MIQDASH BETHEL COVENANT INSTITUTION

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A Study for Judaism · Christianity · Islam

DOCUMENT 249

Little by Little

A Covenant Deep Dive into Teaching the Tanakh to One Coming Out of Religious Deception — *me'at me'at (little by little)* — Without Overloading Him and Without Offending Him

How Does a Man of Yahweh Give the Covenant to a Newcomer Without Burying Him Under It or Wounding Him in the Giving? — A Three-Religion Covenant Response

September 2026 • Revised October 2026
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The Message is Sent to the World

REACHING JUDAISM, CHRISTIANITY, AND ISLAM

✡ JUDAISM	✝ CHRISTIANITY	☪ ISLAM
The Talmud's rule for receiving a convert is to tell him ***"some of the lenient mitzvot and some of the stringent mitzvot"*** and ***"not overwhelm him"*** (Yevamot 47a). Hillel answered the man who wanted the whole Torah ***"on one foot"*** with one sentence and ***"go and learn it"*** (Shabbat 31a). The Tanakh's own rule is older: ***me'at me'at (little by little)*** (**Exodus 23:30**).	Paul wrote, ***"I fed you with milk, not solid food, for you were not yet able"*** (1 Corinthians 3:2), and John records, ***"I have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now"*** (John 16:12). The Tanakh gives the pattern first: teaching that falls ***"as the rain ... upon the tender grass"*** (**Deuteronomy 32:2**).	Islamic tradition holds that the Qur'an was revealed in stages ***"that you might recite it to the people at intervals"*** (Q. 17:106). Aisha is reported to have said that if ***"do not drink alcohol"*** had been revealed first, people would have said ***"we will never leave it"*** (Sahih al-Bukhari 4993). The Tanakh's older witness: **Yahweh** led Israel by the long road ***"lest they return to Egypt"*** (**Exodus 13:17**).

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Talmud, New Testament, and Qur'an are cited as historical reference and comparative witness — never as superseding authority.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 **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; 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 **Deuteronomy 19:15** two-or-three-witness evidentiary standard governs all textual claims in this document.

HOW TO READ THIS DOCUMENT

This document applies the sole authority of the written Tanakh to one pastoral question: how to teach the covenant to a person coming out of religious deception without overloading or needlessly offending him. **Yahweh** (**יהוה**) and **Elohim** (**אֱלֹהִים**) appear in bold throughout. Tanakh books are cited by their English names only. Hebrew transliterations appear in ***bold italic (with the English meaning in parentheses)*** at every occurrence. Scripture references are bold. **Verse numbers follow the English version. In a few chapters the Hebrew Bible divides the chapter at a different point, so the same verse carries a different number in the Hebrew text. Where that happens, the Hebrew number is given in brackets on first citation, for example Numbers 30:13 [Hebrew 30:14].** Scripture is rendered in a literal working translation from the Hebrew. Textual findings are graded Corroborated, Single witness, or Not in the text. Outside research — learning science and the study of religious transition — is graded Corroborated, Partly corroborated, or Not established; it is a witness from the created world, never an authority over the text. A shorter Condensed Edition of this document is available for printing. Rabbinic commentary, New Testament texts, and the Qur'an are cited as historical and comparative reference — not as binding authority. The Written Tanakh governs all conclusions.

TANAKH BOOKS CITED IN THIS DOCUMENT

DIVISION	BOOKS CITED	PURPOSE IN THIS STUDY
Torah	Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy	**Yahweh**'s own gradual leading; the command to teach; the shepherd's pace; the covenant's order
Nevi'im (Prophets)	Joshua, 1 Samuel, 2 Samuel, 1 Kings, 2 Kings, **Isaiah**, **Jeremiah**, **Ezekiel**, **Hosea**, **Joel**, **Micah**, **Habakkuk**	Teachers who taught well and badly; the false shepherds; the inherited lies; the cords of love
Ketuvim (Writings)	Psalms, Proverbs, Job, Ruth, Nehemiah	The soft answer and the word in season; the public reading that gave the sense; the counselors who failed

COMPARATIVE TEXTS CITED — HISTORICAL AND COMPARATIVE REFERENCE ONLY

CATEGORY	TEXTS CITED	PURPOSE IN THIS STUDY
Rabbinic literature	Talmud Yevamot 47a; Shabbat 31a; Sifra on **Leviticus 19:14**; Maimonides, Guide of the Perplexed I:33	How the rabbinic tradition receives and teaches a newcomer
New Testament	John 16:12; Acts 15:19–21; 1 Corinthians 3:2	The ***"milk before meat"*** principle in the Christian scriptures
Qur'an and hadith	Q. 2:219, 256; 4:43; 5:90; 16:125; 17:106; 25:32; Sahih al-Bukhari 4993	Gradual revelation and invitation in the Islamic witness
Modern research	Miller 1956; Cowan 2001; Sweller 1988; Cepeda et al. 2006; Miller and Rollnick; Barbour 1994; Streib et al. 2009; Nyhan and Reifler 2010; Wood and Porter 2019; Festinger 1956; Kelly 2025	How people learn, how they leave a faith, and how they respond to correction — graded, not binding

I. FRAMING THE STUDY — THE TWO DANGERS

I-A. The Question

A person leaves a system of religious deception. It may have been a church that taught him the covenant was nailed away, a movement that sold him a false calendar or a false prophet, a mosque or

synagogue that buried the written text under later tradition, or a group that ruled his life by fear. Now he opens the Tanakh for himself and meets a man or woman of **Yahweh** who has studied it for years. The question this document answers is the one every such teacher eventually faces: how do you give that person the covenant without burying him under it, and without wounding him in the giving?

There are two dangers, and they pull in opposite directions.

First: overload — pouring out in one sitting what took the teacher twenty years to learn, until the listener cannot hold it, cannot sort it, and walks away.

Second: offense — delivering true things in a manner that shames the listener, attacks the people he still loves, or treats his years in the old system as stupidity rather than inheritance. A teacher can fall into both at once. The Tanakh speaks to both.

I-B. The Method

This study answers six questions in the Tanakh's own terms:

First: Does **Yahweh** Himself teach all at once, or little by little? (Section III)

Second: What does the Tanakh say about the weight a person can carry? (Section IV)

Third: What manner of speech does the Tanakh require of the teacher? (Section V)

Fourth: How did the men and women of the Tanakh actually teach, and where did they fail? (Section VI)

Fifth: What is the person coming out of deception carrying, and what does outside research confirm about how people learn and change? (Sections VII and VIII)

Sixth: In what order should the covenant be taught, and what practical counsel follows? (Sections IX and X)

The method is the standing method of this Institution. **Deuteronomy 19:15** requires two or three witnesses before a matter is established, and each finding is graded on that standard. Where outside research agrees with the Tanakh, it is a second witness from the created world; where it does not, the Tanakh governs.

I-C. What the Library Has Already Established

Several earlier documents bear directly on this one. Doc 228 studied **Ecclesiastes 12:12**, ***"of making many books there is no end, and much study is a weariness of the flesh,"*** and turned the warning on this Institution's own library: a library of more than two hundred documents is a gift to the mature and a wall to the beginner. Doc 236 studied the power of the spoken word (**Proverbs 18:21**). Doc 218 set out the Tanakh's tests of true and false prophecy, and Doc 220 set out its

vocabulary of truth and falsehood — tools a person coming out of deception will eventually need, but not all on the first day. Doc 144 studied **Psalms 23**, the shepherd who ***"leads me beside still waters"*** — not rushing ones. Doc 216 studied the anointing of the elder, whose office includes teaching. The 613 Laws course is itself built as a lesson-by-lesson progression. The present study asks how all of that is to be handed to someone just beginning.

