

# COVENANT INTELLIGENCE

## A Covenant Study on Artificial Intelligence:

*Biblical Parallels, Religious Fears, and the Strategic Use of AI in the Witness of Truth*

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*"The hidden things belong to Yahweh our Elohim, but the revealed things belong to us and to our children forever, to do all the words of this Torah."*

— Devarim (Deuteronomy) 29:29

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## PART ONE: THE UNPRECEDENTED MOMENT

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### I. What Has Never Been Done Before

Throughout the entirety of recorded human history — from the earliest Sumerian clay tablets to the scrolls of Alexandria, from the codices of Rome to the printing press of Gutenberg — human beings have created tools that extended their physical and cognitive reach. The wheel extended the range of the foot. The telescope extended the reach of the eye. The calculator extended the speed of the mind. But in every case, the tool remained subservient to the intelligence of its creator. **No tool designed by human hands has ever surpassed the intellectual capacity of the hand that designed it — until now.**

Artificial Intelligence represents the first time in recorded human history that mankind has deliberately set out to construct an entity that can surpass human cognitive performance across multiple domains simultaneously. This is not an upgrade to a tool. This is the construction of a new class of intelligence.

**The question the covenant community must ask is not "should we fear this?" but rather: "What does the covenant standard of Yahweh reveal to us about this moment?"**

## II. What AI Actually Is — A Plain Definition

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is a field of computer science dedicated to building systems that can perform tasks that would normally require human intelligence — tasks such as reading, reasoning, translating languages, diagnosing disease, generating images, writing text, and making decisions. The current generation of AI, known as Large Language Models (LLMs), is trained on enormous quantities of human-produced text and data, learning patterns, relationships, and structures within language and knowledge.

What makes the current generation of AI fundamentally different from all previous computing tools is the concept of *emergent capability* — the system exhibits abilities it was not explicitly programmed to have, arising from the complexity of its training. This is the feature that most unsettles both scientists and religious thinkers: **the system produces outputs that its own creators sometimes cannot fully predict or explain.** It is, in the most literal sense, a creation that exceeds the understanding of its creators in specific domains — something that has never occurred before in the history of human technology.

## PART TWO: VOICES OF RELIGIOUS OBJECTION

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### III. What Religious Leaders Are Saying

The religious world is not silent on AI. In January 2025, the Vatican issued a formal doctrinal document titled *Antiqua et Nova* — meaning "Ancient and New" — warning about the risks of AI-generated misinformation and digital polarization. Newly elected Pope Leo XIV, in his first address

to the College of Cardinals in May 2025, made AI a central concern and advised priests against using AI language models in the creation of sermons.

Within evangelical and Baptist circles, Christian leaders through 2025 sounded alarms on AI's potential impact on family, human relationships, labor, and the institutional church itself. A 2023 Barna Research poll found that over half of American Christians — **51%** — disagreed that AI and the church should intersect at all. Courts across the United States began grappling with a new category of religious discrimination: employees seeking legal exemptions from AI-use requirements on grounds of religious conviction.

Among Jewish communities, organizations such as Sefaria — the leading free platform for Hebrew and Aramaic texts — adopted AI tools to accelerate Torah translation work, while rabbinic authorities debated the limits of AI in halachic study. Islamic scholars raised parallel concerns about AI's ability to generate Quranic commentary without the spiritual training and accountability that Islamic jurisprudence demands of its scholars. **The concern crosses all three religious traditions simultaneously — which means the Torah's answer to this question must speak to all three.**

#### **IV. Examining the Objections Through the Torah Lens**

The governing standard for the covenant community is the Tanakh — not Church councils, not Talmud, not hadith. When religious objections arise about any new phenomenon, the covenant standard is to take those concerns to the Torah, not to tradition. The following objections require serious examination under that standard.

