# MIQDASH BETHEL COVENANT INSTITUTION

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*A Study for Judaism · Christianity · Islam*

**DOCUMENT 254**

# And You Shall Love

## A Covenant Deep Dive into Deuteronomy 6:5 — *ve-ahavta* (and you shall love) Yahweh with All Your Heart, All Your Soul, and All Your Might

***Can Love Be Commanded, What Are the Heart, the Soul, and the Might, and How Does a Covenant Person Love Yahweh with All Three? — A Three-Religion Covenant Response***

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***The Message is Sent to the World***

## REACHING JUDAISM, CHRISTIANITY, AND ISLAM

| ✡ JUDAISM | † CHRISTIANITY | ☪ ISLAM |
|---|---|---|
| The paragraph beginning ***ve-ahavta*** (and you shall love) is recited morning and evening as part of the Shema. The Mishnah reads its three phrases as ***"with both your inclinations," "even if He takes your soul,"*** and ***"with all your money"*** (Mishnah Berakhot 9:5). Rabbi Akiva is remembered as explaining ***"with all your soul"*** at his death and as dying with the Shema on his lips (Talmud Berakhot 61b). Tanakh's own words come first. | Jesus names **Deuteronomy 6:4–5** ***"the first of all the commandments"*** (Mark 12:29–30), pairing it with **Leviticus 19:18**. The Gospels list four faculties (heart, soul, mind, strength) where the Hebrew has three. The question for every church is whether ***"love"*** still means what **Deuteronomy** means by it: loyalty that keeps His commandments. | The Qur'an says of those who set up rivals to God, ***"they love them as they love Allah,"*** while ***"those who believe are stronger in love for Allah"*** (Q. 2:165), and it speaks of ***"a people He loves and who love Him"*** (Q. 5:54). Undivided love for the One God is shared ground. Where Islam routes that love through following a messenger (Q. 3:31), the Tanakh's own terms are the measure. |

## 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 The Talmud, New Testament, and Qur'an are cited as historical reference and comparative witness — never as superseding authority.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 verse, **Deuteronomy 6:5**, and to the questions it raises: whether love can be commanded, what the heart, the soul, and the might are, how love for **Yahweh** is shown, and how the command relates to love of neighbor. **Yahweh** (**יהוה**) and **Elohim** (**אֱלֹהִים**) appear in bold throughout. Tanakh books are cited by their English names. Hebrew transliterations appear in ***bold italic*** with 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. Each finding is graded under the two-or-three-witness standard as **Corroborated** (two or more independent Tanakh witnesses), **Single witness**, or **Not in the text**. Three audiences are addressed simultaneously: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. Rabbinic commentary, New Testament texts, and the Qur'an and hadith appear only in the three-religion table, the Comparative Texts table, and the Three-Religion Audit, as historical and comparative reference —

not as binding authority. The teaching sections rest on the Tanakh alone. The Written Tanakh governs all conclusions.

## TANAKH BOOKS CITED IN THIS DOCUMENT

| DIVISION | BOOKS CITED | PURPOSE IN THIS STUDY |
|---|---|---|
| **Torah** | Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Deuteronomy | The verse itself and its paragraph; the first use of ***"love"***; love bound to the commandments; love of neighbor and stranger; the circumcised heart |
| **Nevi'im (Prophets)** | Joshua, 1 Samuel, 1 Kings, 2 Kings, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Hosea, Micah, Malachi | Joshua's charge; Jonathan's love; Solomon's divided heart; Josiah, the one king who kept the verse; Abraham ohavi (My friend); the new heart; Yahweh's love first |
| **Ketuvim (Writings)** | Psalms, Proverbs, Daniel, 1 and 2 Chronicles | The psalmists who said ***"I love"***; the undivided heart; the nephesh that thirsts; faithfulness to the point of death |

## COMPARATIVE TEXTS CITED — HISTORICAL AND COMPARATIVE REFERENCE ONLY

| CATEGORY | TEXTS CITED | PURPOSE IN THIS STUDY |
|---|---|---|
| **New Testament** | Mark 12:28–34; Matthew 22:34–40; Luke 10:25–28; John 14:15; 1 John 5:3 | The ***"greatest commandment"*** teaching and the four-faculty wording |
| **Qur'an and hadith** | Q. 2:165; 3:31; 5:54; Sahih al-Bukhari 13 | Love of God, its undivided form, and love of the brother |
| **Rabbinic literature** | Mishnah Berakhot 9:5; Talmud Berakhot 61b; Rambam, Hilkhot Yesodei HaTorah 2:2 | The classic Jewish readings of heart, soul, and might, cited only in the three-religion table and the audit |

# I. FRAMING THE QUESTION — ONE VERSE, ONE WHOLE PERSON

## I-A. The Questions as They Are Usually Asked

Every covenant believer has heard this verse. Few have been shown what its words mean. The questions put to this Institution are these:

