ וְכָתַב לוֹ אֶת־מִשְׁנֵה הַתּוֹרָה הַזֹּאת עַל־סֹפֶר מִלְּפָנֵי הַכֹּהֲנִים הַלְוִיִּם: (יט) וְהָיְתָה עִמּוֹ וְקָרָא בּוֹ כָּל־יְמֵי חַיָּו לְמַעַן יִלְמַד לִירְאֵה אֶת־ה' אֱלֹהָיו לְשֹׁמֵר אֶת־כָּל־דְּבָרֵי הַתּוֹרָה הַזֹּאת וְאֶת־הַחֻקִּים הָאֵלֶּה לַעֲשׂוֹתָם: (כ) לְבַלְתִּי רוּם־לְבָבוֹ מֵאֲחָיו וְלְבַלְתִּי סוּר מן־הַמִּצְוָה יְמִין וּשְׂמֹאל לְמַעַן יֵאָרֶיךָ יָמִים עַל־מְמַלְכְּתוֹ הוּא וּבְנָיו בְּקֶרֶב יִשְׂרָאֵל.</p>	<p><b>Deuteronomy 17:14-20</b></p> <p>(14) <b>When</b> you have entered the land that 'ה your God has assigned to you, and taken possession of it and settled in it, <b>and you say, "I will set a king over me, like all the nations around me,"</b> (15) <b>then set a king over yourself, one chosen by 'ה your God.</b> Be sure to set as king over yourself one of your own people; you must not set a foreigner over you, one who is not your kin. (16) <b>But he shall not amass too many horses or send people back to Egypt to add to his horses, since 'ה has warned you, "You must not go back that way again."</b> (17) <b>And he shall not amass too many wives, lest his turn heart away; nor shall he amass silver and gold to excess.</b> (18) When he is seated on his royal throne, he shall have a copy of this Torah written for him on a scroll by the levitical priests. (19) Let it remain with him and let him read in it all his life, <b>so that he may learn to fear 'ה his God,</b> to observe faithfully every word of this Torah as well as these laws. (20) Thus he will not raise his heart above his fellows or turn from the commandments to the right or to the left, so that he and his descendants may reign long in the midst of Israel.</p>
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<p><b>משנה תורה, הלכות מלכים ומלחמות א':א'</b></p> <p>שֶׁלֶשׁ מִצְוֹת נִצְטוּ יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּשַׁעַת כְּנִיסַתוֹ לְאֶרֶץ. לְמִנּוֹת לָהֶם מֶלֶךְ שְׁנָאָמַר (דברים יז טו) "שׁוּם תִּשִּׂים עָלֶיךָ מֶלֶךְ". וְלִהְיֶיךָ זָרְעוֹ שֶׁל עַמְלֵק שְׁנָאָמַר (דברים כה יט) "תִּמְחָה אֶת זֵכֶר עַמְלֵק". וְלִבְנוֹת בֵּית הַבְּחִירָה שְׁנָאָמַר (דברים יב ה) "לְשִׁכְנוֹ תִדְרָשׁוּ וּבָאתָ שָׁמָּה".</p>	<p><b>Mishneh Torah, Kings and Wars 1:1</b></p> <p>Israel was commanded to fulfill three mitzvot upon entering the Land: 1) To appoint a king, as Deut. 17:15 states: '<i>Set a king over yourself;</i>' 2) To cut off out the descendants of Amalek, as Deut. 25:19 states: '<i>Erase the memory of Amalek;</i>' 3) To build God's Chosen House, as Deut. 12:5 states: '<i>Seek out God's Presence and go there.</i>'</p>
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<p><b>אבן עזרא על דברים יז:טו</b> שׁוּם תִּשִּׂים. רשות.</p>	<p><b>Ibn Ezra on Deuteronomy 17:15</b> 'Set a king over yourself' - Optional</p>
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**Sefer Shoftim: NO KINGS IN ISRAEL!**

A Closing Refrain:

