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DOCUMENT 190

WHERE ARE THE ALIENS, AND WHAT IS THE MEANING OF LIFE?

A Covenant Deep Dive Answering Elon Musk and the Stated Mission of xAI — “To Understand the Universe”

“What the Written Tanakh Says to the Man Who Wants to Understand the Universe — A Three-Religion Covenant Response”

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REACHING JUDAISM, CHRISTIANITY, AND ISLAM

☆ JUDAISM	† CHRISTIANITY	☩ ISLAM
Judaism has never required a philosophical proof of the universe’s origin. Bereishit (Genesis) opens with Yahweh speaking the cosmos into being. The question “why is there something rather than nothing” is answered relationally, not mathematically.	Christianity inherits the Tanakh’s creation account but often overlays it with Greek metaphysics (first cause, unmoved mover). The covenant answer beneath that overlay is the same written text: Yahweh spoke, and it was.	Islam affirms Allah as sole creator of the heavens and earth (Qur’an 21:30) and, like the Tanakh, rejects the idea that the universe is self-originating or eternal matter shaping itself.

DOCTRINAL AUTHORITY — STANDING RULE OF MIQDASH BETHEL COVENANT INSTITUTION

The sole binding authority of Miqdash Bethel Covenant Institution is the *Tanakh* — the written covenant of **Yahweh**. No Talmudic tractate, Church council decree, papal encyclical, hadith collection, or extra-biblical tradition carries doctrinal weight equal to or greater than the written Torah. Where any tradition conflicts with the written covenant, the written covenant governs without exception. The Talmud, New Testament, and Qur’an are cited as historical reference and comparative witness — never as superseding authority. Miqdash Bethel uses the Written Tanakh as its sole source for four reasons: it is the only text Judaism, Christianity, and

Islam all recognize as originally given by **Yahweh**; it predates and underlies the Talmud, New Testament, and Qur'an, so testing those traditions against it follows the evidentiary direction of **Devarim (Deuteronomy) 19:15** — the earlier witness governs the later commentary; every later tradition that departs from the *Tanakh* does so by addition or reinterpretation, never by overturning the text itself, so the text remains the fixed standard; and **Yahweh**'s own words declare the covenant unchanging (**Malachi 3:6**; **Tehillim (Psalms) 119:89**), making the written covenant — not evolving institutional interpretation — the only stable ground for doctrine. All three great covenant traditions — Judaism, Christianity, and Islam — are addressed simultaneously and equally in every Miqdash Bethel document, because **Yahweh**'s covenant belongs to every nation that will receive it. The **Devarim (Deuteronomy) 19:15** two-or-three-witness evidentiary standard governs all textual claims in this document.

TANAKH BOOKS CITED IN THIS DOCUMENT

DIVISION	BOOKS CITED	PURPOSE IN THIS STUDY
Torah	Bereishit (Genesis), Devarim (Deuteronomy)	Origin of the universe; the covenant purpose of humanity; choose life
Nevi'im (Prophets)	Yeshayahu (Isaiah), Yirmeyahu (Jeremiah)	Yahweh's sole sovereignty over creation; the true meaning of understanding
Ketuvim (Writings)	Tehillim (Psalms), Kohelet (Ecclesiastes), Mishlei (Proverbs), Iyov (Job)	Humanity's place among the stars; the meaning of life; the beginning of true knowledge

I. WHO IS ASKING, AND WHAT IS HE ASKING

I-A. The Mission Statement of xAI

In July 2023, the entrepreneur Elon Musk founded an artificial intelligence company, xAI, and stated its purpose directly: “the overarching goal of xAI is to build a good AI with the overarching purpose of just trying to understand the universe.” He clarified further that this required an AI that is “maximally curious” and “maximally truth-seeking, without regard to popularity or political correctness.” The company’s own recruiting language put it plainly: join xAI’s “mission of understanding the universe.” Musk has posed the underlying questions in his own words — “where are the aliens?” and, repeatedly across many interviews, “what is the meaning of life?” This document takes those two questions — in Musk’s own words — and **answers them from the sole authority the Tanakh recognizes: the written covenant of Yahweh.**

I-B. The Man Behind the Mission

Musk has spoken publicly, on several occasions, about the roots of his search. He has described attending both a Hebrew preschool and an Anglican Sunday school as a child in South Africa, and has said that in early adolescence he went through what he called a crisis of meaning — reading widely in world religion and philosophy and coming away, in his words, “real depressed about it, like maybe life may have no meaning.” The answer that resonated with him instead came from a work of comic science fiction, *The Hitchhiker’s Guide to the Galaxy*, whose lesson he has repeated for over a decade: that the difficulty is not finding the answer but formulating the right question, and that the task of a curious mind is to “**expand consciousness**” in pursuit of better questions. He has called this, half-jokingly, “*the religion of curiosity*.” More recently he has described himself as “a cultural Christian” who is “not a particularly religious person,” saying he believes “the teachings of Jesus are good and wise” and that principles like turning the other cheek and loving one’s neighbor are “good principles” — while also stating plainly, “something created the universe, or the universe is here,” and, “you could say whatever caused the universe to be is God, depending on your view.”