**First:** can love be commanded at all, or is it a feeling that comes and goes?

**Second:** what are the heart, the soul, and the might, and why these three?

**Third:** how does a person actually love **Yahweh** — what does it look like on an ordinary day?

**Fourth:** how does this command relate to ***"love your neighbor as yourself,"*** which many were taught is its twin?

This study builds on earlier work in the Library and does not repeat it. **Doc 185** (***Shema Yisrael***) examined **Deuteronomy 6:4** and the oneness of **Yahweh**; it touched verse 5 only in passing. **Doc 189** examined ***deveikut*** (***cleaving***) and covenant unity. **Doc 219** examined **Deuteronomy 6:25** from the same chapter. **Doc 230** and the unnumbered ***Anatomy of the Soul*** response examined ***nephesh*** (***soul / living being***). **Doc 235** examined the two inclinations of the heart. The present document takes up the verse the Shema turns into a command.

## I-B. The Verse in Its Own Words

The Hebrew of Deuteronomy 6:5 is ten words, joined by the maqaf into seven:

**וְאָהַבְתָּ אֵת יהוה אֱלֹהֶיךָ בְּכָל־לְבָבְךָ וּבְכָל־נַפְשְׁךָ וּבְכָל־מְאֹדֶךָ**

**"And you shall love Yahweh your Elohim with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might"** (**Deuteronomy 6:5**)

The verse follows directly on the confession **"Hear, O Israel: Yahweh our Elohim, Yahweh is one"** (**Deuteronomy 6:4**). The logic is plain: because **Yahweh** is one, the one who loves Him must be whole. An undivided **Elohim** is answered by an undivided person. The word ***kol*** (all), **כֹּל**, is repeated three times; nothing of the person is left outside the command.

Every finding below is graded. A finding is **Corroborated** when two or more independent Tanakh witnesses carry it (**Deuteronomy 19:15**). It is **Single witness** when only one text carries it. It is **Not in the text** when it is taught but the Tanakh does not say it.

## II. THE WORD STUDY — WHAT THE HEBREW SAYS

The table sets out the terms this study relies on.

| HEBREW TERM | STRONG'S | CORE MEANING | KEY TEXT |
|---|---|---|---|
| ***ahav*** (to love), **אָהַב** | H157 | To love; used of a father for a son, of friends, of husband and wife, of a servant for his master, and of loyalty between covenant partners | **Genesis 22:2**; **Exodus 21:5**; **Deuteronomy 6:5** |
| ***ahavah*** (love), **אַהֲבָה** | H160 | The noun: love as a bond and as a way of acting | **Deuteronomy 7:8**; **Jeremiah 31:3** |
| ***levav / lev*** (heart), **לֵבָב, לֵב** | H3824 / H3820 | The inner person: mind, memory, will, decision, and desire — the place where a person thinks and chooses | **Deuteronomy 6:6; 29:4**; **Proverbs 4:23** |
| ***nephesh*** (soul / living self), **נֶפֶשׁ** | H5315 | The whole living being; life itself; also appetite, desire, and longing | **Genesis 2:7**; **Leviticus 17:11**; **Psalms 63:1** |
| ***me'od*** (might / utmost), **מְאֹד** | H3966 | Normally the adverb ***"very, exceedingly."*** Used as a noun (***"your very-ness, your utmost"***) only here and in **2 Kings 23:25** | **Genesis 1:31**; **Deuteronomy 6:5**; **2 Kings 23:25** |
| ***kol*** (all / whole), **כֹּל** | H3605 | The totality of a thing; nothing held back | **Deuteronomy 6:5; 10:12** |
| ***shalem*** (whole / complete), **שָׁלֵם** | H8003 | Whole, at peace, undivided — said of a heart fully given | **1 Kings 8:61; 11:4** |
| ***chalak*** (divided / smooth), **חָלַק** | H2505 | To divide or share out; of a heart split between loyalties | **Hosea 10:2** |
| ***davak*** (to cleave), **דָּבַק** | H1692 | To cling, hold fast, stay joined — the bond of a man to his wife | **Genesis 2:24**; **Deuteronomy 30:20** |
| ***mul*** (to circumcise), **מוּל** | H4135 | To cut away; used of the heart that **Yahweh** opens to love Him | **Deuteronomy 10:16; 30:6** |
| ***yare*** (to fear / revere), **יָרֵא** | H3372 | Reverent awe; paired with love in the same commands | **Deuteronomy 10:12** |

**Two lexical observations govern what follows.**

**First,** the first time the Tanakh uses the verb ***ahav*** (***to love***) is **Genesis 22:2**: **"Take your son, your only one, whom you love, Isaac."** The first love named in Scripture is placed on an altar. From its first appearance, love in the Tanakh is measured by what a person will give.

**Second, *me'od*** (***might / utmost***) is one of the most common adverbs in Hebrew: ***tov me'od*** (***very good***) in **Genesis 1:31**, ***bi-me'od me'od*** (***exceedingly***) in **Genesis 17:2**. Only in **Deuteronomy 6:5** and **2 Kings 23:25** is it used as a noun with a possessive: ***me'odecha*** (***your very-ness***), מְאֹדֶךָ. The word describes a person's ***"muchness"***: everything he has and everything he can do, at full measure.

