MIQDASH BETHEL COVENANT INSTITUTION

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DOCUMENT 216

Called and Chosen

A Covenant Deep Dive into the Anointing of the Elder in the Family of Yahweh

Qualification, Divine Choosing, and the Laying On of Hands — A Three-Religion Covenant Response

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Elder Kepha Arcemont, Founder

miqdashbethel.ai • miqdashbethel@gmail.com

✡ JUDAISM	† CHRISTIANITY	☪ ISLAM
Semikhah (סְמִיכָה) traces ordination from Moshe's hands on the seventy elders and on Yehoshua, through an unbroken chain, to the Sanhedrin.	The New Testament records the ***laying on of hands*** on Timothy by the body of elders (1 Timothy 4:14), on the seven (Acts 6:6), and on Barnabas and Saul (Acts 13:3) — the same physical act Moshe performed on Yehoshua.	Authority is granted through ***bay'ah*** (allegiance) and ***ijazah*** (certification) — moral credibility and demonstrated fitness precede appointment.

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 The Talmud, New Testament, and Qur'an are cited as historical reference and comparative witness — never as superseding authority.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.

HOW TO READ THIS DOCUMENT

This document applies the sole authority of the written ***Tanakh***. **Yahweh (יהוה)** and **Elohim (אֱלֹהִים)** appear in bold throughout. Hebrew book names are given with English in parentheses, bolded at every occurrence. Hebrew transliterations appear in ***bold italic*** with English meaning in parentheses at every occurrence. Hebrew characters are bold. Scripture references and quotations are bold. Strong's numbers are given in plain text. Three audiences are addressed simultaneously: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. Rabbinic commentary, New Testament texts, and the Qur'an are cited as historical and comparative reference — never as binding authority. The Written Tanakh governs every conclusion.

TANAKH BOOKS CITED IN THIS DOCUMENT

DIVISION	BOOKS CITED	PURPOSE IN THIS STUDY
Torah	Bereishit (Genesis), Shemot (Exodus), Vayikra (Leviticus), Bemidbar (Numbers), Devarim (Deuteronomy)	Foundation texts — the qualification of the man and the choosing act of Yahweh
Nevi'im (Prophets)	Yehoshua (Joshua), Shmuel Alef (1 Samuel), Melachim Alef (1 Kings), Yechezkel (Ezekiel)	Prophetic and historical witness to commissioning, kingship, and false shepherds
Ketuvim (Writings)	Tehillim (Psalms), Divrei HaYamim Alef (1 Chronicles)	Witness to the priesthood, the anointed office, and covenant blessing

I. FRAMING THE QUESTION — QUALIFICATION OR CHOOSING?

I-A. Not an Either/Or

The question is often posed as a contest: does a man qualify himself for the office of elder by his own character, or is the office entirely **Yahweh**'s sovereign choice, with no human contribution at all? The written covenant answers with neither extreme. Two distinct textual streams run through the Torah, and they must be held together rather than collapsed into one: (1) a **qualification** — a standard of demonstrated character that the community observes and testifies to before any office is conferred; and (2) a **choosing** — an act that only

Yahweh performs, imparting ***ruach*** (רוּחַ) [spirit] and authority that no man can confer upon himself. The qualification narrows the pool. The choosing fills the office. Neither substitutes for the other.

I-B. Governing Vocabulary

Zaken (זָקֵן) — Strong's H2205 — '***elder, old man***.' The BDB (Brown-Driver-Briggs) Lexicon glosses it both by age and by office: an elder is a man whose years have produced tested character and whose office carries recognized authority among the people (see Shemot [Exodus] 3:16, 18; Bemidbar [Numbers] 11:16).

Mashach (מָשַׁח) — Strong's H4886 — '***to smear, anoint***.' The root behind ***Mashiach*** (מָשִׁיחַ) [anointed one], H4899. In the Torah, ***mashach*** describes the application of oil to consecrate priests, kings, and sacred objects (Shemot [Exodus] 30:22-33; Vayikra [Leviticus] 8:10-12; Shmuel Alef [1 Samuel] 16:13) — never, in the Torah's own text, the ordination of an elder.

