

# THE COVENANT OF MARRIAGE

*A Covenant Study in the Light of Torah*

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**This study is written to all who trace their covenant lineage to Abraham — to the Jewish community, to followers of Yeshua within the Sacred Name Movement and Christianity, and to the ummah of Islam.** Each tradition claims the covenant of **Yahweh** (יהוה) as its foundation. This study invites every reader to examine the covenant of marriage not through the lens of tradition, commentary, or ecclesiastical law, but through the sole authority of the Tanakh — the written covenant of **Yahweh** — and to measure every teaching against that standard.

Where a tradition upholds Torah, it will be affirmed. Where a tradition has departed from Torah, it will be identified — not as an accusation, but as a covenant call to return.

**Yahweh** is witness.

## PART I

### Marriage as Covenant: The Creation Foundation

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**Marriage did not originate in human culture, religious tradition, or civil law. It was established by Yahweh at the moment of creation, before any nation, before any priesthood, before any Torah was written in stone.** To understand the covenant of marriage, we must return to its source — **Bereishit (Genesis) 1 and 2.**

### **The Creation of Woman — Bereishit (Genesis) 2:18–24**

**Bereishit (Genesis) 2:18** *“And Yahweh Elohim said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper corresponding to him.”*

The Hebrew phrase translated ‘helper corresponding to him’ is **ezer kenegdo** (עֵזֶר כְּנֶגְדּוֹ) — **H5828** and **H5048**. **BDB** defines **ezer** as ‘one who helps, a helper, an aid’ — the same word used of **Yahweh** Himself as Israel’s helper in **Tehillim (Psalms) 121:2**. This is not a word of subordination alone — it is a word of covenant partnership. **Kenegdo** means ‘corresponding to him, counterpart to him, his equal and complement.’ **HALOT** renders it as ‘a helper who is his counterpart.’

The woman was not created as a servant but as a covenant counterpart — designed by **Yahweh** to complete what the man alone could not be.

**Bereishit (Genesis) 2:23–24** *“And the man said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called woman [Ishah], because she was taken out of man [Ish]. Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.”*

Three Hebrew terms anchor this foundational text. First, **Ish** (אִישׁ) — **H376** — man; and **Ishah** (אִשָּׁה) — **H802** — woman/wife. **BDB** shows that **Ishah** is grammatically derived from **Ish**, establishing the ontological unity of husband and wife from the moment of creation.

Second, **davaq** (דָּבַק — **H1692**) — ‘to cleave, cling, adhere.’ **BDB**: ‘to cling, stick, stay close, follow hard after.’ **HALOT**: ‘to form an unbreakable bond.’ This is the same verb used in **Devarim (Deuteronomy) 4:4** of Israel’s covenant adhesion to **Yahweh**. The

covenant bond of husband and wife mirrors the covenant bond between **Yahweh** and Israel.

Third, **basar echad** (בֶּשֶׂר אֶחָד) — ‘one flesh.’ **Echad** (H259) is the same word used in the Shema of **Devarim (Deuteronomy) 6:4**. The unity of husband and wife is patterned on the unity of **Yahweh** Himself. This is not metaphor — it is covenant architecture.

## PART II

### Hebrew Lexical Study of the Covenant of Marriage

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**Every covenant is built on words — and the words Yahweh chose to describe marriage carry legal, relational, and spiritual weight that English translations often obscure.** This section opens each key term to its full Hebrew meaning.

#### 1. Karat Brit (כָּרַת בְּרִית) — ‘To Cut a Covenant’

The standard Hebrew expression for entering a covenant is **karat brit** — literally ‘to cut a covenant’ (H3772 + H1285). **BDB** defines **karat** as ‘to cut, cut off, cut down’ — the covenantal use derives from the ancient practice of cutting animals in two and passing between the pieces, as **Yahweh** Himself enacted in **Bereishit (Genesis) 15:17–18**. This was a death-bound oath: ‘May I become like these cut pieces if I break this covenant.’

