

A COVENANT LETTER TO THE SYNAGOGUES OF AMERICA

Return to the Written Torah — The Word of Yahweh Alone

Issued by: Miqdash Bethel Covenant Institution | Pearl River, Louisiana | May 2026
Authority: The Tanakh — The Written Torah of Yahweh Alone | Standard: Devarim 19:15

To the Rabbis, Cantors, Teachers, Scholars, Elders, and every man, woman, and child who has ever recited the Shema, kept the Shabbat, fasted on Yom Kippur, wept at the memory of the destruction of the Temples, and carried in your heart the longing for Yahweh's shalom in the earth:

We come to you first with honor. Of all the people on this earth, you carry the most intimate relationship with the written Word of **Yahweh** (יהוה). The Tanakh — the Torah, the Nevi'im, the Ketuvim — was entrusted to the sons of Avraham, Yitzchak, and Ya'akov. You preserved it through Egypt, through exile, through the destruction of two Temples, through the Roman dispersion, through the Inquisition, through the pogroms, through the Holocaust. That you still exist as a people — still gathering on Shabbat, still singing Tehillim, still debating the meaning of a word in Bereishit — is itself a testimony to the faithfulness of **Yahweh**.

We are not Christian missionaries. We do not come to you with the New Testament, the Nicene Creed, or a call to convert to any institutional religion. We come to you with the Tanakh — the same document you carry — and we come as covenant witnesses who believe that **Yahweh's** call to return is addressed to every person who carries His Name, regardless of which community they worship in.

This letter is written in love — **chesed** (חֶסֶד) — the covenant loyalty that does not abandon when it is easier to stay silent. And it is written under the standard of **Vayikra (Leviticus) 19:17**:

Vayikra (Leviticus) 19:17 — *"You shall not hate your fellow in your heart; you shall surely rebuke your neighbor and not incur sin because of him."*

The word for "surely rebuke" is **hokhiach tokhiach** — a doubling of the root **yakach** (H3198) — meaning to reason with, to convict, to present evidence, to hold the mirror. That is what this letter is. Not a condemnation. A mirror. Held by someone who has looked into it himself.

PART ONE: THE DEBT WE CANNOT REPAY — WHAT WE HONOR IN YOU

Before we speak of the breaches, we must speak of what is true, what is genuine, and what must not be lost.

You preserved the Name. Even when you stopped pronouncing it aloud — even when "HaShem" and "Adonai" became substitutes in daily speech — you preserved the written Tetragrammaton in every Torah scroll. Not one legitimate Torah scroll replaces יהוה with another word in its letters. The Name survived every century of suppression precisely because the covenant people maintained the text with extraordinary care. That matters.

You preserved the Tanakh. The Masoretes — the scribal guardians of the 6th–10th centuries CE — counted every letter in the Torah, every word, every verse. They developed a system of vowel markings and cantillation signs to ensure the text could not drift. They counted the middle letter of the Torah. They noted unusual spellings. Because of their faithfulness, the Hebrew scriptures you read today are demonstrably stable across nearly two millennia of manuscript transmission. No other ancient document comes close to this level of care.

You kept the Shabbat. For three thousand years, through every form of persecution and exile imaginable, the Jewish people have hallowed the seventh day. You lit the candles. You recited Kiddush. You rested. And in doing so — even when the surrounding culture demanded your economic participation and your physical presence on that day — you bore witness to the covenant. Shemot (Exodus) 31:17 calls the Shabbat a sign between **Yahweh** and Israel *le'olam* — forever. You kept it. That is not nothing. That is covenant faithfulness of an order the world has rarely seen.

You kept the mo'edim — the appointed times. Pesach, Shavuot, Sukkot, Yom Kippur, Rosh Hashanah — the sacred calendar of **Yahweh** (יהוה) inscribed in Vayikra 23 has survived in living practice because the Jewish people kept observing it. Even when the Temple was destroyed and the sacrificial system ceased, you adapted the forms and kept the times. The world was not in darkness about **Yahweh's** appointed times because you kept them.

You carried the Tanakh to the world. Christianity drew its scriptures from the Hebrew text. Islam acknowledges Musa (Moshe), Ibrahim (Avraham), and the prophets as foundational. Every religion that acknowledges the Creator of the universe as a personal being with a moral will — owes its primary source material to the preservation work of the Jewish people. **Yeshayahu (Isaiah) 43:10** names you: *"You are My witnesses, declares Yahweh, and My servant whom I have chosen."*

This is the honor. It is real. And it is precisely because the honor is real that what follows must be spoken.

PART TWO: THE URGENCY OF THIS MOMENT

We write in May 2026, and the world is at a point of reckoning that the prophets described with precision. Wars involving the descendants of Avraham. The name of Israel invoked to

justify military actions. The nations watching. The question of who **Yahweh** is and what He requires is being debated publicly in ways that were not possible a generation ago.

In the middle of all of this, the Jewish community faces a question that the Tanakh itself poses directly — a question that was posed by every prophet from **Moshe (Moses)** to **Malakhi (Malachi)**: are you walking in the covenant, or are you walking in the traditions of men that have gradually displaced it?

***Yeshayahu (Isaiah) 29:13** — "Because this people draw near with their words and honor Me with their lip service, but they remove their hearts far from Me, and their reverence for Me consists of tradition learned by rote..."*

Yahweh said this to Israel — not to the nations, not to the pagans, not to the enemies of the covenant. He said it to His own people, who were performing religious observance faithfully, who were offering the prescribed sacrifices, who were reciting the correct prayers. And He called it empty — because the heart had been captured by tradition rather than by **Yahweh** Himself.

The Tanakh contains **Yahweh's** own repeated pattern: faithfulness, drift, warning, call to return, and the promise that return is always possible. We are somewhere in that pattern right now. The urgency of this letter is that the pattern does not wait indefinitely.

***Malakhi (Malachi) 3:7** — "From the days of your fathers you have turned aside from My statutes and have not kept them. Return to Me, and I will return to you, says Yahweh of hosts."*

PART THREE: SEVEN COVENANT DEPARTURES FROM THE WRITTEN TORAH

What follows is not anti-Jewish in any sense of the word. It is anti-drift. It is pro-Tanakh. Every departure named below is measured exclusively against the Written Torah — the text that every Jewish tradition acknowledges as primary. We cite no New Testament, no Quran, no non-Jewish source. The witness stands entirely within the Hebrew scriptures.