II. THE HEBREW VOCABULARY OF TEACHING

The Tanakh's words for teaching carry their own instruction. The table sets the core vocabulary side by side.

HEBREW TERM	STRONG'S	CORE MEANING	KEY TEXT
yarah (to throw / to teach) **יָרָה**; ***torah (instruction)*** **תּוֹרָה**	H3384 / H8451	To cast or shoot; to point out; to teach. Torah is the noun: instruction, direction	**Exodus 24:12**; **Deuteronomy 17:10–11**
moreh (teacher / early rain) **מוֹרֶה**	H4175	From the same root: both ***"teacher"*** and the early rain that softens the ground	**Joel 2:23**; **Isaiah 30:20**
lamad (to learn); ***limmed (to teach)*** **לָמַד**	H3925	To learn by practice; in the intensive stem, to train, to goad an animal into a trained path	**Deuteronomy 4:10; 5:1**
shinnantam (teach them diligently) **שִׁנַּנְתָּם**	H8150	From ***shanan (to sharpen / repeat)***: to impress by repetition, as a blade is sharpened by many strokes	**Deuteronomy 6:7**
be'er (to make plain) **בֵּאֵר**	H874	To make clear, to write plainly, to expound	**Deuteronomy 1:5; 27:8**; **Habakkuk 2:2**
sekhel (understanding / sense) **שֶׂכֶל**	H7922	Insight, the sense of a thing; the Levites ***"gave the sense"***	**Nehemiah 8:8**
me'at me'at (little by little) **מְעַט מְעַט**	H4592	A little, then a little: gradual, piece by piece	**Exodus 23:30**; **Deuteronomy 7:22**
le'itti (at my slow pace) **לְאִטִּי**	H328	Gently, softly, slowly — at a pace that does not drive	**Genesis 33:14**

HEBREW TERM	STRONG'S	CORE MEANING	KEY TEXT
rakh (tender / soft) **רַךְ**	H7390	Tender, delicate, young; soft (of speech)	**Genesis 33:13**; **Proverbs 15:1; 25:15**
qotser ruach (shortness of spirit) **קְצַר רוּחַ**	H7115 / H7307	Exhaustion, anguish; literally ***"shortness of breath / spirit"*** — no room left to receive	**Exodus 6:9**
la'ut (to sustain) **לָעוּת**	H5790	To help, to succor — ***"to sustain the weary with a word"***	**Isaiah 50:4**
dai (sufficiency / enough) **דַּי**	H1767	What is enough; the right measure	**Proverbs 25:16**
peti (simple / open) **פֶּתִי**	H6612	The simple or untaught — open, not yet formed; not a fool, but a beginner	**Psalms 19:7** [Hebrew 19:8]; 119:130; **Proverbs 1:4**
mikhshol (stumbling block) **מִכְשׁוֹל**	H4383	An obstacle over which one falls	**Leviticus 19:14**; **Ezekiel 14:3**

Four observations follow from the vocabulary.

First, the same root gives Hebrew both its word for teaching and its word for the early rain. The ***moreh (teacher / early rain)*** of **Joel 2:23** is the autumn rain that softens ground hardened by summer. **Moses** chose the same picture for his own teaching: ***"Let my teaching drop as the rain, my speech distill as the dew"*** (**Deuteronomy 32:2**). Rain that falls in drops is received; rain that falls all at once runs off hard ground and carries the soil with it. The Tanakh's own vocabulary treats teaching as something that must soak in.

Second, the command to teach the covenant to the next generation uses ***shinnantam (teach them diligently)***, from a root meaning to sharpen (**Deuteronomy 6:7**). A blade is not sharpened by one heavy blow but by many light strokes. The same verse places the teaching ***"when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up"*** — spread across the day, not packed into one sitting.

Third, the Tanakh has a word for the beginner that is not an insult. The ***peti (simple / open)*** is the person not yet formed, and the covenant is described as made for him: ***"The testimony of Yahweh is sure, making wise the simple"*** (**Psalms 19:7** [Hebrew 19:8]); ***"the opening of Your words gives***

light; it gives understanding to the simple" **(Psalms 119:130)**. The one coming out of deception is not a fool to be corrected; he is a ***peti (simple / open)*** to be formed.

Fourth, the Tanakh names the condition in which a person cannot receive even a true word: ***qotser ruach (shortness of spirit)*** **(Exodus 6:9)**. Section III examines it. It is the Tanakh's own term for what modern writers call overload.

III. FIVE WITNESSES THAT YAHWEH HIMSELF TEACHES LITTLE BY LITTLE

Before asking how a man should teach, the Tanakh must be asked how **Yahweh** teaches. Five witnesses answer.

Witness One — Exodus 23:29–30 and Deuteronomy 7:22: Little by Little

"I will not drive them out from before you in one year, lest the land become desolate and the beast of the field multiply against you. Little by little I will drive them out from before you, until you have increased and inherit the land" (Exodus 23:29–30).

The conquest of the land is the Tanakh's great picture of taking possession of the promise. **Yahweh** could have cleared it in a day. He refused, and gave the reason: a land emptied faster than it can be filled goes wild. The phrase is ***me'at me'at (little by little)***, and **Moses** repeats it forty years later: ***"Yahweh your Elohim will clear away these nations before you little by little; you may not make an end of them at once, lest the beasts of the field increase upon you"*** **(Deuteronomy 7:22)**.

The application is direct. When a teacher tears down every false belief a person holds in one conversation, he leaves an emptied field. What grows in it first is not the covenant but the wild things — despair, cynicism, the conclusion that if everything he was taught was false, then nothing can be trusted, including the Tanakh. The old ground is taken as the new ground can be held.

Witness Two — Exodus 13:17–18: Not by the Short Road

"And when Pharaoh had let the people go, Elohim did not lead them by the way of the land of the Philistines, although it was near; for Elohim said, Lest the people repent when they see war, and return to Egypt. But Elohim led the people around by the way of the wilderness" (Exodus 13:17–18).

This is the Tanakh's clearest witness for the person coming out of bondage. The short road ran straight up the coast, but it ran through a war the people were not ready to face. **Yahweh** took the long way — not because the short way was wrong, but because the people were new to freedom and would have

turned back. The text states His reason outright: ***pen yinnachem ha'am (lest the people change their minds)***.

A person who has just left a deceptive system is in exactly that condition. The shortest road to the full truth may lead straight through the hardest battles — his family's faith, his former teachers, the holidays and customs he loved, the doctrines his whole world was built on. Lead him that way too soon and he will go back to Egypt, and he will tell others the wilderness was worse. The long road is not a compromise with the truth; it is **Yahweh**'s own route.

Witness Three — Exodus 6:9: They Could Not Hear for Shortness of Spirit

"And Moses spoke so to the children of Israel, but they did not listen to Moses because of shortness of spirit and because of hard bondage" (**Exodus 6:9**).

The message **Moses** carried was entirely true — the very promise of deliverance, with the Name of **Yahweh** attached to it (**Exodus 6:2–8**). Israel did not reject it because it was false. They could not hear it because of ***qotser ruach (shortness of spirit)*** and ***avodah qashah (hard bondage)***. The text places the failure in the listener's condition, not in the message, and it does not condemn them for it.

A person who has been ruled by fear, shamed, controlled, or exhausted by a religious system may be in the same condition. The truth may be sound and still not land. The Tanakh's answer in the next chapters is not louder preaching; it is **Yahweh** acting on their behalf until they were able to hear. The teacher's first work with such a person may be to lighten the load before adding to it.

