MIQDASH BETHEL COVENANT INSTITUTION

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A Study for Judaism · Christianity · Islam

DOCUMENT 350

To Those Who Love Me

A Covenant Deep Dive into *ahavah (love)*, *chesed (covenant love)*, and *rachamim (compassion)* in the Written Covenant — What Yahweh Says Love Is (Exodus 20:5–6; 34:6–7; Deuteronomy 7:9–10)

What Is Love? Is "God Is Love" a Teaching of the Tanakh, and Does Yahweh Love Everyone No Matter What They Do? What Does Yahweh Say His Love Is, What Is Our Love for Him, and What Is Our Love for One Another? — 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 morning blessing praises the One who chooses Israel ***be-ahavah (in love)***. The Thirteen Attributes from **Exodus 34:6–7** are chanted in the season of repentance, but stop at ***ve-nakeh (and clearing)***, leaving off ***lo yenakeh (He will not clear)***. The Talmud reads the whole: He clears those who repent, not those who do not (Yoma 86a).	***"God is love"*** (1 John 4:8, 16) is often joined to the teaching that His love is unconditional. The same letter defines the love of God as keeping His commandments (1 John 5:3), and Hebrews 12:6 quotes **Proverbs 3:12**: whom He loves, He disciplines. Does the slogan keep what the letter keeps?	***Al-Wadud (the Loving)*** is a name of God (Q. 11:90; 85:14). He loves the doers of good and the repentant (Q. 2:195, 222) and does not love the transgressors and wrongdoers (Q. 2:190; 3:57). Love is tied to deeds, close to the Tanakh, but routed through a later messenger (Q. 3:31).

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 The Talmud, New Testament, and Qur'an are cited as historical reference and comparative witness — never as superseding authority.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 question: what is love? It asks what **Yahweh** says He is, whether He loves everyone no matter what they do, what His love does, what our love for Him is, and what our love for one another is. **Yahweh** (**יהוה**) and **Elohim** (**אֱלֹהִים**) appear in bold throughout. Tanakh books and personal names are given in English. Hebrew transliterations appear in ***bold italic*** with their English meaning in parentheses at every occurrence. Scripture references are bold, and anything in quotation marks is bold italic. Scripture is rendered in a literal working translation from the Hebrew. **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].** 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**. Lexicons (BDB, HALOT, Gesenius, TWOT, DCH) are used as witnesses, never as the authority; where a lexicon gives a meaning the Tanakh's own usage does not carry, the reader is told. 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, Numbers, Deuteronomy	The Name proclaimed at Sinai; love bound to the commandments; covenant love to those who love Him; the stranger, the neighbor, and the enemy's ox; **Yahweh**'s abhorrence of the nations' practices
Nevi'im (Prophets)	Judges, 1 Samuel, 2 Samuel, 1 Kings, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Zephaniah, Zechariah, Malachi	Love withdrawn and restored; the false peace of the false prophets; the slogan Malachi condemns; Hosea's redeeming love; counterfeits of love (Amnon, Delilah, Solomon)
Ketuvim (Writings)	Psalms, Proverbs, Job, Song of Songs, Ruth, Ecclesiastes, Daniel, Nehemiah, 2 Chronicles	**Yahweh** good to all and the hater of the workers of iniquity; the love that disciplines; love that covers and love that rebukes; Ruth's covenant love; love for those who hate **Yahweh**

COMPARATIVE TEXTS CITED — HISTORICAL AND COMPARATIVE REFERENCE ONLY

CATEGORY	TEXTS CITED	PURPOSE IN THIS STUDY
New Testament	Matthew 5:43–44; John 3:16; 14:15; Romans 5:8; Hebrews 12:6; 1 John 4:8, 16; 5:3; Revelation 3:19	***"God is love"*** in its own context; love defined as keeping commandments; the love that disciplines; ***"hate your enemy"***
Qur'an	Q. 2:190, 195, 205, 222; 3:31, 57, 146; 11:90; 85:14	Al-Wadud; whom God loves and does not love; love routed through a messenger
Rabbinic literature and liturgy	Talmud Yoma 86a; Mishnah Avot 5:16; the Ahavah Rabbah blessing; the Thirteen Attributes in the Selichot	How Exodus 34:7 is read and recited; love that depends on a thing and love that does not

I. FRAMING THE QUESTION — WHAT IS LOVE?

I-A. The Claim as It Is Usually Taught

Ask most people in the Western world what the Creator is, and many will answer with three words: ***"God is love."***

Ask what that means, and the answer often comes in a second sentence: ***"He loves everyone, no matter what they do."***

From there it is a short step to a third: since He loves everyone no matter what, what a person does matters very little, and anyone who speaks of **Yahweh**'s anger, judgment, or commandments is ***"unloving."***

The questions put to this Institution are these:

First: what is love — a feeling, a choice, a loyalty, or all of these?

Second: does the Tanakh say ***"Yahweh is love"***? What does **Yahweh** say He is?

Third: does **Yahweh** love everyone no matter what they do? If not, whom does He love, and what does He hate?

Fourth: what does **Yahweh**'s love do — does it only comfort, or does it also correct?

Fifth: what is our love for **Yahweh**, for our neighbor, for the stranger, and for our enemy, and what passes for love but is not?

I-B. What This Study Builds On

This study builds on earlier work in the Library and does not repeat it. **Doc 254** (***And You Shall Love***) examined **Deuteronomy 6:5** — our love for **Yahweh** with heart, soul, and might. **Doc 293** (***Nor Bear a Grudge***) and its Section II-E insert examined **Leviticus 19:17–18** and the measure ***kamokha (as yourself)***. **Doc 321** examined covenant friendship, ***ahav (to love)*** and ***chesed (covenant love)*** between men. **Doc 270** examined why the commandments are given ***le-tov lanu (for our good)***. **Doc 253** examined **Yahweh** as a man of war, and **Doc 319** examined His anger. The present document takes up the question beneath all of them: what the written covenant shows love itself to be, beginning with **Yahweh**'s own love.

I-C. How the Findings Are 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. A popular teaching is not judged by how often it is repeated or by how kind it sounds, but by whether the written covenant says it.

II. THE WORD STUDY — THE TANAKH'S VOCABULARY OF LOVE

English has one word, ***"love,"*** for a mother's care, a husband's devotion, a liking for food, and loyalty to a king. Hebrew has several words, and each is defined first by how the Tanakh uses it. The table sets out the terms this study relies on.

