

MIQDASH BETHEL COVENANT INSTITUTION

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AVRAHAM: FATHER OF MANY NATIONS

A COVENANT DEEP STUDY

REACHING JUDAISM · CHRISTIANITY · ISLAM

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HOW TO READ THIS DOCUMENT — TANAKH BOOK NAMES

The following Tanakh books are cited in this study. Hebrew names are the primary reference; English equivalents follow in parentheses as required by Miqdash Bethel document standards.

HEBREW NAME	ENGLISH	DIVISION	ROLE IN THIS STUDY
Bereishit	Genesis	Torah	Primary narrative of Abraham
Yeshayahu	Isaiah	Nevi'im	Covenant seed & nations
Tehillim	Psalms	Ketuvim	Covenant memory & praise
Nehemiah	Nehemiah	Ketuvim	Historical covenant rehearsal
Yehoshua	Joshua	Nevi'im	Covenant land fulfillment

Yirmeyahu	Jeremiah	Nevi'im	Covenant faithfulness
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DOCTRINAL AUTHORITY — STANDING RULE OF MIQDASH BETHEL

The sole binding authority of this institution is the **Written Tanakh** under the evidentiary standard of **Devarim (Deuteronomy) 19:15** — two or three independent witnesses. Rabbinic commentary, Church councils, Islamic hadith, and all post-biblical commentary are cited as *historical witnesses only* and carry no binding doctrinal authority. Josephus is always corroborated due to his documented pro-Roman bias. Scholars referenced in this study are cited for orientation and cross-reference, not as final authority. The Tanakh text speaks for itself at the plumb line of covenant.

PART I

WHO IS AVRAHAM? ORIGIN, LINEAGE, AND THE CALL

IA — GENEALOGICAL CONTEXT: THE TENTH GENERATION FROM NOACH

The Tanakh places Avram (later **Avraham**) squarely within a precise genealogical record. **Bereishit (Genesis) 11:10–26** traces the Shemite line from **Shem** son of **Noach**, through ten generations, arriving at **Terah**, whose son is **Avram**. Avram is therefore the tenth generation after Noach — a pattern of covenant significance in the Tanakh (ten generations also appear before Noach himself, **Bereishit 5**). The Tanakh says nothing of his childhood; the famous story of Avram smashing his father's idols appears only in post-biblical rabbinic midrash and is not in the biblical text.

Bereishit 11:27–28 introduces his immediate family context:

Bereishit 11:27–28 — *Now these are the generations of Terah: Terah begot Avram, Nabor, and Haran; and Haran died before his father Terah in the land of his nativity, in Ur of the Chaldees.*

His father **Terah** took the family — Avram, his wife **Sarai** (who was barren), and his nephew **Lot** — from **Ur Kasdim** (Ur of the Chaldees) headed toward Canaan, but they settled at **Haran**, where Terah died at 205 years of age (**Bereishit 11:31–32**). The family's original destination — Canaan — is significant: the text reveals that the migration was already in motion before Yahweh's direct call, yet it stalled until Terah died. What the father began, the son would complete under direct divine commission.

RESEARCH NOTE: The Location of Ur Kasdim

The precise geographic identity of **Ur Kasdim** (אֹרַר כַּשְׁדִּים — *ʿŪr Kaśdīm*) remains a matter of scholarly debate. The dominant modern identification since Henry Rawlinson (1862) and Sir Charles Woolley's excavations (1927) places it at **Tell el-Muqayyar** in southern Mesopotamia near modern Nasiriyah, Iraq — the ancient Sumerian city of Ur. However, classical Jewish authorities including **Maimonides**, as well as Josephus and Islamic tradition, locate Ur Kasdim in **northern Mesopotamia** — in the region of modern southeastern Turkey, near Edessa or Urfa. **Yehoshua (Joshua) 24:2–3** states that Abraham's ancestors dwelt "*beyond the River*" — the Euphrates — which may support a

northern location. Under the Devarim 19:15 two-witness standard, the location remains under legitimate scholarly and geographic debate. The covenant itself, however, is unambiguous in the Tanakh regardless of the precise starting city.