Covenant Departure #1 — The Name of Yahweh: Suppressed in Speech, Though Preserved in Script

The Tetragrammaton — יהוה — appears 6,828 times in the Tanakh. It is **Yahweh's** personal covenant Name, given to **Moshe** at the burning bush with an explicit declaration:

***Shemot (Exodus) 3:15** — "Yahweh, the Elohim of your fathers, the Elohim of Avraham, the Elohim of Yitzchak, and the Elohim of Ya'akov has sent me to you. This is My name forever, and this is My memorial name for all generations."*

The Name was given **le'olam va'ed** — forever and to all generations. This is not a suggestion. It is a declaration. And yet the rabbinic tradition, beginning after the Second Temple period and solidified by the early medieval period, adopted a practice of substituting "Adonai" (my Lord) or "HaShem" (the Name) in speech — eventually extending this to written texts outside the Torah scroll itself.

The original basis for caution around the Name was Vayikra 24:11-16, which prohibits **nakav** (H5344) — piercing, puncturing, cursing — the Name. But the rabbinic fence that

was built around this prohibition became something the prohibition never intended: the effective erasure of the Name from living speech and active relationship. A covenant is between parties who know each other's names. **Yahweh** told you His.

Tehillim (Psalms) 83:18 — *"That they may know that You alone, whose name is Yahweh, are the Most High over all the earth."*

Yechezkel (Ezekiel) 39:7 — *"My holy Name I will make known in the midst of My people Israel; and I will not let My holy Name be profaned anymore. And the nations will know that I am Yahweh, the Holy One in Israel."*

Yahweh Himself says He will make His Name known. Not suppress it — make it known. The fence built to protect the Name has functioned, in practice, to accomplish what Yechezkel 39:7 says **Yahweh** will not allow — the profaning of His Name through its absence from the lips of His people. **The call: restore the Name to your mouths, your prayers, your teaching, and your worship.** Speak **Yahweh** (יהוה) as He commanded.

Covenant Departure #2 — The Oral Torah: The Fence That Became the Field

The Talmud — the Mishnah and the Gemara — represents centuries of rabbinic legal reasoning, debate, and commentary produced primarily between 200 BCE and 500 CE. It is an extraordinary intellectual achievement. It is the product of some of the most rigorous legal and theological minds in human history. And it is not the Word of **Yahweh** (יהוה).

The doctrine of the Oral Torah — the claim that an oral tradition was given to Moshe at Sinai simultaneously with the Written Torah, and that this oral tradition carries equal or in certain cases superior authority to the Written Torah — is itself a doctrine that cannot be found in the Written Torah. The Written Torah repeatedly affirms its own completeness and warns explicitly against addition:

Devarim (Deuteronomy) 4:2 — *"You shall not add to the word which I am commanding you, nor take away from it, that you may keep the commandments of Yahweh your Elohim which I command you."*

Devarim (Deuteronomy) 12:32 — *"Whatever I command you, you shall be careful to do; you shall not add to it nor take away from it."*

Mishlei (Proverbs) 30:5–6 — *"Every word of Elohim is tested; He is a shield to those who take refuge in Him. Do not add to His words or He will reprove you, and you will be proved a liar."*

Three independent Tanakh witnesses, applying the Devarim 19:15 standard: do not add to the Written Word. The oral tradition — however valuable as a record of legal discussion and historical practice — was built as a fence around the Torah. The rabbis themselves used this language: the Oral Torah is a **seyag la-Torah** — a hedge around the Torah. But a hedge around a field is not the field. A fence around the Torah is not the Torah. And when the fence is treated as the Torah — when Talmudic rulings override or modify Written Torah commandments — the fence has consumed the thing it was built to protect.

The prophet **Yirmeyahu (Jeremiah)** records one of the most stunning indictments in the Tanakh — aimed directly at the scribes and legal experts of his day:

Yirmeyahu (Jeremiah) 8:8 — *"How can you say, 'We are wise, and the Torah of Yahweh is with us'? But behold, the lying pen of the scribes has made it into a lie."*

This is not Kepha Arcemont speaking. This is **Yahweh's** own prophet, speaking to the learned scribes of Israel in the 7th century BCE, warning that the handling of the written text could itself become a form of falsification. The call is not to abandon scholarship — it is to subordinate scholarship to the Written Torah rather than allowing scholarship to govern it. **The Tanakh must judge the Talmud. The Talmud does not judge the Tanakh.**

Covenant Departure #3 — The Treatment of the Ger: One Law for All, or Two?

This may be the single most urgent covenant issue for the Jewish community in 2026 — because it is playing out in real time in front of the watching world. The Tanakh's standard for the treatment of the **ger** (H1616) — the stranger, the foreigner who dwells among the covenant people — is unambiguous and repeated:

Vayikra (Leviticus) 19:33–34 — *"When a stranger resides with you in your land, you shall not do him wrong. The stranger who resides with you shall be to you as the native among you, and you shall love him as yourself, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt; I am Yahweh your Elohim."*

Shemot (Exodus) 12:49 — *"The same Torah shall apply to the native as to the stranger who sojourns among you."*

Bamidbar (Numbers) 15:15–16 — *"As for the assembly, there shall be one statute for you and for the stranger who sojourns with you, a perpetual statute throughout your generations; as you are, so shall the stranger be before Yahweh. There is to be one Torah and one ordinance for you and for the stranger who sojourns with you."*

Three independent witnesses. One Torah. One standard. No differentiation between the covenant person and the stranger in the application of **Yahweh's** law and protection.

And yet sections of the Talmud — particularly tractates in the Babylonian Talmud dealing with civil law, damages, and relations with non-Jews — contain rulings that create a two-tier legal system in which the life, property, and dignity of non-Jews receive different treatment than those of Jews. We name this not to condemn but because the Tanakh requires it to be named. Whether one holds these rulings as normative today or not, they represent departures from the explicit one-Torah standard of Bamidbar 15:16 and must be acknowledged as such.