Samach (סָמַךְ) — Strong's H5564 — 'to lean, lay, rest upon.' This verb, not ***mashach***, is the verb of elder-commissioning: **"Lay (samach) your hand upon him"** (Bemidbar [Numbers] 27:18). Post-biblical Hebrew builds the noun ***semikhah*** (סְמִיכָה) [ordination, laying on of hands] directly from this root. Elders and judges are ***nismach*** (ordained by the hand); priests and kings are ***mashuach*** (anointed by oil). The two mechanisms are related in function — both consecrate a man to an office — but they are not the same word, and Section IV below addresses this distinction directly, since it governs how the word 'anoint' should be understood in Miqdash Bethel's own practice.

Ruach (רוּחַ) — Strong's H7307 — '***spirit, wind, breath.***' What is transferred in Bemidbar (Numbers) 11:17 and what fills Yehoshua in Devarim (Deuteronomy) 34:9 — the empowering presence that no ceremony manufactures and no man possesses by right.

Bachar (בָּחַר) — Strong's H977 — '***to choose, elect.***' The verb of **Yahweh**'s own selection — used of Israel's election (Devarim [Deuteronomy] 7:6-8) and, by pattern, of every office **Yahweh** fills. Choosing is His verb, not man's.

II. THE QUALIFICATION REQUIRED OF THE MAN

II-A. Shemot (Exodus) 18:21 — Yitro's Four-Part Standard

Before any chief or judge is appointed in the Torah's own narrative sequence (the elders of Israel were already in place, Shemot (Exodus) 3:16; 18:12), Yitro (Jethro) counsels Moshe to look for a specific, observable standard of character in the men who will bear judicial and pastoral weight:

"You shall seek out from among all the people capable men (anshei chayil, אַנְשֵׁי־חַיִל) who fear Elohim (yirei Elohim, יִרְאֵי אֱלֹהִים), men of truth (anshei emet, אַנְשֵׁי אֱמֶת), who hate unjust gain (sonei batza, שֹׂנְאֵי בָצַע); and place these over them."

Four qualities, each doing distinct work: ***chayil*** (חַיִל) — H2428 — capability, substance, competence to actually bear the office; ***yirat Elohim*** (יִרְאַת אֱלֹהִים) — reverence that governs conduct when no human is watching; ***emet*** (אֱמֶת) — H571 — truthfulness, reliability of word; and freedom from ***betza*** (בֶּצַע) — H1215 — the specific temptation of using the office for private profit. This is not a mystical checklist. It is the plain, observable character standard the covenant community is instructed to apply **before** any man is placed in office.

II-B. Devarim (Deuteronomy) 1:13-15 — Community-Recognized Character

When Moshe retells this same appointment in Devarim (Deuteronomy), the emphasis shifts to the community's own responsibility to identify these men:

"Choose for yourselves wise (chachamim, חֲכָמִים), understanding (nevonim, נְבֹנִים), and known (yedu'im, יְדֻעִים) men from your tribes, and I will appoint them as your heads."

The word ***yedu'im*** (יְדֻעִים) — from ***yada*** [H3045, to know] — means **known**: men whose reputation is already established and verifiable within the community, not men making a private claim to worthiness. The character is not self-certified. It is publicly proven over time, in view of the people who will be governed by it. This is the same evidentiary posture that governs Devarim (Deuteronomy) 19:15 — no single, unverified witness (including the candidate's own testimony about himself) is sufficient to establish a matter.

II-C. The Standard Extends to the Conduct of the Office

Devarim (Deuteronomy) 1:16-17 immediately attaches the ethical demand of the office itself to the men chosen:

"Judge righteously... you shall not be partial in judgment; hear the small and the great alike; you shall not be afraid of any man, for judgment belongs to Elohim."

Qualification is not a one-time entrance exam. It is a standing accountability the office carries for as long as it is held — reinforcing that the office exists to serve **Yahweh**'s justice for the people, not the personal standing of the man who holds it.

III. THE CHOOSING THAT ONLY YAHWEH CAN DO

III-A. Bemidbar (Numbers) 11:16-17, 24-25 — The Seventy Elders

Notice precisely what **Yahweh** instructs Moshe to do:

"Gather to Me seventy men of the elders of Israel, whom you know to be elders of the people and officers over them... I will take of the ruach (רוּחַ) [spirit] that is upon you, and will put it upon them; and they shall bear the burden of the people with you."