I.B — THE CALL: LECH LECHA — "GO FORTH FOR YOURSELF"

After Terah's death, **Yahweh** speaks directly to Avram in one of the most consequential commands in all of covenant history. **Bereishit 12:1–3** records the call:

Bereishit 12:1–3 — *"Go forth for yourself from your land, and from your birthplace, and from your father's house, to the land that I will show you. And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and I will make your name great; and be a blessing. And I will bless them that bless you, and him that curses you I will curse; and in you shall all the families of the earth be blessed."*

The Hebrew command **Lech Lecha** (לך לך) is a reflexive imperative: not merely "go," but "go for yourself" — emphasizing personal destiny and voluntary covenant response. **Yahweh** asks Avram to leave three concentric layers of identity in ascending order of sacrifice: his *land*, his *birthplace*, and his *father's house*. The most intimate is named last — the father's house — making the departure most costly at its deepest level. This structure of triple separation foreshadows the triple covenant grants: land, seed, and blessing to the nations.

The closing phrase of **Bereishit 12:3** is extraordinary in its scope: *"in you shall all the families of the earth be blessed."* This is not a tribal promise. It is a universal covenant declaration. Every family — every **mishpachah** — of the earth is named within the scope of what **Yahweh** initiates through one man. This verse alone anchors the legitimacy of addressing all three religious traditions simultaneously, as this institution does — for all three trace their spiritual inheritance through this single call.

I.C — HEBREW LEXICAL STUDY: THE NAME AVRAHAM

The name transformation from **Avram** (אַבְרָם) to **Avraham** (אַבְרָהָם) is one of the most precisely documented name changes in the Tanakh, occurring in **Bereishit 17:5** at the moment of the covenant of circumcision.

NAME	HEBREW	COMPONENT ANALYSIS	MEANING
Avram	אַבְרָם	אַב (av) + רָם (ram)	"Exalted Father" — local honor
Avraham	אַבְרָהָם	אַב (av) + הָמוֹן (hamon)	"Father of a multitude of nations"
The letter ה (He)	ה	Added from יהוה (Yahweh)	Sign of divine transformation; covenant insertion
Av Hamon Goyim	אַב הָמוֹן גּוֹיִם	Strong's H1 (av) + H1995 (hamon) + H1471 (goyim)	"Father of a multitude of nations" — universal scope

The Hebrew word *hamon* (הָמוֹן — Strong's H1995) does not merely indicate a large number. It carries the sense of a *rain-like noise from a seething, unified multitude* — a roar of nations, not a quiet arithmetic count. The promise in **Bereishit 17:4–5** is that Avraham would become father not merely of many people but of many *goyim* (גּוֹיִם — nations, Strong's H1471) — autonomous peoples. **Yahweh's** insertion of the letter ה (He) — a letter found within the divine name יהוה itself — into Avram's name is a Tanakh-attested act of covenant transformation. His wife **Sarai** (שָׂרַי — "my princess") was similarly renamed **Sarah** (שָׂרָה — "princess of the nations") in **Bereishit 17:15–16**, confirming that both patriarch and matriarch received parallel elevation within the same covenant declaration.

PART II

THE THREE COVENANTS OF AVRAHAM

The Tanakh records three distinct covenant exchanges between **Yahweh** and Avraham, each building upon the previous, each introducing new covenant dimensions. These are not repetitions — they are covenant progressions. Together they form the legal, theological, and genealogical foundation upon which three world religions rest.

II.A — THE FIRST COVENANT: THE CALL AND THE PROMISE (BEREISHIT 12)

The first covenant is the foundational declaration of **Bereishit 12:1–3**, already examined above. Its components are:

COVENANT COMPONENT	TANAKH TEXT	SCOPE
Land promise	Bereishit 12:1 — "the land I will show you"	National / territorial
Great nation	Bereishit 12:2 — "I will make of you a great nation"	Genealogical / political
Personal blessing	Bereishit 12:2 — "I will bless you and make your name great"	Individual
Blessing/curse of nations	Bereishit 12:3 — "I will bless them that bless you"	International / diplomatic
Universal blessing	Bereishit 12:3 — "all families of the earth blessed in you"	Universal / all humanity