The word **brit** (בְּרִית — H1285) appears explicitly of the marriage covenant in **Malachi (Malachi) 2:14**: ‘she is your companion and your covenant wife [אִשְׁתְּ בְרִיתְךָ].’ **HALOT**: ‘covenant, treaty, alliance, pledge’ — always bilateral, always binding. **Marriage in Tanakh is not a contract between two people — it is a covenant cut before Yahweh, death-bound and irrevocable except on the specific grounds Yahweh Himself established.**

#### 2. Ba’al (בַּעַל) — Husband / Owner / Covenant Head

The Tanakh uses **ba'al** (בַּעַל — H1167) for 'husband' in full covenantal weight. **BDB**: 'owner, master, lord' in the primary sense; 'husband' in the covenantal-relational sense. In **Yirmeyahu (Jeremiah) 3:14**, **Yahweh** uses this word of His own covenant with Israel: 'I am a husband [**ba'alti**] to you.' To be under the covenant headship of **Yahweh** is Israel's glory. For a wife to be under the covenant headship of a righteous husband is her glory and security.

### 3. Rosh (ראש) — Head / Authority

The Hebrew **rosh** (ראש — H7218) means 'head, top, chief, first in rank.' **BDB** establishes both physical and figurative uses. The authority structure is not a human invention — it mirrors **Yahweh's** own government: **Yahweh** over all, the man accountable to **Yahweh**, the husband as covenant head of his household.

### 4. Na'aph (נָאַף) — Adultery

The verb **na'aph** (נָאַף — H5003) means 'to commit adultery.' **BDB**: 'used of both men and women; to break the covenant of marriage.'

**Shemot (Exodus) 20:14** ***"You shall not commit adultery."***

**Vayikra (Leviticus) 20:10** ***"The man that commits adultery with another man's wife — the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death."***

**The penalty for adultery in Torah is death — for both parties.** Marriage is a death-bound covenant; breaking it carries a death-bound consequence.

### 5. Zannah (זָנָה) — Spiritual Adultery

The verb **zannah** (זָנָה — H2181) — **BDB**: 'to commit fornication, to be a harlot, to go whoring' — used extensively of Israel's unfaithfulness to **Yahweh** in pursuing other gods. The phrase **zannah acharei** ('to go whoring after') is the standard prophetic indictment of idolatry as spiritual adultery. The marriage covenant between husband and wife reflects, at the human level, the covenant between **Yahweh** and His people.

### 6. Teshuqah (תְּשׁוּקָה) and Mashal (מָשַׁל) — Bereishit (Genesis) 3:16

**Teshuqah (H8669)** — **BDB**: ‘longing, craving, desire’ — an intense covenant orientation of the woman toward her husband, her whole self directed toward her covenant head.

**Mashal (H4910)** — **BDB**: ‘to rule, have dominion, reign over’ — the word used of the sun ruling the day (**Bereishit 1:16**) and of righteous rulers in **Shmuel Bet (2 Samuel) 23:3**. The husband’s **mashal** is covenantal governance accountable to **Yahweh**, not tyranny.

## PART III

### The Torah Legal Framework for Marriage

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#### The Husband’s Three Obligations — Shemot (Exodus) 21:10–11

Torah does not merely give the husband authority — it binds him to three covenant obligations that cannot be violated.

**Shemot (Exodus) 21:10–11** *“If he takes another wife for himself, he shall not diminish her food, her clothing, or her conjugal rights. And if he does not do these three things for her, she shall go out for nothing.”*

The three obligatory provisions: **(1) She’er** — food and sustenance; **(2) Kesut** — clothing; **(3) Onah (H5772)** — conjugal rights and marital intimacy. A husband who withholds any of these from his wife has broken the covenant. **The Torah places the weight of marital covenant obligation squarely and explicitly on the man.**

#### The Sotah — Bemidbar (Numbers) 5:11–31

The **sotah** (סוֹטָה — **H7847**) — the trial of the suspected unfaithful wife — reveals Torah’s absolute commitment to both covenant fidelity and justice. **Torah does not permit a husband to simply accuse his wife without consequence — the matter is**

**brought before Yahweh Himself.** The protection of the innocent wife is built into the covenant structure from the beginning.

