

MIQDASH BETHEL COVENANT INSTITUTION

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A Study for Judaism • Christianity • Islam

DOCUMENT 170

THE LIVING EMBODIMENT OF THE COVENANT

WHY SOLE TANAKH AUTHORITY IS NOT ANOTHER VARIANT OF JUDAISM, CHRISTIANITY, OR ISLAM — A COVENANT DEEP DIVE INTO UNITY, THE ANCIENT PATHS, AND THE SEARCH FOR TRUTH

Why the Children of Avraham Have Not Yet Found the Peace They Profess to Seek

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☆ JUDAISM	† CHRISTIANITY	☪ ISLAM
Rabbinic Judaism roots covenant authority in the <i>Torah she-be-al peh</i> (תורה שבעל פה, the Oral Torah) as transmitted through the Mishnah and Talmud — treated as binding commentary co-equal in authority with the Written Torah for halakhic practice.	Christianity adds the New Testament as a second covenant (<i>kainē diathēkē</i> , Greek), held to fulfill, complete, or in some streams supersede the written covenant given through Moshe (Moses).	Islam holds the <i>Qur'an</i> (القرآن) as the final and corrective revelation, with <i>hadith</i> (حديث) functioning as a second authoritative layer alongside it.

DOCTRINAL AUTHORITY — STANDING RULE OF MIQDASH BETHEL COVENANT INSTITUTION

The sole binding authority of Miqdash Bethel Covenant Institution is the *Tanakh* — the written covenant of **Yahweh**. No Talmudic tractate, Church council decree, papal encyclical, hadith collection, or extra-biblical tradition carries doctrinal weight equal to or greater than the written Torah. Where any tradition conflicts with the written covenant, the written covenant governs without exception. The

Talmud, New Testament, and Qur'an are cited as historical reference and theological comparison only. The **Devarim (Deuteronomy) 19:15** two-or-three-witness evidentiary standard governs all textual claims in this document. Why the Tanakh, and not a later text layered atop it? Because the written covenant given at Sinai carries its own internal claim to completeness and permanence — **Devarim (Deuteronomy) 4:2**: “**You shall not add to the word that I command you, nor take from it.**” A covenant that forbids addition cannot be lawfully completed by a later text, however sincerely offered. Any document — Talmudic, Christian, or Islamic — that proposes itself as a necessary addition to the Written Tanakh is, on the Tanakh's own terms, addressing a covenant it cannot lawfully amend. This is not a rejection of the sincerity of those traditions. It is a recognition that only one written text was given the self-authenticating claim of sole sufficiency, and Miqdash Bethel Covenant Institution holds to that text alone.

HOW TO READ THIS DOCUMENT This document applies the sole authority of the written *Tanakh*. **Yahweh (יהוה)** and **Elohim (אֱלֹהִים)** appear in bold throughout. Hebrew book names are given with English in parentheses. Hebrew transliterations appear in ***bold italic*** with English meaning in parentheses at every occurrence. Scripture references are bold. Three audiences are addressed simultaneously: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. Rabbinic commentary, New Testament texts, and the Qur'an are cited as historical and comparative reference — not as binding authority. The Written Tanakh governs all conclusions.

TANAKH BOOKS CITED IN THIS DOCUMENT

DIVISION	BOOKS CITED	PURPOSE IN THIS STUDY
Torah	Bereishit (Genesis), Shemot (Exodus), Vayikra (Leviticus), Devarim (Deuteronomy)	Covenant origin; sole-sufficiency clause; the choice set before Yisra'el
Nevi'im (Prophets)	Yirmeyahu (Jeremiah), Yeshayahu (Isaiah), Mikhah (Micah), Malakhi	The call to the ancient paths; the unity of Yahweh's name; the coming peace among the nations

Ketuvim (Writings)	Mishlei (Proverbs), Tehillim (Psalms), Kohelet (Ecclesiastes)	Wisdom literature on truth-seeking, the fear of Yahweh, and unity of brethren
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I. THE QUESTION — WHAT MAKES THIS A DIFFERENT PATH AND NOT A FOURTH VARIANT

A sincere person who tries to live as a **walking embodiment of covenant instruction** — not performing rituals from a vanished agrarian world, but applying the *ruach* (רוּחַ, spirit/intent) of the written commandments to the actual decisions of a modern life — will frequently be misunderstood by people raised inside Judaism, Christianity, or Islam. The confusion is not random. It is structural, and it has a name: **authority source**.