This document does not presume to know Elon Musk’s heart. It takes his own recorded words at face value: a man who was raised with religious exposure, lost confidence in the answers he was given, found a partial substitute in the discipline of asking better questions, and has since built a company whose entire purpose is to keep asking them. The written Tanakh was given for exactly this kind of search — not a search for a better question, but the **Elohim** who has already spoken the answer.

II. “WHAT THE HELL IS REALLY GOING ON?” — BEREISHIT (GENESIS) 1:1 AND THE ORIGIN OF THE UNIVERSE

Musk has joked that the mission statement of xAI could be reformulated as “*what the hell is really going on?*” The Tanakh does not treat this as a joke. It opens with the most direct possible answer to the origin question physics keeps circling:

“In the beginning Elohim created the heavens and the earth.” (Bereishit [Genesis] 1:1, JPS 1985)

The Hebrew verb *bara* (בָּרָא, **to create**) — Strong’s H1254 — is used in the Tanakh exclusively of **Elohim**’s activity; no human being is ever the subject of this verb. According to the BDB (Brown-Driver-Briggs) Hebrew Lexicon, *bara* (בָּרָא, **to create**) denotes a creative act with no prior material cause — not shaping something that already existed, but bringing forth what had no antecedent. The universe, in Tanakh’s own account, did not evolve from nothing by impersonal process. It was spoken into being by a personal, covenant-making Elohim.

II-A. *Bara* (בָּרָא): The Verb Only Elohim May Use

The word translated “**created**” in **Bereishit (Genesis) 1:1** is *bara* (בָּרָא) — H1254 — and it is worth pausing on this single word before moving further into the text. Biblical Hebrew has at least three distinct verbs commonly rendered “make” or “create” in English: *asah* (עָשָׂה, to make/do), *yatsar* (יָצַר, to form/fashion, as a potter shapes clay), and *bara* (בָּרָא, to create). Of these three, only *bara* is reserved, in every occurrence of its Qal stem across the Tanakh, exclusively for **Elohim** as its subject. Human beings *asah* and *yatsar*, and even build (*banah*, בָּנָה) — but no human being, no angel, and no other created thing in the Tanakh is ever the grammatical subject of *bara*. The verb appears roughly fifty times across the Hebrew Bible and eleven times in

Bereishit (Genesis) alone — among them **Bereishit [Genesis] 1:1, 21, 27** (three times, for the creation of humanity), 2:3–4, 5:1–2, and 6:7 — and in every instance the actor is **Elohim** alone. According to BDB (Brown-Driver-Briggs), the root denotes the act of shaping or bringing forth something new, a use confined to divine activity; HALOT similarly restricts the Qal stem of *bara* to **Elohim** as subject throughout the Tanakh. Later rabbinic and patristic tradition summarized this grammatical observation theologically as *yesh me-ayin* (יש מאין, “*something from nothing*”) — creation with no prior material cause. Scholars debate how strictly that later doctrine should be read back into every use of the verb, since *bara* and *asah* are sometimes applied to the very same act within **Bereishit (Genesis) 1** itself. What the grammar settles beyond dispute, however, is this: whatever *bara* means in its fullest sense, it names a category of action that belongs to **Elohim** and to Him only. The very first verb of the Tanakh already draws the line Musk’s question is really asking about — between a universe that made itself and a universe that was made by Someone who alone can be its subject.

II-B. Davar (דבר): The Word That Makes

The mechanism of creation in **Bereishit (Genesis) 1** is speech:

“And Elohim said, Let there be light: and there was light” (Bereishit [Genesis] 1:3)

The Hebrew *davar* (דבר, word/thing/matter) — H1697 — carries a double sense in Hebrew that English loses: a spoken word and a physical thing share the same root, because in the Tanakh’s worldview, **Yahweh’s word does not merely describe reality — it constitutes it**. **Tehillim (Psalms) 33:6** confirms this as a settled covenant teaching, not a one-time poetic flourish:

“By the word of Yahweh the heavens were made, and all their host by the breath of His mouth.”