### **Sexual Fidelity Laws — Devarim (Deuteronomy) 22:13–29**

**Yahweh takes covenantal sexual fidelity with the utmost seriousness, and the penalties reflect that seriousness.** False accusation against a wife is punished. Proven unfaithfulness carries the death penalty. The repeated phrase is: ‘So you shall purge the evil from your midst.’ Covenant purity is not a private matter — it is a communal covenant obligation.

### **Ervat Davar — Devarim (Deuteronomy) 24:1–4**

The key phrase **ervat davar** (עֲרוֹת דְּבָר) — ‘nakedness of a matter / matter of indecency’ (H6172) — is a technical legal phrase whose exact meaning was debated in 1st-century Judea between the schools of **Shammai** (restricting it to sexual immorality) and **Hillel** (expanding it broadly). The critical interpretive point is this: Torah does not command divorce — it regulates it. Torah is not endorsing divorce; it is limiting its consequences and protecting the woman from being passed between men as property.

**Malachi (Malachi) 2:16** delivers **Yahweh’s** unambiguous position: **ki sane’ shalach** (כִּי שָׂנֵא שְׁלַח) — ‘for He hates sending away.’ **BDB** defines **sane’** (H8130) as ‘to hate, detest, be hostile to.’ **Yahweh does not simply discourage divorce — He declares His hatred of it.**

**Yahweh does not simply discourage divorce** — the Hebrew text of **Malachi (Malachi) 2:16** condemns it from two angles that reinforce each other. The traditional rendering reads: ***"For I hate divorce, says Yahweh Elohim of Israel."*** The Hebrew, however, permits a second reading that is equally supported by the grammar: ***"For he hates and divorces"*** — meaning the husband who hates his wife and sends her away. The verb **sane’** (שָׂנֵא — H8130) can carry Yahweh as its subject ("Yahweh hates") or the husband as its subject ("he who hates"). **BDB** documents both uses. The immediately following phrase confirms the second reading: ***"he covers his garment with violence"*** — a statement about the husband's own moral condition, not Yahweh's declaration. Both readings point to the identical **covenant conclusion**: whether Yahweh is declaring His

hatred of divorce or whether the text is condemning the husband who hates and dismisses his wife, the covenant verdict is the same — divorce is a covenant violation rooted in hatred and violence, not in righteousness. A righteous covenant husband does not hate his wife. And a man who does not hate his wife has no Torah ground on which to send her away.

## PART IV

### Headship: Yahweh’s Government in the Home

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The authority structure of marriage is not a cultural convention — it is the architecture of Yahweh’s own government replicated at the household level. The structure is explicit: Yahweh is Head over all. Man is accountable to Yahweh as his Head. Within the covenant household, the husband is the *rosh* over his wife and children. This is a hierarchy of accountability and responsibility — the husband will answer to Yahweh for the covenant faithfulness of his household.

#### The Husband’s Responsibility as Teacher and Guide

**Bereishit (Genesis) 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.”*

The command of the covenant head over his household is not optional — it is the very reason Yahweh chose Avraham. The husband who does not teach his household the way of Yahweh has failed his covenant headship, regardless of how he performs in any other area of life.

#### The Eshet Chayil — Mishlei (Proverbs) 31:10–31

The **Eshet Chayil** (אִשָּׁת חַיִּיל — ‘woman of valor’) is not a passive figure. **BDB** defines **chayil** (H2428) as ‘strength, efficiency, wealth, army’ — the same word used of mighty warriors. Submission in Torah is not weakness — it is the strength of a covenant partner

operating within **Yahweh's** established order. A husband's covenant standing before **Yahweh** is inseparable from how he treats his wife and how she upholds the covenant with him.

## PART V

### The Prophetic Witness: Yahweh's Own Marriage Covenant

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The most powerful witness to the sacredness of marriage in all of Tanakh is the fact that **Yahweh** chose marriage as the metaphor for His covenant with Israel. This is not incidental. It reveals that marriage and covenant are structurally identical in **Yahweh's** design.