The pool is drawn from men **already known** to Moshe as elders — the Shemot (Exodus) 18:21 / Devarim (Deuteronomy) 1:13 standard has already been applied. But the office itself is not activated by their prior reputation. It is activated when **Yahweh** Himself takes of the ***ruach*** on Moshe and places it on them (Bemidbar [Numbers] 11:25) — a transfer no man can perform on his own authority, and one whose effect (they prophesied) was externally visible and unmistakable to the whole camp.

III-B. Bemidbar (Numbers) 27:18-23 — Yehoshua and the Public Laying On of Hands

The clearest single text on the mechanics of elder/successor commissioning in the Torah: **"Take Yehoshua (Joshua) son of Nun, a man in whom is ruach (רוּחַ) [spirit], and lay (samach, סָמַךְ) your hand on him. Have him stand before Elazar the priest and before the whole congregation, and commission him in their sight. Put some of your authority (hod, הוֹד) upon him, so that the whole congregation of the children of Israel may obey."** Three elements are inseparable here: (1) a man already recognized as bearing ***ruach*** — the qualification is presupposed, not skipped; (2) an act of physical transfer — ***samach*** yado, laying the hand — performed by the one who already holds the office and authority being transferred; and (3) a **public** commissioning, before both the priesthood (Elazar) and the whole congregation, so that the office is not a private arrangement between two men but an event the entire covenant community witnesses and is bound to recognize.

III-C. Devarim (Deuteronomy) 34:9 — The Result of the Transfer

After Moshe's death:

"Yehoshua son of Nun was full of the ruach (רוּחַ) [spirit] of wisdom, for Moshe had laid (samach) his hands on him; and the children of Israel listened to him and did as Yahweh had commanded Moshe."

The text credits both causes without collapsing them: Yehoshua's fullness of spirit is tied directly to the physical act Moshe performed, and the congregation's obedience follows from that same act being publicly witnessed and covenantally binding. The laying on of hands is not a symbolic gesture layered on top of an invisible spiritual event — the text presents it as the appointed means through which **Yahweh**'s impartation and the community's recognition happen together, in the same moment.

IV. THE MECHANISM OF TRANSFER — SEMIKHAH, AND ITS RELATION TO ANOINTING

IV-A. Semikhah: The Unbroken-Chain Tradition

As comparative reference only, post-biblical Jewish tradition holds that Moshe's act of ***semikhah*** on Yehoshua and on the seventy elders (Bemidbar [Numbers] 27:18-23; Devarim [Deuteronomy] 34:9; Bemidbar 11 records no laying on of hands on the seventy, on whom Yahweh Himself placed the spirit, 11:25) established an unbroken chain of ordination — each ordained elder ordaining his own successor by the same act — running

down to the Sanhedrin of the Second Temple period (Rambam, ***Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Sanhedrin*** 4:2). According to this tradition, the chain of literal ***semikhah*** was broken around 360 CE (a traditional date that modern scholarship disputes; see Doc 240) when the fixed calendar replaced the Sanhedrin's court functions, after which ordination continued only as the conferral of the title 'Rabbi.' Fairness to the record requires noting that the claim of an unbroken, verifiable historical chain of hand-to-hand transmission from Moshe himself has been challenged by later scholarship as resting on tradition rather than documentable historical continuity. Miqdash Bethel does not depend on a claim of an unbroken historical chain reaching back in an uninterrupted physical line to Moshe. What the written Torah establishes — and what does not depend on any later, undocumented chain — is the **pattern**: a qualified man, publicly commissioned by the laying on of the hand of one already holding and exercising the office, in the sight of the covenant community.

IV-B. Anointing (Mashach) Is Reserved for Priests, Kings, and Certain Prophets

Precision matters here. In the Torah's own vocabulary, ***mashach*** — anointing with oil — is the specific consecration act for the **priesthood** (Aharon and his sons, Shemot [Exodus] 30:30; Vayikra [Leviticus] 8:12), for **kings** (Shaul, David, and Shlomo — Shmuel Alef [1 Samuel] 10:1; 16:13; Melachim Alef [1 Kings] 1:39), and it is commanded once for a prophet (Elisha, Melachim Alef [1 Kings] 19:16), carried out by the casting of the mantle, not oil (19:19). Elders are never described in the Torah as receiving oil. Their commissioning verb is consistently ***samach*** — the laying on of the hand — not ***mashach***. The two mechanisms share a common function (setting a man apart to bear an office he did not create for himself) but are textually and ritually distinct.