Yechezkel (Ezekiel) makes the covenant standard for the foreigner's land inheritance explicit in the vision of restored Israel — and the standard is full equality:

Yechezkel (Ezekiel) 47:22–23 — *"You shall divide it by lot for an inheritance among yourselves and among the aliens who stay in your midst, who bring forth sons in your midst. And they shall be to you as the native-born among the sons of Israel; they shall be allotted an inheritance with you among the tribes of Israel. And in the tribe with which the alien stays, there you shall give him his inheritance, declares Yahweh Elohim."*

The call: wherever the Talmudic tradition creates a differential standard between Jewish and non-Jewish persons in matters of law, protection, life, and dignity — measure it against the Written Torah. The Written Torah wins. Always. And its standard is: **one Torah, one judgment, one covenant for all who dwell among you.**

Covenant Departure #4 — The Rabbinic Calendar: When Postponements Override Yahweh's Times

Yahweh established His covenant calendar in Vayikra 23 with precision. The appointed times — the *mo'edim* — are called His "fixed times," bound to the lunar-solar cycle He built into creation itself. The sanctification of the new month (Rosh Chodesh) was entrusted to the community to observe and proclaim (Shemot 12:2).

Beginning in the Talmudic period and codified by Hillel II approximately 358-359 CE, the calculated Jewish calendar adopted a system of postponement rules called the *dechiyot* — four specific rules that shift the calendar by one or two days to prevent certain holidays from falling on particular days of the week. The stated reasons are practical and administrative — preventing Yom Kippur from falling adjacent to Shabbat, preventing Hoshana Rabbah from falling on Shabbat, and similar concerns.

But here is the covenant question: the postponement rules are human administrative decisions, applied to dates that **Yahweh** fixed by the created luminaries. Bereishit 1:14 establishes that the sun, moon, and stars were placed in the firmament specifically "*for seasons and for days and for years*" — the same word *mo'adim* that appears in Vayikra 23. When human administrative convenience overrides the sky **Yahweh** designed to mark His appointments, the question must be asked: whose calendar is being kept?

Vayikra (Leviticus) 23:4 — "These are the appointed times of Yahweh, holy convocations which you shall proclaim at the times appointed for them."

The call: examine the postponement rules against the Written Torah standard. Where human administrative decisions have shifted **Yahweh's** appointed times away from the observable lunar-solar calendar He designed, consider returning to the created signs He gave.

Covenant Departure #5 — The Political State of Israel: Secular Zionism vs. Covenant Zion

This is the most politically sensitive issue in this letter, and it is also the most necessary. We speak it with full awareness that the Jewish people have endured centuries of persecution — including genocide — and that the establishment of a state of refuge carried genuine human urgency. We do not minimize that history. But the Tanakh must be the measure.

Political Zionism — the movement founded by Theodor Herzl in the 1890s — was explicitly and self-consciously a secular nationalist movement. Herzl himself was not an observant Jew. His 1896 manifesto, *Der Judenstaat* (The Jewish State), argued for a Jewish homeland on political and ethnic grounds, not covenant grounds. Many of the most prominent Orthodox rabbinical voices of the early 20th century — including the Satmar Rav, Rabbi Yoel Teitelbaum — argued strenuously that the establishment of a Jewish state through political and military means, before the coming of the Mashiach, constituted a violation of covenant — specifically the Three Oaths recorded in the Talmud itself (Babylonian Talmud, Ketubot 111a).

More importantly: the Tanakh's vision of the restoration of Israel is explicitly covenantal — it is tied to *teshuvah*, to the return of the people's hearts to **Yahweh** and His Torah, not to military conquest or political diplomacy:

Devarim (Deuteronomy) 30:1–3 — *"So it shall be when all of these things have come upon you, the blessing and the curse which I have set before you, and you call them to mind in all nations where Yahweh your Elohim has banished you, and you return to Yahweh your Elohim and obey Him with all your heart and soul according to all that I command you today, then Yahweh your Elohim will restore you from captivity, and have compassion on you, and will gather you again from all the peoples..."*

The sequence in Devarim 30 is: teshuvah first — gathering second. The secular Zionist movement reversed the sequence: gathering first — with teshuvah either optional or irrelevant. And the Tanakh's land promise carries explicit covenant conditions for its continuation:

Devarim (Deuteronomy) 28:1–2, 15 — *"Now it shall be, if you diligently obey the voice of Yahweh your Elohim, being careful to do all His commandments which I command you today, Yahweh your Elohim will set you high above all the nations of the earth. All these blessings will come upon you... But it shall come about, if you do not obey the voice of Yahweh your Elohim, to be careful to do all His commandments and statutes which I command you today, that all these curses will come upon you and overtake you."*

And most directly, Devarim 28 includes in its covenant curse pattern: the scattering among the nations, siege warfare, loss of the land, the enemy consuming what you built. The Tanakh does not promise unconditional land tenure. It promises covenant land tenure — **conditioned on walking in Yahweh's statutes.**

Furthermore: the land covenant of the Tanakh explicitly includes the stranger within its inheritance. Yechezkel 47:22-23 gives the foreigner equal inheritance in the land of Israel. A political program that displaces an indigenous population — regardless of political justification — must be measured against this standard. Bamidbar 35:33 declares that innocent blood pollutes the land, and no expiation can be made for it. These are not political opinions. They are Written Torah.

The call: separate the covenant promise of **Yahweh (יהוה)** from the secular political project of Herzlian Zionism. Honor the land promise by honoring its conditions. Apply the one-Torah standard to every person who dwells in the land. And let teshuvah — not military strategy — lead the restoration.

Covenant Departure #6 — The Exile and Its Lesson: Devarim 28 Must Be Read Honestly

The covenant of **Yahweh (יהוה)** with Israel includes one of the most detailed and sobering sections of blessings and curses in the ancient world — Devarim 28. The blessings (verses 1-14) describe a nation exalted above all nations, fruitful in every dimension of life, feared by its enemies. The curses (verses 15-68) describe a nation scattered, persecuted, sold as slaves, afflicted with every form of suffering — and made a proverb and a byword among the nations.