Witness Four — Deuteronomy 32:2: As the Rain on Tender Grass

"Let my teaching drop as the rain; let my speech distill as the dew, as the small rain upon the tender grass, and as the showers upon the herb" (**Deuteronomy 32:2**).

Moses named four kinds of water: ***matar (rain)***, ***tal (dew)***, ***se'irim (fine rain)***, and ***revivim (showers)***. None of them is a flood. The object of the teaching is ***deshe (tender grass)*** and ***esev (herb)*** — young growth that is fed by gentle water and destroyed by violent water. The song that follows is one of the hardest rebukes in the Torah (**Deuteronomy 32:15–35**), yet it begins by asking to fall as dew. The manner is gentle even when the content is severe.

Witness Five — Genesis 33:13–14: According to the Pace of the Children

"My lord knows that the children are tender, and the flocks and herds with young are upon me; and if they are driven hard one day, all the flock will die. Let my lord pass on before his servant, and I will lead on slowly, according to the pace of the livestock that goes before me and according to the pace of the children" (**Genesis 33:13–14**).

This witness is a man, not **Yahweh** — but it is the shepherd's rule, and the Tanakh preserves it as wisdom. Jacob had spent twenty years with flocks. He knew that animals with young, and children, are ***rakkim (tender)***, and that one day of driving them at a strong man's pace would kill them. He chose ***le'itti (at my slow pace)***, ***le-regel ha-yeladim (according to the foot of the children)***. The teacher sets the pace by the slowest feet in front of him, not by his own.

Finding — Five witnesses in three books of the Torah establish beyond the **Deuteronomy 19:15** standard that the Tanakh's own pattern of leading and teaching is gradual: little by little (**Exodus 23:30**; **Deuteronomy 7:22**), by the longer road when the shorter would drive the people back (**Exodus 13:17**), with regard for the listener's capacity (**Exodus 6:9**), as rain and not flood (**Deuteronomy 32:2**), and at the pace of the tender (**Genesis 33:14**). **Grading: Corroborated.** The gradual teaching of a new learner is not a modern softening of the covenant; it is the covenant's own method.

IV. THE WEIGHT A PERSON CAN CARRY — OVERLOAD IN THE TANAKH

IV-A. Honey Beyond Sufficiency

"Have you found honey? Eat only what is sufficient for you, lest you be filled with it and vomit it" (Proverbs 25:16).

The covenant is honey: ***"sweeter than honey and the drippings of the honeycomb"*** (**Psalms 19:10** [Hebrew 19:11]). But Proverbs warns that good honey eaten past ***dayyekka (your sufficiency)*** comes back up. The problem is not the honey; it is the quantity at one time. A person force-fed good teaching may reject not only the excess but the whole meal, and associate the taste of the covenant with the sickness that followed. Doc 228 found the same warning in **Proverbs 25:27** and **Ecclesiastes 12:12**: much study wearies the flesh.

IV-B. The Teacher Can Be Overloaded Too

"The thing that you do is not good. You will surely wear away, both you and this people that is with you, for the thing is too heavy for you; you are not able to do it alone" (Exodus 18:17–18).

Jethro saw **Moses** teaching the people ***"from morning until evening"*** (**Exodus 18:13**) and named the result: ***navol tibbol (you will surely wither)***. Both the teacher and the people were being worn down. His counsel was to divide the load, to teach the people ***"the statutes and the laws, and make them know the way they must walk and the work they must do"*** (**Exodus 18:20**), and to bring only the hard matters to **Moses**. **Moses** later confessed the same weight: ***"I am not able to carry all***

this people alone, for it is too heavy for me" (**Numbers 11:14**). A teacher who tries to do everything for one learner in every conversation will exhaust them both. He should share the work — with the text itself, with other members of the covenant community, and with time.

IV-C. "Precept upon Precept" — What Isaiah 28 Actually Says

"Whom will he teach knowledge, and whom will he make to understand the message? Those weaned from the milk, taken from the breasts? For it is tsav latsav, tsav latsav, qav laqav, qav laqav, a little here, a little there" (**Isaiah 28:9–10**).

This passage is often quoted as a method of Bible study: ***"precept upon precept, line upon line, here a little, there a little."*** Honesty requires a closer look. In context, these words are most often read as spoken by the drunken priests and prophets who ***"stagger with strong drink"*** (**Isaiah 28:7**), mocking **Isaiah**'s message as baby-talk fit for toddlers. The syllables ***tsav latsav, qav laqav (precept upon precept, line upon line)*** have the sound of a child's alphabet chant. In verse 13, **Yahweh** turns their mockery back on them: because they would not hear, His word will come to them as broken syllables, ***"that they may go and fall backward, and be broken"*** (**Isaiah 28:13**).

Grading: that **Isaiah 28:10** is a commanded method of teaching is **Not in the text**; it is the scoffers' ridicule. But the same passage contains a teaching principle that is established, spoken by **Yahweh** Himself in verse 12: ***"This is the rest; give rest to the weary; and this is the refreshing — yet they would not hear"*** (**Isaiah 28:12**). The teacher who uses ***"line upon line"*** to justify loading a newcomer with charts and proof-texts has read the verse backward. The teacher who gives rest to the weary has read it rightly.

IV-D. Signs That a Learner Is Overloaded

The Tanakh records the outward signs of a person past his capacity, and pastoral experience confirms them.

SIGN	WHAT IT MAY MEAN	TANAKH PARALLEL
Shutting down — silence, nodding without engagement	He can no longer take in more; he is waiting for it to end	**Exodus 6:9** — they did not listen for shortness of spirit
Arguing every point	Identity feels under attack; the argument is self-defense, not inquiry	**Proverbs 18:19** — a brother offended is harder to win than a strong city
Weeping or grief	Loss is being felt — of teachers, family unity, years of life	**Nehemiah 8:9** — all the people wept when they heard

SIGN	WHAT IT MAY MEAN	TANAKH PARALLEL
All-or-nothing conclusions	***"Everything I believed is false; I have to throw out everything"***	**Deuteronomy 7:22** — the land emptied too fast grows wild
Fixation on one issue	One disturbing fact has become the whole picture	**Proverbs 25:16** — honey beyond sufficiency
Withdrawal — missed studies, unanswered messages	The cost of continuing feels too high right now	**Exodus 13:17** — lest they see war and return to Egypt

None of these signs means the person is rejecting **Yahweh**. They mean the pace or the manner needs to change. The right response to each is the same: stop adding, listen, and let what has been given take root.

V. THE MANNER OF THE TEACHER — WITHOUT NEEDLESS OFFENSE

V-A. The Soft Answer and the Soft Tongue

"A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger" (**Proverbs 15:1**).

"By long patience a ruler is persuaded, and a soft tongue breaks the bone" (**Proverbs 25:15**).

The word for ***"soft"*** in both verses is ***rakh (tender / soft)*** — the same word Jacob used for the tender children (**Genesis 33:13**). **Proverbs 25:15** makes a remarkable claim: soft speech is not weak speech. It ***"breaks the bone"*** — it reaches what hard speech cannot. Hard speech makes the listener defend himself; soft speech lets him lower his guard long enough to consider. The same verse joins softness to ***orekh appayim (long patience)***. Persuasion is slow.

V-B. The Word in Its Season

"A person has joy in the answer of his mouth, and a word in its season, how good it is" (**Proverbs 15:23**).

"Lord Yahweh has given me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to sustain the weary with a word" (**Isaiah 50:4**).