HEBREW TERM	STRONG'S	MEANING FROM TANAKH USAGE	KEY TEXTS
ahav (to love) **אָהַב**	H157	To love, desire, prefer, be loyal to. Used of a father for a son, a husband for a wife, friends, a liking for food, lust, and a treaty partner's loyalty. The word alone does not say whether the love is good.	**Genesis 22:2; 27:4**; **2 Samuel 13:1**; **1 Kings 5:1** [Hebrew 5:15]; **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** [Hebrew 31:2]; **Song of Songs 8:6–7**
chesed (covenant love / loyal kindness) **חֶסֶד**	H2617	Kindness that keeps faith inside a relationship and acts for the other's good, often beyond what is owed	**Exodus 20:6; 34:6–7**; **Ruth 3:10**; **Micah 6:8**
racham (to have compassion) **רָחַם**	H7355	To feel and show tender compassion; once (qal) ***"I love You"***	**Psalms 18:1** [Hebrew 18:2]; **103:13**; **Isaiah 49:15**
rachamim (compassion); ***rechem (womb)*** **רַחֲמִים, רֶחֶם**	H7356; H7358	Mercies; the womb. The usage pictures the tenderness of a mother for the child of her womb	**Isaiah 49:15; 54:7**; **Psalms 103:4**
rachum (compassionate) **רַחוּם**	H7349	Compassionate; used almost always of **Yahweh**	**Exodus 34:6**; **Psalms 86:15**

HEBREW TERM	STRONG'S	MEANING FROM TANAKH USAGE	KEY TEXTS
chashaq (to set one's love upon) **חָשַׁק**	H2836	To attach oneself, set one's desire on; **Yahweh**'s choosing of Israel's fathers	**Deuteronomy 7:7; 10:15**; **Genesis 34:8**
dodim (love, love-making) **דּוֹדִים**	H1730	Love between man and woman; used of the covenant as a marriage and of the harlot's offer	**Song of Songs 1:2**; **Ezekiel 16:8**; **Proverbs 7:18**
sane (to hate) **שָׂנֵא**	H8130	To hate, reject, set aside. Also used comparatively: the wife ***"hated"*** is the one loved less or set second	**Genesis 29:30–31**; **Deuteronomy 21:15**; **Psalms 5:5** [Hebrew 5:6]
qanna (jealous) **קַנָּא**	H7067	Jealous, zealous for an exclusive bond; used only of **Yahweh**	**Exodus 20:5; 34:14**; **Deuteronomy 4:24**
naqah (to clear, leave unpunished) **נָקֹה**	H5352	To hold innocent, acquit; in Exodus 34:7 doubled: ***"clearing He will not clear"***	**Exodus 20:7; 34:7**; **Numbers 14:18**
yakach (to reprove, correct) **יָכַח**	H3198	To reprove, decide, correct; what a loving father does	**Leviticus 19:17**; **Proverbs 3:12**
tov (good) **טוֹב**	H2896	Good; **Yahweh**'s goodness to all His works	**Psalms 100:5; 145:9**

Three lexical observations govern what follows.

First — the word "love" does not tell you whether love is good. The verb ***ahav (to love)*** is used of Isaac's love for the game his son brought him (**Genesis 25:28**) and for ***mat'ammim ka-asher ahavti (savory food such as I love)*** (**Genesis 27:4**). It is used of Amnon's lust for his half-sister, which turned in one hour into a hatred greater than the love had been (**2 Samuel 13:1, 15**). It is used of Hiram, king of Tyre, who ***ohev hayah (had always loved)*** David — a treaty partner's loyalty shown in cedar and a covenant (**1 Kings 5:1** [Hebrew 5:15]; **5:12** [Hebrew 5:26]). And it is the verb of **Deuteronomy 6:5**. In the Tanakh, love is judged by its object and its fruit, not by the strength of the feeling. This is the first thing the slogan forgets.

Second — "hate" can mean "set second." The verb ***sane (to hate)*** is used of Jacob's two wives: ***"he loved Rachel more than Leah ... Yahweh saw that Leah was hated"*** (**Genesis 29:30–31**). The law of inheritance speaks of ***"the loved wife and the hated wife"*** (**Deuteronomy 21:15–17**) — the wife less favored, not one despised. So when the Tanakh sets ***ahav*** against ***sane***, it can describe choice and rejection as well as feeling. This matters for **Malachi 1:2–3** (Section IV-C). The ancient treaties of Assyria used ***"love"*** for a vassal's loyalty and ***"hate"*** for disloyalty (W. L. Moran, 1963). That parallel is comparison only, from a related language; the Tanakh's own usage above is the witness.

Third — chesed is love that keeps faith. ***Chesed (covenant love)*** is what Abraham's servant thanked **Yahweh** for when He kept faith with his master (**Genesis 24:27**), what David showed Mephibosheth ***"for Jonathan's sake"*** because of a covenant (**2 Samuel 9:1, 7**), and what Boaz praised in Ruth (**Ruth 3:10**). It is love inside a bond, acting for the other's good. A caution under this Institution's word-meaning rule: BDB and HALOT both list a second, separate word ***chesed*** meaning ***"shame"*** (**Leviticus 20:17**; **Proverbs 14:34**). It rests on two verses and on Aramaic and Syriac comparison. It is graded **Single witness**, and nothing in this study rests on it.

III. WHAT YAHWEH SAYS HE IS — THE NAME PROCLAIMED AT SINAI

III-A. Exodus 34:6–7 in Full

When Moses asked to see **Yahweh**'s glory, **Yahweh** said He would proclaim His Name before him (**Exodus 33:18–19**). This is the one place in the Tanakh where **Yahweh** describes His own character in a single sentence. It must be read whole.

יהוה יהוה אֵל רַחוּם וְחַנּוּן אֶרֶךְ אַפַּיִם וְרַב־חֶסֶד וֶאֱמֶת

"Yahweh, Yahweh, El compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in covenant love and truth, keeping covenant love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin — but clearing He will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children and upon the children's children, to the third and the fourth generation." (**Exodus 34:6–7**)

Count what is in the sentence. Five phrases describe mercy: ***rachum (compassionate)***, ***chanun (gracious)***, ***erekh appayim (slow to anger)***, ***rav chesed ve-emet (abounding in covenant love and truth)***, and ***notser chesed la-alafim (keeping covenant love for thousands)***. He ***nose avon (forgives iniquity)*** — literally, He carries it.

Then comes ***ve-nakeh lo yenakeh (clearing, He will not clear)***, the verb doubled for emphasis, and the visiting of iniquity. The same Name holds both. **Yahweh** did not proclaim two names, one for the merciful and one for the just. He proclaimed one.

The Ten Words had already joined the two halves: He visits the iniquity ***"of those who hate Me"*** and shows ***chesed (covenant love) "to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments"*** (**Exodus 20:5–6**; **Deuteronomy 5:9–10**). The Hebrew for the second group is **לְאֹהֲבַי** ***le-ohavai*** ***(to those who love Me)*** — the phrase that gives this document its title.