II.B — THE COVENANT BETWEEN THE PARTS (BEREISHIT 15)

In **Bereishit 15**, the covenant is formalized through one of the most ancient Near Eastern covenant-ratification rituals known: the *brit bein ha-betarim* — the Covenant Between the Parts. Animals are cut in two, and the contracting parties pass between the halves, symbolically saying: "May what happened to these animals happen to me if I break this covenant." The Hebrew root *karat* (כָּרַת) — Strong's H3772), meaning "to cut," is the standard Tanakh idiom for covenant-making: *karat brit*

— "to cut a covenant." The act of cutting and passing through is a self-imposed conditional curse upon the covenant breaker.

What is extraordinary in **Bereishit 15:17** is that only **Yahweh** — represented as a smoking furnace and a flaming torch — passes between the pieces. Avraham does not pass through. This is a unilateral covenant. **Yahweh** alone binds Himself. The promise cannot be nullified by any failure on Avraham's part because it is not a bilateral treaty — it is a divine grant.

Bereishit 15:18 — *"On that day Yahweh made a covenant with Abram, saying: To your seed I have given this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the Euphrates River."*

This covenant also includes a prophetic disclosure of extraordinary historical accuracy: **Bereishit 15:13–14** predicts that Avraham's seed would be strangers in a foreign land, afflicted for four hundred years, but that **Yahweh** would judge that nation and bring them out with great substance. This is the Egypt-Exodus narrative — covenant prophecy delivered to Avraham centuries before it occurs.

II.C — THE COVENANT OF CIRCUMCISION (BEREISHIT 17)

The third and most structurally elaborate covenant is recorded in **Bereishit 17**. Here **Yahweh** appears to Avram as **El Shaddai** (אֱלֹהֵי שָׁדַי — Strong's H410 + H7706), the title often rendered "God Almighty." The covenant components are layered and include the name change, the sign of circumcision, the specific naming of Yitzhak (Isaac), and the establishment of the covenant line through him — not Yishmael, though Yishmael receives his own separate blessing (**Bereishit 17:20**).

ELEMENT	CONTENT	REFERENCE
Name change	Avram → Avraham; Sarai → Sarah	Bereishit 17:5, 15
Covenant sign	Circumcision (brit milah) — every male; perpetual covenant in flesh	Bereishit 17:10–14
Land reaffirmed	"I will give to you and to your seed... all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession"	Bereishit 17:8
Covenant line	Through Yitzhak (Isaac) — Sarah's son; covenant is eternal	Bereishit 17:19–21
Yishmael blessed	"I have blessed him... twelve princes he will beget; I will make him a great nation"	Bereishit 17:20

The covenant line distinction — through Yitzhak, not Yishmael — is foundational to understanding how Judaism, Christianity, and Islam each relate to Avraham. This is not a rejection of Yishmael; it is a covenant specification. Yishmael receives his own generous blessing and is promised a great nation (twelve princes, ancestors of the Arab peoples). But the *covenant* — the binding relational promise tied to the land and the messianic line — passes through Yitzhak.

PART III

THE TEN TRIALS OF AVRAHAM

Rabbinic tradition, drawing from the Mishnah (*Avot 5:3*), identifies ten tests (*nisyonot*) that **Yahweh** placed before Avraham — each proving the depth of his covenant faithfulness. While the enumeration varies slightly across sources (*Avot de-Rabbi Natan*, *Pirkei de-Rabbi Eliezer*), the broad structure is consistent. Below are the major trials attested directly in the Tanakh text:

#	TRIAL	TANAKH REFERENCE	COVENANT SIGNIFICANCE
1	The call — leave Ur Kasdim / Haran	Bereishit 12:1	Obedience before the destination is revealed
2	Famine in Canaan — journey to Egypt	Bereishit 12:10	Faith in the promised land during scarcity
3	Sarah taken to Pharaoh's house	Bereishit 12:14–20	Divine protection of the covenant matriarch
4	War of the Four Kings / rescue of Lot	Bereishit 14:14–16	Avraham as warrior-protector; refusal of spoils from Sodom
5	The Covenant Between the Parts	Bereishit 15	Faith in covenant promise despite old age and barrenness
6	Hagar and Yishmael — covenant tension	Bereishit 16	Human attempts to fulfill covenant vs. divine timing
7	The covenant of circumcision at age 99	Bereishit 17	Embodied covenant sign; full self-consecration
8	Sarah taken to Avimelech's house	Bereishit 20	Second testing of the covenant matriarch's protection
9	Expulsion of Hagar and Yishmael	Bereishit 21:9–14	Most painful personal sacrifice before the Akedah
10	The Akedah — binding of Yitzhak on Moriah	Bereishit 22	Supreme test: willingness to return the covenant heir

III.A — THE AKEDAH (BEREISHIT 22): THE SUPREME TEST

The binding of Yitzhak (the *Akedah* — עֶקְדָּה — from the root *aqad*, "to bind," Strong's H6123) stands as the climactic trial in Avraham's covenant journey. After decades of waiting, Yitzhak — the covenant heir — is born. Then **Yahweh** commands Avraham to offer him as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of *Moriyah* (מֹרְיָה — the mountain region later identified with the Temple Mount in Jerusalem).

Bereishit 22:1–2 — *And it came to pass after these things that Elohim tested Avraham, and said to him, "Avraham." And he said, "Here I am." And He said, "Take now your son, your only son, whom you love — Yitzhak — and go to the land of Moriyah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell you."*

The test is theologically total. **Yahweh** identifies Yitzhak in a sequence of increasing specificity: "your son... your only son... whom you love... Yitzhak." Each phrase tightens the emotional weight. And yet the paradox is absolute: if Yitzhak dies, the covenant promise of countless descendants —

"I will make of you a great nation" — is apparently annihilated. Avraham holds two irreconcilable realities in tension: the command to sacrifice and the promise that cannot fail. His response is the paradigm of covenant faithfulness.

The Tanakh records that at the decisive moment — knife raised — the Messenger of **Yahweh** intervenes, and a ram appears in the thicket (**Bereishit 22:13**). **Yahweh** then reaffirms the covenant in the most solemn language of the entire Avraham narrative, swearing by His own name (**Bereishit 22:16–18**):

Bereishit 22:16–18 — *"By Myself I have sworn, says Yahweh, because you have done this thing, and have not withheld your son, your only son — in blessing I will bless you, and in multiplying I will multiply your seed as the stars of the heavens, and as the sand on the seashore; and your seed shall possess the gate of his enemies. And in your seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed — because you have obeyed My voice."*

Note: **Yahweh** swears *by Himself* — there is no greater oath possible. The covenant to bless all nations is here sealed at the highest possible level of divine commitment. It is this oath the writer of Tehillim (Psalms) celebrates in **Tehillim 105:8–9**: *"He remembered His covenant forever, the word He commanded to a thousand generations — which He cut with Avraham."*

PART IV

AVRAHAM IN JUDAISM, CHRISTIANITY, AND ISLAM

This is the defining purpose of this study: to show how each of the three major world religions relates to Avraham — where they agree, where they diverge, and what the Tanakh text itself establishes as the authoritative baseline. This institution addresses all three simultaneously, applying the Tanakh plumb line to each tradition fairly and without partiality.

IV.A — AVRAHAM IN JUDAISM: AVINU — "OUR FATHER"

In Judaism, Avraham is called *Avraham Avinu* — "Avraham our Father." He is the first patriarch, the first Hebrew, the founder of the covenant relationship between **Yahweh** and the Jewish people. The Tanakh's identification of Avram as "the Hebrew" (**Bereishit 14:13** — *ha-Ivri*, הָעִבְרִי) is the first use of this ethnic-covenant designation in the entire Tanakh.

Post-biblical rabbinic tradition elaborated extensively on Avraham's identity. The Mishnah (*Kiddushin* end) credits Avraham with observing the entire Torah before it was given at Sinai — deriving this from **Bereishit 26:5**: "*Because Avraham obeyed My voice, and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes, and My laws.*" This rabbinic reading, while powerful in its devotional intent, is a post-biblical commentary interpretation, not a direct Tanakh assertion. The Tanakh presents Avraham as a covenant partner with **Yahweh** — a man who *believed* (*be'emîn* — הֵאֱמִין, Strong's H539), and it was reckoned to him as righteousness (**Bereishit 15:6**). This single verse — faith reckoned as righteousness — becomes one of the most disputed texts between the three traditions.