#### Yirmeyahu (Jeremiah) 3 — Yahweh as the Faithful Husband

**Yirmeyahu (Jeremiah) 3:14** *“Return, O backsliding children, says Yahweh; for I am a husband [ba’alti] to you.”*

Even after Israel's spiritual adultery, **Yahweh** does not abandon the covenant. He calls her to return. This is the covenant marriage model: faithfulness that endures betrayal, calls for repentance, and restores the covenant.

#### Yechezkel (Ezekiel) 16 — The Covenant Broken and Renewed

**Yechezkel (Ezekiel) 16:8** *“I swore to you, and entered into a covenant with you, says Yahweh Elohim, and you became Mine.”*

The phrase **akrot lach brit** — ‘I entered into a covenant with you’ — uses the root **karat**. **Yahweh** describes His relationship with Israel using the identical language of covenant-cutting used for marriage. The marriage covenant is not a human institution Torah accommodates — it is a reflection of the divine covenant relationship itself.

#### Hoshea (Hosea) 1–3 — The Living Covenant Drama

The prophet **Hoshea (Hosea)** was commanded to marry an unfaithful woman as a living enactment of **Yahweh's** covenant with Israel. When **Gomer** was unfaithful, **Hoshea** was commanded not to abandon her — but to redeem her and restore the covenant. **A righteous husband, like Yahweh Himself, does not abandon his covenant wife in her failure — he pursues her restoration.**

### **Malachi (Malachi) 2:13–16 — The Covenant Wife**

**Malachi (Malachi) 2:14–16** *“Yet is she your companion, and the wife of your covenant. And did not He make one? Yet had He the residue of the Spirit. And wherefore one? That He might seek a godly seed. Therefore take heed to your spirit, and let none deal treacherously against the wife of his youth. For Yahweh Elohim of Israel says that He hates divorce.”*

The wife is called **chavertekha** (חַבְרֶתְךָ — H2278) — ‘your companion, your partner’ — and **eshet beritekha** — ‘the wife of your covenant.’ **A man who abandons his wife betrays both his companion and his covenant — and Yahweh is witness to both violations.**

## **PART VI**

### **Spiritual Adultery: The Deeper Warning**

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Torah establishes two dimensions of adultery: physical and spiritual. Both carry covenant consequences. **Physical adultery violates the marriage covenant between husband and wife. Spiritual adultery violates the covenant between Yahweh and His people.**

Throughout the Nevi'im, **Yahweh** uses the phrase **zanah acharei** (‘to go whoring after’) to describe Israel's idolatry. In **Bemidbar (Numbers) 15:39**: *‘that you may not follow after your own heart and your own eyes, after which you go whoring.’* In **Devarim**

**(Deuteronomy) 31:16: 'this people will rise up, and go whoring after the gods of the strangers of the land.'**

**When a wife allows another man to become her teacher, spiritual guide, or primary source of covenant authority — displacing her husband from his role as covenant head — she has committed spiritual adultery.** This is not harsh language — it is the language of **Yahweh** Himself. Any counselor, elder, or religious leader who draws a wife away from her covenant husband rather than restoring her to him is guilty of facilitating the same covenant violation.

In the modern age, the threats to covenant headship do not always come from another man. When a wife allows the television, social media, or the voices of popular culture to become her primary teachers — shaping her thinking, her standards, and her expectations above the instruction of her husband — she has displaced her covenant head with the world. The screen has become the teacher. The scrolling feed has become the authority. And the result is the same as if another man had stepped in: the husband's covenant headship has been stolen, and the wife has placed herself under a foreign spirit.

**Yahweh** designed the covenant household so that the husband is the gatekeeper of what enters the home in the way of teaching, values, and spiritual direction. When outside voices — whether from entertainment, social media commentary, or the opinions of other women — are given more weight than the husband's instruction, the order of **Yahweh's** government has been overturned in the home. This is not a small matter. It is the same pattern that undid **Chavah (Eve)** in **Bereishit (Genesis) 3** — she listened to a voice that was not her covenant head, and she led her household into ruin.