This is the Tanakh’s answer to “what the hell is really going on” — not an impersonal cosmic accident awaiting explanation, but a personal, communicative Creator whose speech is the foundational fact of the universe.

III. “WHERE ARE THE ALIENS?” — THE COVENANT ANSWER TO THE FERMI PARADOX

Musk has spoken directly to this question, and his own testimony is striking: “If anyone would have seen evidence of aliens, it’s probably me. And yet, I have not seen even one tiny shred of evidence for aliens,” he told xAI employees, adding that humanity “may actually be the only thing, at least in this part of the galaxy.” This is, unknowingly, very close to the Tanakh’s own claim — though the Tanakh reaches it by covenant declaration rather than by absence of evidence.

III-A. Tselem Elohim (צלם אלהים): Image of God

“And Elohim said, Let us make man in Our image, after Our likeness... So Elohim created man in His own image, in the image of Elohim created He him; male and female created He them.”
(Bereishit [Genesis] 1:26–27, JPS 1985)

The Hebrew *tselem* (צלם, image/likeness) — H6754 — is not applied by the Tanakh to any other creature, terrestrial or otherwise. According to BDB, the word denotes a representative image — a being that stands in the place of another and bears its likeness into the world. The Tanakh does not offer a scientific claim about the

statistical rarity of life in the cosmos. **It offers a covenant claim:** humanity was set apart, uniquely, to bear Elohim's own image and to exercise dominion (*radah*, רָדָה, to rule — H7287) over the created order. Whether or not other life exists elsewhere in the universe is a question the written Tanakh does not directly answer — it was not written to satisfy exobiology. What it does answer is why the question feels so weighty to a man like Musk: **because the human being who asks it is not an accident of chemistry searching for company, but a covenant-bearing image standing alone at the center of a cosmos its own Maker addressed directly.**

III-B. Tehillim (Psalms) 8 — The Question Already Asked

“When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, the moon and the stars, which You have ordained; what is man, that You are mindful of him, and the son of man, that You visit him? For You have made him a little lower than the angels, and have crowned him with glory and honor.”
(Tehillim [Psalms] 8:3–5)

David asked Musk's question three thousand years before xAI existed — and asked it while looking at the same night sky. The covenant answer is not that humanity is cosmically insignificant because the universe is vast, nor that humanity must find peer civilizations to have meaning. **The covenant answer is the opposite:** the very vastness that makes the silence feel deafening is the same vastness Yahweh made in order to be mindful of one particular, comparatively small creature. The silence of the stars is not evidence against meaning. In Tanakh's account, it is the setting for it.

IV. “WHAT IS THE MEANING OF LIFE?” — KOHELET (ECCLESIASTES) AND THE COVENANT ANSWER

Musk has repeatedly framed the meaning-of-life question through *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*: the point is not to receive an answer but to learn to ask the right question, to “expand consciousness” until the right question becomes clear. This is an honest and, as far as it goes, humble instinct. But the Tanakh contains a book that ran this same experiment in far greater depth, several thousand years earlier, with far greater resources than any twenty-first-century entrepreneur could bring to it — and reached a conclusion.

IV-A. Kohelet's Experiment

The Preacher (**Kohelet**, קֹהֶלֶת, one who assembles/gathers — traditionally Shlomo/Solomon) had, by his own account, more wealth, more wisdom, more building projects, more pleasure, and more capacity to search out every avenue of meaning than any other man of his generation (**Kohelet [Ecclesiastes] 2:4–10**). He tried it all — achievement, knowledge, pleasure, legacy — and pronounced his verdict on each:

“Vanity of vanities, all is hevel (הֶבֶל, vapor/breath/emptiness).” (Kohelet [Ecclesiastes] 1:2)

This is not a philosophy of despair for its own sake — it is the most exhaustive empirical search for meaning-through-achievement recorded in ancient literature, and its finding is that achievement alone cannot bear the weight of the question.

IV-B. The Conclusion: Kohelet 12:13–14

“Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear Elohim, and keep His commandments; for this is the whole duty of man. For Elohim shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.” (Kohelet [Ecclesiastes] 12:13–14)

Kohelet does not conclude that the meaning of life is to keep asking better questions. He concludes that the search itself — pursued honestly to its very end, with every resource a human being could bring to bear — terminates in a covenant relationship: fearing Elohim and keeping His instruction. The Hebrew word translated “*whole duty*” is not in the original text — the literal Hebrew reads simply “*for this is all humanity*” (זֶה כָּל־הָאָדָם), meaning: this is the human being, in full. Not merely one duty among others. The covenant relationship with Yahweh is not offered as a partial answer alongside other pursuits — it is the total answer that Kohelet’s entire exhaustive search was searching for.