<p><b>שופטים כ"א:כ"ה</b></p> <p>בַּיָּמִים הֵהָם אֵין מֶלֶךְ בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל אִישׁ הַיָּשָׁר בְּעֵינָיו יַעֲשֶׂה.</p>	<p><b>Judges 21:25</b></p> <p>In those days there was no king in Israel, and every man did what was right in his own eyes.</p>
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<p><b>שופטים י"ז:ה-ו'</b></p> <p>(ה) וְהָאִישׁ מִיכָה לוֹ בַּיִת אֱלֹקִים וַיַּעַשׂ אֶפֹּד וַיִּתְּרָפִים וַיִּמְלֵא אֶת־יָד אֶחָד מִבָּנָיו וַיְהִי־לוֹ לַחֹן: (ו) בַּיָּמִים הֵהָם אֵין מֶלֶךְ בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל אִישׁ הַיָּשָׁר בְּעֵינָיו יַעֲשֶׂה.</p>	<p><b>Judges 17:5-6</b></p> <p>(5) Now this man Mikhah had a house of God; he had made an ephod and oracle idols and he had inducted one of his sons to be his priest. (6) <b>In those days there was no king in Israel, and every man did what was right in his own eyes.</b></p>
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<p><b>שופטים י"ח:א'</b></p> <p>בַּיָּמִים הֵהָם אֵין מֶלֶךְ בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל וּבַיָּמִים הֵהָם שָׁבַט הַדָּנִי מְבַקֵּשׁ־לוֹ נַחֲלָה לְשִׁבְתָּ כִּי לֹא־נָפְלָה לוֹ עַד־הַיּוֹם הַהוּא בְּתוֹךְ־שְׁבֹטֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּנַחֲלָה.</p>	<p><b>Judges 18:1</b></p> <p><b>In those days there was no king in Israel</b>, and in those days the tribe of Dan was seeking a territory in which to settle; for to that day no territory had fallen to their lot among the tribes of Israel.</p>
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<p><b>שופטים י"ט:א'</b></p> <p>וַיְהִי בַּיָּמִים הֵהָם וּמֶלֶךְ אֵין בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל וַיְהִי אִישׁ לוֹ גֵּר בִּירְכַתֵי הַר־אֶפְרָיִם וַיִּקַּח־לוֹ אִשָּׁה פִּילְגֶשֶׁת מִבֵּית לָחֶם יְהוּדָה:</p>	<p><b>Judges 19:1</b></p> <p><b>In those days, when there was no king in Israel</b>, a certain Levite residing at the other end of the hill country of Ephraim took to himself a concubine from Bethlehem in Judah.</p>
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But...a counter-testimony from one of the Judges:

<p><b>שופטים ח:כ"ב-כ"ג</b></p> <p>(כב) וַיֹּאמְרוּ אִישׁ־יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶל־גִּדְעוֹן מִשְׁל־בְּנוֹ גַם־אַתָּה גַם־בְּנֶךָ גַם־בֶּן־בְּנֶךָ כִּי הוֹשַׁעְתָּנוּ מִיַּד מִדְיָן: (כג) וַיֹּאמֶר אֲלֵהֶם גִּדְעוֹן לֹא־אֶמְשַׁל אֲנִי בְכֶם וְלֹא־יִמְשַׁל בְּנִי בְכֶם ה' יִמְשַׁל בְּכֶם:</p>	<p><b>Shoftim 8:22-23</b></p> <p>(22) Then those [who fought] on Israel's side said to Gidon, "<b>Rule over us—you, your son, and your grandson as well</b>; for you have saved us from the Midianites." (23) But Gidon replied, "<b>I will not rule over you myself, nor shall my son rule over you - ה' alone shall rule over you!</b>"</p>
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**Sefer Shmuel: WE MUST HAVE A KING!**