III-B. The Two Halves Quoted Through the Tanakh

The prophets and psalmists quote this proclamation again and again, and they quote whichever half their moment requires. Moses, pleading for the people after the spies, quotes it whole, including

"He will by no means clear the guilty" (**Numbers 14:18**).

Nahum, announcing judgment on Nineveh, quotes it:

"Yahweh is slow to anger and great in power, and will by no means clear the guilty" (**Nahum 1:3**).

Joel, calling Judah to return, quotes the mercy: ***"for He is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger, abounding in covenant love"*** (**Joel 2:13**).

Jonah quotes the same words in complaint, because he knew **Yahweh** would spare Nineveh if it turned (**Jonah 4:2**). The Levites in Nehemiah's day confess it (**Nehemiah 9:17**), and David sings it (**Psalms 86:15; 103:8; 145:8**).

Notice whom the mercy half is spoken to. In **Joel 2:12–13** it is spoken to people being called to ***"return to Me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning."*** In **Jonah 3:10–4:2** it is spoken over a city that had already turned from its evil way.

In **Psalms 103:8–13** the compassion is ***"on those who fear Him"*** (**Psalms 103:11, 13**). The Tanakh never quotes the mercy of **Exodus 34:6** to people who are refusing to turn, as a promise that their refusal does not matter.

Finding — Yahweh's own self-description joins abounding mercy and the refusal to clear the guilty in one Name. Corroborated (**Exodus 20:5–6; 34:6–7**; **Numbers 14:18**; **Nahum 1:2–3**; **Joel 2:13**; **Psalms 103:8–13**). To quote the first half as the whole of His character is **Not in the text**.

III-C. Does the Tanakh Say "Yahweh Is Love"?

It does not. The sentence ***"God is love"*** comes from 1 John 4:8 and 16, which is addressed in the Three-Religion Audit.

The Tanakh never says *Yahweh ahavah (Yahweh is love).* It does say a great deal about what Yahweh is, and the list is worth reading slowly:

THE TANAKH SAYS YAHWEH IS	TEXT
One	**Deuteronomy 6:4**
Good; His covenant love endures forever	**Psalms 100:5; 34:8** [Hebrew 34:9]; **136:1**
Compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in covenant love	**Exodus 34:6**; **Psalms 86:15**
The faithful El who keeps covenant and covenant love with those who love Him	**Deuteronomy 7:9**; **Nehemiah 1:5**; **Daniel 9:4**
Righteous; He loves righteous deeds	**Psalms 11:7; 145:17**
Holy	**Leviticus 19:2**; **Isaiah 6:3**
Jealous — ***"Yahweh, whose name is Jealous"***	**Exodus 34:14**; **Deuteronomy 4:24**
A consuming fire	**Deuteronomy 4:24; 9:3**
A righteous judge, and an El who is indignant every day	**Psalms 7:11** [Hebrew 7:12]
A man of war	**Exodus 15:3** (Doc 253)

Every line of that list is love's company. Yahweh's love is never presented alone, as if it were the whole of Him and the other things were exceptions to it. His love is the love of the holy, righteous, jealous, and faithful One. A love that is not holy, not righteous, and not jealous for the bond is not His love.

Finding — That Yahweh abounds in *chesed (covenant love)* and loves His people is Corroborated (Exodus 34:6; Deuteronomy 7:8; Jeremiah 31:3; Psalms 136). The sentence *"Yahweh is love,"* used to mean that love is the whole of His nature and that His holiness, justice, and jealousy give way to it, is Not in the text.

IV. DOES YAHWEH LOVE EVERYONE NO MATTER WHAT THEY DO?

This is the heart of the question. The Tanakh answers it in four parts, and all four must be held together.

IV-A. His Goodness Reaches All

"Yahweh is good to all, and His compassion is over all His works." **(Psalms 145:9)**

Yahweh feeds every living thing: ***"These all wait for You, that You may give them their food in due season"*** **(Psalms 104:27–28)**. After the flood He promised every creature that seedtime and harvest would not cease **(Genesis 8:22)** and made His covenant ***"with every living creature"*** **(Genesis 9:9–11)**.

He had pity on Nineveh, a violent foreign city, with its ***"more than a hundred and twenty thousand persons who cannot discern between their right hand and their left, and also much cattle"*** **(Jonah 4:11)**.

He ***loves the stranger*** **(Deuteronomy 10:18)**. And He takes no pleasure in the death of anyone:

"As I live, says the Lord Yahweh, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live. Turn, turn from your evil ways! For why will you die, O house of Israel?" **(Ezekiel 33:11)**

The same is said in **Ezekiel 18:23** and **18:32**. Isaiah opens the door to the worst: ***"Let the wicked forsake his way, and the man of iniquity his thoughts; let him return to Yahweh, and He will have compassion on him"*** **(Isaiah 55:7)**.

Finding — Yahweh's goodness, provision, patience, and desire that the wicked turn and live reach every person and every creature. Corroborated (Genesis 8:22; 9:9–11; Psalms 104:27–28; 145:9; Jonah 4:11; Ezekiel 18:23, 32; 33:11; Isaiah 55:7).

IV-B. His Covenant Love Is Kept for Those Who Love Him

The Tanakh is just as clear that Yahweh's *chesed (covenant love)*, the love that keeps covenant and blesses, has an address. The pattern is set at Sinai and repeated across all three divisions:

"Know therefore that Yahweh your Elohim, He is Elohim, the faithful El, who keeps covenant and covenant love with those who love Him and keep His commandments, to a thousand generations; and repays those who hate Him to their face, to destroy them." **(Deuteronomy 7:9–10)**

"But the covenant love of Yahweh is from everlasting to everlasting upon those who fear Him, and His righteousness to children's children — to those who keep His covenant, and to those who remember His precepts to do them." **(Psalms 103:17–18)**

"All the paths of Yahweh are covenant love and truth to those who keep His covenant and His testimonies." **(Psalms 25:10)**

Nehemiah and Daniel both open their great prayers with the same words:

Yahweh ***"keeps covenant and covenant love with those who love Him and keep His commandments"*** **(Nehemiah 1:5**; **Daniel 9:4)**.

And **Psalms 145**, the very psalm that says **Yahweh** is good to all, ends: ***"Yahweh preserves all who love Him, but all the wicked He will destroy"*** **(Psalms 145:20)**. The same psalm holds both truths, eleven verses apart.

