

# The Torah is Not the Law

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## Introduction

The objective of this study is to help the reader to better understand both the L-rd our G-d, YHVH, our Creator and King of the Universe, who is also Abba, our Father, and the loving instructions he carefully revealed to his beloved children as recorded in the Holy Scriptures.

As you begin, I respectfully ask you to put aside, at least temporarily, the concepts and opinions you have formed or been taught throughout your life about the word of G-d, the Torah, that is commonly called “the Law.” I ask you to start afresh and join me in building a new paradigm, a new way of thinking about the Torah. Of course, I want you to carefully consider what I offer to you in light of the totality of the Scriptures as you are led into the truth by the Ruach HaKodesh, the Holy Spirit. Please do not accept what I say merely because I say it, but because the Ruach HaKodesh confirms it in your spirit as truth from YHVH.

If the Ruach HaKodesh confirms this new paradigm to you as truth, I believe that you will experience a heightened level of liberation, expanded dimensions of freedom to be what Abba has created you to be, one of his beloved children. He said, “I am YHVH your G-d, who brought you out of the land of Egypt so that you would not be their slaves, and I broke the bars of your yoke and made you walk erect. (Leviticus 26:13) Because G-d delivered his people from slavery, he gave them a Torah of deliverance, instructions about living in the new liberty.

Likewise, we have been enslaved to the kingdom of sin and death but YHVH has delivered us and liberated us into his kingdom of life. As Rav Sha’ul (Apostle Paul) wrote to the Romans “The Torah of the Spirit, which produces this life in union with Messiah Yeshua, has set me free from the Torah of sin and death.” (8:2 JNT)

Similarly, we have been enslaved by the old paradigm that the Torah is the Law and in the Law we find sin and death. Now, in these last days, YHVH wants us to be delivered, to be liberated, to fully understand and embrace what has been hidden from us for centuries and generations so we may be truly free in him and in his Torah that brings us to life in him.

The title of this study is the central conclusion to which the Ruach HaKodesh has led me over the past several years. The Torah is not the Law! The subtitle might be an expanded conclusion: The Torah is the set of instructions graciously offered by our loving heavenly Father for our own good about how we are to walk humbly before him and with our fellow men.

As you are probably aware, the subject of “the Law” is probably one of the most misunderstood concepts in all of Christendom. For most Christians, the term, “the Law” produces negative mental and spiritual images. Those negative images are both of YHVH, our Creator and King of the Universe, and also of his word, the truth he has revealed to his people. In the context of “the Law,” YHVH is imagined as the stern lawgiver and harsh judge who sits behind a high bench in the courtroom. A gavel in hand, he is carefully watching every move that we make, every step that we take, every word that we say. He eagerly awaits our failure to keep the least of these “Laws” so that he may slam his gavel down and condemn us to hell. “The Law” is seen as a bookshelf full of statutes, ordinances, regulations, rules, and judgments against others for their failures. We imagine these “laws” are just waiting to trip us up because we cannot possibly know or comprehend or implement them all in our lives. Such negative images do a grave injustice to YHVH's revelation of himself to his children. They also confine us and restrict our behavior rather than encouraging us to experience the freedom of being a child of the King of the Universe.

These negative images were first imagined centuries ago, about the time of Y'shua but not by him or his disciples. Through time the images were developed, refined, taught and perpetuated from generation to generation by well-meaning but misinformed teachers who failed to understand the true nature of YHVH in relationship to his children. Thus they have viewed and taught “the Law” as something harsh, bad, transient, and superseded by something better, namely, grace. They refer to passages such as Yochanan (John) 1:16-17 to prove this for it says, “And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace. For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.”

The purpose of this study is to dispel these erroneous negative images from the minds and spirits of believers and replace them with the truth. YHVH, our G-d, Creator, and King of the Universe, is also Abba, our loving heavenly Father. As all fathers do, Abba desires only the best for his beloved children. In order to achieve that objective, Abba has lovingly given instructions which he asks his children to follow for their own good.

These instructions are a unity just as YHVH is a unity as we proclaim regularly in the Shema from Devarim (Deut.) 6:4. “Shema Yisrael. Adonai Eloheinu. Adonai Echad. Hear O Yisrael. The L-rd is our G-d. The L-rd is one.” The unity of YHVH has many diverse aspects as revealed in his many, varied manifestations described by approximately 50 names for YHVH in his scriptures. Likewise the unity of his instructions, the Torah, is revealed in diverse aspects described by a number of Hebrew words.

To enable you to grasp the wonderful truth that the Torah is not the Law, I will present evidence to support my conclusion. I will offer a reasonable explanation of how we arrived at our erroneous understanding of the Torah as “the Law.” I will describe this Law Model from an attorney’s perspective. We will also examine the understanding that Y’shua and Rav Sha’ul had of the Torah. Based on that understanding, I will propose the Education Model of Torah which better describes the Torah from the perspective of Abba. Finally, we will consider what our responses should be to this new paradigm, the Education Model of Torah.

This study is a work in progress. By no means is it intended to be the final word on this topic. Rather, I pray that it will be used by the Ruach HaKodesh to encourage the readers to carefully contemplate and prayerfully study the word of Abba for themselves being led into the truth by the Ruach HaKodesh. Constructive criticism, comments and suggestions based on such study will be gratefully received and considered. May the end result be a fuller understanding of YHVH our Abba and his wonderful word in which he reveals himself to those who love him and diligently seek him.