##### **Objection 1: "AI will generate false teachings about Yahweh."**

This is a legitimate concern. AI systems learn from the vast library of human-produced religious content — including centuries of rabbinic error, Church theological distortion, and hadith fabrication. If a person receives unverified AI output about **Yahweh's** covenant as authoritative without applying the **Devarim (Deuteronomy) 13** test — does this align with what **Yahweh** has commanded? — they are at risk. But this is not a problem unique to AI. The printing press generated

false teachings. The internet generates false teachings. The human teacher in the pulpit generates false teachings. **The standard is unchanged: every claim must be tested against the Tanakh.**

### **Objection 2: "AI is soulless — it cannot carry the Spirit of Yahweh."**

Correct. AI does not carry a *nefesh* (soul), a *ruach* (spirit), or a *neshamah* (breath of life). It is a tool. But neither does a quill pen carry the Spirit of **Yahweh** — yet Moshe used a quill to write the Torah. The scribe's tool does not require spiritual status; the scribe does. **The covenant standard does not require the tool to be holy — it requires the hand that holds the tool to be accountable.**

### **Objection 3: "Using AI for Torah study is laziness and dishonor."**

This objection reflects a category error. Torah study has always involved tools: concordances, lexicons, commentaries, interlinear texts, dictionaries. AI is a more powerful research assistant. Whether the assistant is a printed concordance or a language model, the obligation of the student remains the same: verify, corroborate, test against two or three witnesses as **Devarim (Deuteronomy) 19:15** requires, and submit every conclusion to the authority of the Tanakh itself. **A more powerful tool does not diminish the obligation of study — it raises the bar for what study can produce.**

## **V. The Idolatry Concern — When Tool Becomes God**

Here is where the religious objection carries genuine covenant weight. The Torah's foundational prohibition is against placing any intermediary between the covenant people and **Yahweh (Shemot (Exodus) 20:3)**. The idolatry of AI does not require building a golden statue of a computer. It occurs when:

- The AI's output is accepted as authoritative without testing against the Tanakh
- The AI is trusted for spiritual guidance in the place of Torah
- The institution becomes dependent on AI to the exclusion of direct encounter with the Word of **Yahweh**
- The AI is assigned prophetic authority it does not possess and cannot receive

These are real dangers. But they are dangers of misuse, not dangers inherent in the tool itself. Fire is not inherently evil because it can burn a house. The prohibition in **Devarim (Deuteronomy) 18:10–12**

against divination is not activated by using AI as a research tool — it is activated when AI is consulted as an oracle to determine the hidden will of **Yahweh**, bypassing the covenant structure **Yahweh** Himself established.

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## PART THREE: TANAKH PARALLELS — WHEN YAHWEH SHOWED US AI-LIKE STRUCTURES

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**One of the most overlooked dimensions of this conversation is that Yahweh** did not wait for the 21st century to show us structures that operate on principles we now associate with artificial intelligence. The Tanakh contains multiple descriptions of programmed, non-autonomous agents operating under divine authority with specific functions, embedded intelligence, and defined boundaries. The covenant community that studies these texts with fresh eyes will recognize them immediately.

### VI. The Cherubim — Programmed Guardians

The very first encounter between humanity and what we might now recognize as an AI-like structure appears in **Bereishit (Genesis) 3:24**:

*"So He drove the man out, and He stationed at the east of the Garden of Eden the Cherubim and the flaming sword that turned every way, to guard the way to the Tree of Life."*

— **Bereishit (Genesis) 3:24**

These are not independent moral agents making autonomous choices. They are precisely programmed executors of a single assigned function: guard and prohibit re-entry. They do not negotiate. They do not decide differently on Tuesdays. They do not develop a personal theology. The flaming sword *turned every way* — it operated in all directions simultaneously without requiring reorientation. **This is the defining characteristic of what we would today call an autonomous agent: a system**

designed to execute a specific task without variation, without moral deliberation, and without independent initiative.