**There is a second and graver violation that compounds this sin: when a wife disrespects her husband in front of his children.** A husband's covenant authority is not only between himself and his wife — it is the living model of **Yahweh's** government that the children are watching and learning from. When a wife dishonors, dismisses, or mocks her husband's instruction before the children, she does not merely wound her husband. She teaches her sons that covenant headship is a thing to be despised, and

she teaches her daughters that submission to a righteous head is weakness. She is training the next generation in rebellion against Yahweh's own governmental order.

**Yeshayahu (Isaiah) 3:12** speaks directly to this condition: ***"As for My people, children are their oppressors, and women rule over them. O My people! They who lead you cause you to err, and destroy the way of your paths!"***

This is not a distant prophecy — it describes every household where the covenant order has been inverted. When a mother undermines the father before the children, she has handed the government of the home to chaos. Yahweh holds this as a sign of national and covenant collapse, not merely a domestic dispute.

**The covenant household is Yahweh's government in miniature. The father is the visible representative of divine headship to every child in that home. To honor the father is to teach the children what it means to honor Yahweh. To dishonor the father is to teach them what it means to rebel against Yahweh. There is no neutral ground. A wife who upholds her husband's covenant authority before her children is building a generation of covenant people. A wife who tears it down is building a generation of covenant breakers.**

## PART VII

### **Judaism, Christianity, and Islam: Where Each Upholds and Departs from Torah**

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Each of the three Abrahamic traditions has preserved elements of the Torah's covenant marriage framework — and each has introduced departures from it. What follows is not condemnation but covenant discernment. Torah is the standard; each tradition is measured against it.

## Judaism

**What upholds Torah:** The *ketubah* (marriage contract) preserves the Torah principle of the husband's covenant obligations (**Shemot 21:10–11**). The school of **Shammai's** interpretation of *ervat davar* — restricting divorce to sexual immorality — most closely follows the Torah text.

**Where departure occurs:** The school of Hillel expanded *ervat davar* to include virtually any displeasure — directly contradicting Malachi 2:16's declaration that Yahweh hates divorce. Rabbeinu Gershom's decree (c. 1000 CE) banning polygamy among Ashkenazi Jews was a rabbinic enactment, not a Torah commandment — and was never accepted by Sephardi, Mizrachi, or Yemenite communities who continued plural covenant marriage in accordance with Torah. **Torah is the authority — not the Talmud, not rabbinic decree.**

## Christianity

**What upholds Torah:** The teaching attributed to Yeshua in **Mattithyahu (Matthew) 19:3–9** explicitly returns to **Bereishit (Genesis) 1–2** as the creation foundation of marriage, restricting divorce to the ground of sexual immorality and echoing Torah's *ervat davar*. This is a direct appeal to Torah authority. It is critical to understand that Yeshua was a 1st-century Jewish teacher operating within **Second Temple Judea** — his debates on divorce were conducted against the backdrop of the active **Hillel/Shammai** dispute, and his answer aligns with the school of Shammai in restricting divorce grounds. He was not introducing new law; he was calling people back to Torah.

**Where departure occurs:** Many Christian traditions have moved far from Torah's covenant marriage framework, permitting divorce and remarriage on grounds Torah does not authorize. The introduction of 'Pauline privilege' (**1 Corinthians 7:15**) — permitting divorce when an unbelieving spouse departs — has no Torah parallel. More fundamentally, Christian tradition's replacement of the Tanakh's covenant law with 'grace' frameworks has severed the connection to the legal covenant structure **Yahweh** established at Sinai. The covenant of marriage is not dissolved by 'grace' — it is upheld by it.

## **A Critical Mistranslation: “Husband of One Wife” — 1 Timayah (1 Timothy) 3:2**

Christian tradition has long imposed a false prohibition on plural covenant marriage by mistranslating a single Greek phrase. The qualification for elders in **1 Timayah (1 Timothy) 3:2** reads in Greek: μιᾶς γυναικὸς ἄνδρα (*mias gunaikos andra*). The identical construction appears in **1 Timayah 3:12** and **Titus 1:6**. Most English Bibles render it ‘husband of one wife.’ This translation is grammatically imprecise and interpretively misleading.