Jewish tradition rightly sees Avraham as the progenitor of the Hebrew nation, the inaugurator of *brit milah* (covenant circumcision), and the model of covenant loyalty tested and proven through ten trials. The land promise — Canaan, the Land of Israel — flows directly from the Avrahamic covenant as confirmed through **Bereishit 12, 15, 17** and reaffirmed to Yitzhak (**Bereishit 26**) and Yaakov (**Bereishit 28**).

IV.B — AVRAHAM IN CHRISTIANITY: FATHER OF ALL WHO BELIEVE

Christianity's primary interpretive lens on Avraham comes not from the Tanakh text itself but from the NT reading of the Tanakh — particularly through Paul's letter to the Romans (Chapter 4) and Galatians (Chapter 3). Paul argues that Avraham was justified by *faith* before circumcision was

instituted (**Bereishit 15:6** precedes **Bereishit 17**), making him the spiritual ancestor of all who believe — both circumcised and uncircumcised.

This reading is not without its internal tensions with the Tanakh text. The Tanakh presents Avraham's righteousness in **Bereishit 15:6** as a specific relational credit given by **Yahweh** in the context of Avraham's trust regarding the promise of a son — not as a general theological category of "justification by faith alone." The Christian tradition reads backward from the NT theological system and finds Avraham as its proof text. Judaism reads forward from the Tanakh and sees Avraham as the model of covenant *obedience*. The Tanakh presents both as inseparable: Avraham trusted and obeyed. The two are not in conflict in the original text.

The Akedah holds special significance in Christian theology as a typological prefiguration of the sacrifice of Jesus of Nazareth — Yitzhak as the "type" and Jesus as the "antitype." The ram in the thicket is read as prefiguring the substitutionary sacrifice. This typological reading is a post-biblical Christian interpretive tradition, not the plain Tanakh text. The Tanakh presents the Akedah as the supreme test of Avraham's covenant faithfulness — full stop. The ram is provided by **Yahweh** as a sign that human child sacrifice is *rejected* in the covenant — a reading directly consistent with the later Tanakh prohibition (**Devarim/Deuteronomy 12:31, 18:10**).

IV.C — IBRAHIM IN ISLAM: KHALIL ALLAH — "FRIEND OF GOD"

In Islam, Avraham is known as *Ibrahim* (إِبْرَاهِيمَ) and holds the title *Khalil Allah* — "Friend of God." He is the second most frequently mentioned prophet in the Quran after Musa (Moses), appearing across 25 surahs. The Quran describes Ibrahim as an *Ummah* — a nation in himself (Quran 16:120) — meaning that at the moment when he stood alone for monotheism, his singular faithfulness constituted the entirety of the covenant community of faith.

Islamic tradition holds that Ibrahim and his son Yishmael (*Ismail*) together built the **Kaaba** in Mecca as the central house of monotheistic worship (Quran 2:125–129). The *Maqam Ibrahim* — the Station of Ibrahim — is a stone in the Kaaba precinct upon which Ibrahim reportedly stood while building the structure, and it remains a place of prayer for Muslim pilgrims to this day. The annual festival of *Eid al-Adha* commemorates Ibrahim's willingness to sacrifice his son in obedience to Allah.

A critical divergence: Islamic tradition identifies the son whom Ibrahim was commanded to sacrifice as **Ismail**, not Yitzhak. The Tanakh text is unambiguous: **Bereishit 22:2** names the son as Yitzhak by name. The Quran does not name the son in the sacrifice narrative (Quran 37:102) — the identification of Ismail as the sacrificed son is a later Islamic interpretive tradition, not a direct Quranic statement.

Yahweh's explicit naming of Yitzhak in **Bereishit 22:2** stands as the Tanakh's witness at the two-witness standard of **Devarim 19:15**.

