

My friends, learn Tanach!

Baruch Hashem, we live in a generation in which there has been a tremendous resurgence in Torah study. From young to old, many Jews from across the spectrum are beginning to reconnect more to our great inheritance. However, while many thousands of Jews are learning daf yomi and the annual "Tzumah" Chassidic book sale every year at Binyanei Hauma in Yerushalayim is a mega hit, it still seems, that at least in some circles, the "Book of all Books"-our holy Tanach is not studied as much as it should be.

Let us say it clearly: The Tanach is the foundation of all of the Torah. Everything in the Gemara is based on the Tanach. The Tanach is our inheritance and it preserves for us the words of the great, true tested prophets of Israel. Only those prophecies in which the Men of the Great Assembly felt were relevant for all times were codified in the Tanach. It is impossible to study Torah properly without dedicating time to the study of the Tanach.

For many reasons, the study of Tanach was sadly neglected by many in the world of Torah. At some point, the Jewish people reached a very sad state in which most of the people studying Tanach were distant from the true spirit of Israel. However, in order to understand the true relationship between the "big picture" of Judaism that the Tanach projects and the numerous critically important details that are enumerated in the works of halacha let us present a parable: If a person wants to fly on an airplane there are really two critically important things one needs to be aware of. 1.) It is not wise at all to fly on a plane that was not engineered properly. Now, to do this properly, however, will require a tremendous attention to detail and functionality. 2.) However, even if a plane was engineered perfectly, a person still needs to know where he is going. One can be in the most advanced designer plane- however, if there is no sense of where one is going, one can just hover endlessly in the air.. So, to fly a plane properly, the plane needs to be engineered properly and also have a clear path of direction.

Our holy Torah contains two parts to it: The big picture and the critically important details. The Gemara and halacha teach us about the details of how to serve Hashem. Each one of these details is critical just as each detail is critical to the engineering of a plain. However, if one has just mastered all the details but is lacking proper perspective of the big picture-he is akin to the plane that is hovering in the air. Sure the plain can fly just fine-however, where are we going with all of this?

The Tanach does not contain within it all the details and 'question and answer' style of the Gemara. However, it does teach the big picture of Judaism. It teaches us that we have to be in awe of Hashem, keep His Mitzvot and follow His ways. Throughout the Tanach there are also numerous warnings and examples urging us in the strongest terms that if we don't follow our mission, chas veshalom, there will be grave consequences. Yes, there are other hashkafa seforim that also describe the big picture. However, the Tanach is the foundation of them all.

There is also another critically important central theme that runs through the Tanach, that needs to be emphasized: the centrality of the land of Israel to Judaism. If one just learns Gemara and

halacha, he will come upon Eretz Yisroel here and there in certain sections. However, one can also study large swaths of the gemara in which there is hardly a mention of Eretz Yisroel. The Tanach, however, is not like this at all. From the beginning of sefer Yehoshua, and the conquest of the land, to the end of Ezra/Nechemia which discusses the return at the beginning of the second Temple era-the central theme of Eretz Yisroel is woven through the whole Tanach. And ,on this note- the section of Tanach that is most relevant to us today are the numerous prophecies by Isaiah and Yechezkel etc talking about the ultimate return of the Jewish people to our holy land and the subsequent rejuvenation of the land itself.

In the words of the righteous convert, Avraham Llvni in his remarkable work, " The return of Israel and the Hope of the World" the entire Tanach can be summed up in three words: Creation, Exile and Return. The Tanach is the story of the creation of the Jewish people, their exile from the Promised land and the story of their ultimate return. From the big picture perspective of the Tanach, Eretz Yisroel is not just another detail of the Torah-it is the ultimate vessel for the expression of the Torah itself.

I have a friend here in Beitar, named Reb Simcha, who moved to Eretz Yisroel from Brooklyn around two years ago. He told me that before he moved he spent a long time davening to Hashem to help him come home. During the winter (when there were no problems with Tznius) he would go to the Hudson River, do *hisbodedus* and cry out to Hashem" Rebono Shel Olam, get me out of this place. Bring me home!" He also mentioned to me that he spent time studying the Tanach and learning about the importance of our holy land.

So let us all set aside time to study the Tanach. We should learn it with an open mind and think about the lessons that need to be culled from between its holy words. We should also learn about the mission of the Jewish people and the central importance of our dear land.

-Ariel

If you have feedback (or need a healthy reminder from time to time to continue your Tanach seder) please contact me at

Harav Brim % Beitar

02-580-5410

0533109350

arielgalian613@gmail.com