The Jewish community has, historically, engaged in significant debate about the theological interpretation of the exile and the persecutions of history. Some have framed them as tests. Some as the sufferings of a righteous remnant. Some as evidence that the covenant has

been superseded. The Tanakh itself provides only one interpretation of the covenant curse pattern:

Vayikra (Leviticus) 26:40–42 — *"If they confess their iniquity and the iniquity of their forefathers, in their unfaithfulness which they committed against Me, and also in their acting with hostility against Me — I also was acting with hostility against them, to bring them into the land of their enemies — or if their uncircumcised heart becomes humbled so that they then make amends for their iniquity, then I will remember My covenant with Ya'akov, and I will remember also My covenant with Yitzchak, and My covenant with Avraham as well, and I will remember the land."*

The path back is confession. Honest, specific, national-level acknowledgment of the covenant departures that brought the covenant curses — not as a theological formula but as a genuine reckoning with the Written Torah's standard and where the community has departed from it.

Daniyel (Daniel) models this precisely. In Daniyel 9, the prophet prays on behalf of the entire nation — confessing *specifically* that Israel had not walked in the Torah of **Yahweh**, had not heeded the prophets, had not turned from their iniquities. And **Yahweh** responded to that prayer.

Daniyel (Daniel) 9:11, 13 — *"Indeed all Israel has transgressed Your Torah and turned aside, not obeying Your voice; so the curse has been poured out on us, along with the oath which is written in the Torah of Moshe the servant of Elohim, for we have sinned against Him... as it is written in the Torah of Moshe, all this calamity has come on us; yet we have not sought the favor of Yahweh our Elohim by turning from our iniquity and giving attention to Your truth."*

The call: the Jewish community — in all its branches — is invited to engage in the Daniyel 9 reckoning. Not as a shameful self-condemnation, but as the honest covenant accounting that **Yahweh** says opens the door to His remembrance of the covenant. The exile's lesson is not that **Yahweh** abandoned Israel. It is that **Yahweh** is faithful to His covenant — including the part that begins in Devarim 28:15.

Covenant Departure #7 — The Messianic Hope: What the Tanakh Actually Says

We address this last, and we address it carefully. The Tanakh's messianic passages are among the most debated and disputed texts in all of human literature — contested between Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, and within each tradition. We make no claim to resolve all of these debates. But there are several things the Tanakh says clearly that the contemporary Jewish community, in most of its branches, has moved away from in practice.

The Tanakh describes the **Mashiach** (H4899 — anointed one) in various prophetic contexts as: a descendant of David (Yirmeyahu 23:5-6), a servant of **Yahweh** who brings justice to the nations without violence (Yeshayahu 42:1-4), a figure who will teach the Torah to the nations (Yeshayahu 2:2-4; Michah 4:1-3), and one whose arrival is preceded by a covenant return of the people's hearts to **Yahweh's** Torah (Malakhi 3:1; 4:4-6).

Yeshayahu (Isaiah) 2:3–4 — *"And many peoples will come and say, 'Come, let us go up to the mountain of Yahweh, to the house of the Elohim of Ya'akov; that He may teach us concerning His ways and that we may walk in His paths.' For the Torah will go forth from Tzion and the word of Yahweh from Yerushalayim. And He*

will judge between the nations, and will render decisions for many peoples; and they will hammer their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not lift up sword against nation, and never again will they learn war."

Notice what this vision requires: the nations coming to learn **Yahweh's** Torah. The Torah going out from Zion. Judgment rendered by one whose standard is the covenant. This is not a vision of political dominance. It is a vision of covenant peace — with the Torah of **Yahweh** as the foundation of international justice.

The final two verses of the Tanakh — the closing words of **Malakhi (Malachi)** — make the covenant prerequisite for the messianic era explicit beyond any reasonable dispute:

Malakhi (Malachi) 4:4–6 — *"Remember the Torah of Moshe My servant, even the statutes and ordinances which I commanded him in Horeb for all Israel. Behold, I am going to send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and terrible day of Yahweh. He will restore the hearts of the fathers to their children and the hearts of the children to their fathers, so that I will not come and strike the land with a curse."*

The Tanakh ends here. These are its closing words. And they are a call — not a promise of automatic fulfillment — but a call: **remember the Torah**. The messianic era does not arrive because of political arrangements, military victories, or the alignment of national interests. It arrives when the hearts of the fathers are turned back to **Yahweh's** covenant and the hearts of the children follow. That turning is the work of right now.

Covenant Departure #8 — The Blood of Kindred: Gaza, the West Bank, and Lebanon

This is the departure that cannot be softened, deferred, or addressed in abstract theological language — because it is happening right now, in real time, with a body count that the agencies of the United Nations have documented in weekly reports. And it is being carried out in a land governed by a state that claims to stand in the tradition of the covenant of **Yahweh (יהוה)**. That claim, above all others, is what makes the silence of the synagogue unconscionable. If you will not speak, then you have ceased to function as a covenant community and have become an institution of ethnic solidarity — which is a far lesser thing.

I. The DNA Evidence: You Are Killing Your Own Kindred

The single most urgent fact that every Jewish congregation in America must receive and reckon with is this: the genetic and archaeological evidence establishes, beyond reasonable scientific dispute, that a significant portion of the Palestinian people — and the Maronite and Shia communities of Lebanon — are themselves descended from the ancient Hebrews and Canaanites who never left the land.

This is not a political claim invented by advocates. It is the scientific consensus of peer-reviewed population genetics research, corroborated by multiple independent methodologies, and — most remarkably — acknowledged in writing by the founders of modern Zionism themselves.

The Genetic Record: Multiple independent peer-reviewed genetic studies have established the following findings:

Palestinian ancestry: Palestinians carry 81 to 87 percent of their ancestry from the ancient Bronze Age Levantine population — the Canaanite and Semitic peoples who inhabited the land of Kena'an for millennia before any modern political boundary existed.

Their male Y-chromosome line shows marginally *higher* continuity with the ancient Semitic inhabitants of the land than the modern Israeli Jewish population as a whole — because the Ashkenazi Jewish community, which constitutes roughly 38 percent of modern Israeli Jews, carries approximately 80 percent of its mitochondrial DNA from European origin, consistent with over a thousand years of diaspora life in Europe.