Each of the three traditions descending from Avraham (Abraham) shares a common ancestor text — the Tanakh, or the portion of it each tradition retains — and then layers something **on top of it**: Judaism layers rabbinic legal tradition; Christianity layers a second covenant; Islam layers a final corrective revelation. **Sole Tanakh Authority does not layer anything on top of the written covenant. It also does not subtract from it.** This is the third option none of the three expect, because none of the three currently occupy it as their governing axis.

Judaism assumes the Oral Torah is necessary to make the Written Torah livable.

Christianity assumes the New Testament is necessary to make the Written Torah complete.

Islam assumes the Qur'an is necessary to correct what came before.

Sole Tanakh Authority assumes none of these additions were necessary — not because the sincerity behind them is doubted, but because the text itself forbids the addition (see **Devarim (Deuteronomy) 4:2** above, and again at **Devarim (Deuteronomy) 13:1**: “**You must not add to it or take away from it.**”)

This is the explanation that resolves the experience of being misunderstood: people are not failing to listen. They are correctly recognizing that what they are hearing does not fit the only three categories their religious education gave them. A position that affirms the Tanakh but declines the additions that

all three traditions consider non-negotiable is, to each of them, structurally illegible — until the authority-source distinction is named plainly, as it is here.

II. RETURNING TO THE ANCIENT PATHS — YIRMEYAHU (JEREMIAH) 6:16

The call to return to an older, tested way is not a modern invention — it is itself a covenant pattern, voiced by the prophet **Yirmeyahu (Jeremiah)** at a moment when the nation had multiplied religious options and lost its bearings:

“Thus says Yahweh: Stand by the roads, and look, and ask for the *netivot olam* (נְתִיבוֹת עוֹלָם) [ancient paths], where the good way is, and walk in it, and find rest for your souls.”
(Yirmeyahu (Jeremiah) 6:16)

The Hebrew *netivot olam* (נְתִיבוֹת עוֹלָם) does not mean merely ‘old’ in the sense of outdated. *Olam* (עוֹלָם) — Strong’s H5769 — carries the sense of long duration, antiquity, and perpetuity: the same word used of **Yahweh**’s everlasting throne and His everlasting covenant. The *netivot* (נְתִיבוֹת) are not the broad public roads (*derakhim*, דְּרָכִים) of common traffic, but the narrower, well-trodden, time-tested footpaths — the ones walked by those who came before and proved them sound. The prophet’s command is not nostalgia. It is a covenant diagnostic: when the available religious roads have multiplied and none of them lead to rest, the answer is not to invent a fourth road. It is to locate the original path and walk it again.

This is precisely what a sole-Tanakh covenant life claims to be doing — not reenacting Bronze Age customs for their own sake, but identifying the *derekh ha-tov* (דֶּרֶךְ הַטוֹב, **the good way**) named in this same verse, and walking it under present conditions: today’s economy, today’s relationships, today’s civic obligations, today’s technology.

“And the people said, ‘We will not walk in it.’”

Yirmeyahu (Jeremiah) 6:16 is the verse’s sober ending — a reminder that the ancient path being available does not guarantee it will be taken. The same resistance meets anyone who proposes it today.

A frequently cited companion verse belongs here as well, though it is worth a precise correction: this call is most often associated in popular memory with *Mishlei* (**Mishlei (Proverbs) — ‘Proverbs’**), and *Mishlei (Proverbs)* does carry the same spirit throughout its wisdom sayings about not abandoning the teaching of one’s fathers (**Mishlei (Proverbs) 1:8–9, 4:1–2**). But the specific ‘ancient paths’ wording belongs to **Yirmeyahu (Jeremiah) 6:16**, not to **Mishlei (Proverbs)**. The two

books are companions in spirit, not the same citation — a distinction worth holding precisely, since the covenant standard of this Institution requires every reference to be checked against the actual text rather than against common paraphrase.