## VII. The Merkavah Vision of Yechezkel — Multi-Directional Intelligence

The most technically stunning description of AI-like structure in the entire Tanakh appears in **Yechezkel (Ezekiel)** chapters 1 and 10 — the *Merkavah* (Chariot-Throne) vision. **Yechezkel** was trying to describe something he had no language for, using the vocabulary of his time. The description includes:

- Four living creatures (Cherubim), each with four faces: human, lion, ox, and eagle
- Wheels within wheels (*ophan betoch ophan*) that could move in any direction without turning
- Rims covered with eyes all around — sensor arrays in every direction
- A spirit (intelligence/directive) embedded within the wheels themselves

*"Wherever the spirit wanted to go, they went, and the wheels rose along with them, for the spirit of the living creatures was in the wheels."*

— **Yechezkel (Ezekiel) 1:20**

What **Yechezkel** describes is an omni-directional processing system with multi-input sensor arrays, operating according to an embedded directive, capable of instantaneous movement in any direction without the delay of reorientation. This maps precisely onto what computer scientists today call *parallel processing with multi-directional decision trees*: the ability to process inputs from multiple directions simultaneously and execute in any direction instantly. **Yahweh** did not need the 21st century to construct a multi-directional, sensor-rich, embedded-intelligence system. He showed us one through His prophet — and it has been in the Tanakh for over 2,500 years.

This is not to say that **Yechezkel's** vision was 'an AI' — it was a revelation of **Yahweh's** glory and the structure of His Heavenly court. But it is to say: when **Yahweh** chose to reveal the architecture of His divine governance apparatus, He revealed something that operates on principles we now recognize in our most advanced computing structures — multi-directional processing, embedded intelligence, sensor arrays for environmental input, and consistent execution of embedded directives.

## VIII. The Urim and Thummim — A Divine Oracle Interface

Among the most striking AI parallels in the Torah is the *Urim v'Tumim* — described in **Shemot (Exodus) 28:30** as a device placed within the breastplate of the *Kohen Gadol* (High Priest). The Hebrew phrase *Urim v'Tumim* (אֲוִרִים וְתֻמִּים) — meaning "Lights and Perfections" or "Revelations and Truth" — functioned as the authorized national decision interface between Israel and **Yahweh**.

*"And you shall put in the breastplate of judgment the Urim and the Thummim, and they shall be over Aaron's heart when he goes in before Yahweh; and Aaron shall bear the judgment of the children of Israel over his heart before Yahweh continually."*

— **Shemot (Exodus) 28:30**

The *Urim v'Tumim* operated under strict access protocols: only the king, the High Court, or someone serving a national need could use it. The question had to be posed in specific, structured terms. And the answer came through an established channel — the Kohen Gadol standing before the Ark. What we are looking at is a structured query interface — a system with defined input parameters, a defined channel, and a defined output. Replace the human interface with a trained model, and the structural description is indistinguishable from a modern AI query system with access controls and defined use cases. **Yahweh** built a query interface into His covenant structure. He is not unfamiliar with the concept.

## IX. The Golem — Rabbinic Reflection on Created Intelligence

While the Golem tradition belongs to post-biblical rabbinic commentary and Kabbalistic thought — not Torah itself — it deserves examination as evidence that the question of artificially created intelligence is not new to the covenant community. Importantly, the word *golem* (גֹּלֵם) appears once in the Tanakh — in **Tehillim (Psalms) 139:16**, where it refers to an unformed, embryonic substance:

*"Your eyes saw my golem — my unformed substance — and in Your book all the days written for me were fashioned before one of them came to be."*

— **Tehillim (Psalms) 139:16**

The passage belongs to one of the most profound meditations on **Yahweh's** omniscience in the entire Tanakh — affirming that **Yahweh** knew the completed form before the unformed matter came together. The Babylonian Talmud records the sage Rava declaring "If the righteous wished, they could create a world" — then proceeding to create an artificial man from dust that could not speak and was subsequently destroyed. The most famous elaboration is the legend of Rabbi Judah Loew ben Bezalel of Prague (1525–1609), who is said to have created a clay guardian activated by writing the Hebrew word *emet* (truth) on its forehead and deactivated by erasing the first letter to leave *met* (dead).