## **Foundational Truths**

To begin, we must agree on a foundation of truths about YHVH our Abba, our Father.

Abba is love. Abba is full of grace. Abba is full of mercy. Abba is unchanging. Abba is eternal. Abba has created mankind. Those men and women who submit themselves to him are his children. In various ways, places and times, Abba, through the leaders of his people such as Moshe and the prophets who spoke for him, like Yesha’yahu (Isaiah), Yirmeyahu (Jeremiah), Yechezk’el (Ezekiel), and Y’shua (Jesus) gave his children instructions, guidance, directions for living. With these statements I believe we all agree. The original Hebrew words of the Tanakh, the “Old Testament,” portray Abba and his word in these ways. Thus Moshe and all Bnei Yisrael (the Children of Yisrael, the descendants of Ya’akov (Jacob)) understood Abba to have these characteristics and to have spoken to them his instructions for living uprightly before Abba and with mankind whom Abba created.

The system of instructions Abba gave to his children, described above, is called the Torah. Initially Torah encompassed the first five books, B’reshit (Genesis) through Devarim (Deuteronomy) the books written by Moshe. Today, Judaism has an expanded definition of Torah which includes these books plus the “Oral Torah” (commonly referred to as the Mishnah) plus the rabbinical commentary including the Talmud and other writings of the Sages. Messianic believers have expanded the definition of Torah to encompass the Tanakh (consisting of the Torah, the Nevi’im (Prophets) and the Ketuvim (Writings), what Christendom calls the “Old Testament”) and all of the B’rit Chadashah (what Christendom calls the “New Testament”) - the entire scriptures from B’reshit through the Revelation - for we

believe that all instructions of Abba that have been transmitted to us in these writings are applicable and appropriately called Torah.

## **How Did We Get Here?**

Little mistakes made at the beginning of a project can lead to big problems at the end. This is a good case of that maxim being true. To translate Torah as “law” may be considered a small mistake but it has led to a massive perversion of the truth, to a distorted image of Abba and his words of life that has caused many to reject Abba and his loving instructions. We need to examine the history of the development of man’s understanding of Torah as the Law.

The Torah was first identified as the books written by Moshe. These would have been completed approximately 1500 years before the birth of Y’shua. The remaining books of the Tanakh, the Prophets and the Writings, were generally written prior to the Babylonian captivity or shortly after the return of the Jewish people from that captivity and the reconstruction of the Temple and the restoration of Temple worship. All of these writings in Hebrew were on scrolls accessible to the people in their places of study and worship. Because of their wonderful gift of memory they would probably have memorized at least the Psalms and the books of Moshe, if not the whole Tanakh.

Approximately 300 years before Y’shua's birth, the influence of the Greeks had pervaded the land of Yisrael. First the Greek Empire of Alexander the Great and later the Greek-influenced Ptolemaic Empire ruled over the land of Yisrael as well as the southern Mediterranean including Egypt. During the reign of Ptolemy II, the books of Moshe were translated by Jewish scholars in Egypt into Greek and this translation was called the Septuagint.

Under the influence of the Greek Alexandrian and Ptolemaic Empires, these Jewish scholars became “hellenized” in their thinking, that is they fell under the influence of the western Greek way of thinking and shifted their thinking from the eastern Hebraic mode of thought. Thus, they began to see the Torah through Greek eyes having been assimilated into the Greek world around them. The Greeks had many laws governing their Empire. This system of laws affected the Jewish Sages until they perceived the Torah as a legal system like the Greek system which might be described as “If you don't do what the Law says, you will be exiled from the Empire.” So these Jewish scholars developed halachah, a series of interpretations of the Torah intended to guide the walk of the observant Jews by placing a fence around the Torah to prevent inadvertent violations.

This fence around the Torah was patterned after the westernized, Greek system of law. It became a tradition of the elders which they added to the Oral Torah that was spoken by Abba to Moshe while he was on Har Sinai. This halachic fence included many “laws” like limitation

on the Shabbat day's walk, and the tithing of herbs, which became burdensome to the people. You will recall that Y'shua condemned the Pharisees for their hypocritical imposition of these man-made traditions as burdens upon the people which they themselves ignored. Furthermore, they effectively added these laws to Abba's Torah by telling the people that if they broke these additional traditions they were dangerously close to breaking G-d's Torah and if they broke the Torah they would be exiled from their holy city.

The most significant result of these developments on the "Law" of the Torah was the Septuagint translation of the Hebrew word Torah into Greek as *nomos* meaning law and not *didaskalia*. *Didaskalia* means teaching, instruction, education, doctrine, what is taught. It means precisely what the Hebrew word Torah really means, as we will discuss below. This mistranslation of Torah into Greek as *nomos* set the stage for the church fathers' full-fledged proclamation of the Torah as "the Law."

At and after the time of Y'shua, the Sages of Judaism contributed to this process of making Torah into "law." After the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 C.E., the rabbis formally compiled their oral traditions and halachic interpretations of Torah, wrote them as the Mishnah in about 200 C.E., adopted them as their "Law" and required obedience of all Jewish people to this combination of the Torah and Mishnah. Subsequently their Sages commented further on the Mishnah thus adding more "law" and compiled those comments or Gemara as the Talmud. The Palestinian (or Jerusalem) Talmud was issued first in Yerushalayim in about 400 C.E. followed about 100 years later by the Babylonian Talmud. It is estimated to contain about two and a half million words and is about three times as long as the Palestinian Talmud. The Talmud has been accepted as a code book for the regulation of Jewish life. Because it does not have the outward form of a code book, logically ordered books of law code of Talmudic and later decisions were composed subsequently through the centuries. Thus, in the Jewish mind, the Torah became the Law and the rabbis became excellent "lawyers." Today the rabbis say they are studying the Torah when they are really studying all of these works of men in addition to the words of G-d through Moshe which they spend precious little time studying..