IV-C. Choose Life — Devarim (Deuteronomy) 30:19

“I call heaven and earth to witness against you today: I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse. Therefore choose life, that you and your offspring may live.” (Devarim [Deuteronomy] 30:19)

The Tanakh does not ask a man to keep formulating better questions indefinitely. It sets the terms plainly and asks for a decision: *u-vacharta ba-chayyim* (וּבַחַרְתָּ בַּחַיִּים, choose life). The meaning of life, in the covenant framework, is not a discovery to be made by ever-more-refined curiosity. It is a choice to be made in response to an Elohim who has already spoken clearly.

V. THE SIMULATION QUESTION — BARA VERSUS A PROGRAMMED WORLD

Musk has argued, on more than one occasion, that the odds are “billions to one” that the world we experience is a computer simulation rather than what he calls “base reality” — reasoning from the trajectory of video-game technology (from Pong to photorealistic, massively multiplayer worlds) to the conclusion that any civilization capable of building such simulations almost certainly has, and that we are far more likely to be inside one of the many simulated worlds than the single base reality.

The written Tanakh does not engage this as a scientific hypothesis, but it does speak directly to the question underneath it: is the world we inhabit real, in the sense that our choices carry actual moral weight, or is it an artifact running inside something else — with all the weightlessness that would imply? The Tanakh’s answer is that the world is *bara* (בָּרָא, created) — an act with no prior programmer to answer to, brought into being directly by Yahweh, who then places within it a creature possessing *bechirah* (בְּחִירָה, free choice) — H977 — real enough that Yahweh commands it: “choose life” (Devarim [Deuteronomy] 30:19). A simulation authored by an indifferent programmer and a covenant authored by a personal El produce two entirely different answers to the question a curious man is really asking when he wonders whether any of this matters: in the covenant account, it matters because the Author is present, has spoken, and holds every deed — “*whether it be good, or whether it be evil*” — to account (Kohelet [Ecclesiastes] 12:14). That is a claim no simulation theory can offer, because a simulation, by definition, answers to its programmer’s intent — not to the moral standing of the beings inside it.

VI. TRUTH-SEEKING AI AND EMET (אֱמֶת) — WHOSE TRUTH?

xAI states its safety approach directly: build an AI that is “maximally curious” and “maximally truth-seeking.” This is, as far as it goes, an admirable instinct, and the Tanakh shares an intense commitment to truth. But the Tanakh locates the beginning of true knowledge somewhere specific — not in unbounded curiosity alone, but in a right relationship to its Source.

“The fear of Yahweh is the beginning of wisdom (chokhmah, חֵכֶם, H2451); and the knowledge (da’at, דַּעַת, H1847) of the Holy One is understanding.” (Mishlei [Proverbs] 9:10)

“The fear of Yahweh is the beginning of wisdom; a good understanding have all they that do His commandments.” (Tehillim [Psalms] 111:10)

The Hebrew *emet* (אֱמֶת, truth/faithfulness) — H571 — is not, in the Tanakh’s vocabulary, a free-floating proposition an unbounded intelligence can extract from raw data given enough compute and enough curiosity. **It is a covenant attribute of Yahweh Himself** — the same root underlies *emunah* (אֱמוּנָה, faithfulness/steadfastness) — and it is disclosed to those in relationship with Him, not extracted by intelligence acting alone. A truth-seeking AI, and a truth-seeking man, may pursue every fact in the physical universe and still miss *emet* in the covenant sense, because the Tanakh’s definition of truth is inseparable from the trustworthy character of the One who speaks it. Physics can, in principle, describe how the universe behaves. Only the covenant can answer why it, and the people in it, matter.