# III. CAN LOVE BE COMMANDED?

The modern ear hears ***"love"*** as a feeling, and a feeling cannot be ordered. Tanakh's usage is broader. Three lines of evidence answer the question.

### III-A. Love and the Commandments Are Named Together

Every time **Deuteronomy** commands love for **Yahweh**, it names the same partner: keeping His commandments. The pattern is set at Sinai:

**"showing covenant kindness to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments" (Exodus 20:6; Deuteronomy 5:10)**

It is repeated throughout the book:

**"And now, Israel, what does Yahweh your Elohim require of you, but to fear Yahweh your Elohim, to walk in all His ways, and 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" (Deuteronomy 10:12–13)**

**"Therefore you shall love Yahweh your Elohim, and keep His charge, His statutes, His judgments, and His commandments, always" (Deuteronomy 11:1)**

The same pairing appears in **Deuteronomy 7:9; 11:13, 22; 19:9; 30:16** and in Joshua's charge (**Joshua 22:5**). Love in **Deuteronomy** is not only an emotion that accompanies obedience. It is the loyalty that obedience expresses. That is why it can be commanded: a person can be told to be loyal.

### III-B. Love That Answers Love

**Deuteronomy** is equally clear that the relationship did not begin with Israel's love. It began with **Yahweh's:**

**"Yahweh did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any people... but because Yahweh loves you, and because He would keep the oath which He swore to your fathers" (Deuteronomy 7:7–8)**

The same is said in **Deuteronomy 4:37** and **10:15**, and the prophets repeat it:

**"I have loved you with an everlasting love" (Jeremiah 31:3** [Hebrew 31:2]); **"I drew them with cords of a man, with bands of love" (Hosea 11:4)**;

**"I have loved you, says Yahweh" (Malachi 1:2)**.

The command of **Deuteronomy 6:5** is not a demand made by a stranger. It is the answer asked of people who were loved first.

### III-C. Yahweh Opens the Heart to Love

Moses commands the people to open their own hearts:

**"Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart, and be no longer stiff-necked" (Deuteronomy 10:16)**.

Near the end of the book he promises that **Yahweh** will do it:

**"And Yahweh your Elohim will circumcise your heart and the heart of your offspring, to love Yahweh your Elohim with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may live" (Deuteronomy 30:6)**

The prophets carry the same promise forward: the Torah written **"on their heart" (Jeremiah 31:33** [Hebrew 31:32]); **"a new heart... and I will put My spirit within you" (Ezekiel 36:26–27)**. The command and the promise stand side by side. The person is responsible to love; **Yahweh** gives what is needed to do it.

**Finding — can love be commanded?** Yes. In **Deuteronomy**, love for **Yahweh** is covenant loyalty shown in keeping His commandments (**Exodus 20:6; Deuteronomy 10:12–13; 11:1**), offered in answer to His prior love (**Deuteronomy 7:7–8; Jeremiah 31:3**), and made possible by His work on the heart (**Deuteronomy 30:6; Ezekiel 36:26**).

**Corroborated.** That love is *only* a feeling, or *only* a legal duty without devotion, is **Not in the text**.

## IV. WITH ALL YOUR HEART — LEVAV

### IV-A. What the Heart Is in the Tanakh

In English the heart is the seat of feeling. In Hebrew it is first of all the seat of thought and choice.

**"Yahweh has not given you a heart to know"** (**Deuteronomy 29:4** [Hebrew 29:3]).

**"Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life"** (**Proverbs 4:23**).

**Yahweh "looks on the heart"** (**1 Samuel 16:7**) and **"searches the heart"** (**Jeremiah 17:10**). To love with all the heart is to give **Yahweh** the mind, the memory, the plans, and the decisions — not only the emotions.

That is why the next verse places the words there:

**"And these words which I command you this day shall be upon your heart"** (**Deuteronomy 6:6**).

The heart that loves is a heart that knows what He said.

### IV-B. The Whole Heart and the Divided Heart

The Tanakh sets the whole heart against the divided one again and again:

**"Their heart is divided; now they shall be found guilty"** (**Hosea 10:2**)

**"How long will you limp between two opinions? If Yahweh is Elohim, follow Him"** (**1 Kings 18:21**)

**"Unite my heart to fear Your name"** (**Psalms 86:11**)

The Psalms condemn those who speak **"with a double heart"** (***lev va-lev***, heart and a heart, **לֵב וָלֵב**; **Psalms 12:2** [Hebrew 12:3]), and the Chronicler praises the men of Zebulun who came to David **"not of a double heart"** (**1 Chronicles 12:33** [Hebrew 12:34]). The prophet Jeremiah names the half-hearted return: Judah returned **"not with her whole heart, but in falsehood"** (**Jeremiah 3:10**). The promise of restoration is **"one heart and one way"** (**Jeremiah 32:39**).