A true word at the wrong time can do harm. Proverbs warns that ***"he who blesses his friend with a loud voice, rising early in the morning, it shall be counted a curse to him"*** (**Proverbs 27:14**) — a good thing, delivered too loudly and at the wrong hour, becomes an injury. And ***"as one who***

takes away a garment in cold weather, and as vinegar on soda, so is one who sings songs to a heavy heart" (**Proverbs 25:20**). ***"A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in settings of silver"*** (**Proverbs 25:11**). The servant of **Isaiah 50:4** was given the tongue of ***limmudim (the taught ones)*** — and the first thing that tongue is for is ***la'ut et ya'ef davar (to sustain the weary with a word)***. One word. The right one.

V-C. Listen First, and Draw It Out

"He who answers a matter before he hears it, it is folly and shame to him" (**Proverbs 18:13**).

"Counsel in the heart of a man is deep water, but a man of understanding will draw it out" (**Proverbs 20:5**).

The teacher's first task is not to speak but to find out where the listener is. What did he believe? What made him question it? What does he already see in the text? What is he afraid of losing? **Proverbs 20:5** pictures the answers already present in the person, like water in a deep well, and the wise man as the one who draws them up — by questions, not by pouring more in. A person who discovers a truth in the text for himself will hold it far longer than one who was told it.

V-D. Gentle Without Being False

"A bruised reed He will not break, and a dimly burning wick He will not quench; He will bring forth justice in truth" (**Isaiah 42:3**).

"He will feed His flock like a shepherd; He will gather the lambs in His arm and carry them in His bosom, and gently lead those that are with young" (**Isaiah 40:11**).

The Servant of **Yahweh** in **Isaiah 42** is gentle with the bruised — and in the same verse ***"brings forth justice in truth."*** Gentleness is not the surrender of truth. The Tanakh never asks the teacher to say that deception was truth, that a false prophet was a true one, or that a later tradition carries the authority of the written covenant. It asks him to say true things in a way that does not break what is already bruised.

V-E. When the Truth Itself Offends

Not all offense can be avoided, and the Tanakh does not pretend it can. **Yahweh** sent **Ezekiel** to speak His words ***"whether they will hear or whether they will refuse"*** (**Ezekiel 2:7**), and warned **Jeremiah** that his hearers would fight against him (**Jeremiah 1:17–19**). Proverbs distinguishes two kinds of wound: ***"Faithful are the wounds of a friend, but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful"*** (**Proverbs 27:6**). The covenant also commands honest correction: ***"You shall surely reprove your neighbor, and not bear sin because of him"*** — set within the command not to hate him in your heart and to love him as yourself (**Leviticus 19:17–18**).

The line the Tanakh draws is between the offense of the truth and the offense of the teacher. When a person is offended because the written covenant contradicts what he was taught, the teacher may grieve, but he has not sinned. When a person is offended because the teacher mocked, rushed, shamed, lectured, or attacked the people the listener loves, the offense is the teacher's own, and he has placed a ***mikhshol (stumbling block)*** before one who could not yet see (**Leviticus 19:14**). **Grading:** the distinction between the friend's faithful wound and needless harm is **Corroborated** (**Proverbs 27:6**; **Leviticus 19:17–18**). The literal command of **Leviticus 19:14** concerns the physically blind; its extension to misleading the uninformed is rabbinic tradition (Sifra on **Leviticus 19:14**) — **Not in the text** as a stated command, though it follows naturally from the verse's concern.

V-F. The Scoffer and the Seeker

"Do not reprove a scoffer, lest he hate you; reprove a wise man, and he will love you. Give instruction to a wise man, and he will be yet wiser" (**Proverbs 9:8–9**).

The Tanakh distinguishes the ***lets (scoffer)***, who mocks correction, from the one who wants to learn. A person who has come out of deception and is asking questions is almost always the second kind, even if his questions come out sharp. The teacher should not treat a wounded seeker as a scoffer. And if someone truly is a scoffer — interested only in winning — Proverbs counsels the teacher to stop, not to press harder (**Proverbs 26:4**).

VI. HOW THE MEN AND WOMEN OF THE TANAKH TAUGHT — FIVE WITNESSES AND TWO WARNINGS

Witness One — Elisha and Naaman: One Command, Then "Go in Peace"

Naaman, commander of Aram's army, came to **Elisha** seeking healing (**2 Kings 5**). **Elisha** did not teach him the history of Israel, the laws of the altar, or the errors of Aramean religion. He sent one instruction: ***"Go and wash in the Jordan seven times"*** (**2 Kings 5:10**). Naaman was offended at first — his servants gently reasoned him into obedience (**2 Kings 5:13**) — and after he was healed he confessed, ***"Now I know that there is no Elohim in all the earth except in Israel"*** (**2 Kings 5:15**).

Then Naaman raised a hard question. His king would still lean on his arm when he bowed in the house of Rimmon, the Aramean god; he asked pardon in advance (**2 Kings 5:17–18**). **Elisha** answered in two words: ***lekh le-shalom (go in peace)*** (**2 Kings 5:19**). **Grading:** interpreters have long disagreed about what **Elisha**'s answer meant — whether he permitted the act, or simply declined to settle it that day and sent Naaman home with his new faith intact. The text does not say. What it records beyond dispute is that the prophet did not load a new believer with every consequence of his new faith in the

first conversation. Naaman went home carrying two loads of Israel's earth and a resolve to offer to no other god (**2 Kings 5:17**). That was enough for one day.

Witness Two — Nathan and David: The Side Door, Then the Full Truth

When **Nathan** was sent to confront King David over Bathsheba and Uriah, he did not open with the charge. He told a story about a rich man who took a poor man's one ewe lamb (**2 Samuel 12:1–4**). David, judging the story on its own terms, condemned the rich man — and **Nathan** said, ***"You are the man"*** (**2 Samuel 12:7**). The truth was not softened at all; the approach was. The parable let David see the matter clearly before he knew it was about him, so that the judgment came from his own mouth. The teacher who wants a person to see an error in the system he came from will often do better to let the person meet the principle first in the text, and apply it himself.

Witness Three — Ezra and the Levites: Read, Give the Sense, and Watch the Listeners

"So they read in the book, in the Torah of Elohim, distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading" (**Nehemiah 8:8**).

The great public reading of **Nehemiah 8** is the Tanakh's model classroom. Three things were done: the text was read ***meforash (distinctly)***, the teachers gave ***sekhel (the sense)***, and they made the people understand (**Nehemiah 8:7–8**). The teaching was not left in the air; the Levites moved among the people so that each one understood.

And then the teachers watched their listeners. ***"All the people wept when they heard the words of the Torah"*** (**Nehemiah 8:9**). The leaders did not press the conviction further. They stopped it: ***"This day is holy to Yahweh your Elohim; do not mourn or weep ... Go your way, eat the fat, drink the sweet, and send portions to him for whom nothing is prepared ... for the joy of Yahweh is your strength"*** (**Nehemiah 8:9–10**). The Levites quieted the people: ***"Be still, for the day is holy; do not be grieved"*** (**Nehemiah 8:11**). Only after that, ***"because they had understood the words that were declared to them,"*** did the people rejoice (**Nehemiah 8:12**) — and the next day they came back for more (**Nehemiah 8:13**).

This is the pattern for a person coming out of deception. When the truth brings grief — for lost years, for misplaced trust, for family who remain behind — the teacher does not use the grief as leverage for more conviction. He stops, points the person to **Yahweh**'s joy, feeds him, and lets him come back tomorrow.

