



Judaism's Two Torahs

In rabbinic literature, the word Torah denotes both the five books (תורה שבכתב "Torah that is written") and the Oral Torah (תורה שבעל פה, "Torah that is spoken").

🌀 Wikipedia

...there is a companion to the Written Torah, an Oral Law [תורה שבעל פה] without which the Written Torah can be twisted and misinterpreted beyond recognition, as indeed it has been by the ignorant down through the centuries.

🌀 Introduction to the Stone Chumash

A gentile said to Shammai: How many Torahs do you have? He said to him: Two, the Written Torah and the Oral Torah.

🌀 b. Shabbat 31a

The Written Law is a general outline of the complete Oral Law. One must always keep this in mind in order to correctly understand the nature of תורה שבכתב, the written Word of God.

🌀 R' Samson Raphael Hirsch

Acts 15:5-6

But some believers who belonged to the party of the Pharisees rose up and said, "It is necessary to circumcise [the gentiles] and to order them to keep the Torah of Moses." The apostles and the elders were gathered together to consider this matter.

Acts 15:10

Now, therefore, why are you putting God to the test by placing a yoke on the neck of the disciples that neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear?

Matthew 23:4

[The Scribes and Pharisees] tie up heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on people's shoulders, but they themselves are not willing to move them with their finger.

Acts 15:19-21

[James:] "Therefore my judgment is that we should not trouble those of the Gentiles who turn to God, but should write to them to **(A)** abstain from the things polluted by idols, and from **(B)** sexual immorality, and from **(C)** what has been strangled, and from **(D)** blood. For from ancient generations Moses has had in every city those who proclaim him, for he is read every Sabbath in the synagogues."

*Although ... the Jew's mission of holiness encompasses his entire being and all forms of his behavior, the Torah uses the term holiness specifically with regard to three areas: **(A) idolatry**, **(B) sexual immorality**, and **(C&D) forbidden foods**. One who curbs himself from forbidden activities in those areas is on the way to holiness; but one who indulges in those vices is טמא, contaminated.*

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Paul's Commitment to Torah

Acts 21:17-26

When we had come to Jerusalem, the brothers received us gladly. On the following day Paul went in with us to James, and all the elders were present. After greeting them, he related one by one the things that God had done among the Gentiles through his ministry. And when they heard it, they glorified God. And they said to him, "You see, brother, how many thousands there are among the Jews of those who have believed. They are all zealous for the Torah, and they have been told about you that you teach all the Jews who are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, telling them not to circumcise their children or walk according to our customs. What then is to be done? They will certainly hear that you have come. Do therefore what we tell you. We have four men who are under a vow; take these men and purify yourself along with them and pay their expenses, so that they may shave their heads. Thus all will know that there is nothing in what they have been told about you, but that you yourself also live in observance of the Torah. But as for the Gentiles who have believed, we have sent a letter with our judgment that they should abstain from what has been sacrificed to idols, and from blood, and from what has been strangled, and from sexual immorality." Then Paul took the men, and the next day he purified himself along with them and went into the temple, giving notice when the days of purification would be fulfilled and the offering presented for each one of them.

1 Corinthians 9:20-21

To the Jews I became as a Jew, in order to win Jews. To those under the law I became as one under the law (though not being myself under the law) that I might win those under the law. To those outside the law I became as one outside the law (not being outside God's Torah, but legally Messiah's) that I might win those outside the law.

RESOURCES:

Leviticus 3:17 It shall be a statute forever throughout your generations, in all your dwelling places, that you eat neither fat nor blood."

Nahum 2:12 The lion tore [טרף, *treif*] enough for his cubs and **strangled** prey for his lionesses. He filled his caves with prey and his dens with torn flesh [טרפה, *treifah*].

Philippians 3:4-6 Though I myself have reason for confidence in the flesh also. If anyone else thinks he has reason for confidence in the flesh, I have more: circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the Torah, a Pharisee; as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the Torah, blameless.