

## Torah and Jews and Gentiles

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There is one Torah and it applies to all peoples—Jews, Gentiles, male, female, slave, free, priests, Levites, and all other descendants of Jacob. The question therefore is, “What parts apply to what people?” The Torah is often explicit as to what parts apply to whom. The challenge we face now is one of the New Covenant order in which Gentiles are now grafted into the commonwealth of Israel. Do they now have to live according to the Torah just as a Jew does? The short answer is no.

At Ohev Yisrael we believe that Gentiles are welcome to participate in Jewish life, particularly as being part of a Jewish community, as Ohev is. We have a culture and it is a Jewish one. There is much blessing too in observing some of the commandments in the Torah. For instance, taking a day of rest is a great personal and familial blessing. There are even prophecies of a time when the nations will observe some of the commandments, like Sukkot, and the result will be rain for those nations.

In Acts 15 the initial governing body of Jewish believers concluded decisively that Gentiles don't have to keep the Torah like Jews do but will learn what is necessary for them to do now as part of the commonwealth of Israel. The new Gentile followers of Yeshua did not have to circumcise themselves and live Jewish lives, though they certainly would have oriented their faith-walk and been influenced by Jewish life and practice, given they heard of Yeshua from Jewish men and women.

There is also the aspect of Gentiles observing some Jewish practices as a testimony of one's love and devotion to the God of Israel, the Messiah of Israel, the book of Israel, and the people of Israel. For a Gentile to love in practical and loving identification with the Jewish people speaks volume, particularly in light of such tragic Church-Synagogue history.

Ultimately, Gentiles at Ohev should honor Jewish tradition as that is the culture of Ohev, but one should not feel obligated to observe the Torah as a Jew, one who is born into a covenant. If one wants to read more about this, please see the article, “One Law,” by Dr. Daniel Juster, who goes into this much more in depth.