Islam does not recognize the Abrahamic covenant as passing specifically through Yitzhak. The Quran's covenant language in connection with Ibrahim is linked to Ismail and the purification of the Kaaba (Quran 2:125–129), not to the specific covenant-through-Isaac structure of **Bereishit 17**. This distinction is not a minor difference — it is the genealogical and theological fork in the road between the Tanakh tradition and the Quranic tradition regarding covenant succession.

PART V

AVRAHAM AND MELCHIZEDEK: THE PRIESTLY ENCOUNTER

One of the most theologically charged encounters in the Avraham narrative is his meeting with **Malkiy-Tsedeq** (מֶלְכִי-צֶדֶק — Melchizedek, "King of Righteousness") in **Bereishit 14:18–20**. This is the first mention of *kohen* (כֹּהֵן — priest, Strong's H3548) in the entire Tanakh — and this first priest is neither Levite nor Israelite.

Bereishit 14:18–20 — *And Malkiy-Tsedeq king of Shalem brought forth bread and wine; and he was priest of El Elyon. And he blessed him, and said, "Blessed be Avram of El Elyon, Creator of heaven and earth. And blessed be El Elyon, who has delivered your enemies into your hand." And he gave him a tenth of all.*

The significance of this encounter operates on multiple levels. **Malkiy-Tsedeq** is identified as king of **Shalem** (שָׁלֵם — widely identified by tradition with Jerusalem), as a priest of **El Elyon** (אֱלֹהֵי יוֹן — "God Most High"), and as the one who brings forth *bread and wine*. Avraham pays him a tithe — one tenth of the battle spoils. In the Tanakh's own logic, the one who receives the tithe is greater; this is a voluntary act of covenant submission by Avraham before a recognized priestly authority.

Rabbinic tradition, drawing from Vayikra Rabbah, holds that **Yahweh** initially intended the eternal priesthood to remain with Malkiy-Tsedeq's line. When Malkiy-Tsedeq blessed Avraham before blessing **Yahweh** (v. 19–20), the priesthood was transferred to Avraham's descendants. The later Tanakh text (**Tehillim 110:4**) echoes this: *"You are a priest forever after the order of Malkiy-Tsedeq."* This verse becomes significant in the NT's Christological application in Hebrews 7 — but its original Tanakh context applies to the Davidic king, not to Jesus.

PART VI

THE DESCENDANTS: TWO LINES, ONE COVENANT ROOT

Avraham is the father of nations through multiple lines — a fact the Tanakh presents explicitly and without apology. Understanding this genealogical structure is essential to applying the Tanakh fairly across all three religious traditions.

SON	MOTHER	COVENANT STATUS	NATIONS DESCENDED	REFERENCE
Yishmael (Ishmael)	Hagar (Egyptian)	Blessed — 12 princes, great nation	Arab peoples; Islamic tradition	Bereishit 17:20
Yitzhak (Isaac)	Sarah	Covenant heir — eternal covenant continues	Hebrews → 12 Tribes of Israel	Bereishit 17:21
Sons of Keturah	Keturah (3rd wife)	Descendants of Avraham, not primary covenant line	Midian, Sheba, and others	Bereishit 25:1–4

The Tanakh is precise: the covenant — including the land promise and the seed promise — passes through **Yitzhak**. This is stated explicitly in **Bereishit 17:21**: *"But My covenant I will establish with Yitzhak."* Yishmael is blessed — generously, historically, and nationally. His blessing is real covenant blessing from **Yahweh**. But it is distinct from the *covenant* that carries the specific land promise, the messianic genealogy, and the Torah framework. This distinction is not hostility toward Yishmael's descendants — it is covenant specificity that the Tanakh itself demands be honored honestly.

The Tanakh also documents Avraham's character in **Bereishit 24**, where he sends his servant to find a covenant wife for Yitzhak from among his own kinspeople — not from the Canaanites among whom they dwelt. Covenant marriage to preserve covenant lineage is part of the Avrahamic pattern, sustained by Yitzhak (**Bereishit 26**) and Yaakov (**Bereishit 28**).