Lebanese Canaanite continuity: Studies have established that Lebanese people today derive more than 90 percent of their genetic ancestry from the Bronze Age Canaanite population of the ancient Levant — one of the strongest documented cases of ancient genetic continuity in the world. Four thousand years of population stability on the same soil, through every conquest and every change of religious label.

Samaritan continuity: Approximately 800 Samaritans living near Nablus under Palestinian Authority jurisdiction are recognized by genetic and historical consensus as among the most direct surviving remnants of the Northern Kingdom of Yisra'el — continuous inhabitants of the covenant land for over three thousand years.

The testimony of Zionism's own founders: David Ben-Gurion and Yitzhak Ben Zvi — Israel's first Prime Minister and President — wrote in their 1918 work that the Palestinian *fellahin* (Arab farmers working the land) were in all likelihood the descendants of ancient Hebrew and Samaritan farmers who remained on the soil after the Jewish-Roman Wars and converted to Islam over subsequent centuries under successive imperial pressure. Ber Borochov, a founding theorist of Labor Zionism, published the same conclusion in 1905. These are not the words of Palestinian advocates. They are the documented published conclusions of the architects of the modern State of Israel, written in their own names, before the state existed.

This changes the entire covenant framework of the current conflict. The Tanakh's protections of the **ger** — the resident foreigner — already required full covenant protection and equal legal standing. But the protection of a **fellow Israelite** is of a different and higher order entirely. You are not merely ignoring the stranger. You are killing the kin.

The prophet **Ovadyah (Obadiah)** records one of the Tanakh's most direct covenantal indictments — spoken against Edom for standing aside while violence was done to their kinsmen:

Ovadyah (Obadiah) 1:10–12 — "Because of the violence done to your brother Ya'akov, shame shall cover you, and you shall be cut off forever. On the day that you stood aside — on the day that strangers carried off his wealth and foreigners entered his gates and cast lots for Yerushalayim — you were like one of them. But do not gloat over your brother's day, the day of his disaster; do not rejoice over the people of Yehudah in the day of their ruin; do not boast in the day of distress."

Ovadyah was not addressing Edom's direct military assault on Israel. He was addressing their *standing aside* while others committed the violence — and their satisfaction at the outcome. If the Tanakh indicts mere passive complicity in the suffering of kindred, what does it say about active participation? The answer is in Bamidbar 35:33 and it does not change for political context or national security justification.

II. What Is Happening Right Now: The Documented Record

We do not issue covenant verdicts from single data points. The standard of Devarim 19:15 — two or three independent witnesses — governs every claim in this section. What follows is sourced from the United Nations, UNRWA, OHCHR, Human Rights Watch, Amnesty

International, and the Gaza Ministry of Health. These are not advocacy organizations with a single political agenda. They are multiple independent bodies applying their own methodologies. Their findings converge.

Gaza — October 7, 2023 to May 2026

72,344+ Palestinians killed in the Gaza Strip as of April 2026, with 172,000+ injured, according to the Gaza Ministry of Health as reported by OCHA (UNRWA Situation Report #218, April 2026). An Israeli military official acknowledged in January 2026 — for the first time — that these figures represent deaths from direct Israeli fire, not other causes. The UN's OHCHR found, through verification of deaths in residential buildings, that **70 percent of those killed in housing were women and children**. An internal Israeli military report, cited by The Guardian in August 2025, indicated that approximately 83 percent of Palestinians killed were civilians. The UN Commission of Inquiry formally found in 2025 that four categories of genocidal acts had been carried out in Gaza and has expressed serious concern that these acts continue.

391 UNRWA colleagues — aid workers serving the civilian population — have been killed since October 7, 2023. 270 journalists. 560+ humanitarian workers. More than 1,000 mosques and three churches destroyed. UNRWA has been blocked by Israeli authorities from bringing humanitarian personnel and food into Gaza since March 2025. The agency ran out of food for Gaza in April 2025.

Bamidbar (Numbers) 35:33 — *"You shall not pollute the land in which you live, for blood pollutes the land; and no expiation can be made for the land for the blood that is shed on it, except by the blood of him who shed it."*

The West Bank — Settler Violence and Military Operations

1,079 Palestinians killed in the West Bank including East Jerusalem between October 7, 2023 and April 2026, including at least 233 children (OCHA). In March 2026 alone — described by UNRWA as one of the deadliest months of settler violence ever recorded — settlers shot and killed Palestinians in multiple incidents, often with Israeli military backing or in the presence of IDF forces who did not intervene. The Israeli Knesset passed legislation in March 2026 expanding the use of the death penalty. The Israeli security cabinet approved 34 new settlements in the occupied West Bank — all of which remain illegal under international law. Palestinian families continue to be evicted from their homes in East Jerusalem. West Bank refugee camps including Jenin, Tulkarm, and Nur Shams have been completely emptied of residents under the IDF's "Iron Wall" operation.

The OHCHR in April 2026 stated: *"Israeli settlers have been carrying out daily attacks, often with Israeli military backing... The increasing use of sexual and gender-based violence by settlers to intimidate and expel Palestinians from their land continues with impunity."*

Shemot (Exodus) 22:21–24 — *"You shall not wrong a stranger or oppress him, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt. You shall not afflict any widow or orphan. If you afflict him at all, and if he does cry out to Me, I will surely hear his cry; and My anger will be kindled, and I will kill you with the sword, and your wives shall become widows and your children fatherless."*

Lebanon — March 2026 to Present

Beginning March 2, 2026, Israel resumed major military operations in Lebanon. As of late April 2026, Lebanon's Health Ministry reports **more than 2,000 people killed and 6,436 wounded** since the escalation began — with over 1 million Lebanese displaced, constituting 20 percent of Lebanon's population (UN, April 2026).