After the formation of the "church" -- not at Shavuot (Pentecost) but years later -- it was organized under the churchmen (the church fathers, scholars, teachers, and leaders) who, over the first few centuries after the life of Y'shua, rejected the Hebraic heritage of their faith. Some became quite anti-semitic. The churchmen demanded orthodoxy from all who would follow in their footsteps as churchmen. Orthodoxy meant what these churchmen said was right and not necessarily what was the truth. Orthodoxy was thus perpetuated in the teaching cycle, from scholar/teachers to students who grew up to become scholar/teachers who taught the next generation their orthodoxy rather than the truth. (I do not use the term "churchmen" to mean the pastors, leaders, and believers in local churches today who are being as faithful to the word of G-d as they know how based upon the orthodoxy that has been transmitted to them.)

Soon after the death of Y'shua and the organization of the church, churchmen adopted the terminology of the rabbis and started calling the Torah "the Law." They adopted the Septuagint's translator's view of Torah as nomos, the Greek law which resulted in exile if broken. In the process, the churchmen changed the truths about the character of Abba and his word that we agreed upon above. They portrayed YHVH, as revealed in the "Old Testament," as the awesome, stern lawgiver who imposed the Law on mankind in the form of commands, statutes, ordinances, regulations, judgments and rules. He demanded all people follow these or he would punish them both on earth and in hell for eternity. They saw him as the judge of all the earth constantly monitoring all actions and issuing judgment to inflict punishment for failing to keep every Law in his Torah. Those images of YHVH were passed from generation to generation even until today.

Is that your idea of Abba, G-d of love, grace and mercy? It certainly is not mine! But churchmen's portrayal of G-d in this manner and their transforming of Torah into "the Law" enhanced their ability to enforce their orthodoxy on their church members. Over the centuries they used this model of Torah as law to create their own church law which they sometimes ruthlessly imposed on their church members, as during the Inquisition. This contributed to the Protestant movement and the splintering into denominations, each of which had its own version of church law imposed on its members. Is it any wonder that in the last few decades people have run away from the church or at least avoided the Old Testament if they stayed in church.

As languages developed besides Hebrew and Greek, in order for the Scriptures to be disseminated translations had to be made so that the people would be able to understand them. The translators were scholars who had been raised in the traditional portrayal of YHVH and his word as "the Law." Controlled by the churchmen who funded their translations, they incorporated into their translations the churchmen's bias against the Torah of G-d. They rewarded their paymasters by using words that perpetuated the traditional portrayal of YHVH, the G-d of the Old Testament.

To counter this portrayal, the churchmen and their translators proclaimed that the G-d of the New Testament changed into a G-d of love, grace and mercy sometime immediately before, during or after the life of Y'shua. Furthermore, his Torah was nullified by Y'shua and replaced with two commandments: to love G-d and love your neighbor. That, of course, is the current position of most churchmen today -- G-d of the Old Testament changed into the loving G-d of the New Testament. In fact, some have gone so far with this theology that they effectively portray G-d as their bellboy who immediately responds to their every call and who must and will do everything that they desire including providing them with earthly riches if they will just ask in the right way. Some even see Y'shua as their big brother or pal rather than as their Redeemer, L-rd, Creator and King of the Universe.

The Scriptures proclaim that G-d is eternal and he does not change. Thus he must have been the same all along, both before and after Y'shua. So the churchmen can't logically have a G-d revealed in the Old Testament (stern lawgiver and harsh judge) who is different in the New Testament (loving, merciful and gracious). But that is precisely what they try to tell us. They use their translations to impart this message to their people, most of whom are not trained in the original languages. Even if they have such language training, they have been taught that the English meanings of the original words are what the churchmen erroneously say they are. Even the Biblical dictionaries and lexicons have been compiled by the translators based upon their understanding rather than upon the original meaning of words.

Christianity's view of "the Law" has been influenced by the struggle to define its own identity apart from its Hebraic roots. That struggle was fought with powerful figures like Marcion (A.D. 130), who denied the validity of the Hebrew Bible for Christian faith and practice. He loved Rav Sha'ul, according to special interpretation of him, but Marcion hated the Bible. Even though the Church called Marcion a heretic, his view of "the Law" was largely accepted without consideration of the Jewish understanding of the Torah. In contrast to Marcion, both Y'shua and Rav Sha'ul highly valued the Torah as we shall see.

Martin Luther also had a negative impact on Christian theologies by misunderstanding Rav Sha'ul and developing the theology of justification by faith. According to Luther, faith negated Torah. Torah was bad, imperfect, and transient. Judaism, as a religious system, was bad and all Jews would burn in hell unless they accepted Y'shua as their personal savior. Luther was as rabid an anti-Semite as was Marcion and his anti-Semitism is clearly reflected in his theology.

Unfortunately, the influence of Marcion, Luther, and others of their ilk and kind remain with us until today. As a result many unwary believers have been, and continue to be, taught erroneously.

