

## There is Only One Torah

<sup>7</sup>So Moses went, called for the elders of the people, and put before them all these words that Adonai had commanded him. <sup>8</sup>All the people answered together and said, "Everything that Adonai has spoken, we will do." Then Moses reported the words of the people to Adonai...<sup>1</sup>Then to Moses He said, "Come up to Adonai, you and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and the seventy elders of Israel, and worship from afar. <sup>2</sup>Moses alone is to approach Adonai, but the others may not draw near, nor are the people to go up with him." <sup>3</sup>So Moses came and told the people all the words of Adonai as well as all the ordinances. All the people answered with one voice and said, "All the words which Adonai has spoken, we will do." <sup>4</sup>So Moses wrote down all the words of Adonai, then rose up early in the morning, and built an altar below the mountain, along with twelve pillars for the twelve tribes of Israel. <sup>5</sup>He then sent out young men of Bnei-Yisrael, who sacrificed burnt offerings and fellowship offerings of oxen to Adonai. <sup>6</sup>Then Moses took half of the blood and put it in basins and the other half he poured out against the altar. <sup>7</sup>He took the Scroll of the Covenant and read it in the hearing of the people. Again they said, "All that Adonai has spoken, we will do and obey." <sup>8</sup>Then Moses took the blood, sprinkled it on the people, and said, "Behold the blood of the covenant, which Adonai has cut with you, in agreement with all these words." <sup>9</sup>Then Moses and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel went up. <sup>10</sup>They saw the God of Israel, and under His feet was something like a pavement of sapphire, as clear as the very heavens. <sup>11</sup>Yet He did not raise His hand against the nobles of Bnei-Yisrael. So they beheld God, and ate and drank. <sup>12</sup>Then Adonai said to Moses, "Come up to Me on the mountain and stay there, and I will give you the tablets of stone with the Torah and the mitzvot, which I have written so that you may instruct them." (Exodus 19:7-8; 24:1-12)

When our people in *Parashat Mishpatim* heard all words of *Adonai* and all His judgments (*mishpatim*) the response by all of Israel was "All the words Adonai has spoken we will do." This is practically the same response they had given *before Adonai* spoke in *Ex. 19:8*: "All the words which Adonai has spoken, we will do." The *Torah* records for us in *Ex. 24:4* that Moses wrote *all* of the words spoken by *Adonai*: "Moses wrote down all the words of Adonai" followed by the *reading of the just written Words of Adonai* in the audience of all of the people. What was their response to the newly documented portion of the *Torah*? They said "Na'ase V'Nishma (*Ex. 24:7*)" which the *Artscroll TNK* and the *TLV* translate as "We will do and we will obey." The first part of the response phrase is identical to the previous two references (*Ex. 19:8* and *Ex. 24:3*) and the verb comes from the *Hebrew Paal Oseh* (עשה), meaning to do. But now, after having heard the words orally and upon hearing the *written words* they add *nishma* {the first-person plural future tense of the Hebrew verb *sh'ma* (שמע)} – which means to prove that one has heard by one's actions (i.e., *intrinsic* and *explicit obedience*). This was a complete and binding endorsement of a covenant. The text shows that *Moses* went on to perform the *ancient ritual ratification of a covenant with the shedding of blood* that was the practice of his time: "<sup>8</sup>Then Moses took the blood, sprinkled it on the people, and said, "Behold the blood of the covenant, which Adonai has cut with you, in agreement with all these words" (*Ex. 24:8*)

After that, God called Moses up the mountain again, in order to receive the "*luchot habrit*," the tablets of the covenant. Even though *Adonai* had already spoken the Ten Commandments (the Ten Words) in the hearing of the entirety of the Congregation of the Children of Israel, now *Adonai* gives Moses His words written upon tablets of stone, not by Moses' hand but by the finger of *Adonai Himself*: "*I will give you the tablets of stone with the Torah and the mitzvot, which I have written so that you may instruct them.*"

Throughout the *Torah*, it continually makes the point that *Adonai* gave His Word to Moses to be conveyed in written format. *Adonai* gave the *Written Word* to Israel in order to fulfill His purpose as stated to Abraham, to make from one man a great nation for the benefit of all mankind (See *Ex. 19:6* "You will be to me a kingdom of kohanim and a holy nation.")