On April 8, 2026 — a day Lebanese officials called "Black Wednesday" — Israel launched Operation Eternal Darkness: more than **100 strikes in under 10 minutes** across Beirut, southern Lebanon, and the Beqaa Valley, with no prior warning to civilians. Charred bodies were found at one of Beirut's busiest intersections — a mixed commercial and residential area. A cemetery in the Beqaa Valley was struck during a funeral, killing at least 10 mourners. Researchers from Legal Agenda documented that 101 women and children were killed on April 8 alone. UN experts described the attacks as "indiscriminate." ACLED analysts found that only a few of the documented casualties were known Hezbollah members. Israel claimed 250 militants killed; Human Rights Watch researchers found that claim could not be independently verified without classifying every adult civilian male killed as a combatant.

Israel's Defense Minister declared the IDF would demolish Lebanese border settlements and occupy southern Lebanon up to the Litani River. NPR (April 30, 2026) reported that towns in southern Lebanon near the border have been "largely destroyed" by Israeli demolitions and strikes, with UN human rights experts writing: *"We are witnessing the continuing utmost contempt for the international legal order, for diplomacy, and above all for the lives of civilians... consistent with Israel's actions in Gaza."* Oxfam warned in March 2026 that Israel was using "the Gaza playbook in Lebanon" — targeting water infrastructure, electricity networks, and bridges.

Lebanon is not a foreign people. The Lebanese — Maronite Christian, Shia, Sunni, Druze — carry more than 90 percent Bronze Age Canaanite genetic ancestry. They are the blood relatives of the ancient Hebrews. The IDF demolished a Maronite Christian village. An IDF soldier smashed a statue of Yeshua of Nazareth with a sledgehammer in the village of Debel on April 19, 2026 — confirmed authentic by the IDF itself. Israeli tanks demolished a statue of Saint George in the Lebanese village of Yaroun. A Lebanese Catholic priest was killed by Israeli tank fire. These are Semitic people — cousins in the deepest genetic and historical sense — and the covenant addresses exactly this:

Shemot (Exodus) 23:9 — *"You shall not oppress a stranger, since you yourselves know the feeling of a stranger, for you also were strangers in the land of Egypt."*

III. The True Love of Yahweh: Covenant of Peace, Not a Rod of Iron

We come now to the heart of this entire section — and to the reason why what is happening in Gaza, the West Bank, and Lebanon is not merely a political catastrophe or a humanitarian crisis. It is a theological failure. And the failure begins in the synagogue.

There is a strand of rabbinic legal thought — not universal, not representative of the Jewish community as a whole, but present and influential — that has created a framework in which the life of a non-Jew carries measurably less covenant weight than the life of a Jew. We have addressed this in Departure #3, under the one-Torah standard. But here we must go deeper — because the current bloodshed is not only a legal problem. It is a spiritual one. It is the fruit of a conception of **Yahweh** that has drifted far from the Tanakh's own portrait of Him.

The Tanakh's portrait of **Yahweh** (יהוה) is not of a national deity who favors one ethnic group and is indifferent to the blood of others. It is the portrait of the Creator of all humanity — who holds every nation accountable, who grieves over innocent death regardless of whose children are dying, and whose character is summarized in the Tanakh's most repeated self-description:

***Shemot (Exodus) 34:6–7** — "Yahweh, Yahweh Elohim, compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in lovingkindness (*chesed*) and truth; who keeps lovingkindness for thousands, who forgives iniquity, transgression and sin; yet He will by no means leave the guilty unpunished..."*

This is the Name's own self-definition. It begins with compassion — **rachum** (רחום) — a word derived from the root **rechem** (H7356), meaning womb. The compassion of **Yahweh** is womb-compassion — the instinctive, physical, irresistible love of a mother for the child she carried. It is extended to all creation, to every person made in the image of **Elohim** (אלהים) — regardless of nation, regardless of religion, regardless of which side of which political border they were born on.

The Tanakh records **Yahweh's** own grief over the death of those who were enemies of Israel:

***Shemot (Exodus) 14:27–30; Midrash Rabbah** — When the angels wanted to sing as the Egyptians drowned in the sea, Yahweh rebuked them: "My creatures are drowning in the sea and you wish to sing before Me?"*

This teaching, rooted in the prophetic tradition and preserved in Jewish midrashic literature, reveals a **Yahweh** who cannot rejoice over the death of those He made — even enemies. Even those who oppressed His covenant people. How much more does this apply to the descendants of the ancient Hebrews who share the land, the soil, the genetic memory, and the covenant heritage?

The prophetic tradition is unambiguous on what covenant peace looks like versus what it does not look like:

***Yeshayahu (Isaiah) 2:4** — "And He will judge between the nations, and will render decisions for many peoples; and they will hammer their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not lift up sword against nation, and never again will they learn war."*

***Yirmeyahu (Jeremiah) 29:7** — "Seek the welfare (*shalom*) of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to Yahweh on its behalf; for in its welfare you will have welfare."*

Yahweh told the exiles in Babylon — people who had been forcibly removed from their homes — to seek the *shalom* of the city that displaced them. Not to destroy it. Not to seek revenge. To pray for it. Because **Yahweh's** covenant is always a covenant of **shalom** — of wholeness, welfare, peace, and reconciliation — not a covenant of conquest, displacement, and domination.

The "rod of iron" framework — the idea that **Yahweh's** covenant authorizes unrestrained military power against those defined as enemies, with no obligation to the vulnerable, the stranger, or the innocent — does not come from the Tanakh. It comes from centuries of rabbinical legal reasoning that built fence upon fence, privilege upon privilege, exception

upon exception, until the Written Torah's crystal-clear one-law standard was buried beneath them. The Written Torah says:

Vayikra (Leviticus) 19:18 — *"You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the sons of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself; I am Yahweh."*

Vayikra (Leviticus) 19:34 — *"The stranger who resides with you shall be to you as the native among you, and you shall love him as yourself, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt; I am Yahweh your Elohim."*

Notice that both verses close with the same declaration: **"I am Yahweh."** This is not a suggestion. It is a covenant command, sealed with the Name. The standard of love for neighbor and stranger is identical — **as yourself**. There is no qualifier for national origin, religion, or military designation. And there is no covenant authority — rabbinic, military, or political — that can override the direct command of the One who sealed it with His own Name.