Based upon this history we can understand why we are taught today that the Torah is "the Law" of G-d. This is why churchmen taught that all the commandments of "the Law" must be fulfilled in every respect in order for one to have salvation. This is why churchmen taught that if one attempted to keep any of the "laws" one had to keep them all. This is why churchmen taught that YHVH had to come up with a better plan of salvation. This is why churchmen substituted the two commandments of Y'shua to love G-d and to love your neighbor for the whole of the Torah.

Somehow churchmen did not realize that these two commandments are actually contained within the Torah! (Devarim (Deut) 6:5, "You shall love YHVH your G-d with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might." Vayikra (Lev.) 19:18, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself; I am YHVH.") So, according to churchmen's own theology, if they

attempt to keep these two commandments of Y'shua, they must keep all the commandments in order to be saved.

### **The Law Model and its Terminology**

Historically churchmen and their translators have used words taken from the legal profession to translate the Hebrew words Abba chose to describe the various aspects of his Torah. Hebrew words such as Torah, chuqqah, choq, and mishpatim are translated with various legal terms including law, statute, ordinance, regulation, rule and judgment. Of course, all of these are attributed to YHVH thus painting the traditional portrayal of G-d as lawgiver and judge.

As an attorney familiar with legal terminology, I have become increasingly troubled with the use of these legal words to describe the system of loving instructions Abba gave his people in the Tanakh (Old Testament). The churchmen's chosen legal words do not seem to fit the G-d of the Bible and his Torah that I see revealed in the Hebrew Scriptures.

Here are some legal terms that churchmen and their translators have used to translate the various Hebrew words that are listed. The definitions are abridged from the Black's Law Dictionary, the standard dictionary used by all attorneys in the United States.

**LAW** - The Hebrew word **Torah** (pl. Torot) is usually translated as Law. Law is defined as that which is laid down, ordained, or established. Law, in its generic sense, is a body of rules of action or conduct prescribed by controlling authority, and having binding legal force. That which must be obeyed and followed by citizens subject to sanctions or legal consequences is a law. Law is a solemn expression of the will of the supreme power of the State.

**STATUTE** - The Hebrew words **Chukah** and **Chok** are usually translated as statute. A statute is a formal written enactment of a legislative body declaring, commanding, or prohibiting something.

**ORDINANCE** - The Hebrew word **Chukah** is also translated as ordinance. An ordinance is a local law of a municipality prescribing general, uniform, and permanent rules of conduct and governing matters such as zoning, building, health, traffic and safety, etc.

**REGULATION** - The Hebrew words **Torah**, **Mishpat**, **Chok** and **Chukah** are sometimes translated as regulation. Regulations are issued by various governmental departments to carry out the intent of the law. Agencies issue regulations to guide the activity of those regulated by the agency and of their own employees and to ensure uniform application of the law.

**RULE, STANDARD** - The Hebrew words **Mishpat** and **Chukah** are also translated as rule or standard. Rules are established standards, guides, or regulations for conduct or action. Principles or regulations set up by authority, prescribing or directing action or forbearance.

**JUDGMENT** - The Hebrew word **Mishpat** is also translated as judgment. A judgment is the official and authentic decision of a court of justice upon the respective rights and claims of the parties and submitted to its determination.

Does reading these legal words in your Bible in connection with our loving Abba trouble you as they do me? Perhaps, because of teaching by your pastors and teachers, you believe the G-d of the Tanakh is a G-d of law. Perhaps you believe his word is the Law rather than Abba's loving instructions. Perhaps in this study you will find a better understanding of the words Abba chose to describe his loving instructions to his children.

### **Yarah and Torah**

In Hebrew words are derived from root words and nouns from verbs. The root word for the noun Torah is the verb yarah. Yarah means to "throw, cast, shoot, point out, show, direct, teach, instruct." It connotes shooting or throwing something at a target, like guiding an arrow to a bull's-eye or guiding sheep toward the sheepfold. The meaning of yarah is clear and does not in any way embrace or imply any of the aspects of the law terms we have defined above.

Thus Torah, derived from yarah, is a noun which means teaching or instruction that is true and straight, as if the words of Torah are shot in a direct path like an arrow, with power and force for the best in life. Torah is the divine theme for all people who love G-d. Torah means G-d's will including but going over and beyond the ink dried upon the scrolls of holy writ. So Torah cannot mean or connote "law" in any way, shape or form unless it is distorted by those with a bias in favor of the law model.

Until the time of Y'shua and in the century following his life, Torah had this meaning. In the light of this, Y'shua condemned the rabbinical leaders of his day and their predecessors who had imposed their human traditions as laws on the people rather than teaching them to obey the instructions of their loving heavenly Father. They had perverted the Torah instructions that were delivered to Moshe by HaShem into a strict moral code full of requirements created by man in order to maintain control over the people. Torah has become a broad, all-encompassing term including the traditions of men rather than the loving instructions of our Father originally given to us in the books of Moshe, B'reshit (Genesis) through Devarim (Deuteronomy). So the rabbis no longer were educators in the Instructions of the Father but "lawyers" who argued about the Law that they created.

Equally unfortunate, this has been the case in some Messianic circles. Some teachers have adopted the rabbinical concept of the Torah as the “Law of Moshe” and have proclaimed it as such. They then apply the legalism that must naturally accompany such “law.” So they proclaim that believers have to keep the law to be saved or to receive the blessings of the L-rd. Then they go a step further by observing and judging the performance of others in keeping their law in their way. If they determine the performance is not up to their specifications and standards, they reject these poor, underperforming or nonperforming believers or place greater burdens on them, just like some of the Pharisees in the time of Y’shua whom he chastised for their own hypocrisy and lack of performance even to their own standards. This is a problem about which informed believers need to be fully aware.