Therefore, after reading Exodus 24, is there an *Oral Law* from Sinai, in addition to the *Written Law*? No! Firstly, Moses *wrote down All the Words of the Lord!* Secondly, His covenant is based on the *Written Law*: "<sup>27</sup>Then Adonai said to Moses, "Write these words, for based on these words I have cut a covenant with you

and with Israel” (Ex. 34:27). Thirdly, His Words are written in the Torah Scroll (book): “<sup>58</sup>If you do not take care to do all the words of this Torah, the things written in this scroll, to fear this glorious and awesome Name, Adonai your God... <sup>10</sup>when you listen to the voice of Adonai your God, to keep His mitzvot and His statutes that are written in this scroll of the Torah, when you turn to Adonai your God with all your heart and with all your soul” (Deut. 28:58; 30:10).

Fourthly, we are to read His Torah Publicly: “<sup>9</sup>Moses wrote down this Torah and gave it to the kohanim, the sons of Levi who carry the Ark of the Covenant of Adonai, and to all the elders of Israel. <sup>10</sup>Then Moses commanded them saying, “At the end of every seven years, in the set time of the year of cancelling debts (shmitah year), during the feast of Sukkot, <sup>11</sup>when all Israel comes to appear before Adonai your God in the place He chooses, you are to read this Torah before them in their hearing. <sup>12</sup>Gather the people—the men and women and little ones, and the outsider within your town gates—so they may hear and so they may learn, and they will fear Adonai your God and take care to do all the words of this Torah. <sup>13</sup>So their children, who have not known, will hear and learn to fear Adonai your God—all the days you live on the land you are about to cross over the Jordan to possess” (Deut. 31:9-13). And finally, the finished written *Sefer Torah* was placed in the Ark of the Covenant: “<sup>24</sup>Now when Moses had finished writing the words of this Torah on a scroll, right to the end...<sup>25</sup>Moses commanded the Levites, carriers of the Ark of the Covenant of Adonai saying, <sup>26</sup>Take this scroll of the Torah, and place it beside the Ark of the Covenant of Adonai your God. It will remain there as a witness against you” (Deut. 31:24-26).

So, who sits in Moses’ Seat? The words of *Yeshua* in Matthew 23:1-3 are challenging in the face of a human tendency to try and usurp authority that belongs to *Adonai* only: “<sup>1</sup>Then *Yeshua* spoke to the crowds and to His disciples, <sup>2</sup>saying, “The Torah scholars and Pharisees sit on the seat of Moses. <sup>3</sup>So whatever they tell you, do and observe. But don’t do what they do; for what they say, they do not do.” Traditionally, the Pharisees unilaterally seated themselves in this seat. The Hebrew and Greek in the Authorized Version merely says to *guard* (*shomer*) what they tell you to *guard*, i.e., the *Torah*. *Yeshua* transferred the power to *Bind and Loose / to Forbid and Permit / to make Halakha* to Peter and the Disciples, and by implication, to the Believing Community (to the original *Messianic Community*) and not to the unbelieving Jewish Community of their day: “<sup>19</sup>I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven. Whatever you forbid on earth will have been forbidden in heaven and what you permit on earth will have been permitted in heaven” (Matt. 16:19) {See also Matt. 16:6-12, 21:43-45 and Acts 15}.

The Church Fathers believed the Gospel of Matthew was originally written in Hebrew. In the *Shem-Tov Manuscript* Matthew 23:1-3 reads: “All that he [*Moses*] says do.” **Not** “All that they [*Pharisees*] say do.” The difference is one Hebrew letter – *Omer* [he says] vs. *Omru* [they say]. *Yeshua* finishes in Matthew 23:3 with “don’t do according to their deeds [*Takanot*]” – which uses the same Hebrew word also used in Matthew 15 when *Yeshua* opposes the traditions of men that make null and void the Word of God. BTW, the Seat of Moses only had limited power (See Deut. 17:8-9) to decide certain cases that came before them but not to make universal *Halakha* over every area of a person’s life, biding for all time... So as for me and my house, we will *Naase V’Nishma* His *Torah* which is His *Written Word* forever! *Shabbat Shalom!*