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>שמואל א ח' ד'-כ"ב</b></p> <p>(ד) וַיִּתְקַבְּצוּ כָּל זִקְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיָּבֹאוּ אֶל-שְׁמוּאֵל הַרְמַתָּה: (ה) וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֵלָיו הֲנֵה אַתָּה זָקֵן וְבָנֶיךָ לֹא הִלְכוּ בְדַרְכֶיךָ עִתָּה שִׁימָה-לָנוּ מֶלֶךְ לְשִׁפְטֵנוּ כְּכָל-הַגּוֹיִם: (ו) וַיֹּרַע הַדָּבָר בְּעֵינֵי שְׁמוּאֵל כַּאֲשֶׁר אָמְרוּ תִּנְהַלְנוּ מֶלֶךְ לְשִׁפְטֵנוּ וַיִּתְפַּלֵּל שְׁמוּאֵל אֶל-ה': {פ}</p> <p>(ז) וַיֹּאמֶר ה' אֶל-שְׁמוּאֵל שְׁמַע בְּקוֹל הָעָם לְכָל אֲשֶׁר-יֹאמְרוּ אֵלֶיךָ כִּי לֹא אֶתָּךְ מָאֶסוּ כִּי-אֲתִי מָאֶסוּ מִמֶּלֶךְ עֲלֵיהֶם: (ח) כְּכָל-הַמַּעֲשִׂים אֲשֶׁר-עָשׂוּ מִיּוֹם הֵעַלְתִּי אוֹתָם מִמִּצְרָיִם וְעַד-הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה וַיַּעַזְבֵנִי וַיַּעֲבְדוּ אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים כֹּן הִמָּה עֹשִׂים גַּם-לָךְ: (ט) וְעַתָּה שְׁמַע בְּקוֹלִי אֲךָ כִּי-הָעֵד תַּעֲדִל בְּהֵם וְהִגַּדְתָּ לָהֶם מִשְׁפַּט הַמֶּלֶךְ אֲשֶׁר יִמְלֹךְ עֲלֵיהֶם: {ס} (י) וַיֹּאמֶר שְׁמוּאֵל אֶת-כָּל-דִּבְרֵי ה' אֶל-הָעָם הַשְּׂאֵלִים מֵאִתּוֹ מֶלֶךְ: {ס} (יא) וַיֹּאמֶר זֶה יִהְיֶה מִשְׁפַּט הַמֶּלֶךְ אֲשֶׁר יִמְלֹךְ עֲלֵיכֶם אֶת-בְּנֵיכֶם יִקַּח וְיִשֵּׂם לוֹ בְּמִרְכָּבָתוֹ וּבַפָּרָשָׁיו וְרָצוּ לִפְנֵי מִרְכָּבָתוֹ: (יב) וְלִשְׂוֹם לוֹ שָׂרֵי אֲלָפִים וְשָׂרֵי חֲמִשָּׁים וְלַחֲרָשׁ חֲרִישׁוֹ וְלִקְצֹר קְצִירוֹ וְלַעֲשׂוֹת כְּלֵי-מַלְחָמָה וְכָלֵי רֶכֶב: (יג) וְאֶת-בְּנוֹתֵיכֶם יִקַּח לְרִקְחוֹת וְלִטְבָּחוֹת וְלֵאֲפוֹת: (יד) וְאֶת-שְׂדוֹתֵיכֶם וְאֶת-כַּרְמֵיכֶם וְזִיתֵיכֶם הַטּוֹבִים יִקַּח וְנָתַן לְעַבְדָּיו: (טו) וְזִרְעֵיכֶם וְכַרְמֵיכֶם יַעֲשֶׂר וְנָתַן לְסָרִיסָיו וְלַעַבְדָּיו: (טז) וְאֶת-שְׂפָחוֹתֵיכֶם וְאֶת-בְּחֹרֵיכֶם הַטּוֹבִים וְאֶת-חֲמוֹרֵיכֶם יִקַּח וְעָשָׂה לְמַלְאכָתוֹ: (יז) צֹאנֵיכֶם יַעֲשֶׂר וְאַתֶּם תִּהְיוּ לוֹ לְעַבְדִּים: (יח) וְזַעֲקֶתְם בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא מִלִּפְנֵי מֶלֶכְכֶם אֲשֶׁר בְּחַרְתֶּם לָכֶם וְלֹא-יַעֲנֶה ה' אֶתְכֶם בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא: (יט) וַיִּמָּאֲנוּ הָעָם לְשִׁמְעַ בְּקוֹל שְׁמוּאֵל וַיֹּאמְרוּ לֹא כִּי אִם-מֶלֶךְ יִהְיֶה עֲלֵינוּ: (כ) וְהִינּוּ גַם-אַנְחֵנוּ כְּכָל-הַגּוֹיִם וְשִׁפְטֵנוּ מִלְּכָנוּ וַיֵּצֵא לִפְנֵינוּ וְנִלְחַם אֶת-מַלְחַמָּתָנוּ:</p>	<p><b>I Samuel 8:4-22</b></p> <p>(4) All the elders of Israel assembled and came to Shmuel at Ramah, (5) and they said to him, “You have grown old, and your sons have not followed your ways. <b>Now set a king over us, to judge us, like all the other nations.</b>” (6) This was very bad in Shmuel’s eyes that they said “Give us a king to judge us.” So Shmuel prayed to ה’.</p> <p>(7) And ה’ replied to Shmuel, “Heed the voice of the people in everything they say to you. <b>For it is not you that they have rejected; it is Me they have rejected as their king.</b>” (8) Like everything else they have done ever since I brought them out of Egypt to this day—forsaking Me and worshiping other gods—so they are doing to you.</p> <p>(9) Heed their demand; but warn them solemnly, and tell them about the <b>law of the king</b> (<i>mishpat hamelekh</i>) who will rule over them.”