**Finding — with all your heart:** The heart is the seat of thought, will, and choice, and the command asks for all of it, undivided. **Corroborated** (**Deuteronomy 6:6; 29:4; 1 Kings 18:21; Hosea 10:2; Psalms 86:11; Jeremiah 3:10**).

## V. WITH ALL YOUR SOUL — NEPHESH

### V-A. The Living Self, Its Life, and Its Longing

The ***nephesh*** (***soul / living self***) is not a ghost inside a body. When **Yahweh** breathed into the man, **"the man became a living *nephesh*"** (**Genesis 2:7**); **"the *nephesh* of the flesh is in the blood"** (**Leviticus 17:11**). **Doc 230** and the Library's ***Anatomy of the Soul*** response set out this Hebrew picture in full: the ***nephesh*** is the whole living person.

The word also carries desire and appetite. The psalmists love **Yahweh** with their ***nephesh*** by longing for Him:

**"O Elohim, You are my El; early will I seek You; my *nephesh* thirsts for You, my flesh longs for You in a dry and weary land where there is no water" (Psalms 63:1** [Hebrew 63:2])

**"With my *nephesh* I have desired You in the night" (Isaiah 26:9)**

So also **Psalms 42:1–2** [Hebrew 42:2–3] and **84:2** [Hebrew 84:3]. The Tanakh's best picture of loving another "**as one's own *nephesh***" is Jonathan:

**"the nephesh of Jonathan was knit with the nephesh of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own nephesh" (1 Samuel 18:1, 3)**.

To love with all the ***nephesh*** is to love with one's whole life and one's deepest wants.

### V-B. Even to the Giving of Life

"**All your *nephesh***" includes life itself. The Tanakh supplies the examples:

**"Our Elohim whom we serve is able to deliver us... But if not, be it known to you, O king, that we will not serve your gods" (Daniel 3:17–18)**

Daniel prayed toward Jerusalem three times a day **"as he had done before"**, knowing the decree (**Daniel 6:10** [Hebrew 6:11]). Neither he nor his three companions sought death. They refused to divide their loyalty, whatever it cost.

**Finding — with all your soul:** The ***nephesh*** is the whole living self, with its life and its longing; to love with all of it is to give **Yahweh** one's desire and, if it comes to it, one's life. **Corroborated (Genesis 2:7; Psalms 63:1; Isaiah 26:9; 1 Samuel 18:1–3; Daniel 3:17–18; 6:10)**. That the ***nephesh*** is a separable immortal substance distinct from the living person is **Not in the text**.

## VI. WITH ALL YOUR MIGHT — ME'OD

### VI-A. An Adverb Made into a Noun

Heart and soul are commanded together elsewhere (**Deuteronomy 4:29; 10:12; 11:13; 13:3; 30:6**). Only **Deuteronomy 6:5** adds the third term. ***Me'odecha*** (**your might / your utmost**) takes the word for **"very"** and makes it the thing possessed. Everything that a person has at full stretch — strength, ability, means, reach — is claimed.

### VI-B. Josiah — the One Man Said to Have Done It

The only other time ***me'od*** is used as a noun, it describes a man:

**"And like him there was no king before him who turned to Yahweh with all his heart, and with all his soul, and with all his might, according to all the Torah of Moses; nor after him did any arise like him"** (**2 Kings 23:25**)

The text shows what Josiah's ***me'od*** (**might / utmost**) consisted of. When the book of the Torah was found, he tore his clothes and sought **Yahweh** (**2 Kings 22:11–13**). He read the covenant to all the people and made a covenant before **Yahweh** (**2 Kings 23:1–3**). He used the full weight of his office and his treasury to remove idolatry from the land (**2 Kings 23:4–20**), and he kept the Passover as it had not been kept since the judges (**2 Kings 23:21–23**). His **"might"** was his authority, his resources, and his energy, all directed at one thing. The verse that describes him is the verse of **Deuteronomy 6:5**, applied to a life.

### VI-C. The Warning That Follows

**Deuteronomy** knows where a person's ***me'od*** **(might)** is most at risk. Five verses later it warns: when you have **"great and good cities which you did not build, and houses full of all good things... then beware, lest you forget Yahweh"** (**Deuteronomy 6:10–12**).

Two chapters later: **"lest you say in your heart, My power and the might of my hand have gotten me this wealth. But you shall remember Yahweh your Elohim, for it is He who gives you power to get wealth"** (**Deuteronomy 8:17–18**).

The might that is commanded to love **Yahweh** is the same might that is tempted to credit itself. **Doc 250** traced the same principle in the tithe:

**"Honor Yahweh with your wealth"** (**Proverbs 3:9**).

**Finding — with all your might:** ***Me'od*** (***might / utmost***) claims a person's full capacity — strength, means, and influence — for **Yahweh**. **Corroborated** by the word's use (**Deuteronomy 6:5; 2 Kings 23:25**) and by the book's own warnings about strength and wealth (**Deuteronomy 6:10–12; 8:17–18**).