**The literal Greek construction reads word-for-word: “of-one woman man” — a one-woman man.** Both *gunaikos* (woman/wife) and *andra* (man/husband) are *anarthrous* — they lack the definite article. In Greek, the absence of the article in this construction signals a description of *character or quality*, not a numerical count. This is a genitive of quality: the phrase describes what kind of man the overseer must be, not how many times he has been married.

**The five leading NT Greek lexicons agree on this grammatical force. BDAG** (Bauer-Danker-Arndt-Gingrich, 3rd ed.) glosses the phrase as describing ‘extraordinary fidelity’ and links it to Greco-Roman inscriptional commendations of marital devotion. **Louw-Nida** (Greek-English Lexicon based on Semantic Domains) places both *anēr* and *gunē* in the marital domain when context demands — but recognizes the construction describes relational character. **LSJ** (Liddell-Scott-Jones) confirms that *gunē* carries both ‘woman’ and ‘wife’ senses depending on context, and that *anēr* similarly carries both ‘man’ and ‘husband.’ **William Mounce** (Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 46) changed his own position during his commentary research, writing: ‘The issue is moral character, not marital status.’ **Concise BDAG** (Danker) maintains the same emphasis on fidelity as the operative meaning.

The decisive interpretive test is **1 Timayah (1 Timothy) 5:9** — the exact reverse construction: ἐνὸς ἀνδρὸς γυνή (*henos andros gunē*) — ‘of-one man woman’ — applied to widows enrolled for church support. If *mias gunaikos andra* means ‘married exactly once,’ then *henos andros gunē* means a widow must have been married exactly once. But in **1 Timayah 5:14**, Paul explicitly *commands* younger widows to

remarry — a direct contradiction if ‘married only once’ is the meaning. Mounce writes: ‘Since the phrase is somewhat unusual, it is safe to insist that it had the same meaning in reverse when applied to widows.’ The 5:9 parallel and the 5:14 command together prove the phrase cannot mean a numerical restriction on marriages. It means *faithful to one woman* — a character qualification.

The scholarly consensus among specialists in the Pastoral Epistles favors the faithfulness interpretation: Mounce (WBC), Knight (NIGTC), Towner (NICNT), Marshall (ICC), Witherington, Keener, Johnson (Anchor Bible), MacArthur (MNTC), and Yarbrough all agree the phrase describes marital character — not a count of marriages. The NIV (2011 revision) changed its rendering to *faithful to his wife*, and the NLT reads the same. **Philip Towner** states directly: ‘The point is not how often one can be married, but rather how one conducts himself in his marriage.’

The Hellenistic cultural background explains why the phrase was coined and why it was misread. In 1st-century Greco-Roman culture, monogamy was the legal standard for Greek and Roman citizens — men could have concubines and mistresses but only one legal wife, much like today. Polygamy was viewed as a foreign, barbarian custom. The New Testament was written in Koine Greek to audiences shaped by these cultural assumptions. When Greek readers encountered *mias gunaikos andra*, their Hellenistic framework naturally read ‘one wife’ through the lens of their own monogamy culture. But the NT authors were 1st-century **Jewish** thinkers writing in Greek — and in the **Second Temple Jewish world of Judea and Samaria**, plural marriage was practiced, documented by **Josephus** (*Antiquities* 17.14: ‘It is our ancestral custom to have several wives at the same time’), attested at Qumran, and regulated under Torah without censure of the plurality itself.

**The Torah never prohibited plural covenant marriage.** The Torah record is unambiguous: **Avraham (Abraham)** had Sarah, Hagar, and later Keturah. **Ya’akov (Jacob)** had four covenant wives, and from them came the twelve tribes of Israel. **David**, called a man after **Yahweh’s** own heart, had multiple wives — and in **Shmuel Bet (2 Samuel) 12:7–8**, **Yahweh** Himself said through **Natan (Nathan)**: ‘I gave you your master’s house and your master’s wives... and if that had been too little, I would

have added to you many more.’ **Devarim (Deuteronomy) 21:15–17** explicitly legislates for a man with two wives. **Shemot (Exodus) 21:10** mandates that if a man takes an additional wife, he may not diminish the rights of the first. This is covenant protection — not prohibition.