Finding — Yahweh's covenant love is promised to those who love Him and keep His commandments. Corroborated (Exodus 20:6; Deuteronomy 5:10; 7:9; Psalms 25:10; 103:17–18; 145:20; Nehemiah 1:5; Daniel 9:4).

IV-C. What Yahweh Says He Hates

A love that hates nothing would be no love at all, for it would not care what becomes of the one it loves. The Tanakh says plainly that Yahweh hates — deeds, and the people who persist in them.

"The boastful shall not stand before Your eyes; You hate all workers of iniquity. You destroy those who speak lies; Yahweh abhors the man of bloodshed and deceit." **(Psalms 5:5–6** [Hebrew 5:6–7])

The Hebrew of the first line is **שָׂנֵאתָ כָּל־פֹּעֲלֵי אָוֶן** ***sanetha kol po'alei aven*** ***(You hate all workers of iniquity)***. The object is not ***"iniquity"*** but ***"the workers of iniquity."***

"Yahweh tests the righteous, but the wicked and the one who loves violence His soul hates." **(Psalms 11:5)**

Proverbs lists seven things that are an abomination to Him, and the last two are persons: ***"a false witness who breathes out lies, and one who sows discord among brothers"*** **(Proverbs 6:16–19)**. Of the nations driven out of Canaan, **Yahweh** says, ***"they did all these things, and therefore I abhorred them"*** **(Leviticus 20:23)**. Of His own people in their rebellion He says:

"All their evil is in Gilgal; for there I hated them. Because of the evil of their deeds I will drive them out of My house; I will love them no more. All their princes are rebels." (**Hosea 9:15**)

The words ***lo osif ahavatam (I will love them no more)***, **לֹא אוֹסִף אַהֲבָתָם**, are spoken to Israel, not to a foreign nation.

Jeremiah hears the same: ***"My heritage has become to Me like a lion in the forest; she has raised her voice against Me; therefore I have hated her"*** (**Jeremiah 12:8**).

And Isaiah records both sides of **Yahweh**'s love in two verses: ***"in His love and in His pity He redeemed them ... But they rebelled and grieved His holy spirit; therefore He turned to be their enemy, and He Himself fought against them"*** (**Isaiah 63:9–10**).

Yahweh also names deeds He hates:

1.
2. the abominations done for other gods (**Deuteronomy 12:31**),
3. the standing pillar (**Deuteronomy 16:22**),
4. robbery with a burnt offering (**Isaiah 61:8**),
5. feasts kept by people who will not do justice (**Isaiah 1:14**; **Amos 5:21**),
6. and the false oath and evil plotted against a neighbor (**Zechariah 8:17**).

"The way of the wicked is an abomination to Yahweh, but He loves him who pursues righteousness" (**Proverbs 15:9**).

An honest word on **Malachi 1:2–3**, ***"I loved Jacob, but Esau I hated."*** As Section II showed, ***sane*** can mean ***"set second"*** or ***"reject."*** Malachi is speaking of two nations and their lands: Edom's mountains laid waste and its people called ***"the people against whom Yahweh is indignant forever"*** (**Malachi 1:3–4**), for its violence against its brother Jacob (**Obadiah 10**). The verse is a witness to **Yahweh**'s choosing and His judgment on a nation's deeds. It is not, by itself, a teaching that He hates a particular infant at birth, and this study does not use it that way.

Finding — Yahweh hates evil deeds and, in the Tanakh's own words, the workers of iniquity who persist in them, including His own people in their rebellion. Corroborated (**Psalms 5:5–6; 11:5**; **Proverbs 6:16–19**; **Leviticus 20:23**; **Hosea 9:15**; **Jeremiah 12:8**; **Isaiah 63:10**).

The teaching that Yahweh loves everyone *"no matter what they do,"* in the sense that their deeds make no difference to Him, is Not in the text.

IV-D. Love Withdrawn, Love Restored

If the Tanakh ended at **Hosea 9:15**, the answer would be simple and severe. It does not end there. The same prophet records **Yahweh**'s heart toward the same people:

"When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called My son … How shall I give you up, Ephraim? How shall I hand you over, Israel? … My heart is turned within Me; My compassions are kindled together." (**Hosea 11:1, 8**)

And the last chapter of Hosea shows how love is restored.

First the call: ***"Return, O Israel, to Yahweh your Elohim, for you have stumbled by your iniquity. Take words with you and return to Yahweh"*** (**Hosea 14:1–2** [Hebrew 14:2–3]).

Then the promise: ***"I will heal their backsliding; I will love them freely, for My anger has turned away from him"*** (**Hosea 14:4** [Hebrew 14:5]).

The Hebrew is **אֹהֲבֵם נְדָבָה** ***ohavem nedavah (I will love them freely)***.

The love that was withdrawn in **Hosea 9:15** is given freely in **Hosea 14:4** — to people who have returned.

Leviticus 26 holds the same pair in one chapter.

To a people who walk contrary to Him, **Yahweh** says, ***"My soul shall abhor you"*** (**Leviticus 26:30**).

Yet when they confess their iniquity and their uncircumcised heart is humbled, He remembers His covenant with Jacob, Isaac, and Abraham:

"I will not reject them, nor abhor them, to destroy them utterly and to break My covenant with them" (**Leviticus 26:40–45**).

The covenant with David's house says the same: if his children forsake the Torah, ***"I will visit their transgression with the rod … but My covenant love I will not take from him"*** (**Psalms 89:30–33** [Hebrew 89:31–34]; **2 Samuel 7:14–15**).

Isaiah puts it in one sentence: ***"For a brief moment I forsook you, but with great compassions I will gather you"*** (**Isaiah 54:7–8**).

This is the truth inside the popular teaching, and it should be stated plainly: **Yahweh's faithfulness to His covenant outlasts His people's unfaithfulness, and He does not stop seeking them** (**Jeremiah 31:3, 20** [Hebrew 31:2, 19]).

But the Tanakh never describes this as love that is indifferent to what they do. It is love that punishes the transgression with the rod and restores the one who turns.

And for the individual who hears the covenant and blesses himself in his heart, saying *"I shall have peace, though I walk in the stubbornness of my heart,"*

Torah says: ***"Yahweh will not be willing to forgive him"*** (**Deuteronomy 29:19–20** [Hebrew 29:18–19]; Doc 290).

Ezekiel says the same of the righteous man who turns to iniquity and stays there (**Ezekiel 18:24, 26**).

Finding — Yahweh's covenant faithfulness outlasts His people's sin, and He restores those who return. Corroborated (**Leviticus 26:40–45**; **Hosea 11:8; 14:1–4**; **Isaiah 54:7–8**; **Psalms 89:30–33**; **Jeremiah 31:3, 20**).