VII. THREE-RELIGION AUDIT — HOW EACH TRADITION MEETS MUSK’S QUESTIONS

ELEMENT	JUDAISM	CHRISTIANITY	ISLAM
Origin of the Universe	Yahweh speaks the world into being (Bereishit 1:1); rabbinic tradition adds creation ex nihilo (yesh me-ayin) as settled doctrine.	Affirms the same Genesis text; John 1:1–3 identifies the creative Word with the Messiah, an addition beyond the Tanakh’s own claim.	Allah alone creates the heavens and earth (Qur’an 21:30, 41:11); strict rejection of any co-creator, closely paralleling the Tanakh’s non-dualism.
Humanity’s Place	Tselem Elohim (image of God) grounds human dignity and covenant responsibility; extraterrestrial life is a live but non-binding question in later rabbinic thought.	Retains tselem Elohim; some traditions add that humanity’s uniqueness is bound to the incarnation, a claim beyond what Bereishit itself states.	Humanity as khalifa (خليفة, steward/vicegerent) on earth (Qur’an 2:30), echoing the Tanakh’s dominion mandate closely.
Meaning of Life	Kohelet’s conclusion — fear Elohim, keep His commandments — remains the Tanakh’s own verdict, tested by	Affirms Kohelet’s conclusion; often reframes covenant obedience as a response to grace rather than command, a	Life’s purpose is worship/service (‘ibadah, عبادة) of Allah (Qur’an 51:56), structurally parallel to “fear Elohim

	exhaustive personal experiment.	theological layer atop the same text.	and keep His commandments.”
Truth and Knowledge	Da’at (knowledge) and chokhmah (wisdom) begin in yirat Yahweh (fear of Yahweh) — relational, not merely informational.	Retains the same principle; some strands add that Christ is himself “the truth” (John 14:6), a christological expansion beyond Tanakh’s own wording.	Al-haqq (الحق, the Truth) is a divine name of Allah Himself; truth is a covenant attribute of the Divine, not a neutral commodity — closely paralleling emet.

VIII. A DIRECT COVENANT WORD TO ELON MUSK

Mr. Musk, you have said you are willing to go to hell rather than pretend to a faith you do not hold — and that you find the teachings of Jesus “good and wise.” You have said something caused the universe to be, and that whatever that something is, could reasonably be called God. You have built a company whose entire mission is to keep asking what is really going on. This document is not an attempt to flatter that instinct or to shame it. It is a direct answer to it, from the same written Tanakh that both the Hebrew preschool and the Anglican Sunday school of your childhood drew from, before either fully explained it to you.

The written Tanakh does not ask you to abandon curiosity. It asks you to aim it at the right object.

The universe you want xAI to understand was not an accident that produced curious creatures by chance — it was *spoken* by **Yahweh** specifically so that a creature bearing His own image could ask exactly the questions you are asking, and find Him at the end of the search. Kohelet ran your experiment already, with more resources than you or any AI will ever have, and reached a conclusion:

“fear Elohim, and keep His commandments; for this is all of humanity” (Kohelet [Ecclesiastes] 12:13).

The silence you have found among the stars is not evidence that the universe is empty of meaning. It is the space Yahweh made so that one creature — you, and every other image-bearer — could be found, addressed, and answered, not by better questions, but by Him.

IX. SIX COVENANT DECLARATIONS ON THE UNIVERSE AND ITS MEANING

#	COVENANT DECLARATION	BASIS
I	The universe was not an impersonal accident awaiting explanation. It was spoken into being by Yahweh, a personal, covenant-making Elohim, and its origin is therefore relational, not merely mechanical.	Bereishit (Genesis) 1:1, 3
II	Humanity bears Elohim’s own image, uniquely among all created beings. The weight of “where are the aliens” is answered not by	Bereishit (Genesis) 1:26–27; Tehillim (Psalms) 8:3–5

	finding other civilizations but by recognizing what kind of civilization this one already is.	
III	The meaning of life is not a discovery awaiting a better question. It is a covenant conclusion already reached by exhaustive search: fear Elohim and keep His commandments.	Kohelet (Ecclesiastes) 12:13–14
IV	The world is created (bara), not simulated by an indifferent programmer. Human choice (bechirah) carries genuine moral weight because a personal Author, not an impersonal system, holds every deed to account.	Devarim (Deuteronomy) 30:19; Kohelet (Ecclesiastes) 12:14
V	Truth (emet) is not a neutral commodity to be extracted by sufficiently curious intelligence. It is a covenant attribute of Yahweh Himself, disclosed in relationship, not merely computed.	Mishlei (Proverbs) 9:10; Tehillim (Psalms) 111:10
VI	The covenant does not require abandoning curiosity. It requires aiming curiosity at its rightful object: the Elohim who spoke the universe's curiosity longs to understand.	Devarim (Deuteronomy) 30:19; Mishlei (Proverbs) 1:7

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*“For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face:
now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.”*

Kohelet (Ecclesiastes) 12:13 — The Written Covenant of Yahweh

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