Miqdash Bethel's use of the word **"anoint"** for the setting-apart of an Elder therefore carries its wider covenant sense — being set apart by **Yahweh** through a publicly witnessed act performed by one already holding the office — rather than a claim that literal oil-anointing (the priestly/royal ***mashach***) is the specific mechanism in view. The specific, textually-attested mechanism for the office of elder is the laying on of hands, ***semikhah***, following Bemidbar (Numbers) 27:18-23. Where oil is used in Miqdash Bethel's own practice as an accompanying sign of consecration, it functions as a covenant symbol of being set apart — consistent with the wider biblical pattern of consecration (Shemot [Exodus] 30:22-33) — and is offered here as clarification, not correction, of the institution's practice.

V. THE PROCESS MIQDASH BETHEL FOLLOWS TO ANOINT AN ELDER INTO THE FAMILY OF YAHWEH

Miqdash Bethel Covenant Institution follows the pattern established in Sections II-IV above as a matter of covenant practice, not invention. The process rests on the same two pillars the Torah itself requires — a qualification recognized by the community, and a choice sealed by the public laying on of hands by one already holding the office — applied at the level of the household.

V-A. Recognition — The Shemot 18:21 / Devarim 1:13 Standard Is Applied First

Before any man is set apart, the qualification standard of Section II governs: demonstrated capability, reverence for **Elohim**, truthfulness, freedom from the pursuit of unjust gain, and a reputation for wisdom and understanding that is ***known*** — verified within the community rather than self-asserted. No man presents himself for this office; he is recognized by the community he already serves.

V-B. Yahweh's Choosing Is Acknowledged, Not Manufactured

Consistent with Bemidbar (Numbers) 11:16-17, the office is not treated as a human election alone. The recognition of qualification identifies the pool; it does not, by itself, confer the ***ruach*** and authority of the office. That impartation remains **Yahweh**'s act, acknowledged by the institution rather than produced by it.

V-C. The Laying On of Hands — Semikhah Performed by One Already Holding the Office

Elder Kepha Arcemont, having himself been anointed into the office of Elder, lays hands on the man being set apart, following the pattern of Bemidbar (Numbers) 27:18-23 — Moshe, already bearing the office, laying his hand on Yehoshua before Elazar the priest and the whole congregation. This is the same principle underlying ***semikhah***'s traditional requirement that ordination is conferred by one already ordained (Section IV-A): the office is transmitted, not self-conferred. The man being set apart does not anoint himself, and no man outside the office confers it upon another.

V-D. Commissioning Into the Office of Priesthood and Patriarch Over the Family

The elder who is anointed through this act is thereby set into the office of **priesthood and patriarch over his own family** — the household-level expression of the same covenant office the seventy elders and Yehoshua held at the congregational level. This mirrors the household character of priestly consecration in the Torah itself: Aharon's sons were anointed **with him** and **for their generations** (Shemot [Exodus] 40:15) — the office was never a single isolated man but a man set at the head of a household that would carry the covenant forward. In the same way, the elder anointed into this office becomes responsible before **Yahweh** for the spiritual governance, instruction, and covenant faithfulness of his own household, standing in the pattern of the ***zekenim*** who bore the burden of the people with Moshe.

V-E. The Act Is Public

Following Bemidbar (Numbers) 27:19 — Yehoshua commissioned **"in their sight"** — the anointing is not a private transaction. It is performed in the sight of the covenant community, so that the office carries the same public, witnessed weight the Torah itself requires, and so that those under the newly anointed elder's household leadership have themselves seen the transfer take place.