I am keenly aware of the need to use accurate, precise language in our communications. Lawsuits are sometimes won or lost on the basis of terms and definitions and the precision of the words used in presenting and advocating a position.

Imagine with me a courtroom setting as portrayed in reality on Court TV and not the People’s Court. Imagine me standing before the judge as an attorney hired to vigorously represent my client in a lawsuit arising from a contract my client signed. The dispute is about the meaning of the terms and definitions found in that contract. At the time my client signed the contract and to this present day, my client has a clear and correct understanding of the meaning of the terms used in the contract. On the other side, the other party to the contract has perverted over time the meaning of the original terms in such a way to benefit itself at the expense of my client.

Think with me about my strategy as the attorney representing the clear and correct meaning of the terms. I have two choices about what words to use in my trial preparation. I can use the words with the clear and correct understanding of my client or I can use the erroneous terms and definitions as perverted by the other party. What will happen if I adopt, embrace and constantly use the erroneous terms and definitions throughout my trial presentation? What if I use the terms incorrectly whenever I examine a witness, whenever I confer with the judge, and whenever I present my case to the jury? Do I have a chance of winning this case? Of course not. In order to win the case I must consistently use, proclaim and advocate the correct meaning. I must not compromise by using my opponent’s meanings at any time or I will concede my case.

That imaginary scenario precisely illustrates the situation in which we find ourselves today. As Messianic believers who want to be faithful and true to the First Covenant Scriptures as originally revealed and as written in the original Hebrew language, we are in a battle for the minds of believers. In this battle we must not use terminology that is erroneous and incorrectly portrays the very nature and character of Abba our loving heavenly Father and which also perverts the truth of what he would have us do in obedience to him.

We must not use the erroneous term “law” but should use Torah or instructions whenever possible. That is why I carefully and consistently avoid the use of the erroneous term “law” in my teachings and writings. Torah is not the “law!” So please don’t call Torah what it is not! Try to faithfully talk about the instructions of Abba. He lovingly asks and reasonably expects his children to be obedient to the things that he asks them to do which he called Torah -- instructions.

### **Y’shua and Rav Sha’ul on Torah**

It is difficult for the average Christian to project themselves back some two thousand years in history into a cultural condition and mentality totally foreign to that of the Western world today. That is exactly, however, what we must do to gain proper perspective on the Torah.

The context is Jewish. The language is Hebrew. Y’shua and Rav Sha’ul were both Jewish, spoke Hebrew, and their perspective on Torah is deeply rooted in the Hebrew thought of their day which recognized two Torahs, the written and the oral. The Hebrew mind was realistic but simple. Their’s was a G-d not thought out. They took him for what he said he was and neither tried to explain nor understand. That much was a mystery posed no problems. Questions could remain unanswered, things unknown. They only needed to know one thing: G-d is and he is one; great, wonderful, powerful, all-encompassing producing wonder and awe.

The Greek mind had to reason everything out. The Greek mind was idealistic. They saw the world as it was, then tried to fashion it into what they thought it ought to be. Western thought today is derived from the Greek mind and the Hebrew mind has effectively been eliminated from our thought processes. To understand Torah we must return to the Hebrew mind and Hebrew thought.

Speaking to the household of Israel, Y’shua said, “Don’t think that I have come to abolish the Torah or the Prophets. I have come not to abolish but to complete. Yes indeed! I tell you that until heaven and earth pass away, not so much as a yud or a stroke will pass from the Torah.” (Mattityahu 5:17-18 JNT) The word Torah was not understood in a negative sense by Y’shua. In his view, the Torah revealed G-d's will. It was good and holy. It was eternal and would not change so long as heaven and earth existed. The Hebrew Bible taught Abba's love for all people, and provided a guide for daily life. Hence, the major issue Y’shua and his talmidim (students/disciples) faced was the proper understanding of Torah, which would lead to the right conduct in everyday living.

How does one abolish the Torah? By misinterpreting it. How does one complete the Torah? By correctly interpreting it and being obedient to its instructions. From the Hebrew, the passage could be translated, “Think not that I am come to misinterpret, or to misapply, the

Torah. Rather, I have come to correctly interpret and, thereby, cause the Torah to stand upright on a firm foundation.”

Abba’s divine revelation can be interpreted in different ways. Proper interpretation breathes life and power into words divinely spoken. If properly understood and obeyed, divine revelation, Torah, provides a guide for daily living. Thus the Torah is fulfilled. Wrong interpretation cancels the words communicated by Abba. Torah aids one’s understanding of his nature and his love for his people. Torah is a magnificent demonstration of Abba’s grace.

Rav Sha’ul is well qualified to speak about the Torah. In Acts 22:3 JNT he spoke in Hebrew to the mob at the Temple Mount that was rioting and demanding his arrest. “I am a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this city and trained at the feet of Gamli’el in every detail of the Torah of our forefathers. I was a zealot for G-d, as all of you are today.” The purpose of his letter to the Romans was to foster “the obedience that comes from trusting” in Y’shua. So he taught that such trusting does not abolish Torah but confirms it (Romans 3:31 JNT) “Does it follow that we abolish Torah by this trusting? Heaven forbid! On the contrary, we confirm Torah.”