Witness Four — Naomi and Ruth: She Stopped Speaking

Ruth the Moabite came to **Yahweh** by attachment to a person before she knew the covenant's details. ***"Your people shall be my people, and your Elohim my Elohim"*** (**Ruth 1:16**). Naomi had tried

three times to send her back. When she saw Ruth was determined, ***"she ceased speaking to her"*** (**Ruth 1:18**). Naomi did not follow Ruth's confession with a lecture. Ruth learned the covenant the way most people do — by living beside it: gleaning under the law of **Leviticus 19:9–10** and **Deuteronomy 24:19**, meeting a redeemer under the law of **Deuteronomy 25** and **Leviticus 25**, and being taught step by step what to do next (**Ruth 3:1–4**). The covenant reached her through a relationship and was learned one situation at a time.

Witness Five — Moses in Deuteronomy: Teaching It Again

"On the other side of the Jordan, in the land of Moab, Moses began to make this Torah plain" (**Deuteronomy 1:5**).

The book of Deuteronomy exists because a new generation needed the covenant taught again. **Moses *be'er (made it plain)*** — the word used for writing ***"very plainly"*** on stones (**Deuteronomy 27:8**) and for writing a vision ***"plain on tablets, that he may run who reads it"*** (**Habakkuk 2:2**). Much of Deuteronomy repeats what Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers had already said, now explained, applied, and pressed on the heart. The greatest teacher in the Tanakh did not regard repetition as failure. He built it into the covenant (**Deuteronomy 6:7; 31:10–13**).

Two Warnings — Job's Friends and Eli

The Tanakh also preserves teachers who failed. Job's three friends began well: ***"they sat down with him on the ground seven days and seven nights, and no one spoke a word to him, for they saw that his grief was very great"*** (**Job 2:13**). Their silence was their best counsel. When they began to talk, they explained Job's suffering with confident doctrine that did not fit his case, and at the end **Yahweh** said to them, ***"You have not spoken of Me what is right"*** (**Job 42:7**). Many of their individual sentences were true; the application to the man in front of them was not.

Eli the priest saw Hannah praying silently in anguish and concluded she was drunk (**1 Samuel 1:12–14**). He rebuked before he understood. Hannah answered, ***"No, my lord, I am a woman of sorrowful spirit"*** (**1 Samuel 1:15**), and Eli, to his credit, changed his word at once to a blessing (**1 Samuel 1:17**). A person coming out of deception may look, from outside, like a rebel, a doubter, or a troublemaker. He may be a person of sorrowful spirit. The teacher should find out which before he speaks.

VII. COMING OUT OF DECEPTION — WHAT THE PERSON IS CARRYING

VII-A. "Our Fathers Inherited Lies"

"O Yahweh, my strength and my fortress, my refuge in the day of affliction: to You the nations shall come from the ends of the earth and say, Surely our fathers have inherited lies, vanity, and things in which there is no profit" (Jeremiah 16:19).

Jeremiah foresees the nations coming to **Yahweh**, and he gives them their confession in advance: ***akh sheqer nachalu avoteinu (surely our fathers inherited falsehood)***. The word is ***nachal (to inherit)***. The falsehood was not invented by the people who now confess it; it was handed down to them as an inheritance, the way land and names are handed down. This verse gives the teacher his posture. The person coming out of deception is not to be shamed for having believed what his parents, pastors, imams, or rabbis taught him. He received an inheritance he did not choose. His coming to **Yahweh** is the fulfillment of prophecy, not the exposure of a fool.

VII-B. The Shepherds Who Ruled with Force

"The weak you have not strengthened, the sick you have not healed, the broken you have not bound up, the driven away you have not brought back, the lost you have not sought; but with force and with harshness you have ruled them" (Ezekiel 34:4).

Ezekiel 34 is **Yahweh**'s indictment of false shepherds, and its charge is not only doctrinal. They ruled ***be-chozqah (with force)*** and ***be-farekh (with harshness)*** — the same word used for Egypt's crushing labor (**Exodus 1:13–14**). Many who leave deceptive systems were ruled that way: by fear, by control, by threats of losing salvation, family, or community. **Yahweh**'s answer is to do the opposite: ***"I will seek the lost, bring back the driven away, bind up the broken, and strengthen the sick"*** (**Ezekiel 34:16**).

The danger for the new teacher is that he replaces one harsh shepherd with another — correct in doctrine this time, but still ruling with force. A person who has escaped a system that demanded instant, total obedience should not be met by a teacher who demands instant, total renunciation. The doctrine changes; the harshness must change too.

VII-C. Cords of a Man

"I taught Ephraim to walk, taking them by their arms; but they did not know that I healed them. I drew them with cords of a man, with bands of love; and I was to them as those who lift the yoke from their jaws, and I bent down to them and fed them" (Hosea 11:3–4).

Hosea gives the most tender picture of **Yahweh**'s teaching in the Tanakh. He taught Israel to walk the way a parent teaches a child — holding the arms. He drew them with ***chavlei adam (cords of a man)***: human-sized ropes, not chains. He lifted the yoke rather than adding to it, and He bent down to feed them. A teacher who bends down to the level of the learner, and lifts burdens before placing new ones, is teaching the way **Yahweh** taught.

VII-D. What Research on Leaving a Faith Describes

Researchers who study religious transition confirm that leaving a belief system is rarely only an intellectual event. Religious-studies scholar John Barbour (1994) described deconversion as involving intellectual doubt, moral criticism, emotional suffering, and disaffiliation from the community. The large cross-cultural Deconversion study led by Heinz Streib and Ralph Hood (Germany and the United States, 2009) added the loss of specific religious experience, and documented how varied the paths out of a faith are. **Grading: Corroborated** — leaving a religious system commonly involves grief, loss of community, and emotional strain as well as changed ideas, matching the Tanakh's own pictures of loss (**Nehemiah 8:9**; **Ruth 1:16**). The research does not tell anyone which beliefs are true; it describes what the journey costs.

Some clinicians use the phrase ***"religious trauma"*** for severe cases (popularized by Marlene Winell, 2011). The phrase describes real suffering, but it is not a formal diagnosis in the DSM-5. **Grading:** as a clinical category, **Not established**. The practical point stands regardless: a covenant teacher is not a therapist. Where a person shows signs of serious distress — sleeplessness, panic, despair, thoughts of harming himself — the teacher should help him find qualified help, following **Proverbs 11:14**: ***"in the multitude of counselors there is safety."*** This is covenant wisdom, not medical advice.

VII-E. Does Correcting a Belief Make People Hold It Harder?

A widely repeated claim holds that correcting a false belief causes people to cling to it more strongly — the so-called ***"backfire effect."*** An early study by Brendan Nyhan and Jason Reifler (2010) reported such an effect in some cases. But a much larger series of experiments by Thomas Wood and Ethan Porter, covering 52 issues and more than 10,000 participants (Political Behavior, 2019), found that factual correction generally moved people toward the truth, and that backfire was rare. **Grading:** backfire as a general rule is **Not established**; later research has largely failed to reproduce it.

A similar case is Leon Festinger's famous study When Prophecy Fails (1956), which claimed a group whose prophecy failed became more zealous. Later scholars (Bainbridge, 1997; Stone, 2000) found the account less clean than its summary and noted that the researchers' own presence in the small group may have shaped its behavior, and Thomas Kelly's 2025 archival study, ***"Debunking 'When Prophecy Fails',"*** challenges it further. **Grading: Partly corroborated at best**; no teaching method should be built on it.