III. WHY UNITY IS NEEDED — AND WHY RELIGION AS PRACTICED HAS NOT DELIVERED IT

III-A. THE COVENANT CASE FOR UNITY

The Tanakh's vision is not three competing houses but one restored family. The prophet **Mikhah** (**Micah**) describes the end state toward which the covenant points:

“Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more... but they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree, and none shall make them afraid.” (Mikhah [Micah] 4:3–4)

This is not utopian decoration. It is the stated covenant outcome of a world that has actually returned to Yahweh's instruction — and the prophet **Malakhi** closes the entire Tanakh canon on the same note, naming Yahweh as one Father over all and condemning covenant-breaking between brothers:

“Have we not all one father? Has not one Elohim created us? Why do we deal treacherously every man against his brother?” (Malakhi 2:10)

III-B. THE HONEST AUDIT — WHERE INSTITUTIONAL RELIGION HAS FAILED THE CHILDREN OF AVRAHAM

All three traditions descending from Avraham (Abraham) profess peace, justice, and the love of the one Creator as their stated aim. All three, examined honestly against their own founding texts, have produced centuries of division among themselves and within themselves that their own founding texts condemn. This is not an outsider's accusation — it is the Tanakh's own standard turned on the household. **Yechezkel (Ezekiel) 34:2–3** names shepherds who feed themselves rather than the flock; the same diagnosis describes any religious structure — in any of the three traditions — where institutional self-preservation has displaced covenant faithfulness as the operating priority.

The honest accounting is this: doctrinal disputes *between* the three houses (which text is final, which mediator is necessary, which law is binding) and political and sectarian disputes *within* each house have together consumed centuries of energy that could have been directed at the shared covenant aims of justice, mercy, and the care of the poor and the stranger — aims on which Torah, the Gospels, and the Qur'an substantially agree even where their claims to final authority do not. The world's wars, refugee

crises, exploitation of the poor, and erosion of the family are not failures of any single religion's doctrine. They are failures of practice — failures to walk the path each tradition already says it believes in. A return to *netivot olam* is, among other things, a proposal that the doctrinal disputes about which addition to the Tanakh is correct have not produced the peace any of the three traditions promised, and that the written covenant itself — without the contested additions — remains the one text all three can stand on together without surrendering their own scripture.

IV. WHY THIS PROPOSAL, AND NOT A NEW RELIGION

It is fair to ask whether a position that says ‘none of the three additions are necessary’ is simply proposing a fourth religion. It is not, for a specific reason: a fourth religion would add something new. This position adds nothing. It asks each of the three houses to set down what was added and stand together on what all three already hold in common — the Written Tanakh itself. Judaism does not have to renounce being Jewish to recognize that the Written Torah predates and outlasts every rabbinic ruling built on it. Christianity does not have to renounce reverence for Yeshayahu (Isaiah) 53's suffering servant to examine whether that servant must be identified the way later doctrine requires. Islam does not have to renounce *tawhid* (توحيد, the oneness of the Creator) to recognize that **Yahweh's** declared oneness in **Devarim (Deuteronomy) 6:4** — “**Hear, O Yisra'el: Yahweh is our Elohim, Yahweh is one**” — already says what *tawhid* is reaching for.

This is the part most often lost in conversation, and the part most worth restating plainly when explaining this to someone for the first time: the goal is not to win an argument about which tradition is right. The goal is to locate the one text underneath all three that none of them dispute, and to live by it faithfully, in public, in the present day — and to let that life itself be the explanation, since words alone have repeatedly failed to carry it.