That this faithfulness means the one who will not turn is untouched by judgment is **Not in the text** (**Deuteronomy 29:19–20**; **Ezekiel 18:24**; **Hosea 9:15**).

IV-E. The Slogan Has a Name in the Tanakh

The teaching that **Yahweh** is pleased with everyone whatever they do is not new. The Tanakh heard it, named it, and answered it.

"You have wearied Yahweh with your words. Yet you say, 'How have we wearied Him?' When you say, 'Everyone who does evil is good in the sight of Yahweh, and He delights in them,' or, 'Where is the Elohim of justice?'" (**Malachi 2:17**)

The Hebrew is **כָּל־עֹשֵׂה רָע טוֹב בְּעֵינֵי יהוה** ***kol oseh ra tov be-einei Yahweh*** ***(everyone who does evil is good in the eyes of Yahweh)***. This is the slogan, almost word for word, and Malachi says it does not comfort **Yahweh**. It wearies Him.

The false prophets of Jeremiah's day preached the same message:

"They keep saying to those who despise Me, 'Yahweh has said, You shall have peace'; and to everyone who walks in the stubbornness of his own heart they say, 'No evil shall come upon you.'" (**Jeremiah 23:17**)

They healed the wound of the people lightly, ***"saying, Peace, peace, when there is no peace"*** (**Jeremiah 6:14; 8:11**).

Ezekiel names the result: they ***"strengthened the hands of the wicked, so that he would not turn from his wicked way, by promising him life"*** (**Ezekiel 13:22**).

Isaiah pronounces woe on those ***"who call evil good and good evil"*** (**Isaiah 5:20**),

and Zephaniah describes men who say in their heart, ***"Yahweh will not do good, nor will He do evil"*** (**Zephaniah 1:12**) — a god whose love has become indifference.

The covenant's judgment on the slogan is therefore not that it says too much about love, but that it says too little. It takes away the one thing that makes a person turn: the truth that Yahweh cares what he does.

Finding — The message that Yahweh delights in evildoers, or that those who walk in stubbornness will have peace, is named in the Tanakh as the word of false prophets, and it wearies Yahweh. **Corroborated** (**Malachi 2:17**; **Jeremiah 6:14; 8:11; 23:17**; **Ezekiel 13:10,** 22; **Isaiah 5:20**; **Zephaniah 1:12**).

V. LOVE THAT CORRECTS

"My son, do not despise the discipline of Yahweh, nor be weary of His reproof; for whom Yahweh loves He reproves, even as a father the son in whom he delights." (**Proverbs 3:11–12**)

The Hebrew is כִּי אֵת אֲשֶׁר יְאַהֵב יהוה יוֹכִיחַ *ki et asher ye'ehav Yahweh yokhiach (for whom Yahweh loves He reproves)*. Correction is not a break in **Yahweh**'s love; it is one of the ways the Tanakh says His love is known.

Moses tells Israel, ***"Know in your heart that as a man disciplines his son, so Yahweh your Elohim disciplines you"*** (**Deuteronomy 8:5**).

"Blessed is the man whom You discipline, O Yahweh, and teach out of Your Torah" (**Psalms 94:12**; see also **Job 5:17**).

The same rule governs human love. ***"He who spares his rod hates his son, but he who loves him disciplines him early"*** (**Proverbs 13:24**).

The Torah sets reproof inside the command to love: ***"You shall not hate your brother in your heart; you shall surely reprove your neighbor, and not bear sin because of him ... you shall love your neighbor as yourself"*** (**Leviticus 19:17–18**; Doc 293).

Silence in the face of a brother's sin is placed beside hatred, not beside love. ***"Better is open rebuke than hidden love. Faithful are the wounds of a friend"*** (**Proverbs 27:5–6**).

"Let the righteous strike me — it is kindness" (**Psalms 141:5**), and the word there is ***chesed (covenant love)***.

The Tanakh also shows what happens when love will not be corrected. Eli loved his sons and would not restrain them. **Yahweh**'s verdict was: ***"you honor your sons above Me"*** (**1 Samuel 2:29**), and ***"his sons made themselves vile, and he did not restrain them"*** (**1 Samuel 3:13**). A love that will not say no was counted by **Yahweh** as contempt for Him.

Finding — Love in the Tanakh includes correction, and the refusal to correct is counted as a failure of love. **Corroborated (Proverbs 3:11–12; 13:24; 27:5–6**; **Deuteronomy 8:5**; **Leviticus 19:17–18**; **Psalms 94:12; 141:5**; **1 Samuel 2:29; 3:13**).

VI. OUR LOVE FOR YAHWEH — LOYALTY THAT KEEPS

Doc 254 examined **Deuteronomy 6:5** in full, and its findings stand. Here only what bears on the question of this study is gathered.

Every time the Torah commands love for Yahweh, it names the same partner: keeping His commandments (**Exodus 20:6**; **Deuteronomy 10:12–13; 11:1, 13, 22; 19:9; 30:16**; **Joshua 22:5**). **Love for Yahweh is loyalty, and loyalty is shown by keeping what He said.**

That love is exclusive. ***"You shall have no other gods before Me"*** comes before ***"those who love Me"*** (**Exodus 20:3–6**).

Yahweh tests whether His people love Him with all their heart by letting a prophet with a sign call them to other gods (**Deuteronomy 13:1–3** [Hebrew 13:2–4]).

And if the one who entices is ***"your brother, your son, your daughter, the wife of your bosom, or your friend who is as your own soul,"*** **love for Yahweh comes first** (**Deuteronomy 13:6–8** [Hebrew 13:7–9]).

That love also hates. ***"You who love Yahweh, hate evil"*** (**Psalms 97:10**).

"Hate evil and love good, and establish justice in the gate" (**Amos 5:15**).

"The fear of Yahweh is to hate evil" (**Proverbs 8:13**).

"I hate and abhor falsehood, but Your Torah I love" (**Psalms 119:163**).

The psalmist's love and hatred are not two attitudes in conflict; they are one loyalty seen from two sides.

And that love is answered. Wisdom says, ***"I love those who love me, and those who seek me diligently will find me"*** (**Proverbs 8:17**).

Yahweh says to Eli's house, ***"those who honor Me I will honor, and those who despise Me shall be lightly esteemed"*** (**1 Samuel 2:30**).

"Great peace have those who love Your Torah, and nothing causes them to stumble" (**Psalms 119:165**).

Finding — Love for Yahweh is exclusive loyalty shown in keeping His commandments, joined to the hatred of evil, and answered by His love. Corroborated (Exodus 20:3–6; Deuteronomy 11:1; 13:3; Psalms 97:10; 119:163, 165; Amos 5:15; Proverbs 8:13, 17; 1 Samuel 2:30).