## VII. HOW LOVE FOR YAHWEH IS SHOWN

The Tanakh does not leave **"love"** undefined. The verses around **Deuteronomy 6:5**, and the passages that repeat the command, describe what it looks like. The table sets out six marks.

| MARK OF LOVE | WHAT THE TEXT SAYS | TEXT |
|---|---|---|
| **1. His words on the heart** | ***"These words... shall be upon your heart"*** | **Deuteronomy 6:6**; **Psalms 119:97** |

| MARK OF LOVE | WHAT THE TEXT SAYS | TEXT |
|---|---|---|
| **2. Taught to the children** | ***"You shall teach them diligently to your children, and speak of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way"*** | **Deuteronomy 6:7; 11:19** |
| **3. Kept in daily life** | ***"Love Him and keep His charge... always"***; bound on hand and door | **Deuteronomy 6:8–9; 11:1** |
| **4. Cleaving and listening** | ***"To love Yahweh your Elohim, to obey His voice, and to cleave to Him, for He is your life"*** | **Deuteronomy 30:20; Joshua 22:5** |
| **5. Loyalty that is tested** | A false prophet may come with a sign; ***"Yahweh your Elohim is testing you, to know whether you love Yahweh your Elohim with all your heart and all your soul"*** | **Deuteronomy 13:1–3** [Hebrew 13:2–4] |
| **6. Love for those He loves** | ***"He loves the stranger, giving him food and clothing. Love the stranger therefore"*** | **Deuteronomy 10:18–19** |

**The fifth mark deserves attention.** Deuteronomy expects love for **Yahweh** to be tested by persuasive voices that point elsewhere, even when they come with signs. Love in this sense is not blind faith. It is the settled loyalty that measures every new voice by what **Yahweh** has already said. That is the reason this Institution holds the written Tanakh as its sole authority.

The sixth mark leads to Section IX. The **Elohim** who is loved is the **Elohim** who **"executes justice for the fatherless and the widow, and loves the stranger"** (**Deuteronomy 10:18**). To love Him is to love what He loves.

## VIII. FIVE WITNESSES WHO LOVED YAHWEH — AND ONE WHO DIVIDED HIS LOVE

Per the **Deuteronomy 19:15** standard, the following witnesses show the command lived out across the Torah, the Prophets, and the Writings.

**Witness One — Abraham, "My friend."** **Yahweh** calls him ***ohavi*** (***the one who loves Me / My friend***), **אֹהֲבִי** (**Isaiah 41:8**), and Jehoshaphat prays to **"Abraham Your friend"** (**2 Chronicles 20:7**). The man whose name is joined to love is the man of **Genesis 22**: the first ***ahav*** (**to love**) in Scripture is his love for Isaac, and he did not withhold him (**Genesis 22:12**). Abraham loved **Yahweh** above what he loved most.

**Witness Two — Joshua's charge.** At the end of the conquest Joshua repeats **Deuteronomy** to the eastern tribes:

**"to love Yahweh your Elohim, and to walk in all His ways, and to keep His commandments, and to cleave to Him, and to serve Him with all your heart and with all your soul" (Joshua 22:5)**.

In his farewell he says it again with the words of the Shema: ***ve-nishmartem me'od le-nafshotechem le-ahavah*** (***take great care for your souls to love***) **Yahweh** your **Elohim (Joshua 23:11)**.

**Witness Three — David. "I love You, O Yahweh, my strength" (Psalms 18:1** [Hebrew 18:2]). The verb here is ***racham*** (***to love tenderly***), רָחַם, from the same root as ***rechem*** (***womb***): a rare and intimate word. David's love was spoken to **Yahweh** directly, in a song of deliverance.

**Witness Four — the psalmists. "I love Yahweh, because He has heard my voice and my supplications" (Psalms 116:1). "Oh how I love Your Torah! It is my meditation all the day" (Psalms 119:97). "Love Yahweh, all His faithful ones" (Psalms 31:23** [Hebrew 31:24]).

The Psalms show love for **Yahweh** answering His care and love for His word as the same love.

**Witness Five — Josiah.** The only man of whom the Tanakh says he turned to **Yahweh "with all his heart, and with all his soul, and with all his might" (2 Kings 23:25**; Section VI-B).

**The counter-witness — Solomon. "And Solomon loved Yahweh, walking in the statutes of David his father; only he sacrificed and burned incense in the high places" (1 Kings 3:3)**.

The word ***"only"*** marks the division. Later **"King Solomon loved many foreign women"**, and **"his heart was not whole** (***shalem***, whole) **with Yahweh his Elohim, as was the heart of David his father" (1 Kings 11:1, 4)**. He was not a man without love for **Yahweh**. He was a man whose love was shared. The Tanakh counts that as turning away.

**Finding:** Loving **Yahweh** with the whole person is not an ideal no one reached; the Tanakh names people who lived it, and names the man who began in it and divided it.

**Corroborated** by six texts across all three divisions.

# IX. LOVE OF YAHWEH AND LOVE OF NEIGHBOR — IS THE PAIRING IN THE TANAKH?

Many believers were taught that **Deuteronomy 6:5** and **Leviticus 19:18** are the "two great commandments." The question is what the Tanakh itself says.