In chapters seven and eight of Romans, Rav Sha’ul makes several significant declarations in support of Torah. “The Torah is holy and the commandment is holy and just and good.” (7:12) “For we know that the Torah is of the Spirit.” (7:10) “I am agreeing that the Torah is good.”(7:16) “For in my inner self I completely agree with G-d’s Torah.” (7:22) “The Torah of the Spirit, which produces this life in union with Messiah Y’shua, has set me free from the Torah of sin and death.”(8:2) “The just requirement of the Torah might be fulfilled in us who do not run our lives according to what our old nature wants but according to what the Spirit wants.” (8:4) “For the mind controlled by the old nature is hostile to G-d, because it does not submit itself to G-d’s Torah -- indeed, it cannot. Thus, those who identify with their old nature cannot please G-d.”(8:7-8 JNT)

These statements prove that Rav Sha’ul neither had an un-Jewish view of the Torah nor desired to abrogate it. These verses witness to Rav Sha’ul’s lifelong high regard for the Torah, which corresponds to his lifelong observance of it. This attitude would have been with him from his youth, since his parents were Pharisees (Acts 23:6); it would have been strengthened by his studies with Rabban Gamli’el (Acts 22:3); and there is no reason to suppose that his coming to faith in Y’shua -- who did not “come to abolish the Torah” -- would have changed it.

Y’shua came to accurately interpret the Torah so that G-d who gave us his Torah will be revered and obeyed through our proper action called obedience. Y’shua came to fulfill the Torah, showing its higher meaning by his interpretation. He demonstrated how Torah is to be fulfilled by the life he led in total obedience to Abba. Rav Sha’ul desired to place the Torah on a firmer footing by his teaching of faith and his living of Torah. The followers of Y’shua, like Rav

Sha'ul, must seek, discover and unveil their new nature in a higher level of righteousness and obedience. In doing so, they must be led by the Ruach HaKodesh (Holy Spirit) who will reveal the source of their life and his divine power in Y'shua's message of the restoration of the Kingdom of G-d.

The bottom line for Y'shua and Rav Sha'ul was this. Abba lovingly gave Torah. He is to be revered. Each human being stands in awe and wonder before Abba. Hence, the task of learning Torah is a sacred undertaking. Study leads to reverence. Reverence leads to obedience. Obedience demonstrates love of Abba who first loved us.

### **The Education Model and its Terminology**

All of us have been children so all of us had parents or guardians who lovingly gave us instructions to guide our development and growth. They expected us, motivated by our love for them, to be obedient and carry out their instructions. The instructions were on various levels of importance and had varying degrees of consequences for failing to obey. The system of parental instructions probably recognized negligent failure to obey as different from willful failure to obey. On the one hand, negligent failure might have been from an oversight, forgetting what was asked because we were busy with something else. On the other hand, willful failure likely resulted from a decision not to obey, perhaps prompted by a rebellious spirit.

I believe the loving instructions of Abba are designed in a similar way. The Torah describes various aspects of the conduct Abba desires from his children. There are some instructions that we may consider relatively insignificant in comparison to others such as not eating unclean animals in comparison to murder. And Abba distinguishes between negligent failure to obey and willful failure. His sacrificial system was designed to provide atonement for negligent sin but not for willful sin. Only the blood of Y'shua atoned for all sin.

Education is the purpose for which the Torah was given by Abba. By Torah he educates his children about his will for them for their own good, for the renewing of their mind into his mind, the perfect thought and action of Abba our Father, and the transformation of our nature into his nature.

Because Y'shua and Rav Sha'ul understood that Torah means "direction, instruction, teaching" and the purpose of education, should we not look to the language of education to find words that would more appropriately fit the Hebrew words designed to convey the various aspects that we might discern in the Torah instructions of our Father? That is why I propose this Education Model of Torah for your consideration.

G-d chose specific Hebrew words to describe his Torah and the various aspects that comprise the unity of his Torah: mitzvot, mishpatim, chukim, d'rachim, edot, and shelot. As the rabbis adopted the Greek system of law for their understanding of Torah, they adopted legal terms to translate these Hebrew words. Over time the original meanings and intent were lost. Even modern Hebrew dictionaries now contain only these adopted legal terms rather than the original meanings.

Churchmen and their translators adopted the Jewish legal terms -- not only in their translations but also in the Hebrew-English Biblical dictionaries and lexicons they wrote to support their translations. So one cannot consult any of these for the original meanings. Only people who know the Hebrew language so well that they can see the roots of words and the derivative words can reveal the original meanings as YHVH intended.

I have compiled a number of English words from the language of education and their definitions adapted from the New Shorter Oxford English Dictionary of 1993. With the invaluable assistance of a Sabra, a native Israeli who was also educated in England, Rimona Frank, and a Hebrew scholar, my Timothy in the faith, Bob Sass, I have matched these educational terms with the Hebrew words above taken from the Hebrew scriptures.

**INSTRUCTIONS - TORAH (pl. TOROT)** -- The actual, or acts of, instructing; teaching, education; knowledge etc. taught; instructive rules; precepts; directions; orders to a person.

Instructions are what our Heavenly Father has given to us so this word constitutes an umbrella term encompassing all of his Torah.

**PRINCIPLES - TOROT** -- That which is taught, doctrines, instructions, precepts; fundamental truths or propositions forming the basis of a system of belief etc. General rules adopted or professed as a guide to action; fundamental motives or reasons for action.

**PRECEPTS - MITZVOT** -- Orders to do particular acts; commands; general instructions or rules for action; maxims; injunctions, frequently divine commands regarding moral conduct.