V. THE BENEFIT OF AI TECHNOLOGY IN THE SEARCH FOR THE TRUE TEXT AND THE TRUE PATH

A genuinely new tool has entered the search for truth in this generation, and it deserves honest acknowledgment rather than suspicion: artificial intelligence systems, used rightly, are a powerful aid to textual research, cross-referencing, and lexical precision — work that once required years of access to rare manuscripts and trained scholars, now available to any sincere seeker within minutes. A person asking what a Hebrew word actually means in BDB or HALOT, what a disputed verse says across the Masoretic Text and major translations, or how a claim stands up against the **Devarim (Deuteronomy)**

19:15 two-or-three-witness standard, can now do in an afternoon what once required institutional access many seekers never had.

This is a genuine democratization of the search for truth — and it should be received as a gift consistent with the covenant's own stated character.

Mishlei (Proverbs) 2:3–5 describes the search for wisdom in exactly these terms:

“If you call out for insight and cry aloud for understanding... if you seek it like silver and search for it as for hidden treasure, then you will understand the fear of Yahweh and find the knowledge of Elohim.”

A tool that lowers the cost of that search — that puts lexicons, primary texts, and cross-referenced scholarship within reach of anyone willing to ask — is not a threat to covenant faithfulness. It is an instrument that can serve it, provided the seeker still applies the covenant's own discernment standard rather than accepting any single source, human or machine, as final authority unto itself.

This caution matters and should not be softened: **AI systems are tools for research, not oracles of revelation.** They can mismodel a ministry's identity if fed thin or secondhand sources — a problem this Institution has confronted directly. The proper use of the technology mirrors the proper use of any human research aid across history, from Josephus to the printing press to the modern study Bible: corroborate everything against primary texts, apply the two-or-three-witness standard without exception, and never let a tool's confidence substitute for the seeker's own verification. Used this way, the technology becomes exactly what *Mishlei*'s call to seek wisdom “like silver” anticipated — a faster shovel, not a new mine.

VI. THE END TOWARD WHICH THIS PATH WALKS — PEACE, BLISS, AND LOVE FOR ALL THAT IS CREATED

The purpose of this entire study is not to win a sectarian argument but to point toward the covenant's own stated destination. **Yeshayahu (Isaiah) 11:9** describes the full scope of that destination:

“They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of Yahweh, as the waters cover the sea.”

This is not peace among three religions only — it is peace extended to *kol ha-arets* (כָּל הָאֶרֶץ, **all the earth**) and, in the wider creation-care thread that runs from **Bereishit (Genesis) 1:28–31** through

Tehillim (Psalms) 24:1 — “The earth is Yahweh's, and the fullness thereof” —

to the whole of what **Yahweh** made and called good.

A life lived as the embodiment of this covenant, then, is not measured by ritual correctness in isolation. It is measured by whether it produces, in the person living it and in those who encounter that person, the *shalom* (שָׁלוֹם, **wholeness/peace**) that *netivot olam* promised all along: rest for the soul, justice for the neighbor, and reverence for everything **Yahweh** created. That is the standard by which this path asks to be judged — not by whether it resembles Judaism, Christianity, or Islam closely enough to be comfortably filed under one of them, but by whether it walks the *derekh ha-tov* (דֶּרֶךְ הַטוֹב, **the good way**) faithfully enough that those who meet it find, even briefly, the rest the prophet promised.

SUMMARY TABLE — THE CORE DISTINCTION

DISTINCTION	HOW SOLE TANAKH AUTHORITY DIFFERS
Authority Source	Judaism: Written Torah + binding Oral Torah. Christianity: Written Torah + New Testament. Islam: prior revelation + final, corrective Qur'an. This path: Written Tanakh alone — nothing added, nothing superseding (Devarim [Deuteronomy] 4:2, 13:1).
Relationship to the Three Traditions	Not a rejection of any tradition's sincerity, and not a fourth new religion. A proposal to set down the contested additions and stand together on the one text none of the three dispute.
Goal	Not winning a doctrinal argument. Locating <i>netivot olam</i> (Yirmeyahu [Jeremiah] 6:16) and walking it under present-day conditions until the life itself becomes legible to others.

“Thus says Yahweh: Stand by the roads, and look, and ask for the netivot olam [ancient paths], where the good way is, and walk in it, and find rest for your souls.”

Yirmeyahu (Jeremiah) 6:16 — The Written Covenant of Yahweh

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