IV. The Covenant Call: Stop. Confess. Turn.

We do not speak this to the Jewish community as enemies. We speak it because the Tanakh itself requires it — and because the consequence of silence, when innocent blood is being shed in the name of the covenant people, is covenant pollution of the land itself (Bamidbar 35:33). The watchman who sees the sword and says nothing bears the blood.

The rabbinical tradition at its best has always contained voices of conscience. Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel marched with Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and said afterward that his feet were praying. The prophet **Yechezkel (Ezekiel)** walked the streets of Tel Aviv-Abib and mourned for his people in exile. The entire prophetic tradition of Israel is the tradition of voices who stood up inside the covenant community and named the breach — not to destroy the community, but because they loved it too much to be silent.

Yahweh's covenant call in this hour — to rabbis, cantors, teachers, synagogue boards, and every Jewish person in America who carries the Torah — is this:

Stop lending the Name of Yahweh to the justification of innocent bloodshed. When 72,000 people have been killed — 70 percent of them women and children — in the name of national security, in a land **Yahweh** declared to be His own (Vayikra 25:23), and a significant number of the dead carry the genetic heritage of the ancient Hebrews who never left — the Tanakh's covenant standard requires a response from inside the covenant community.

Confess what the Tanakh identifies as covenant sin: the shedding of innocent blood, the oppression of the stranger, the two-tier legal standard, the displacement of people from Yahweh's land. Daniyel 9 is the model. The great prophet did not confess the sins of the pagans — he confessed the sins of his own people before **Yahweh**. That honest accounting is what opened the door to **Yahweh's** remembrance.

Turn toward the covenant of shalom. Yechezkel 47:22-23 is not a distant future prophecy — it is **Yahweh's** active covenant instruction for the land: one inheritance, equal for the native and the stranger, for the Hebrew-born and the Palestinian who carries 85 percent of Hebrew ancestors' blood in his veins. The path to the lasting peace **Yahweh** promised is not through iron — it is through the covenant. Always has been. Always will be.

Yirmeyahu (Jeremiah) 22:3 — *"Thus says Yahweh: Do justice and righteousness, and deliver the one who has been robbed from the power of his oppressor. Also do not mistreat or do violence to the stranger, the orphan, or the widow; and do not shed innocent blood in this place."*

PART FOUR: A DIRECT WORD TO EACH BRANCH OF JEWISH LIFE

We recognize that "Jewish" covers a vast range of belief, practice, observance, and identity — from the Haredi communities of Brooklyn and Jerusalem to the secular cultural Jews of Tel Aviv and Manhattan. Each branch contains genuine seekers and genuine covenant life, and each has particular points of departure that must be named.

To the Orthodox — Haredi and Modern Orthodox Communities

Brothers and sisters in covenant faithfulness: of all the Jewish branches, you have most zealously guarded the Written Torah. You maintained halachic observance when the surrounding culture demanded accommodation. You preserved the Hebrew language, the Shabbat, the dietary covenant, the family purity laws, and the appointed times when every economic and social pressure pointed toward compromise. That faithfulness is honored here.

The questions we place before you from the Written Torah are these:

The Oral Torah's authority over the Written: where the Talmud modifies, supersedes, or creates exceptions to the explicit Written Torah text — particularly in matters of civil law, the treatment of the non-Jew, and the one-Torah standard of Bamidbar 15:15-16 — the Written Torah must be the final judge. Not rabbinic consensus.

The Name: the tradition of not pronouncing **Yahweh** was built to protect the Name. Has it, in practice, removed the Name from living covenant relationship? Shemot 3:15 says the Name is **Yahweh's** memorial *le'olam* — for all generations. Consider whether the protection has become a suppression.

The ger: the covenant standard of Vayikra 19:34 and Bamidbar 15:16 requires one Torah for the native and the stranger alike. Wherever the treatment of Palestinians, Israeli Arabs, or non-Jewish residents of the land of Israel falls below this standard — the Written Torah requires correction, not rationalization.

To the Conservative — Masorti Communities

Brothers and sisters: your commitment to halachic process while engaging modern scholarship represents a genuine attempt to honor both the covenant and the world the covenant operates in. The instinct to take the Tanakh seriously as a living document, not merely a historical artifact, is correct.

The challenge for the Conservative movement is the nature of the authority by which halachic adjustments are made. When the Committee on Jewish Law and Standards votes to modify a halachic position — who authorizes that vote? The Tanakh gives authority to the Written Torah and to the prophets who spoke in **Yahweh's** Name (Devarim 18:15-22). It does not give authority to a committee of scholars, however learned.

When the written covenant standard is clear — one Torah, one Shabbat, one dietary covenant, one standard for the ger — the question before every committee is not "what does our community need?" but "**what does Yahweh say?**" That is the only question with authority behind it. Let it be the first question in every deliberation.

To the Reform — URJ Communities

Brothers and sisters: the reforming impulse that drove the 19th-century emergence of Reform Judaism was a genuine response to a genuine problem — the isolation of the Jewish community from broader society, and the question of how a covenant people navigates modernity. The social justice conscience that many Reform communities carry — care for the stranger, opposition to oppression, advocacy for the vulnerable — is the heart of Devarim 10:18 and Vayikra 19:34.

But the Reform movement's foundational decision — to treat the covenant commandments as non-binding, subject to individual conscience and historical relevance — has a direct Tanakh problem:

Devarim (Deuteronomy) 5:32–33 — *"So you shall observe to do just as Yahweh your Elohim has commanded you; you shall not turn aside to the right or to the left. You shall walk in all the way which Yahweh your Elohim has commanded you, that you may live and that it may be well with you, and that you may prolong your days in the land which you will possess."*

The Written Torah does not offer individual conscience as a governing principle for covenant law. It offers obedience — specific, detailed, structured obedience — as the path to life. The Reform tradition's embrace of full gender equality, interfaith marriage, and the abandonment of dietary and Sabbath observance were made in good faith. But they were made by measuring the covenant against modern cultural standards — rather than measuring modern cultural standards against the covenant.

The call: let the social justice conscience remain. Let the care for the stranger and the poor remain. But let the Written Torah be the source of that conscience — not modern liberal political theory. And let the commandments that the Written Torah considers foundational — the Name, the Shabbat, the appointed times, the dietary covenant — be revisited not as ancient ethnic customs but as **Yahweh's** covenant instructions.