### IX-A. What the Tanakh Does Not Say

The Tanakh never quotes **Deuteronomy 6:5** and **Leviticus 19:18** side by side, and it never ranks commandments as **"first"** or **"second"** or **"greatest."** That ranking is a later summary. Summaries can be true to the text, but they are not the text. Ranking the commandments in the Tanakh's name is **Not in the text**.

### IX-B. What the Tanakh Does Say

The Tanakh binds the two loves together more closely than a ranking would. **Leviticus 19:18** ends with the Name: **"You shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am Yahweh."**

**Leviticus 19:34** extends it: **"The stranger who dwells with you... you shall love him as yourself, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt: I am Yahweh your Elohim."**

And **Deuteronomy** joins them in one sentence of reasoning:

**"For Yahweh your Elohim is Elohim of Elohim and Lord of lords... who executes justice for the fatherless and the widow, and loves the stranger, giving him food and clothing. Love the stranger therefore, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt"** (**Deuteronomy 10:17–19**)

The same chapter opened with the command to love **Yahweh** with all the heart and soul (**Deuteronomy 10:12**). Love for **Yahweh** leads straight into love for the stranger, because **Yahweh** Himself loves the stranger. The prophet Micah summarizes it without ranking:

**"to do justice, and to love covenant kindness, and to walk humbly with your Elohim"** (**Micah 6:8**).

**Finding — the two loves:** Love for **Yahweh** and love for neighbor and stranger are bound together in the Tanakh (**Leviticus 19:18, 34; Deuteronomy 10:12–19; Micah 6:8**).

**Corroborated.** A formal ranking of them as the first and second of all commandments is a later summary, **Not in the text**, though it is faithful to the connection the text makes.

## X. THREE-RELIGION AUDIT — HOW EACH TRADITION HANDLES DEUTERONOMY 6:5

The table sets the three traditions against the Tanakh's own findings. Comparative texts are cited as historical reference only, in keeping with the standing rule of this document.

| ELEMENT | ✡ JUDAISM | † CHRISTIANITY | ☪ ISLAM |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Practice today** | **Deuteronomy 6:5–9** is the first paragraph after the opening line of the Shema, recited morning and evening, written in the ***mezuzah*** (doorpost scroll) and ***tefillin*** (phylacteries). The Mishnah's three readings (both inclinations; even if He takes your soul; all your money) are taught widely. Rambam teaches that the path to love is contemplating **Yahweh**'s works (Yesodei HaTorah 2:2). | Mark 12:29–30 quotes **Deuteronomy 6:4–5** as ***"the first of all the commandments,"*** with Leviticus 19:18 as the second; Matthew 22:40 says ***"on these two hang all the Law and the Prophets."*** The Gospels list heart, soul, mind, and strength. Churches often teach love as the fulfilment of the law and set it against law-keeping. | Love of God (*mahabbah*) is taught through the Qur'an: ***"those who believe are stronger in love for Allah"*** (Q. 2:165); ***"a people He loves and who love Him"*** (Q. 5:54). The route to that love is framed as following the Prophet: ***"If you love Allah, follow me; Allah will love you"*** (Q. 3:31). ***"None of you believes until he loves for his brother what he loves for himself"*** (Sahih al-Bukhari 13). |
| **Covenant strength** | Keeps the verse in daily speech, in the home, and at the doorpost, as **Deuteronomy 6:7–9** commands. The reading ***"even if He takes your soul"*** matches the Tanakh's own witnesses in **Daniel 3** and **6**. | The pairing of love for God with love for neighbor is faithful to **Deuteronomy 10:12–19** and **Leviticus 19:18, 34**. ***"If you love Me, keep My commandments"*** (John 14:15) and ***"this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments"*** (1 John 5:3) restate **Deuteronomy 11:1**. | Q. 2:165 states the undivided form of love that **Deuteronomy 6:4–5** requires: no rival loved ***"as"*** God is loved. Love of the brother is joined to faith, echoing **Leviticus 19:18**. |
| **Covenant departure** | Reading ***"might"*** as money alone narrows ***me'od*** (Section VI). Reading the doubled ***bet*** as the command's meaning lays a spelling lesson over the | Setting love against law-keeping reverses **Deuteronomy**, where love is expressed *by* keeping the commandments (**Deuteronomy 10:12–13;** | Making love for God conditional on following a later messenger (Q. 3:31) adds a mediator that **Deuteronomy 6:4–5** does not name. The Tanakh |

| ELEMENT | ✡ JUDAISM | † CHRISTIANITY | ☪ ISLAM |
|---|---|---|---|
| | verse. Recitation can stand in for the six marks of Section VII if it is not accompanied by them. | **11:1**). Treating the Gospels' four terms as the original obscures the Hebrew's three. | measures every later voice by the words already given (**Deuteronomy 13:1–3**). |
| **Covenant witness** | Rabbi Akiva's death with the Shema on his lips (Berakhot 61b) stands as a historical witness to ***"with all your soul."*** | The Gospel scribe who answered that love ***"is more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices"*** (Mark 12:33) echoes **1 Samuel 15:22** and **Hosea 6:6**. | The warning against loving rivals ***"as they love Allah"*** (Q. 2:165) restates the divided heart of **1 Kings 18:21**. |