</p> <p>(10) So Shmuel reported all the words of ה’ to the people, who were asking him for a king. (11) He said, “This will be the <b>conduct of the king</b> (<i>mishpat hamelekh</i>) who will rule over you: He will take your sons and appoint them as his charioteers and horsemen, and they will serve as outrunners for his chariots. (12) He will appoint them as his chiefs of thousands and of fifties; or they will have to plow his fields, reap his harvest, and make his weapons and the equipment for his chariots. (13) He will take your daughters as perfumers, cooks, and bakers. (14) He will seize your choice fields, vineyards, and olive groves, and give them to his servants. (15) He will take a tenth of your fields and vineyards and give it to his eunuchs and servants. (16) He will take your male and female slaves, your fine young men, and your donkeys, and put them to work for him. (17) He will take a tenth of your flocks, and <b>you will become his slaves.</b> (18) <b>And you will cry out on that day</b> because of the king whom you yourselves have chosen; but ה’ <b>will not answer you on that day.</b>” (19) But the people would not listen to Shmuelf. “<b>No,</b>” they said. “<b>We must have a king over us,</b> (20) <b>so we will be like all the other nations:</b> Let our king judge us and go out at our head and fight our battles.”</p>
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**Sefer Melakhim: The Second Greatest King of Israel**

מלכים א י"ז-י"א:ז'	I Kings 10:26-11:7
<p>(כו) וַיֵּאסֹף שְׁלֹמֹה רֶכֶב וּפָרָשִׁים וַיְהִי-לוֹ אֵלֶף וָאַרְבַּע-מֵאוֹת רֶכֶב וּשְׁנַיִם-עָשָׂר אֲלָף פָּרָשִׁים וַיִּנְחַם בְּעָרֵי הָרֶכֶב וְעַם-הַמֶּלֶךְ בִּירוּשָׁלַם: (כז) וַיִּתֵּן הַמֶּלֶךְ אֶת-הַכֶּסֶף בִּירוּשָׁלַם כְּאַבְנִים וְאֵת הָאֲרָזִים נָתַן כְּשִׁקְמִים אֲשֶׁר-בְּשִׁפְלָה לְרֹב: (כח) וּמוֹצֵא הַסּוּסִים אֲשֶׁר לְשֹׁלֹמֹה מִמִּצְרַיִם וּמִקִּוּי סַחְרֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ יִקְחוּ מִקִּוּהָ בַמְּחִיר: (כט) וַתֵּעָלֶה וַתֵּצֵא מִרְכָּבָה מִמִּצְרַיִם בְּשֵׁשׁ מֵאוֹת כֶּסֶף וְסוּסִים בַּחֲמִשִּׁים וּמֵאָה וְכֵן לְכָל-מַלְכֵי הַחִתִּים וְלַמְלָכֵי אֲרָם בַּיָּדִים יָצְאוּ: {פ}</p> <p>(א) וְהַמֶּלֶךְ שְׁלֹמֹה אָהַב נָשִׁים נְכָרִיּוֹת רַבּוֹת וְאֶת-בַּת-פְּרַעֲהַ מוֹאָבִיּוֹת עַמִּיּוֹת אֲדָמִיּוֹת יְצִדְנִית חִתִּיּוֹת: (ב) מִן-הַגּוֹיִם אֲשֶׁר אָמַר-ה' אֶל-בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לֹא-תִבְאוּ בָהֶם וְהֵם לֹא-יָבֹאוּ בָכֶם אֲכִן יִטּוּ אֶת-לִבְבְּכֶם אַחֲרַי אֱלֹהֵיהֶם בְּהֵם דָּבַק שְׁלֹמֹה לְאַהֲבָה: (ג) וַיְהִי-לוֹ נָשִׁים שְׂרוֹת שִׁבְעַת מֵאוֹת וּפְלִגְשִׁים שְׁלֹשׁ מֵאוֹת וַיִּטּוּ נָשָׁיו אֶת-לִבּוֹ: (ד) וַיְהִי לְעֵת זָקְנָתוֹ שְׁלֹמֹה נָשָׂיו הִטּוּ אֶת-לִבָּבוֹ אַחֲרַי אֱלֹקִים אַחֲרָי וְלֹא-הָיָה לִבְבוֹ שֹׁלֵם עִם-ה' אֱלֹקָיו כְּלָבֵב דָּוִד אָבִיו: (ה) וַיֵּלֶךְ שְׁלֹמֹה אַחֲרַי עֲשֻׁתָּרֶת אֱלֹקֵי צִדְדִים וְאַחֲרַי מִלְכָם שִׁקְצַ עַמִּיּוֹת: (ו) וַיַּעַשׂ שְׁלֹמֹה הָרַע בְּעֵינֵי ה' וְלֹא מָלַא אַחֲרַי ה' כְּדָוִד אָבִיו: {ס}</p> <p>(ז) אֲזַי בָּנָה שְׁלֹמֹה בְמָה לְכִמּוֹשׁ שִׁקְצַ מוֹאָב בְּהָר אֲשֶׁר עַל-פְּנֵי יְרוּשָׁלַם וְלַמֶּלֶךְ שִׁקְצַ בְּנֵי עַמּוֹן:</p>	<p>(26) <b>Shlomo assembled chariots and horses. He had 1,400 chariots and 12,000 horses</b>, which he stationed in the chariot towns and with the king in Jerusalem.