VI. THREE-RELIGION AUDIT — HOW EACH TRADITION HANDLES ORDINATION

ELEMENT	JUDAISM	CHRISTIANITY	ISLAM
Mechanism	Semikhah (סְמִיכָה) — hand-laying, recorded in the Torah only of Moshe on Yehoshua (Bemidbar 27:18-23; Devarim 34:9); tradition extends it to the seventy elders, but Bemidbar 11 records no hand-laying	Laying on of hands by the presbytery/eldership (1 Timothy 4:14; Acts 6:6; 13:3); Acts 14:23 uses cheirotoneo, 'stretching forth the hand,' for elders	Bay'ah (بَيْعَة) — pledge of allegiance to qualified authority; Ijazah (إجازة) — certified permission to teach/transmit, granted only after demonstrated mastery
Qualification Required	Anshei chayil, yirei Elohim, anshei emet, sonei batza (Shemot 18:21); known, wise, understanding men (Devarim 1:13)	Above reproach, one wife, sober-minded, hospitable, able to teach, not a new convert, well thought of by outsiders (Titus 1:5-9; 1 Timothy 3:1-7 — comparative parallel to the Shemot 18:21 standard)	Trustworthiness (amanah), truthfulness (sidq), justice, and — for leading prayer — the most knowledgeable in Qur'anic recitation and Sunnah (comparative parallel to yirei Elohim / anshei emet)
Chain of Authority	Traditionally held to be unbroken from Moshe to the Sanhedrin (Rambam, Hilchot Sanhedrin 4:2); the historical unbrokenness of the chain is itself disputed by later scholarship	Ordained by those already ordained (presbytery); apostolic succession claims vary by tradition and are not textually mandated as an unbroken physical chain in the New Testament itself	Ijazah preserves an unbroken chain (sanad) of named transmitters back to the Prophet; used chiefly for Qur'an/Hadith transmission rather than pastoral office as such
Covenant Convergence	All three traditions require (a) prior, community-verified character and (b) a public act of transfer performed by one who already holds legitimate authority — no tradition permits self-ordination.		

The convergence across all three traditions is the covenant witness itself: no tradition — Jewish, Christian, or Islamic — permits a man to confer an office of spiritual authority on himself. Qualification is publicly tested; the office is publicly conferred by one who already holds it. Where the traditions diverge is chiefly in how strictly each treats the historical continuity of the chain — a question of documentation, not of the underlying principle, which Devarim (Deuteronomy) 19:15's two-or-three-witness standard already answers: authority is established by witnessed transfer, not by private claim.

VII. SEVEN COVENANT DECLARATIONS ON THE ANOINTING OF THE ELDER

#	COVENANT DECLARATION	BASIS

I	**A man is not anointed into the office of elder until his character is publicly known and tested — capable, reverent of Elohim, truthful, and free of the pursuit of unjust gain.**	Shemot (Exodus) 18:21; Devarim (Deuteronomy) 1:13
II	**No man confers the office of elder upon himself. The impartation of ruach and authority for the office is Yahweh's act, acknowledged and enacted through one who already holds it — never self-appointed.**	Bemidbar (Numbers) 11:16-17
III	**The appointed mechanism for setting an elder into office is the laying on of hands (samach), performed by one already bearing the office, before the priesthood and the whole congregation.**	Bemidbar (Numbers) 27:18-23
IV	**The office of elder is not conferred privately. It is commissioned in the sight of the covenant community, so that the community itself is bound to recognize what Yahweh has done.**	Bemidbar (Numbers) 27:19; Devarim (Deuteronomy) 34:9
V	**Anointing with oil (mashach) in the Torah's own text is reserved for priests, kings, and certain prophets. The elder's office is transmitted by the laying on of hands; where oil accompanies the act, it stands as a covenant sign of consecration, not a claim to priestly or royal anointing.**	Shemot (Exodus) 30:22-33; Vayikra (Leviticus) 8:10-12
VI	**The office of elder, once conferred, extends to the governance of the man's own household — priesthood and patriarchy over his family — in the same pattern by which Aharon's sons were consecrated with him for their generations.**	Shemot (Exodus) 40:15
VII	**Every tradition within the covenant families of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam converges on this: spiritual authority is received, not seized, and it is proven publicly before it is exercised.**	Devarim (Deuteronomy) 19:15

VIII. THE COVENANT ANSWER

The question that opened this study — is anointing the individual's qualification or **Yahweh**'s choosing? — is answered by the text itself as a sequence, not a contest. **Yahweh** does not anoint an unqualified man; the community does not anoint a man on its own authority. The pattern set at Sinai and repeated at Yehoshua's commissioning is this: character is proven among the people first; **Yahweh**'s impartation of ***ruach*** and authority follows; and the transfer is sealed by the hand of one who already carries the office, in front of the whole congregation. Miqdash Bethel's practice of anointing an elder into the office of priesthood and patriarch over his family stands in this same line — not a new invention, but the household-level enactment of the pattern **Yahweh** Himself established when He told Moshe to gather men **"whom you know to be elders,"** and then reached down and placed His own spirit upon them.

"Take Yehoshua son of Nun, a man in whom is ruach, and lay your hand on him... and commission him in their sight."

Bemidbar (Numbers) 27:18-19 — The Written Covenant of Yahweh

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