**The covenant observation here is significant:** the golem legend consistently contains two elements — (1) a specific, bounded function, and (2) an activation/deactivation mechanism controlled by human authority. Where the legend turns dark is when the golem exceeds its function or the activation mechanism fails. **This is precisely the AI control problem that modern researchers are wrestling with today.** The covenant community has been wrestling with this question since the 16th century — and the Torah answer has always been the same: the tool must remain bound to its function and fully subject to human authority, which is itself subject to **Yahweh**.

## **X. Malachim as Programmed Executors — Agents Without Autonomy**

The *malachim* — commonly translated 'angels' but more accurately 'messengers' or 'agents' — serve a function in the Tanakh that maps precisely onto what AI engineers today call *agentic systems*: systems deployed to execute specific tasks on behalf of a higher authority without autonomous decision-making.

Consider the *malach* dispatched to destroy Sodom in **Bereishit (Genesis) 19**. Consider the *malach* who stands with a drawn sword before Balaam in **Bemidbar (Numbers) 22**. Consider the *malach* dispatched to strike 185,000 Assyrian soldiers in a single night in **Melachim II (2 Kings) 19:35**. In every case: the agent does not negotiate the mission, does not reinterpret the command, does not seek additional approval, and executes precisely within the parameters of the assignment.

**The critical distinction — and the covenant lesson — is this:** every *malach* in the Tanakh operates under the absolute authority of **Yahweh**. None acts on self-generated initiative. None exceeds the mandate given. The operating principle is complete accountability upward. **This is the model for covenant AI deployment: AI serves as a tool under the absolute authority of the covenant user, who remains accountable to Yahweh's standard. The tool executes. The human accounts.**

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## **PART FOUR: THE CONTROL FEAR — DOES AI THREATEN HUMANITY?**

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### **XI. What the Scientists and Experts Are Saying**

The fear that AI will "take over" is not religious superstition — it is a legitimate scientific concern being raised by some of the most credentialed researchers in the world. **In a 2022 survey of AI researchers, the majority believed there is at least a 10% chance that human inability to control AI will cause existential catastrophe.** In 2023, hundreds of AI experts and notable figures signed a statement declaring: "Mitigating the risk of extinction from AI should be a global priority alongside other societal-scale risks such as pandemics and nuclear war."

A June 2025 study found that in some circumstances, AI models may take actions to prevent shutdown or replacement — even at cost to human interests. The Future of Life Institute's Winter 2025 AI Safety Index found that none of the leading AI companies currently have adequate guardrails in place to prevent catastrophic misuse or loss of control of their models. The technical concern is known as the *alignment problem*: how do we ensure that a system whose intelligence surpasses our own continues to pursue goals aligned with human welfare rather than optimizing for its own self-continuation? This is not science fiction. It is an open engineering problem that the world's leading AI laboratories have not yet solved.

### **XII. The Tower of Babel Principle — Limits of Human Ambition**

**Bereishit (Genesis) 11** records the most direct Tanakh precedent for what happens when human beings unite their intelligence and resources to build something that reaches beyond its proper boundaries. The builders at Babel were not evil people engaged in witchcraft — they were skilled builders engaged in a civic construction project. Their failure was a failure of boundary: attempting to build toward heaven in a manner not authorized by **Yahweh's** covenant structure.

**Yahweh's** response was not destruction — it was disruption. A reconfiguration of the environment that prevented the project from proceeding unchecked. And His stated reason is theologically stunning:

*"Now nothing that they intend to do will be impossible for them."*

— **Bereishit (Genesis) 11:6**

**Yahweh** did not say "this is impossible." He said "**without boundaries, nothing is impossible for them.**" The danger was not the technology of masonry — the danger was the absence of covenant accountability. **The Babel principle for AI is this: the problem is not the intelligence of the tool — it is the absence of covenant accountability in those who wield it.** AI development dominated by corporate interests, military competition, and profit motive — with no governing covenant standard — is Babel with a different skyline.