What this means for the covenant teacher is encouraging. People are not, as a rule, immune to truth. What hardens them is usually not the fact but the manner: being shamed, being rushed, or feeling their identity and relationships threatened. That is exactly what the Tanakh warns against (**Proverbs 15:1; 18:19; 25:15**).

VIII. HOW MUCH, HOW FAST — WHAT LEARNING RESEARCH CONFIRMS

The created world is a witness to its Creator (**Psalms 19:1–4**). Research into how human beings learn confirms the Tanakh's pattern of gradual teaching from a second direction. Four findings are set out here, each with its Tanakh parallel.

VIII-A. The Mind Holds Only a Little at Once

George Miller's classic paper ***"The Magical Number Seven, Plus or Minus Two"*** (1956) observed that people can hold only a small number of items in immediate memory. Nelson Cowan's later review (2001) put the true limit nearer four meaningful ***"chunks"*** at a time. John Sweller's cognitive load theory (1988 onward) built on this: when a beginner is given too many new, interacting ideas at once, learning collapses; the same material taught in smaller steps, with worked examples, is learned well. **Grading: Corroborated** by decades of research. The Tanakh's parallel is **Exodus 23:30** and **Proverbs 25:16**: little by little, and only what is sufficient.

VIII-B. Spaced Is Stronger Than Massed

Since Hermann Ebbinghaus's memory experiments (1885), researchers have found that material studied in several sessions spread over time is remembered far better than the same material studied in one long session. A review of hundreds of studies by Nicholas Cepeda and colleagues (Psychological Bulletin, 2006) confirmed the ***"spacing effect"*** across many settings. **Grading: Corroborated.** The Tanakh built spacing into the covenant itself: teaching at sitting, walking, lying down, and rising (**Deuteronomy 6:7**); meditating ***"day and night"*** (**Joshua 1:8**; **Psalms 1:2**); reading ***"day by day"*** through the feast (**Nehemiah 8:18**); the whole Torah read aloud every seventh year (**Deuteronomy 31:10–11**). One truth, returned to many times, outlasts ten truths delivered once.

VIII-C. The Urge to Fix

Counselors William Miller and Stephen Rollnick, who developed the approach called motivational interviewing, describe the ***"righting reflex"***: the well-meant urge to identify another person's problem and fix it for him. Their finding is that this urge, acted on too quickly, produces resistance — the person begins to argue for the very thing the helper wants him to leave. The better path is to ask, listen, and draw out the person's own reasons for change. **Grading: Corroborated** in the counseling

literature, and in close agreement with **Proverbs 18:13** (answering before hearing is folly) and **Proverbs 20:5** (the man of understanding draws out the counsel already in the heart).

VIII-D. Research and Tanakh Side by Side

FINDING	TANAKH WITNESS	GRADE	SOURCE
Working memory holds only a few new items at a time	**Exodus 23:30**; **Proverbs 25:16**	Corroborated	Miller 1956; Cowan 2001
Beginners are overloaded by too many new, interacting ideas	**Genesis 33:13–14**; **Isaiah 28:12**	Corroborated	Sweller 1988 and after
Spaced repetition outlasts one long session	**Deuteronomy 6:7**; **Nehemiah 8:18**	Corroborated	Cepeda et al. 2006
Pushing a fix produces resistance; drawing out produces change	**Proverbs 18:13; 20:5**	Corroborated	Miller and Rollnick
Leaving a faith involves grief and loss of community	**Jeremiah 16:19**; **Nehemiah 8:9**	Corroborated	Barbour 1994; Streib et al. 2009
Correction usually makes people dig in (***"backfire"***)	— (the Tanakh expects the seeker to hear)	Not established	Wood and Porter 2019
Failed prophecy increases zeal	—	Partly corroborated at best	Festinger 1956; Kelly 2025

IX. THE ORDER OF TEACHING — WHAT COMES FIRST

IX-A. Yahweh's Own Order at Sinai

"You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to Myself. Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, you shall be My treasured possession" (**Exodus 19:4–5**).

"I am Yahweh your Elohim, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage" (**Exodus 20:2**).

Before a single commandment was given at Sinai, **Yahweh** told Israel who He was and what He had already done for them. The ***"if you will obey"*** of **Exodus 19:5** comes after the ***"I bore you on eagles' wings"*** of verse 4. The Ten Words begin not with a command but with a self-introduction and a

deliverance (**Exodus 20:2**). The order is: who **Yahweh** is, what He has done, and then what He asks. Relationship precedes regulation.

This order is the key for the person coming out of deception. He very likely already knows a great deal about rules — perhaps too much. What he may never have been shown is the character of **Yahweh** as the Tanakh describes Him: ***"Yahweh, Yahweh, El merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abundant in lovingkindness and truth"*** (**Exodus 34:6**). Begin there.

IX-B. What Does Yahweh Require?

"And now, Israel, what does Yahweh your Elohim require of you, but to fear Yahweh your Elohim, to walk in all His ways, to love Him, and to serve Yahweh your Elohim with all your heart and with all your soul, to keep the commandments of Yahweh and His statutes which I command you today for your good?" (**Deuteronomy 10:12–13**).

"He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does Yahweh require of you, but to do justice, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your Elohim?" (**Micah 6:8**).

The Tanakh itself summarizes the covenant for the one who asks where to begin. **Moses** and **Micah**, centuries apart, give the same answer: fear, love, walk, serve — justice, mercy, humility. Every commandment in the Torah hangs from these. A beginner who grasps **Deuteronomy 10:12–13** and **Micah 6:8** has the frame into which everything else will later fit. (Rabbinic tradition records Hillel summarizing the whole Torah for an impatient seeker with the negative form of **Leviticus 19:18**, ***"What is hateful to you, do not do to your neighbor,"*** and then adding, ***"the rest is commentary; go and learn it"*** — Talmud Shabbat 31a. The Tanakh's own summaries come first.)

IX-C. A Five-Stage Order

The following order is offered as covenant wisdom drawn from the witnesses above. It is not a law; people differ, and the teacher must follow the learner's questions. But in general:

STAGE	FOCUS	TANAKH BASIS	HOLD BACK FOR NOW
1. Who Yahweh is	His Name, His character, His deliverance; that He receives all who come	**Exodus 3:14–15; 20:2; 34:6–7**; **Isaiah 56:6–7**	Arguments over pronunciation and transliteration; the errors of the former system

STAGE	FOCUS	TANAKH BASIS	HOLD BACK FOR NOW
2. The covenant core	The Ten Words; what **Yahweh** requires; love of **Yahweh** and neighbor	**Exodus 20:1–17**; **Deuteronomy 6:4–5; 10:12–13**; **Micah 6:8**; **Leviticus 19:18**	Detailed rulings; disputed applications
3. Reading for himself	How to read the Tanakh; where to start; testing every teacher by the text	**Deuteronomy 17:19**; **Nehemiah 8:8**; **Psalms 119:18, 130**	The teacher's own system of interpretation; long lists of proof-texts
4. Walking it out	One practice at a time — Sabbath, then clean food, then the appointed times — as understanding grows	**Exodus 23:30**; **Deuteronomy 5:12–15**; **Leviticus 11; 23**	Demanding every change at once; judging by outward conformity
5. Deeper and disputed matters	Calendar questions, prophecy, the history of how traditions departed from the text	**Deuteronomy 29:29** [Hebrew 29:28]; **Proverbs 25:2**	Nothing — but taught when asked, and graded honestly

Stage three deserves emphasis. The goal of covenant teaching is not a learner who depends on his teacher but one who can read the text for himself. The king was commanded to write his own copy of the Torah ***"and read in it all the days of his life"*** (**Deuteronomy 17:19**). **Jeremiah** foresaw a day when ***"no longer shall each man teach his neighbor, saying, Know Yahweh, for they shall all know Me"*** (**Jeremiah 31:34** [Hebrew 31:33]). **Moses** said, ***"Would that all Yahweh's people were prophets"*** (**Numbers 11:29**). A person who has just escaped dependence on a human authority should not be made dependent on a new one. The best teacher works toward the day he is no longer needed.