Included in the instructions of Torah are certain mitzvah (pl. Mitzvot). This Hebrew word is usually translated as command or commandment. Mitzvah is from the root tzaveh that means to lay charge upon, or to give a charge to someone. Thus a mitzvah is a direct order from our Father to do a particular thing.

As examples of precepts we would consider the Ten Words (Devarim) Abba gave in Sh'mot (Exodus) 20 as precepts. But we need to recognize that most of the instructions of Abba do not constitute precepts or commands but rather some other form of instruction.

**DELIVERANCES, UTTERANCES - MISHPATIM** -- The deliverance of words, utterances, enunciations; declarations; narrations.

The instructions of Abba were words delivered to his people, uttered by him directly at Har Sinai, or enunciated and declared by Moshe as he heard them from Abba. Just because they were uttered and declared did not make them judgments, regulations or rules, as the word mishpatim has been generally translated. There were no legal connotations to mishpatim unless the reader added them from his own bias in translation.

**IMPRINTS, IMAGES - CHUKIM** -- Marks produced by pressure; lasting impressions or signs of some emotion, experience, action; influences; affects; representation of the form of a person or thing. A person or thing in which the appearance of another is reproduced.

We are created in the image and likeness of G-d. He desires for his characteristics to be imprinted upon us. His Torah makes that impression when we willingly submit and obey to his loving instructions.

**DIRECTIONS, WAYS - D'RACHIM** -- The actions or functions of directing; guidance; management; instructions on what to do, how to proceed, or where to go.

Some of the instructions that our Father has given to us fall into the category of directions. For example, many of the instructions regarding the building and operation of the Mishkan and the functions of the priests fall into this category of directions. G-d instructed Moshe who then directed the skilled craftsmen who built the Mishkan.

**POINTERS - EDOT** -- Hints, clues; pieces of information; testimonies - all of these relating to how things can be done. This Hebrew word is usually translated as testimonies.

Sometimes Abba wants us to walk in his ways but allows us to use the mind and abilities he has graciously and generously given us. So he provides us with pointers that will not rise to the level of direction or precepts but which will point us along our path or will help us to better do what he requests. As we walk, grow and mature, our own experiences and testimonies will aid us, and others, building us up in faith and in our walk with Abba in obedience.

**REQUESTS - SHELOT** -- Actions asking or calling for something; petitions, especially written ones; expressed wishes or desires.

Within the Torah instructions are requests, things that our Father has asked us to do, expressions of his desire for our obedience.

For example, Micah 6:8 is a classic example of the request of our Father and the anti-Torah bias of the churchmen/translators that turns it into a command. “What does the L-rd **require** of you but to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your G-d?” The Hebrew word is “darash” and means “seek with care.” In the King James version it is variously translated as seek, enquire (inquire, ask) or request. Darash occurs 164 times and in the King James version it is translated “seek” or “enquire” in 127 times. Only 12 times is it translated “require” and this is one of those cases.

The bias toward the Law Model of the translators is amply evidenced in this verse. If we substitute “seek with care” “request” or “ask” here, we get a far better sense of the meaning intended in Hebrew. Substituting these words eliminates this anti-Torah bias and the bias in favor of the Law Model. The corrected language fits our loving Abba and his desire to teach us his ways.

**SUGGESTIONS** - Actions proposing a theory, course of action, etc. plan, proposal.

Suggestion is probably not a word that is very appropriate in the context of the Torah. It does not appear in the most accepted modern translations nor in the King James version of the Torah. Unfortunately, some churchmen imply that the Ten Words of Abba in Sh'mot (Exodus) 20 are really just nine instructions and a suggestion. The suggestion is to observe the Shabbat.

### **Our Response to Abba's Torah**

The problem with Torah is not that it is not good, or spiritual, or holy. The problem is that we have problems with keeping Torah. The Torah is not weak; the Torah is not imperfect. We are weak; we are imperfect. But, thanks be to G-d, we are declared to be righteous – in a right relationship with G-d, based not upon what we are but upon whom he is.

Although the Torah is spiritual and holy, righteousness does not come by the Torah. Righteousness comes through faithfulness. Faithfulness justifies righteousness. Righteousness justifies reward. The reward is not salvation which comes by faith in G-d and the sacrifice of Y'shua and the grace, the unmerited favor, of Abba. The reward is the blessings promised in Torah for trusting, faithful obedience to the instructions of Abba.

If we will step back from our indoctrination that Torah is the law of the stern lawgiver and judge and honestly reexamine our thinking about the G-d revealed in the Hebrew Scriptures, I believe we will find YHVH to be our loving Abba, the Creator of us all, who wants to redeem us because of his loving kindness that endures forever. That is precisely the picture painted by churchmen regarding the G-d of the New Testament, a G-d of love and mercy and grace.

Recognizing that he has not changed, we can understand he was the same throughout time, from creation through the death of Y'shua, and he is the same today.

Abba always desired Bnei Yisrael to walk humbly and obediently before him in all of his instructions out of their love for the one who first loved them. Abba called them to be his chosen people and a model nation for all the world. Abba gave them his Torah so that his loving instructions would become an integral part of their new nature.