To the Secular and Cultural Jews

Brothers and sisters in the lineage of Avraham, Yitzchak, and Ya'akov: your identity as Jewish — even without religious observance — carries weight in the eyes of **Yahweh** that no secular philosophy can adequately explain. The fact that the Jewish people survived every attempt at annihilation — Pharaoh, Haman, Antiochus, Hadrian, the Inquisition, the Cossacks, Hitler — while maintaining a recognizable communal identity across three thousand years of diaspora is itself a testimony to the covenant. **Yahweh** said through **Yirmeyahu (Jeremiah) 31:35–36**:

Yirmeyahu (Jeremiah) 31:35–36 — *"Thus says Yahweh, who gives the sun for light by day and the fixed order of the moon and the stars for light by night, who stirs up the sea so that its waves roar; Yahweh of hosts is His name: 'If this fixed order departs from before Me,' declares Yahweh, 'then the offspring of Israel also will cease from being a nation before Me forever.'"*

Your survival is not an accident of history or an achievement of human resilience alone — though your people have shown extraordinary resilience. Your survival is a covenant guarantee. **Yahweh** staked the survival of Israel on the same permanence as the sun and moon. The question is not whether you survive — it is what you do with the survival. The Tanakh invites you — not into religion as performance, not into institutional observance as cultural identity preservation — but into a living relationship with **Yahweh** (יהוה), the One who kept His word to your ancestors through every century of impossibility.

PART FIVE: THE COVENANT PATH FORWARD — SIX STEPS OF RETURN

We offer these not as conditions of acceptance before **Yahweh** (יהוה) — He already accepted you. He made a covenant with your fathers and He has not broken it. We offer these as steps of return — a *shub* (שוב) — a turning back toward the One who has been calling since **Malakhi** closed the scroll.

- 1. Speak the Name of Yahweh (יהוה) aloud in worship.** Begin in private prayer. Let the Name return to your lips. **Yahweh** gave it as a memorial forever. Speak it as He intended — in relationship, not in avoidance.
- 2. Place the Written Torah over all commentary.** Read the Tanakh without the Talmudic lens for one hour each week. Ask: what does the Written Torah itself say — before the commentary begins? Let Devarim 4:2 be the measure of everything added to it.
- 3. Apply the one-Torah standard to the stranger.** Vayikra 19:34 and Bamidbar 15:15-16 are not metaphors. They are covenant law. Wherever the treatment of Palestinians, Arab citizens, or non-Jewish residents falls below the one-Torah standard of the Written Torah — acknowledge it honestly, confess it before **Yahweh**, and work to correct it.
- 4. Engage in national teshuvah — the Daniyel 9 reckoning.** Bring before **Yahweh** the honest accounting of where the covenant has been departed from — not the ancestors' failures only, but the community's current departures. Let Vayikra 26:40-42 be the map: when the community confesses and humbles itself, **Yahweh** remembers the covenant.
- 5. Separate the covenant promise from the political state.** Love the land **Yahweh** promised. Walk in the conditions under which He promised it. Apply Yechezkel 47:22-23 to every person dwelling in the land. Let the covenant govern the political — not the political govern the covenant.
- 6. Read Malakhi 4:4-6 as the current assignment.** Remember the Torah of Moshe. This is not a past instruction — it is the final word before the great and terrible day of **Yahweh**. The Tanakh's last call is: return to the Written Torah. Everything else flows from this.

PART SIX: A PERSONAL WORD FROM KEPHA ARCEMONT

I am not Jewish. My lineage is Acadian — French Canadian settlers of Louisiana — with Indigenous roots documented across nearly one thousand years of genealogical record. I am a man who was born Peter Paul Arcemont in New Orleans, Louisiana, who became

Kepha — the Aramaic covenant name — through a lifetime of covenant study and covenant walking.

I have studied your scriptures for over forty years. I have sat with the Tanakh — with BDB and HALOT open beside it — asking the same questions your greatest scholars have asked: what does **Yahweh** actually say? What did these words mean in their original context? What is the covenant demanding of us right now?

I walked for twenty-three years inside the House of Yahweh in Abilene, Texas — a community that took the Name of **Yahweh** seriously, that kept the Sabbath, that observed the appointed times, that rejected Sunday worship and Christmas and Easter. And I watched what happens when the covenant is genuine in its foundation but corrupted by institutional leadership that placed itself above the Word.

I tell you this because I want you to know: I am not a comfortable observer. I have paid the price of covenant walking in broken relationships, financial loss, and social isolation. I know what it costs to name the breach and turn from it. And I know — from experience — that **Yahweh** is faithful to every person who turns to Him with a whole heart, regardless of which tradition they come from.

In 2008, I stood at Tel Arad — the ancient Israelite fortress in the Negev. Inside the inner sanctuary, there is a standing stone — a *matzevah* — that scholars believe once represented the presence of **Yahweh**. Flanking it, two smaller stones. Three thousand years of covenant evidence, standing in silence. **Yahweh** was there before any of our institutions arrived. He will be there when the last institution has passed.

I write this letter as a witness — not as a superior, not as a replacement, not as a Christian missionary with a hidden agenda. I write as a man who has loved the Tanakh since the day I first read it seriously, who has seen the covenant's power to transform lives and communities, and who believes with everything in him that **Yahweh's** call to the Jewish community is the same call He has issued since the first day of the exile:

Malakhi (Malachi) 3:7 — *"Return to Me, and I will return to you, says Yahweh of hosts."*

Not return to the institutions. Not return to the traditions. Return to **Yahweh (יהוה)** Himself. The Name is real. The covenant is real. The invitation is open. And the promise of Yirmeyahu 31:33 — His covenant written not on tablets but on living hearts — is available right now, to every person in every synagogue, in every Haredi street, in every secular Jewish home, who is willing to pick up the Tanakh and say: **"Yahweh, show me what You require."**

In the Name and Authority of Yahweh (יהוה),

Kepha Arcemont

Elder and Founder

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Pearl River, Louisiana | May 2026

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