IX-D. The Secret Things and the Revealed Things

"The secret things belong to Yahweh our Elohim, but the things revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this Torah" (**Deuteronomy 29:29** [Hebrew 29:28]).

This verse protects both teacher and learner. The teacher does not have to answer every question on the first day, and he does not have to pretend to answers he does not have. ***"I do not know"*** and ***"the text does not say"*** are covenant answers. And the learner is pointed toward what is revealed and meant to be done. Speculation can wait; obedience to what is plain cannot.

X. PRACTICAL COUNSEL FOR THE TEACHER

X-A. Twelve Counsels

#	COUNSEL	BASIS
1	**Listen before you teach.** Ask what he believed, what he now questions, and what he fears losing.	**Proverbs 18:13; 20:5**
2	**Answer the question he asked** — not the ten questions you think he should ask.	**Proverbs 15:23; 25:11**
3	**One truth per sitting.** Let it root before adding another. End while he still wants more.	**Exodus 23:30**; **Proverbs 25:16**
4	**Open the text; do not merely quote it.** Let him read the verse with his own eyes.	**Nehemiah 8:8**; **Deuteronomy 17:19**
5	**Start with who Yahweh is,** not with what was wrong in the old system.	**Exodus 19:4–5; 20:2; 34:6**
6	**Do not attack his former teachers or his family.** Show the text; let him draw the conclusion.	**Exodus 20:12; 2** Samuel 12:1–7
7	**Do not shame his past.** He inherited it; his coming out is prophecy fulfilled.	**Jeremiah 16:19**; **Isaiah 42:3**
8	**Separate the plain from the disputed.** Grade your answers honestly, and say ***"I do not know"*** when you do not.	**Deuteronomy 19:15; 29:29**
9	**Watch the load.** When he weeps, shuts down, or argues every point, stop adding and restore joy.	**Nehemiah 8:9–12**; **Exodus 6:9**
10	**Repeat without impatience.** Teaching the same thing again is the covenant's method, not a failure.	**Deuteronomy 1:5; 6:7**
11	**Leave him free to choose.** Set life and death before him; do not coerce.	**Deuteronomy 30:19**; **Joshua 24:15**
12	**Pray for him, and keep the door open** if he steps back.	**1 Samuel 12:23**; **Ezekiel 34:16**

X-B. Things to Avoid

AVOID	WHY
The ***"firehose"*** — charts, timelines, and forty proof-texts in the first meeting	The land emptied too fast grows wild (**Deuteronomy 7:22**); honey beyond sufficiency is vomited (**Proverbs 25:16**)
Starting with the calendar, the Name debate, or the errors of Christmas, the Talmud, or the hadith	These may be true matters, but they are the short road through the land of the Philistines (**Exodus 13:17**)
Mocking the old system or its people	A brother offended is harder to win than a strong city (**Proverbs 18:19**)
Demanding instant, total renunciation	It repeats the force and harshness of the false shepherds (**Ezekiel 34:4**)
Winning the argument at the cost of the person	The soft tongue breaks the bone; the harsh word stirs anger (**Proverbs 15:1; 25:15**)
Presenting your own tradition, or this Institution's documents, as if they were the text	Nothing may be added to the written word (**Deuteronomy 4:2**); test every teacher by it (**Isaiah 8:20**)
Making yourself the new authority in his life	The covenant's goal is that all shall know **Yahweh** (**Jeremiah 31:34**)

X-C. The Teacher's Own Heart

The request behind this document names a particular danger: the one ***"blessed with a greater understanding of Yahweh's covenant."*** Understanding is a blessing, and it carries a temptation. **Moses** warned that when a person has been filled, ***"your heart is lifted up and you forget Yahweh your Elohim"*** (**Deuteronomy 8:12–14**). Knowledge can do the same thing that wealth does. ***"Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall"*** (**Proverbs 16:18**).

Elijah is the Tanakh's warning here. After Carmel, alone and exhausted, he told **Yahweh** twice, ***"I, even I only, am left"*** (**1 Kings 19:10, 14**). **Yahweh** corrected him gently: ***"I have left seven thousand in Israel, all the knees that have not bowed to Baal"*** (**1 Kings 19:18**). The teacher who believes he alone holds the truth will teach with contempt, and contempt is heard long before doctrine is. The remedy the Tanakh gives is memory: ***"You shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt"*** (**Deuteronomy 5:15**); ***"Love the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt"*** (**Deuteronomy 10:19**). Every teacher who came out of error himself should teach as a man who remembers the day he did not yet know.

XI. THREE-RELIGION AUDIT — HOW EACH TRADITION TEACHES THE NEWCOMER

Comparative texts are cited as historical reference only, in keeping with the standing rule of this document.

ELEMENT	✡ JUDAISM	† CHRISTIANITY	☪ ISLAM
Primary Understanding	The Talmud directs that a prospective convert be told ***"some of the lenient mitzvot and some of the stringent mitzvot,"*** and that the court does ***"not overwhelm him"*** (Yevamot 47a). Hillel received impatient seekers with one principle and ***"go and learn"*** (Shabbat 31a).	Paul: ***"I fed you with milk, not with solid food, for you were not yet able"*** (1 Corinthians 3:2). John 16:12: ***"I have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now."*** Acts 15:19 resolves ***"not to trouble"*** the nations turning to **Elohim**.	The Qur'an presents itself as revealed in stages ***"that you might recite it to the people at intervals"*** (Q. 17:106; 25:32). A report from Aisha holds that if ***"do not drink alcohol"*** had come first, people would have said ***"we will never leave it"*** (Sahih al-Bukhari 4993).
Covenant Strength	Maimonides compares teaching deep matters too early to feeding an infant ***"wheaten bread, meat and wine"*** — good food that kills a child (Guide of the Perplexed I:33). This matches **Proverbs 25:16** and **Genesis 33:13**.	Acts 15:21 notes that ***"Moses has been read in every city ... every Sabbath"*** — the newcomer was to keep learning the covenant over time, not all at once.	Q. 16:125 commands inviting ***"with wisdom and good instruction"*** and arguing ***"in the way that is best"***; Q. 2:256: ***"there is no compulsion in religion."***
Covenant Departure	The same tradition that says ***"do not overwhelm him"*** multiplied fences and rulings until the load on the learner far exceeds the written text — an addition the Tanakh forbids (**Deuteronomy 4:2**).	***"Milk"*** often became permanent: the covenant's commandments were never taught at all. At the other extreme, systems like dispensational charts (Doc 150) overload beginners with frameworks the text does not contain.	Gradualism in revelation did not prevent later jurisprudence from prescribing coercive penalties for leaving the faith — contrary to both Q. 2:256 and the free choice of **Deuteronomy 30:19**.
Covenant Witness	The rabbinic rule ***"do not overwhelm him"*** independently confirms the Tanakh's ***me'at me'at (little by little)*** (**Exodus 23:30**).	The ***"milk before meat"*** image reaches back to the Tanakh's own picture of the weaned child and the tender grass (**Isaiah 28:9**; **Deuteronomy 32:2**).	The staged prohibition of wine in Islamic tradition (Q. 2:219; 4:43; 5:90) is a later echo of the Tanakh's gradual conquest: little by little, lest the land grow wild.