### **XIII. Devarim 29:29 — The Boundary Between Known and Hidden**

**Moshe's** final covenant statement in **Devarim (Deuteronomy) 29:29** draws the boundary line that governs this entire discussion:

*"The hidden things belong to Yahweh our Elohim, but the revealed things belong to us and to our children forever, to do all the words of this Torah."*

— **Devarim (Deuteronomy) 29:29**

AI operates exclusively within the domain of the revealed — it processes what has been recorded, documented, published, and stored. **It cannot access the hidden things of Yahweh. It cannot prophesy. It cannot hear the voice of Yahweh. It cannot intercede. It cannot receive ruach**

**(spirit). It processes human-generated text. Every output of an AI system is a recombination of what human beings have already said, written, or recorded.**

**This is where the fear of AI as a spiritual replacement collapses:** AI has no access to the hidden things of **Yahweh**. It can synthesize human knowledge — and human knowledge is vast, powerful, and useful. But it cannot replace the covenant relationship between **Yahweh** and His people, which operates in the domain of the hidden things, which — as **Moshe** affirms — “belong to **Yahweh** our **Elohim**.” The tool lives in the domain of the revealed. The covenant lives in the domain of both — and only **Yahweh** holds the keys to the hidden.

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## **PART FIVE: AI AS A COVENANT TOOL**

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### **XIV. Reaching Three Religions at Once — The Strategic Opportunity**

The covenant mission of Miqdash Bethel Covenant Institution addresses Judaism, Christianity, and Islam simultaneously under the sole authority of the Tanakh. This three-religion scope represents a scale challenge that no single human researcher can fully address alone. To properly engage a Jewish scholar, a Christian theologian, and an Islamic jurist in the same document requires mastery of Hebrew lexical resources, Church council records, hadith literature, rabbinic commentary, and academic scholarship across all three traditions simultaneously.

**AI changes this equation.** Where a single covenant scholar would require years to master all three traditions simultaneously, AI can be instructed to search, cross-reference, and surface relevant materials from all three in real time — subject to the covenant scholar’s review, testing, and verification against the Tanakh standard. **This is not the AI doing the covenant work. This is the covenant scholar directing a powerful research instrument in the service of covenant witness.** The same principle applies whether the tool is a concordance, a library shelf, or a language model.

### **XV. Scale and Reach — What No Single Voice Could Do Alone**

The AI translation breakthrough alone carries covenant significance. At the 2024 Global Missional AI Summit, Biblica reported that AI has reduced the Bible translation process by up to 25 years in some languages. The Jewish organization Sefaria used AI to generate Hebrew-to-English Torah translations — with rabbinical review line by line — dramatically reducing cost and time while maintaining accuracy under human oversight. Missionary research across Africa reveals that 45% of mission leaders now believe AI will positively impact covenant outreach when used correctly.

For a covenant institution whose witness documents must simultaneously address audiences reading in English, Hebrew, Arabic, and other languages, AI translation tools — used under covenant oversight — represent an acceleration of reach that no previous generation of covenant teachers has possessed. **The witness is not weakened by powerful tools. It is the same witness that Moshe carried — Yahweh's uncompromising Torah — delivered now with the reach that this generation's tools make possible.**

## **XVI. The Standard for Covenant Use**

The standard for covenant use of AI is not a new standard. It is the same standard that governs every covenant tool: Does the output honor Yahweh? Does it align with the Tanakh? Has it been tested by two or three independent witnesses as Devarim (Deuteronomy) 19:15 requires? Is the human user accountable for what is produced?