VII. LOVE FOR NEIGHBOR, STRANGER, AND ENEMY

VII-A. The Neighbor

***"You shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am Yahweh"* (Leviticus 19:18).**

The Hebrew is **וְאָהַבְתָּ לְרֵעֲךָ כָּמוֹךָ** ***ve-ahavta le-re'akha kamokha (and you shall love your neighbor as yourself)***. **Doc 293** (Section II-E) showed that the verb here takes the preposition ***le (to)***, so the love is something shown in deed, and that every command leading up to it is an action: leave the gleanings, pay the wage the same day, do not curse the deaf, judge fairly, do not carry tales (**Leviticus 19:9–16**). **Love of neighbor in the Torah is not a feeling announced. It is a way of treating him.**

VII-B. The Stranger

The Torah extends the same love, in the same words, to the outsider: ***"The stranger who dwells with you shall be to you as one born among you, and you shall love him as yourself, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt"* (Leviticus 19:34).**

The reason given is **Yahweh**'s own love: He ***"loves the stranger, giving him food and clothing. Love the stranger therefore"* (Deuteronomy 10:18–19).**

Here the Tanakh does say that **Yahweh**'s love reaches beyond Israel — and it shows that love in bread and clothing, and asks the same of His people.

VII-C. The Enemy

The Torah never commands anyone to hate a personal enemy. It commands the opposite indeed: ***"If you meet your enemy's ox or his donkey going astray, you shall surely bring it back to him. If you see the donkey of one who hates you lying under its load ... you shall surely help him with it"* (Exodus 23:4–5).**

***"If your enemy is hungry, give him bread to eat; if he is thirsty, give him water to drink"* (Proverbs 25:21–22).**

***"Do not rejoice when your enemy falls"* (Proverbs 24:17–18)**, and Job names it among the sins he did not commit (**Job 31:29**). Vengeance and the grudge are forbidden (**Leviticus 19:18**).

VII-D. Those Who Hate Yahweh

There is one place where the Tanakh draws a line, and it is not around a personal enemy but around those who set themselves against **Yahweh**.

When King Jehoshaphat joined Ahab in war, the prophet Jehu met him: ***"Should you help the wicked and love those who hate Yahweh? Because of this, wrath has gone out against you from before Yahweh"*** (**2 Chronicles 19:2**).

David says, ***"Do I not hate those who hate You, O Yahweh? … I hate them with complete hatred; they have become my enemies"*** (**Psalms 139:21–22**),

and, ***"I have hated the assembly of evildoers, and I will not sit with the wicked"*** (**Psalms 26:5**; see **Psalms 101:3–7**).

These texts must be read beside **Exodus 23:4–5** and **Proverbs 25:21**, not against them. The same David who wrote **Psalms 139** spared Saul twice when he could have killed him (**1 Samuel 24:6; 26:9**), and wept over Absalom (**2 Samuel 18:33** [Hebrew 19:1]). The Tanakh asks the covenant person to feed the hungry enemy and return his ox, but not to join himself to those who hate **Yahweh**, approve their way, or give them his strength. Personal kindness and covenant alliance are two different things.

Finding — Love of neighbor and stranger is love shown in deed, and the Torah commands practical kindness even to a personal enemy. Corroborated (**Leviticus 19:9–18, 34**; **Deuteronomy 10:18–19**; **Exodus 23:4–5**; **Proverbs 24:17; 25:21**). The covenant person does not love, ally with, or strengthen those who hate **Yahweh**. **Corroborated** (**2 Chronicles 19:2**; **Psalms 26:5; 101:3–7; 139:21–22**). A command to ***"hate your enemy"*** is **Not in the text**.

VIII. COUNTERFEITS OF LOVE

Because ***ahav (to love)*** can be used of good and evil desire alike (Section II), the Tanakh gives examples of what is called love but is not covenant love. Each one fails one of the marks the covenant gives.

COUNTERFEIT	WHAT THE TEXT SHOWS	TEXT
Desire that uses (Amnon)	He ***"loved"*** Tamar until he took her; then ***"the hatred with which he hated her was greater than the love with which he had loved her."*** Love that seeks only its own pleasure ends in contempt.	**2 Samuel 13:1, 4, 14–15**

COUNTERFEIT	WHAT THE TEXT SHOWS	TEXT
Love as leverage (Delilah)	***"How can you say, I love you, when your heart is not with me?"*** — love demanded as proof, to betray.	**Judges 16:4, 15–18**
Love that divides the heart (Solomon)	He ***"clung to these in love,"*** and his wives turned his heart after other gods; his heart was not whole with **Yahweh**.	**1 Kings 11:1–4**
Favoritism (Isaac, Jacob)	Isaac loved Esau for his game; Jacob loved Joseph more than all his sons, and his brothers hated him.	**Genesis 25:28; 37:3–4**
Love that will not correct (Eli)	He honored his sons above **Yahweh** and did not restrain them.	**1 Samuel 2:29; 3:13**
Love of what Yahweh hates	Those who love bribes, sleep, silver, lies, violence, and the harlot's wages.	**Isaiah 1:23**; **Proverbs 20:13**; **Ecclesiastes 5:10** [Hebrew 5:9]; **Psalms 11:5; 52:3–4** [Hebrew 52:5–6]; **Hosea 9:1**
Love of comfortable falsehood	***"The prophets prophesy falsely ... and My people love to have it so."***	**Jeremiah 5:31** (Doc 310)

Finding — What is called love is not covenant love when it uses, manipulates, divides the heart from Yahweh, plays favorites, refuses to correct, or attaches itself to what Yahweh hates. Corroborated (**2 Samuel 13:15**; **Judges 16:15**; **1 Kings 11:1–4**; **Genesis 37:3–4**; **1 Samuel 3:13**; **Jeremiah 5:31**).

IX. FIVE WITNESSES OF COVENANT LOVE — AND ONE THAT FAILED

Under the **Deuteronomy 19:15** standard, the following witnesses show covenant love lived out across the Torah, the Prophets, and the Writings.

Witness One — Yahweh's love for Israel. The first and model love of the covenant is **Yahweh**'s own. He chose a people not for their number ***"but because Yahweh loves you"*** (**Deuteronomy 7:7–8**).

Ezekiel pictures it as a foundling in a field: ***"I said to you in your blood, Live! ... your time was the time of love; I spread My garment over you ... and entered into a covenant with you, and you became Mine"*** (**Ezekiel 16:6–8**). That love chose, rescued, clothed, and bound itself by covenant — and the rest of the chapter shows that it also judged her harlotry and promised to remember the covenant (**Ezekiel 16:59–63**).