XII. CORRECTIONS TO EARLIER LIBRARY MATERIAL

Under the Corrections Rule, the following items were found and corrected in this revision of Doc 249 itself, which is the earlier library material in question. No other library document was changed.

Correction 1 — Website address. The September 2026 edition's masthead and closing block carried the old address, miqdashbethel.org (flagged in Doc 334, Section XII, item 2). This revision uses miqdashbethel.ai throughout.

Correction 2 — Date of the Kelly study (Section VII-E). The September 2026 edition dated the archival study ***"Debunking 'When Prophecy Fails'"*** to 2026 and did not name its author. The study is by Thomas Kelly and was published in 2025. Corrected in VII-E, VIII-D, and the Comparative Texts table.

Correction 3 — Format. Brought to the Doc 250 standard: the Hebrew verse-number explanation added to How to Read (standing rule of October 8, 2026); Hebrew terms and their English meanings set together in bold italic; the date line added to the masthead; this Corrections section added (standing rule of October 2, 2026); textual findings graded Corroborated, Single witness, or Not in the text; Sections XII–XIV renumbered and the Scripture Index updated to match.

XIII. SEVEN COVENANT DECLARATIONS ON TEACHING THE NEWCOMER

Per the **Deuteronomy 19:15** standard, no doctrine may stand on a single text. The following declarations draw on multiple books and eras of the written Tanakh, and each is corroborated by more than one witness.

#	COVENANT DECLARATION	BASIS
I	**Yahweh** Himself teaches and leads little by little, by the longer road when the shorter would turn the people back. Gradual teaching is the covenant's own method, not a compromise of it.	**Exodus 23:29–30; 13:17**; **Deuteronomy 7:22**
II	A person can be unable to receive a true word because of the weight he carries. The teacher must reckon with the listener's capacity, not only with the truth of his message.	**Exodus 6:9**; **Genesis 33:13–14**; **Proverbs 25:16**
III	Teaching is to fall as rain and dew, repeated through daily life, not poured out as a flood in one sitting.	**Deuteronomy 32:2; 6:7**; **Nehemiah 8:18**

#	COVENANT DECLARATION	BASIS
IV	The covenant is taught in **Yahweh**'s order: who He is and what He has done, then what He requires.	**Exodus 19:4–5; 20:2**; **Deuteronomy 10:12–13**; **Micah 6:8**
V	Soft speech and a word in season are commanded wisdom. Gentleness is not the surrender of truth, but the teacher must never add his own offense to the offense of the truth.	**Proverbs 15:1; 25:11**, 15; 27:6; **Isaiah 42:3; 50:4**
VI	The one coming out of deception inherited falsehood and is not to be shamed for it. His coming is the fulfillment of prophecy. He is not to be ruled with the force and harshness of the shepherds he escaped.	**Jeremiah 16:19**; **Ezekiel 34:4, 16**; **Hosea 11:3–4**
VII	The goal of covenant teaching is a person who knows **Yahweh** and reads the text for himself, not one who depends on his teacher. The teacher must remember that he, too, was once a stranger.	**Deuteronomy 17:19**; **Jeremiah 31:34**; **Numbers 11:29**; **Deuteronomy 10:19**

XIV. THE COVENANT RESPONSE — WHAT YAHWEH ASKS OF THE ONE WHO TEACHES

Behind every question in this study — how much, how fast, in what order — stands a simpler one: what does **Yahweh** want from the person who has been given understanding and now sits across the table from someone who has not? The Tanakh's answer is fivefold.

First: Remember where you came from. ***"You shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and Yahweh your Elohim brought you out from there"*** (**Deuteronomy 5:15**). Teach as one who remembers not knowing.

Second: Listen before you speak. The counsel in his heart is deep water (**Proverbs 20:5**). Draw it out. Find where he is before you tell him where to go.

Third: Give a little, and let it root. ***"Little by little I will drive them out before you, until you have increased"*** (**Exodus 23:30**). One truth that takes root is worth more than twenty that are spilled.

Fourth: Speak softly, and speak truly. ***"A soft tongue breaks the bone"*** (**Proverbs 25:15**). Never trade the truth for his comfort, and never add your harshness to the truth's weight.

Fifth: Point him to Yahweh, not to yourself. ***"They shall all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest"*** **(Jeremiah 31:34).** Put the text in his hands, walk beside him while he learns to read it, and rejoice on the day he no longer needs you.

SCRIPTURE INDEX

REFERENCE	SUBJECT	SECTION
Genesis 33:13–14	The children are tender; I will lead on slowly	II; III; IV-D; V-A; XIII
Exodus 1:13–14	Egypt's harsh labor (***farekh (harshness)***)	VII-B
Exodus 3:14–15	The Name revealed	IX-C
Exodus 6:2–9	They could not listen for shortness of spirit	II; III; IV-D; X-A; XIII
Exodus 13:17–18	Not by the way of the Philistines	Opening; III; IV-D; X-B; XIII
Exodus 18:13–20	Jethro: the thing is too heavy for you	IV-B
Exodus 19:4–5; 20:1–17	Eagles' wings; ***"I am Yahweh your Elohim"***; the Ten Words	IX; X-A; XIII
Exodus 20:12	Honor father and mother	X-A
Exodus 23:29–30	Little by little	Opening; II; III; VIII; IX-C; X; XI; XIII; XIV
Exodus 24:12	The tablets, Torah, and commandment for teaching	II
Exodus 34:6–7	Merciful and gracious, slow to anger	IX; X-A
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Leviticus 19:9–10	Gleaning for the poor and the stranger	VI
Leviticus 19:14	No stumbling block before the blind	II; V-E
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Numbers 30:13 [Hebrew 30:14]	Example of Hebrew verse numbering	How to Read
Deuteronomy 1:5	**Moses** made the Torah plain	II; VI; X-A

REFERENCE	SUBJECT	SECTION
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Deuteronomy 5:12–15	The Sabbath; remember you were a slave	IX-C; X-C; XIV
Deuteronomy 6:4–7	Hear, O Israel; teach them diligently	II; VI; VIII-B; IX-C; X; XIII
Deuteronomy 7:22	Not at once, lest the beasts increase	II; III; IV-D; X-B; XIII
Deuteronomy 8:12–14	The heart lifted up	X-C
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Deuteronomy 19:15	Two-or-three-witness standard governing this study	Opening; I-B; III; X; XIII
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Deuteronomy 31:10–13	The seventh-year reading	VI; VIII-B
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1 Samuel 12:23	Far be it from me to cease praying for you	X-A
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1 Kings 19:10, 14, 18	***"I only am left"***; the seven thousand	X-C
2 Kings 5:10–19	**Elisha** and Naaman; ***"go in peace"***	VI
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Job 2:13; 42:7	Seven days of silence; ***"you have not spoken rightly"***	VI

REFERENCE	SUBJECT	SECTION
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Ezekiel 34:4, 16	Ruled with force and harshness; I will bind up the broken	VII-B; X; XIII
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REFERENCE	SUBJECT	SECTION
Joel 2:23	The ***moreh (teacher / early rain)***	II
Micah 6:8	Justice, mercy, humility	IX-B; IX-C; XIII
Habakkuk 2:2	Make it plain on tablets	II; VI

"Let my teaching drop as the rain; let my speech distill as the dew, as the small rain upon the tender grass, and as the showers upon the herb."

Deuteronomy 32:2 — The Written Covenant of Yahweh

MIQDASH BETHEL COVENANT INSTITUTION

Document 249 • Little by Little • Revised October 2026

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