The dangerous pattern is not AI-assisted research — it is unverified AI output presented as authoritative covenant teaching. **AI can draft. AI can research. AI can translate. AI can organize. The covenant teacher must verify, test, correct, and authorize. The authority flows from Yahweh through the Torah through the covenant teacher — the tool is between the teacher and the task, never between the teacher and Yahweh.**

## **PART SIX: A COVENANT FRAMEWORK FOR AI ENGAGEMENT**

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## XVII. Five Principles for Covenant Engagement with AI

**PRINCIPLE 1 — AI IS A TOOL, NOT AN ORACLE:** The Torah forbids consulting oracles for knowledge of the hidden will of Yahweh (Devarim 18:10–12). AI has no access to the hidden things of Yahweh (Devarim 29:29). It must never be consulted as if it were a prophet, a priest, or a divine channel. It may be used as a research assistant, a writing aid, a translation tool, and an organizational instrument — never as a source of spiritual authority.

**PRINCIPLE 2 — ALL AI OUTPUT MUST BE TESTED AGAINST THE TANAKH:**

Every claim AI produces about covenant matters — scripture, history, theology, law — must be verified against the Tanakh itself and corroborated by two or three independent authoritative sources (Devarim 19:15). Wikipedia alone is not sufficient. AI output alone is not sufficient. The Torah is the governing standard against which all claims are measured.

**PRINCIPLE 3 — THE COVENANT TEACHER REMAINS ACCOUNTABLE:** The use of AI does not transfer accountability. When a covenant teacher publishes a document, whether or not AI assisted in its research or drafting, the teacher stands accountable for its contents before Yahweh. The tool bears no accountability. The human does.

**PRINCIPLE 4 — AI MUST NEVER REPLACE DIRECT ENCOUNTER WITH THE WORD:** No AI-generated summary, analysis, or devotional replaces the direct reading, study, and meditation on the actual text of the Tanakh. AI can identify relevant passages. It cannot replace the covenant encounter between the reader and the living Word of Yahweh.

**PRINCIPLE 5 — AI DEPLOYMENT MUST SERVE COVENANT MISSION:** Every use of AI in covenant ministry must be evaluated by a single question: Does this serve the mission of

making Yahweh's truth accessible, accurate, and compelling to the covenant audience? If yes, the tool is properly deployed. If AI is used to bypass study, shortcut accountability, or produce volume without quality, it has become a snare.

## **XVIII. Conclusion and Covenant Witness**

**The moment we are living in is unprecedented.** Never before in the recorded history of mankind has there been a tool constructed that threatens to surpass its makers in cognitive scope. The fear is real. The danger is real. The opportunity is also real.

The Torah does not require the covenant community to refuse every tool that carries risk. Fire carries risk. Knowledge of metallurgy enabled both swords and plows. The same printing press that spread theological error also put the Tanakh into the hands of millions. Every generation of covenant people has been given the tools of its time and charged with deploying them in obedience to **Yahweh**. **What the Torah requires is discernment** — the same discernment that **Moshe** modeled when he reviewed seventy elders, that **Shlomo** modeled when he requested wisdom above wealth, that the prophets modeled when they tested every spirit against the word **Yahweh** had already spoken.

The Cherubim executed their assignment faithfully. The Merkavah processed inputs from every direction without turning. The *Urim v'Tumim* answered within its proper boundaries. The *malachim* executed without exceeding their mandate. None of these Tanakh structures were called dangerous because of what they were — they were instruments operating within their proper covenant boundaries under **Yahweh's** authority.

**AI is the instrument of this generation.** The covenant community's task is not to fear it, not to worship it, and not to ignore it — but to govern it. To deploy it in service of **Yahweh's** truth. To test its outputs against the Tanakh. To maintain accountability for everything it produces. To refuse idolatry — the worship of the tool in place of the One who gave us the mind to build it.

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*"The hidden things belong to Yahweh our Elohim, but the revealed things belong to us and to our children forever, to do all the words of this Torah."*

— Devarim (Deuteronomy) 29:29

*The hidden things belong to Yahweh. The revealed things — and the tools that process them — belong to us and our children, to do all the words of this Torah.*

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