PART VII

AVRAHAM IN THE PROPHETS AND WRITINGS

The Tanakh's later books — the *Nevi'im* (Prophets) and *Ketuvim* (Writings) — return to Avraham's covenant repeatedly as the foundation upon which **Yahweh** maintains His relationship with Israel. This internal Tanakh cross-referencing is the two-witness standard in action: the covenant is not a single passage's claim but a recurring, multi-book attestation.

Yeshayahu (Isaiah): Avraham as Covenant Anchor

Yeshayahu 41:8 — *"But you, Israel My servant, Yaakov whom I have chosen, the seed of Avraham My friend —"*

The title **Yahweh** gives Avraham here — *obavi* (אָבִי — "My friend," from the root *abav*, Strong's H157) — is the Hebrew parallel to the Arabic *Khalil* used in Islam's title *Khalil Allah*. Both traditions independently preserve this characterization of Avraham as the uniquely intimate friend of the Divine.

Yeshayahu 51:2 — *"Look to Avraham your father, and to Sarah who bore you — for I called him when he was alone, and I blessed him, and multiplied him."*

This verse from Yeshayahu is addressed to a generation of Israelites in exile and distress. **Yahweh** points them back to the single man — alone — from whom the whole nation grew. The pattern is explicit: one faithful man + divine covenant = multitude of nations. This is the template **Yahweh** demonstrates in Avraham and applies throughout covenant history.

Tehillim (Psalms): Covenant Memory

Tehillim 105:8–9, 42 — *"He remembered His covenant forever, the word He commanded to a thousand generations — which He made with Avraham, and His oath to Yitzhak... For He remembered His holy word, and Avraham His servant."*

Nehemiah: The Historical Rehearsal

Nehemiah 9:7–8 — *"You are Yahweh the Elohim who chose Avram, and brought him out of Ur of the Chaldees, and gave him the name Avraham. And You found his heart faithful before You, and made a covenant with him to give the land of the Canaanites... to his seed — and You have confirmed Your words, for You are righteous."*

The Nehemiah passage is among the most important Tanakh attestations of the Avrahamic covenant's permanence, delivered in a community prayer during the restoration after Babylonian exile. It confirms that the covenant is grounded in Yahweh's own righteousness — not in Israel's performance — and that Avraham's faithfulness (*"You found his heart faithful"*) was the covenant basis.

PART VIII

THREE-RELIGION COVENANT AUDIT

Miqdash Bethel Covenant Institution applies the Tanakh plumb line equally to all three traditions. The following audit identifies what each tradition preserves correctly and where each tradition's post-biblical commentary introduces departures from the Tanakh text.

DOCTRINE / CLAIM	JUDAISM	CHRISTIANITY	ISLAM
Avraham as first monotheist / covenant patriarch	✓ Tanakh-affirmed	✓ Affirmed	✓ Affirmed (Ibrahim)
Covenant passes through Yitzhak (Isaac)	✓ Bereishit 17:21	✓ Affirmed	✗ Covenant re-routed through Ismail in tradition
Land promise — Canaan	✓ Central to Judaism	Δ Spiritualized in most traditions	Δ Not central; Mecca focus
Bereishit 15:6 — faith reckoned as righteousness	Δ Read as covenant loyalty	Δ Read as justification by faith alone (NT overlay)	✓ Ibrahim as model of submission (islam)
Akedah — son named as Yitzhak	✓ Bereishit 22:2 — Yitzhak named	✓ Bereishit 22:2 — Yitzhak named	✗ Tradition names Ismail; Quran does not name him
Brit milah (circumcision) as covenant sign	✓ Central, perpetual	Δ Spiritualized (Romans 2:29)	✓ Required practice (Sunna)
Universal blessing through Avraham's seed	✓ Bereishit 12:3	✓ Interpreted as Christ	✓ Ibrahim as father of monotheism for all
Building of the Kaaba with Ismail	✗ Not in Tanakh	✗ Not in NT	✓ Quran 2:125–127

Legend: ✓ = affirmed and consistent with Tanakh text. Δ = present but interpreted through post-biblical overlay. ✗ = departure from or addition to the Tanakh record.