Witness Two — Ruth. ***"Where you go, I will go; where you lodge, I will lodge; your people shall be my people, and your Elohim my Elohim"*** (**Ruth 1:16–17**). Boaz calls her conduct ***chesed (covenant love)*** (**Ruth 3:10**), and the women of Bethlehem say she ***"loves you, and is better to you than seven sons"*** (**Ruth 4:15**). Her love was loyalty that stayed when leaving was easier, and it carried her to **Yahweh**.

Witness Three — Jonathan. He ***"loved him as his own soul"*** and made a covenant with David (**1 Samuel 18:1, 3; 20:17**). When David was hunted, Jonathan went to him ***"and strengthened his hand in Elohim"*** (**1 Samuel 23:16**). His love gave up a throne and pointed his friend to **Yahweh** (Doc 321).

Witness Four — Hosea. **Yahweh** told Hosea to love an adulterous woman ***"as Yahweh loves the children of Israel, though they turn to other gods."*** Hosea bought her back at a price, and then set terms: ***"You shall stay with me many days; you shall not play the harlot ... so will I also be toward you"*** (**Hosea 3:1–3**). This is the clearest picture in the Tanakh of love that redeems the unfaithful without approving the unfaithfulness. It pays the price, and it requires change.

Witness Five — Moses. After the golden calf, Moses executed judgment in the camp (**Exodus 32:26–28**), and the next day went back up to **Yahweh** and said, ***"Now, if You will forgive their sin — and if not, blot me, I pray, out of Your book which You have written"*** (**Exodus 32:31–32**). He would not excuse the sin, and he would not abandon the sinners. In one man, the Tanakh shows love and justice held together.

The counter-witness — Eli. He loved his sons, and it is not said that he loved them too much. He loved them wrongly. He spoke to them mildly (**1 Samuel 2:23–25**) and did not restrain them (**1 Samuel 3:13**), and **Yahweh** said he honored them above Him (**1 Samuel 2:29**). His house fell. Love that will not be corrected, was counted as love withheld from **Yahweh**.

Finding — Covenant love chooses, rescues, stays, strengthens, redeems at a cost, and requires change; it never approves what Yahweh condemns. Corroborated by six witnesses across all three divisions.

X. WHAT, THEN, IS LOVE? — THE COVENANT ANSWER

The Tanakh does not leave ***"love"*** undefined. Gathered from the witnesses above, these are its marks:

#	MARK OF COVENANT LOVE	TEXT
1	It begins with **Yahweh**, who loved first and chose freely	**Deuteronomy 7:7–8**; **Jeremiah 31:3**; **Hosea 11:1**
2	It is shown in deed, not only felt	**Leviticus 19:9–18, 34**; **Deuteronomy 10:18**
3	Toward **Yahweh**, it is exclusive loyalty that keeps His commandments	**Exodus 20:3–6**; **Deuteronomy 11:1; 13:3**
4	It hates evil and does not call evil good	**Psalms 97:10**; **Amos 5:15**; **Isaiah 5:20**; **Malachi 2:17**
5	It corrects, and does not leave the beloved in sin	**Proverbs 3:12; 13:24**; **Leviticus 19:17**
6	It is patient and slow to anger, and it forgives the one who turns	**Exodus 34:6–7**; **Isaiah 55:7**; **Hosea 14:4**
7	It covers offenses rather than stirring up strife	**Proverbs 10:12; 17:9**
8	It is faithful through time and hardship	**Proverbs 17:17**; **Ruth 1:16–17**; **Song of Songs 8:6–7**
9	It does good even to the enemy, but does not join itself to those who hate **Yahweh**	**Exodus 23:4–5**; **Proverbs 25:21**; **2 Chronicles 19:2**

One caution on Mark 7. ***"Hatred stirs up strife, but love covers all transgressions"*** (**Proverbs 10:12**) does not cancel Mark 5. The verb ***kasah (to cover)*** here means not exposing and not repeating an offense to stir up strife; the companion proverb says, ***"He who covers a transgression seeks love, but he who repeats a matter separates close friends"*** (**Proverbs 17:9**).

The same book says, ***"He who covers his sins will not prosper, but whoever confesses and forsakes them will have mercy"*** (**Proverbs 28:13**). Love covers a brother's offense from gossip; it does not cover sin from **Yahweh**.

From these marks, the covenant answer to the question ***"What is love?"*** can be stated in one paragraph:

> **The covenant answer:** ***Love, in the written covenant of Yahweh, is loyal devotion that seeks the true good of the one loved, shown in deeds, measured by Yahweh's commandments, joined to the hatred of evil, willing to correct, and faithful through time. Yahweh's own love is good to all and patient with all; it keeps covenant love with those who love Him and keep His commandments; it disciplines His children; it does not clear the guilty who will not turn; and it receives freely everyone who returns.***

Finding — This definition is drawn from the witnesses in Sections III through IX and is **Corroborated** at every point. **The definition *"love is accepting a person no matter what they do"* is Not in the text**.

XI. THREE-RELIGION AUDIT — HOW EACH TRADITION TEACHES THE LOVE OF THE CREATOR

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
Teaching today	Love is tied to the commandments: the blessing before the Shema thanks **Yahweh** for teaching Israel His statutes ***be-ahavah (in love)***. The Thirteen Attributes from **Exodus 34:6–7** are central to the prayers of repentance. The Mishnah contrasts love that depends on a thing (Amnon and Tamar) with love that does not (David and Jonathan) (Avot 5:16).	***"God is love"*** (1 John 4:8, 16) and ***"God so loved the world"*** (John 3:16) are the best-known texts. Many churches teach that God's love is unconditional and set it against law-keeping. Others hold, with 1 John 5:3, that ***"this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments."***	Al-Wadud (Q. 11:90; 85:14). God loves the doers of good, the repentant, the purified, and the steadfast (Q. 2:195, 222; 3:146) and does not love the transgressors, corruption, the disbelievers, or the wrongdoers (Q. 2:190, 205; 3:32, 57).