## XI. CORRECTIONS TO EARLIER LIBRARY MATERIAL

Per the standing rule of this Institution, every document points out corrections to earlier Library material, and each correction is also made in the affected document itself so the website copy can be replaced. This study touches **Doc 185** (***Shema Yisrael***), which examined **Deuteronomy 6:4**. Two points there needed correction. Both have been made in Doc 185.

**Correction 1 — Doc 185, tefillin and mezuzah (made).** Doc 185 described the physical form of the ***tefillin (phylacteries)*** and ***mezuzah (doorpost scroll)*** as though the verse prescribed it. The Tanakh commands that the words be bound as a sign on the hand and as frontlets between the eyes, and written on the doorposts and gates (**Deuteronomy 6:8–9**). It does not prescribe the boxes, straps, or scroll cases; those are later practice. Doc 185 now says so.

**Correction 2 — Doc 185, the enlarged letters (made).** Doc 185 presented the enlarged ***ayin*** of ***shema (hear)*** and ***dalet*** of ***echad (one)***, which together spell ***ed (witness)***, as the meaning of the verse. The enlarged letters are a scribal tradition, and the "witness" reading is medieval commentary, not the words of **Deuteronomy 6:4** itself. Doc 185 now presents it that way.

**Corrections to this document. Doc 350** corrected two points in this study: the word count of the Hebrew in Section I-B, and the wording about Rabbi Akiva in the three-religion table and the Three-Religion Audit. Both corrections are applied in this edition, which also brings the document into the current Doc 250 format.

## XII. SEVEN COVENANT DECLARATIONS ON DEUTERONOMY 6:5

Per the **Deuteronomy 19:15** standard, no doctrine may stand on a single text. Each declaration below draws on more than one witness.

| # | COVENANT DECLARATION | BASIS |
|---|---|---|
| **I** | Because **Yahweh** is one, He is to be loved by the whole person: heart, soul, and might, with nothing held back. | **Deuteronomy 6:4–5**; **10:12** |
| **II** | Love for **Yahweh** can be commanded because it is covenant loyalty, shown by keeping His commandments. | **Exodus 20:6**; **Deuteronomy 7:9; 11:1** |
| **III** | **Yahweh** loved first. The command is an answer to His love, and He opens the heart so that it can love Him. | **Deuteronomy 7:7–8; 30:6**; **Jeremiah 31:3**; **Ezekiel 36:26** |
| **IV** | The heart is the seat of thought and choice; the divided heart is condemned, and the whole heart is asked for. | **Deuteronomy 6:6**; **1 Kings 11:4; 18:21**; **Hosea 10:2**; **Psalms 86:11** |
| **V** | The soul is the whole living self, with its longing and its life; love for **Yahweh** may cost life itself, and the faithful did not divide their loyalty to save it. | **Genesis 2:7**; **Psalms 63:1**; **Daniel 3:17–18; 6:10** |
| **VI** | The might is a person's full capacity — strength, means, and influence — and it is the part of the person most tempted to forget **Yahweh**. | **2 Kings 23:25**; **Deuteronomy 6:10–12; 8:17–18**; **Proverbs 3:9** |
| **VII** | Love for **Yahweh** is inseparable from love for those He loves: the neighbor, the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow. | **Leviticus 19:18, 34**; **Deuteronomy 10:17–19**; **Micah 6:8** |

## XIII. THE COVENANT RESPONSE — WHAT THE TANAKH SAYS TO THE ONE WHO ASKS

Behind the question "how do I love **Yahweh**?" There is usually a person who has been told to feel something and cannot, or who has kept rules without warmth and wants more. Tanakh's answer is fivefold.

**First: begin with His love, not yours. "Because Yahweh loves you" (Deuteronomy 7:8).** Love for **Yahweh** grows as a person sees what He has done (**Psalms 116:1**).

**Second: give Him your mind and your decisions.** Put His words on your heart (**Deuteronomy 6:6**). Read them, remember them, and let them decide what you do.

**Third: do not divide your heart.** Name the rival loyalties — to a group, a teacher, a habit, a comfort — and refuse to limp between them (**1 Kings 18:21**). If that is beyond you, pray **"Unite my heart"** (**Psalms 86:11**). He has promised to do it (**Deuteronomy 30:6**).

**Fourth: bring your might under His claim.** Your strength, your money, and your influence belong to Him (**Deuteronomy 8:18**). Use them as Josiah used his: to clear away what dishonors **Yahweh** and to restore what He commanded (**2 Kings 23:25**).

**Fifth: love what He loves.** The **Elohim** you love feeds the stranger and defends the widow (**Deuteronomy 10:18–19**). Love for Him that never reaches them is not yet the love **Deuteronomy** commands.