**A critical modern tension must be named directly.** Polygamy is illegal in the United States and most nations today. This legal prohibition has conditioned society — and particularly women — to expect monogamy as the only acceptable norm. When a man desires to take a second covenant wife in this environment, civil law forces him to divorce the first wife in order to remarry — which directly violates **Malachi 2:16**: **Yahweh** hates divorce. The result is that civil law, by prohibiting covenant plurality, compels men to commit the very covenant violation Torah condemns most strongly. The covenant of marriage belongs to **Yahweh**, not to the state. **Torah is the governing authority** — not Rome, not Washington, not Brussels.

**Miqdash Bethel’s position is grounded solely in Torah:** plural covenant marriage is Torah-lawful provided the husband fulfills the covenant obligations of **Shemot 21:10–11** to every wife — her food, her clothing, and her conjugal rights without diminishment. The obligation to every wife in the household is equal, binding, and non-negotiable before **Yahweh**. **This is not a license for selfishness — it is the highest standard of covenant responsibility.**

## Islam

**What upholds Torah:** The Islamic institution of *nikah* (marriage contract) parallels Torah’s covenant framework in requiring a formal public covenant, a *mahr* (bride price) that mirrors Torah’s *mohar* (**Shemot 22:16**), and the husband’s obligation to provide sustenance, clothing, and marital intimacy — the identical three obligations of **Shemot 21:10–11**. The concept of *qiwamah* (male covenant responsibility and guardianship) in Quran 4:34 reflects the Torah principle of *ba’al* and covenant headship. The Islamic permission for plurality of wives has direct Torah precedent.

**Where departure occurs:** The Islamic institution of *talaq* (unilateral divorce by triple verbal repudiation) does not meet the Torah standard of a written *sefer keritut* per

**Devarim (Deuteronomy) 24:1** — Torah requires a formal written instrument, not a verbal declaration alone, to constitute a lawful dissolution. Where Islam's practice diverges from Torah is in the covenant protection standard: **Torah requires that no man diminish the she'er, kesut, or onah of any wife he takes (Shemot 21:10–11) — every wife, whether first or subsequent, holds the full covenant rights Yahweh established at Sinai.**

## CONCLUSION

### The Covenant Vow — Forever

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The covenant of marriage is the oldest institution on earth. It predates every nation, every temple, every priesthood, every written law. Yahweh established it at creation, before the first sin, before the first death, before the first broken covenant. **He established it as a reflection of Himself — of His unity, His fidelity, His covenant love.**

To Judaism, Christianity, and Islam alike: this study is a covenant call — not to your tradition, but to the Torah that precedes and supersedes all tradition. **Yahweh** is witness between every husband and wife who has stood before Him and cut a covenant. That covenant does not expire. It is not subject to revision by a rabbi, a bishop, a pastor, an imam, a judge, or a legislature.

We live in 2026 in a world that has largely abandoned the covenant framework of **Yahweh**. Divorce is normalized. Serial remarriage is celebrated. Civil law has replaced covenant law. Cultural conditioning has severed the connection between the people and the covenant standard of their Creator. But **Yahweh's** covenant does not change with culture. His word spoken from Sinai is the same word spoken today. The covenant of marriage He established in **Bereishit** is the same covenant He holds every man and woman accountable to in 2026.

The husband who stands before **Yahweh** as the righteous head of his household — who teaches, provides, protects, and loves every wife in his covenant household as he loves himself — is enacting **Yahweh's** own government in miniature. The wife who stands with her husband in covenant faithfulness — strong as **chayil**, oriented in **teshuqah**, cleaving in **davaq** — is reflecting the faithfulness that **Yahweh** seeks from His own covenant people.

**This is not a burden — it is the highest honor Yahweh confers on two human beings: to image His covenant in their home, their family, their lives. If it is not forever, it is not a covenant. And Yahweh's covenant is forever.**

**Malachi (Malachi) 2:14 “*Yet is she your companion, and the wife of your covenant.*”**