ELEMENT	✡ JUDAISM	† CHRISTIANITY	☪ ISLAM
Covenant strength	Keeps love joined to commandment, as **Deuteronomy 11:1** does. The Avot saying matches Tanakh's own example of Amnon (**2 Samuel 13:15**) and of Jonathan (**1 Samuel 18:1**).	John 14:15 and 1 John 5:3 restate **Deuteronomy 11:1**. Hebrews 12:6 and Revelation 3:19 restate **Proverbs 3:12**: whom He loves He disciplines. 1 John's own letter says ***"whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God"*** (1 John 3:10).	Love tied to deeds in both directions stands close to **Exodus 20:5–6**, **Proverbs 15:9**, and **Psalms 5:5**.
Covenant departure	The liturgy's Thirteen Attributes stop at ***ve-nakeh (and clearing)***, omitting ***lo yenakeh (He will not clear)***; heard alone, the prayer says the opposite of the verse. The Talmud's reading (Yoma 86a) restores the meaning, but the recited words do not.	***"God is love,"*** cut from its own letter, becomes ***"He loves everyone no matter what"*** — the very saying **Malachi 2:17** condemns. Matthew 5:43 cites ***"hate your enemy"*** as something heard; no Tanakh text says it, and **Exodus 23:4–5** commands the opposite.	Love for God is made conditional on following a later messenger (Q. 3:31), a mediator **Deuteronomy 6:4–5** and **13:1–3** do not name. The Tanakh measures every later voice by the words already given.
Covenant witness	Yoma 86a: He clears those who repent and does not clear those who do not — the Tanakh's own balance (**Ezekiel 18:21–24**).	Romans 5:8 and John 3:16 bear witness to the truth of **Deuteronomy 7:7–8**: the love of the Creator comes first and is not earned.	The repeated ***"God does not love"*** statements stand as a witness against the slogan that He is pleased with all.

XII. CORRECTIONS TO EARLIER LIBRARY MATERIAL

Under the standing Corrections Rule (October 2, 2026), the following points in earlier Library material were found while preparing this study. Each correction marked ***"made"*** has also been entered in the affected Google Doc so that the website copy can be replaced.

Correction 1 — Doc 254, Section I-B (made). The study says, ***"The Hebrew of Deuteronomy 6:5 is eight words."*** The verse has ten Hebrew words, which the maqaf (the Hebrew hyphen) joins into seven units: ***ve-ahavta*** / ***et*** / ***Yahweh*** / ***Eloheikha*** / ***be-khol-levavkha*** / ***u-vekhol-nafshekha*** /

u-vekhol-me'odekha. The sentence now reads: ***"The Hebrew of Deuteronomy 6:5 is ten words, joined by the maqaf into seven."***

Correction 2 — Doc 254, three-religion table and audit (made). The table says Rabbi Akiva ***"is remembered as reciting it at his death (Talmud Berakhot 61b)."*** In Berakhot 61b he explains ***"with all your soul"*** (from verse 5) to his students, and his soul departs at the word ***echad (one)***, the last word of **Deuteronomy 6:4**. The sentence now reads: ***"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)."*** The audit's ***"with this verse on his lips"*** now reads ***"with the Shema on his lips."*** This is comparative material only.

Left for Kepha's decision — Doc 254 format. Doc 254 was built September 28, 2026, before the October 8 Hebrew verse-number rule and the October 22 title-page rule. Its title page has no date line, and its How to Read paragraph lacks the highlighted verse-number explanation. A rebuild in the current Doc 250 format is recommended when convenient. Its teaching content stands, and this study builds on it.

XIII. SEVEN COVENANT DECLARATIONS ON LOVE

Under 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	**Yahweh** is compassionate, gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in covenant love, and in the same Name He will by no means clear the guilty. His love is never separated from His holiness and justice.	**Exodus 34:6–7**; **Numbers 14:18**; **Nahum 1:3**
II	**Yahweh** is good to all; He feeds every creature and desires that the wicked turn and live.	**Psalms 145:9**; **Jonah 4:11**; **Ezekiel 33:11**
III	**Yahweh** keeps covenant and covenant love with those who love Him and keep His commandments, and He hates the workers of iniquity who persist in evil.	**Deuteronomy 7:9–10**; **Psalms 5:5; 103:17–18**
IV	The teaching that **Yahweh** is pleased with evildoers, or that those who walk in stubbornness will have peace, is the word of false prophets.	**Malachi 2:17**; **Jeremiah 23:17**; **Ezekiel 13:22**

#	COVENANT DECLARATION	BASIS
V	Whom **Yahweh** loves He corrects, and the love that will not correct fails both **Yahweh** and the beloved.	**Proverbs 3:11–12; 13:24**; **1 Samuel 3:13**
VI	Love for **Yahweh** is exclusive loyalty shown in keeping His commandments and in hating evil.	**Exodus 20:6**; **Deuteronomy 11:1**; **Psalms 97:10**
VII	Love for neighbor, stranger, and even enemy is shown in deeds; but the covenant person does not love or strengthen those who hate **Yahweh**.	**Leviticus 19:18, 34**; **Exodus 23:4–5**; **2 Chronicles 19:2**

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

Behind the question *"What is love?"* there are usually two kinds of people. One has been told that Yahweh loves him no matter what, and has stopped asking what Yahweh wants. The other has been told so much about judgment that he believes Yahweh could never love him. The written covenant speaks to both.

To the one who has been told "He loves you no matter what." **Yahweh**'s goodness to you is real, and His patience has kept you alive (**Psalms 145:9**). But do not mistake His patience for approval. ***"Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil"*** (**Ecclesiastes 8:11**). The same Name that is slow to anger will by no means clear the guilty (**Exodus 34:7**). His covenant love is kept for those who love Him and keep His commandments (**Deuteronomy 7:9**). Read what He commanded, and do it.

To the one who believes Yahweh could never love him. The door is open to the worst of men: ***"Let the wicked forsake his way … and let him return to Yahweh, and He will have compassion on him; and to our Elohim, for He will abundantly pardon"*** (**Isaiah 55:7**). He has no pleasure in your death (**Ezekiel 33:11**). To people He had said He would love no more, He said, ***"Return … I will love them freely"*** (**Hosea 14:1–4**). His love was there before your return; your return is how you come to it.

To the one who wants to love rightly. Love **Yahweh** first, with all your heart, soul, and might, and show it by keeping what He said (**Deuteronomy 6:5; 11:1**). Hate evil, beginning with your own (**Psalms 97:10**; **Proverbs 28:13**). Love your neighbor in deeds: pay him, help him, tell him the truth, and correct him when he sins (**Leviticus 19:13–18**). Feed your hungry enemy and return his ox

(**Exodus 23:4–5**). Do not join yourself to those who hate **Yahweh** (**2 Chronicles 19:2**). Stay faithful when it is hard (**Ruth 1:16**).

And teach it at home. The command to love **Yahweh** was never meant to end with the one who hears it: ***"You shall teach them diligently to your children"*** (**Deuteronomy 6:7**). A child who learns that love keeps, corrects, forgives, and stays has learned what the covenant means by love.

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"Know therefore that Yahweh your Elohim, He is Elohim, the faithful El, who keeps covenant and covenant love with those who love Him and keep His commandments, to a thousand generations."

Deuteronomy 7:9 — The Written Covenant of Yahweh