

...There shall be one law (Torah) for you and for the resident stranger; it shall be a law for all time throughout the ages. You and the stranger shall be alike before the Lord... --- Numb. 15:15; see also Exodus 12:49

Of Israel it is said: *And who is like Your people Israel, a unique nation on the earth?* (II Samuel 7:23) This is only because they have one Torah, unlike all the other nations who lack the Divine Torah which is one. For they have only a religion of various observances, which may have many manifestations; only of the Torah can it be said that *there shall be one law for you*. There cannot be two Torahs, but only one law. --- Based on Rabbi Judah Loew of Prague, **Netzach Yisrael**, ch. 10; **Be'er HaGolah**)

But is there really one Torah? Yes, but there are multiple approaches and understandings of it, some of them not currently accessible to us. "The directive 'Turn it over, turn it over, for all is in it' (**Pirkei Avot** 5:24) has allowed sages and seekers of the most varied sorts to see their own thought, influenced as it may be by spiritual currents far from those of ancient Israel, as the true meaning of their own religious legacy. There are not **two** Torahs, a revealed and a hidden, but rather both **one** and **many**, as many as the ongoing creativity of the Jewish people can provide." --- Rabbi Arthur Green, Jewish Spirituality, introduction)

The written Torah and the oral Torah are joined together like an almond bud and its blossom--neither one concealed from the other, growing on a single stalk, like male and female joined in love. Both emerge from the sheer, inner voice, to exist as one. From there the written Torah draws, and the oral Torah suckles from the written. Clasp one another, they are inseparable. One is general, the other specific. You cannot have one without the other. --- Moses de Leon, 13th c. Spain, **Sefer ha-Rimmon**

The Torah is one, and it is also two Torahs, a written Torah and an oral Torah. But in truth, it is all one Torah, for the entire oral Torah is alluded to in the written Torah...It is only that the intellect has darkened and its light diminished because of Adam's sin...The Holy One, praised be He, saw (the deeds of the wicked) and concealed (the light, wisdom). Thus, due to the weakening of the human intellect, the written Torah is only understood after great effort. --- Rabbi Isaiah Horowitz, **Shnei Luchot Ha-Brit**

You and the stranger shall be alike before the Lord; the same ritual and the same rule shall apply to you and to the stranger who resides among you.

The influence of the ideal of the equality of all humans can be felt in the laws of the Torah, even though the laws therein are intended for the people of Israel alone. They envision Israel living in its own land – the Land of Israel... and form the constitution of the new state of the Israelites. Rabbi Haim Hirschensohn, an early 20th-century Orthodox Zionist thinker, taught that the Torah is democratic in viewing all citizens as equal before the law, including the Jew and the stranger – the non-Jew – in their midst. As paraphrased by the philosopher Eliezer Schweid, “In principle, the Torah advocates complete social, political and moral equality between Jews and Gentiles, in the sense that any demand based on human morality applies equally to all. The differences in religious and ritual considerations do not in the slightest impinge on the full equality between Jew and Gentile in the eyes of the Torah.” --- Rabbi Reuven Hammer, The Torah Revolution: Fourteen Truths that Changed the World

The stranger is placed on an equal footing with the Israelite citizen in matters of civil law, but there are differences between them in religious law. --- **Chumash Etz Hayim**

Another assertion of the identity, in respect of civil, moral, and religious rights and duties, of the home-born and stranger or proselyte. --- Rabbi Joseph H. Hertz

Great perils have this beauty, that they bring to light the fraternity of strangers. --- Victor Hugo

The humble, meek, merciful, just, pious and devout souls are everywhere of one religion; and when death has taken off the mask they will know one another, though the diverse liveries they wear here make them strangers. --- William Penn