And teach it at home. The verse was never meant to end with the one who hears it: **"You shall teach them diligently to your children"** (**Deuteronomy 6:7**).

## SCRIPTURE INDEX

| REFERENCE | SUBJECT | SECTION |
|---|---|---|
| **Genesis 1:31; 17:2** | ***Me'od*** as adverb — very good; exceedingly | II |
| **Genesis 2:7** | The man became a living ***nephesh*** | V-A; XII |
| **Genesis 22:2, 12** | The first use of ***ahav*** (to love); Abraham did not withhold his son | II; VIII |
| **Exodus 20:6** | Those who love Me and keep My commandments | III-A; XII |
| **Leviticus 17:11** | The ***nephesh*** of the flesh is in the blood | V-A |
| **Leviticus 19:18, 34** | Love your neighbor; love the stranger as yourself | IX; XII |
| **Deuteronomy 4:29, 37** | Seek Him with all heart and soul; He loved your fathers | III-B; VI-A |
| **Deuteronomy 5:10** | Those who love Me and keep My commandments | III-A |
| **Deuteronomy 6:4–9** | The Shema; the love command; on the heart, taught, bound, written | I-B; II; VII; XII |

| REFERENCE | SUBJECT | SECTION |
|---|---|---|
| **Deuteronomy 6:10–12** | Beware lest you forget **Yahweh** in plenty | VI-C; XI |
| **Deuteronomy 7:7–9** | Because **Yahweh** loves you; keeps covenant with those who love Him | III-A; III-B; XII; XIII |
| **Deuteronomy 8:17–18** | My power has gotten me this wealth — remember **Yahweh** | VI-C; XI; XII |
| **Deuteronomy 10:12–19** | Fear, walk, love, serve; circumcise your heart; love the stranger | III-A; III-C; VII; IX; XI; XII |
| **Deuteronomy 11:1, 13, 19, 22** | Love Him and keep His charge always | III-A; VII; XII |
| **Deuteronomy 13:1–3** | **Yahweh** tests whether you love Him with all your heart | VII; X |
| **Deuteronomy 19:15** | The two-or-three-witness standard | Opening; I-B; VIII; XII |
| **Deuteronomy 29:4** | A heart to know | IV-A |
| **Deuteronomy 30:6, 16, 20** | **Yahweh** will circumcise your heart to love Him; cleave to Him | III-C; VII; XI; XII |
| **Joshua 22:5; 23:11** | Joshua's charge to love **Yahweh** | III-A; VII; VIII |
| **1 Samuel 16:7** | **Yahweh** looks on the heart | IV-A |
| **1 Samuel 18:1, 3** | Jonathan loved David as his own ***nephesh*** | V-A |
| **1 Kings 3:3; 11:1–4** | Solomon loved **Yahweh** — only; his heart not whole | VIII; XII |
| **1 Kings 18:21** | Limping between two opinions | IV-B; XII; XIII |
| **2 Kings 22:11–23:25** | Josiah turned to **Yahweh** with all his heart, soul, and might | II; VI-B; VIII; XII; XIII |
| **Isaiah 26:9** | With my ***nephesh*** I desired You | V-A |
| **Isaiah 41:8** | Abraham ***ohavi*** (My friend) | VIII |
| **Jeremiah 3:10; 17:10; 31:3, 33; 32:39** | Not with the whole heart; He searches the heart; everlasting love; Torah on the heart; one heart | III-B; III-C; IV-A; IV-B |
| **Ezekiel 36:26–27** | A new heart and a new spirit | III-C; XI |

| REFERENCE | SUBJECT | SECTION |
|---|---|---|
| **Hosea 10:2; 11:4** | Their heart is divided; cords of love | III-B; IV-B; XII |
| **Micah 6:8** | Do justice, love covenant kindness, walk humbly | IX; XII |
| **Malachi 1:2** | I have loved you, says **Yahweh** | III-B |
| **Psalms 12:2; 18:1; 31:23** | A double heart; I love You, my strength; love **Yahweh**, His faithful ones | IV-B; VIII |
| **Psalms 42:1–2; 63:1; 84:2** | The ***nephesh*** that thirsts for **Elohim** | V-A; XII |
| **Psalms 86:11** | Unite my heart | IV-B; XII; XIII |
| **Psalms 116:1; 119:97** | I love **Yahweh**; how I love Your Torah | VII; VIII; XIII |
| **Proverbs 3:9; 4:23** | Honor **Yahweh** with wealth; keep your heart | IV-A; VI-C |
| **Daniel 3:17–18; 6:10** | Loyalty to the point of death | V-B; XII |
| **1 Chronicles 12:33** | Not of a double heart | IV-B |
| **2 Chronicles 20:7** | Abraham Your friend | VIII |

***"And you shall love Yahweh your Elohim with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might. And these words which I command you this day shall be upon your heart."***

**Deuteronomy 6:5–6 — The Written Covenant of Yahweh**

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