</p> <p>(27) <b>The king made silver in Jerusalem like stones</b>, and cedars as plentiful as sycamores in the Shefelah.</p> <p>(28) <b>Shlomo's horses were procured from Egypt at a fixed price.</b> The king's dealers would buy from them at a fixed price. (29) A chariot came up out from Egypt for 600 shekels of silver, and a horse 150; these in turn were exported by them to all the kings of the Hittites and the kings of the Arameans.</p> <p>(1) King Shlomo loved many foreign women in addition to Pharaoh's daughter—Moabite, Ammonite, Edomite, Phoenician, and Hittite women, (2) from the nations of which ה' had said to the Israelites, "None of you shall join them and none of them shall join you, lest they turn your heart away to follow their gods." Such Shlomo clung to and loved. <b>(3) He had seven hundred royal wives and three hundred concubines; and his wives turned his heart away.</b> <b>(4) In his old age, his wives swayed Shlomo's heart after other gods, and he was not as wholeheartedly devoted to ה' his God as his father David had been.</b> (5) Shlomo followed Ashtoret the goddess of the Phoenicians, and Milkom the abomination of the Ammonites. (6) Shlomo did what was wicked in the eyes of ה' and did not remain loyal to ה' like his father David.</p> <p>(7) Then, Solomon built an altar for Kemosh the abomination of Moav on the hill near Jerusalem, and one for Molekh the abomination of the Ammonites.</p>



## How Shlomo Read Tanakh

<b>תלמוד בבלי, סנהדרין כא:</b>	<b>Talmud Bavli, Sanhedrin 21b</b>
ואמר ר' יצחק מפני מה לא נתגלו טעמי תורה	And Rabbi Yitzḥak says: Why were the reasons behind the Torah not revealed?
שהרי שתי מקראות נתגלו טעמן נכשל בהן גדול העולם	Because the reasons for two verses were revealed, and the greatest man in the world failed in them.
כתיב (דברים יז, יז) לא ירבה לו נשים אמר שלמה אני ארבה ולא אסור	For it is written, <i>“He shall not amass many wives for himself, [lest his heart turn away]”</i> (Deuteronomy 17:17). And Shlomo said: I will amass many, but I will not turn away.
וכתיב (מלכים א יא, ד) ויהי לעת זקנת שלמה נשיו הטו את לבבו	And, it is written: <i>“In his old age, his wives swayed Shlomo’s heart after other gods”</i> (I Kings 11:4).
וכתיב (דברים יז, טז) לא ירבה לו סוסים ואמר שלמה אני ארבה ולא אשיב וכתיב (מלכים א י, כט) ותצא מרכבה ממצרים בשש וגו'	And it is also written: <i>“But he shall not amass too many horses or send people back to Egypt to add to his horses”</i> (Deuteronomy 17:16), and Shlomo said: I will accumulate many, but I will not return. And it is written: <i>“A chariot came up out from Egypt for 600 shekels of silver”</i> (I Kings 10:29).