PART IX

COVENANT WITNESS TO CURRENT EVENTS

The Avrahamic covenant is not a relic of ancient history. It is the living legal framework within which the current conflict over the land of Canaan — the modern State of Israel and its neighbors, including the Palestinian people — must be honestly assessed. The covenant witness of Miqdash Bethel Institution is not political. It is covenantal.

The Tanakh is unambiguous: the land of Canaan was covenanted to Avraham's seed through Yitzhak and Yaakov (the twelve tribes of Israel) as an *abuzzat olam* — an everlasting possession (**Bereishit 17:8**). This is a covenant fact. Simultaneously, the Tanakh is equally clear that **Yahweh** holds Israel accountable to the covenant standard of justice, and that exile is a covenant consequence of injustice (**Yirmeyahu/Jeremiah 9:13–14; Yeshayahu 5:5–7**). The covenant does not authorize the ethnic cleansing of non-covenant peoples from the land. Justice — *mishpat* (מִשְׁפָּט — Strong's H4941) — is itself a covenant obligation.

The descendants of Yishmael — the Arab peoples — also carry Avraham's blood. **Yahweh's** promise to Hagar in the wilderness (**Bereishit 16:10–12; 21:17–18**) is also covenant speech. Yishmael's twelve princes and the nations descended from him are a fulfilment of divine covenant promise — not an accident of history. The conflict of the Middle East is, at its covenant root, a family dispute over the inheritance of one man: **Avraham**.

This institution calls upon all three traditions to return to the Tanakh text — to read the covenant of Avraham honestly, to honor the distinctions the text makes, and to apply the justice standard that **Yahweh** attached to the covenant from the beginning. **Bereishit 18:19** records **Yahweh's** own rationale for choosing Avraham:

Bereishit 18:19 — *"For I have known him, to the end that he may command his children and his household after him, that they may keep the way of Yahweh, to do righteousness and justice — to the end that Yahweh may bring upon Avraham that which He has spoken of him."*

The covenant is inseparable from *tzedakah u-mishpat* — righteousness and justice. Any political, religious, or national claim that invokes Avraham's name while practicing injustice toward any human being made in the image of **Elohim** (**Bereishit 1:26–27**) is a covenant violation — regardless of which

religion makes the claim. This is the covenant witness of Miqdash Bethel Covenant Institution to all three traditions simultaneously.

CONCLUSION

THE TENT OF AVRAHAM IS OPEN ON FOUR SIDES

The Tanakh records that Avraham sat at the entrance to his tent in the heat of the day when **Yahweh** appeared to him (**Bereishit 18:1**). Rabbinic tradition notes that his tent was open on all four sides — a posture of radical welcome to any who would approach. This is the covenant image for this study. The tent of Avraham is not owned by any single religion. It is the shared covenant origin point from which Judaism, Christianity, and Islam all trace their lineage and their claims.

What each tradition does with that shared origin is where they part ways. Judaism keeps the covenant in the specific: Torah, land, circumcision, Shabbat, the 613 commands. Christianity universalizes through the lens of faith in a Messianic fulfillment. Islam submits through the framework of prophetic chain culminating in Muhammad and the five pillars. Each claims Avraham. None owns him — he belongs to **Yahweh**, and **Yahweh** gave him the mandate to be a blessing to *all the families of the earth* (**Bereishit 12:3**).

The covenant witness of Miqdash Bethel Covenant Institution is not that one tradition has superseded the others. It is that all three must return to the Tanakh plumb line — the original covenant text — and stand before it honestly. When they do, the areas of genuine agreement are more foundational than the points of divergence:

- There is one **Yahweh** — Elohim of all creation.
- Avraham was His chosen covenant partner.
- The covenant requires righteousness and justice — not merely ritual.
- The covenant blessing to all nations remains active.
- Every human being bears the image of **Elohim** and is entitled to justice.

These five points are the covenant common ground. They are enough to begin a conversation between Judaism, Christianity, and Islam that is not merely diplomatic — but covenantally honest. That is the mission of this institution, rooted in the father of all three: **Avraham**.

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Sole Authority: The Written Tanakh | Devarim 19:15 Two-Witness Standard