Likewise our unchanging Abba sent Y'shua to call his people back to him and to trusting, faithful obedience to his Torah. He also wants us to recognize that his Torah, his loving instructions, are an integral part of our new nature. Abba declared through the prophet Yirmeyahu, "I will put my Torah within them, and I will write it upon their hearts; and I will be their G-d, and they shall be my people." (Yirmeyahu (Jer.) 31:33) That is the call Abba is issuing today to all who would believe and call upon his name. And that is the very essence of the New Covenant, the Brit Chadashah.

Knowing now that the instructions of our Father are not "laws" but our new nature removes a great burden from us. We are liberated, free. "If the Son frees you, you will really be free!" (Yochanan (John) 8:36 JNT) "If a person looks closely into the perfect Torah, which gives freedom, and continues, becoming not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work it requires, then he will be blessed in what he does." (Ya'akov (James) 1:25 JNT)

There is no need for legalistic observance. No longer will anyone who is a child of Abba be frustrated that they are unable to fulfill all of the "laws." No longer will there be a sense of required performance that might be measured by others. No longer will there be a need for any of us to look over the shoulder of another or to judge their performance. No longer will the gloom of failure to completely observe and perform the "laws" hang over the lives of the people of G-d who walk faithfully, trustingly obediently to his instructions, recognizing that Torah is now their new nature.

To the unregenerate man who does not recognize or honor Abba as his father, the Torah will always be the law. This disobedient son will perceive as law what are truly the loving instructions of his father. The obedient son will recognize them for what they are; the expression by his loving Abba of his principles, precepts, directions, corrections and guidance, intended to imprint upon his offspring his divine nature and character as they grow and mature.

Relieved of the burden of the churchmen's "law," liberated in the loving instructions of Abba, we can live joyful, abundant and fulfilled lives if we will seek the guidance and assistance of the Ruach HaKodesh (Holy Spirit) who will lead us into all truth. We will tap into the source of living water, Y'shua, who is already waiting for us to drink of his life-giving water. In the process of seeking the truth, if we allow our spirits to be led into the truth by the Ruach

HaKodesh, we will become aware of the deficiencies, the shortcomings and the power of the yetzer hara (evil inclination) in our lives.

With the guidance and encouragement of the Ruach HaKodesh, we will become even more trusting and faithful in our obedience. The legalism of the past will be replaced by the wonderful, boundless education of the Ruach HaKodesh, the Spirit of the Holy One, Blessed is he! Our mourning will be turned into dancing and rejoicing in the joy our Father brings us as well as in the blessings that he will pour out upon those who are faithful unto him as he asks.

In Christianity, faith in G-d is elevated to a belief system that is above tangible action. The word for “faith” in Hebrew does not exclude tangible action, and it is not to be understood as intangible belief alone. Faith without corresponding action is dead; it has no life and is not pleasing to G-d. Faith is better understood as faithfulness to G-d and his word, doing that which is right in his sight. It is faithfulness to G-d evidenced by obedience. (See James 2:14-26) To preach faith and not practice it within the framework of Torah, which is Abba’s will, is hypocrisy.

The concept is best summed up in the words of Y’shua when he said; “By their fruits you will know them . . . every good tree produces good fruit; but the corrupt tree produces evil fruits . . . Not everyone who says to me, “L-rd, L-rd” will be those over whom G-d (or Heaven) rules, but the ones who DO the will of my father in heaven.” (Mattityahu 7:16-21) Good fruits” are good works. The Scriptures emphasized works above creeds or dogma. G-d considers actions to be of more importance than beliefs. In Christianity beliefs became the central demand. Deeds became less important than creeds. Though belief became the priority and essence of Christianity, this idea was not practiced by Y’shua or his disciples. Y’shua's emphasis always lay in doing the will of the Father.

Through the centuries churchmen proclaimed that Y’shua replaced the Torah with two commandments: to love G-d and love your neighbor. But Yochanan (John) reported that Y’shua called for obedience to Torah to demonstrate our love for him. “If you love me, you will keep my commands.” (14:15) “If you keep my commands, you will stay in my love – just as I have kept my Abba’s commands and stay in his love.” (15:10) “Whoever has my commands and keeps them is the one who loves me, and the one who loves me will be loved by my Abba, and I will love him and reveal myself to him.” (14:21) “You are my friends, if you do what I command you.” (15:14 JNT)

Yochanan later wrote to believers, “3 The way we can be sure we know him [Y’shua] is if we are obeying his commands. 4 Anyone who says, “I know him,” but doesn’t obey his commands is a liar the truth is not in him. 5 But if someone does what he says, then truly love for God has been brought to its goal in him. This is how we are sure that we are united with him. 6 A person who claims to be continuing in union with him ought to conduct his life the way he did.”

(I Yochanan (John) 2:3-6 JNT) How did Y'shua conduct his life? He lived and taught the Torah of Abba.

Recall what Y'shua said, "So whoever disobeys the least of these mitzvot and teaches others to do so will be called the least in the Kingdom of Heaven. But whoever obeys them and so teaches will be called great in the Kingdom of Heaven."

Will we demonstrate that we know Y'shua and love him by obeying and teaching his Torah, just as he demonstrated his love for his father by obeying and teaching Torah?

So will we believe and act or just believe?

Will we believe the instructions of Abba, written and preserved for 3500 years in the Torah, are still his instructions for those who believe in him today?

Will we believe the unchanging G-d has not changed his intentions toward us?

Will we believe Abba has not changed his desire for us to walk in trusting, faithful obedience to his instructions?

Will we believe and act as Abba has asked us to in his Torah?

Will we believe and act based upon what we know now?

Will we believe and act to diligently learn more of Abba's Torah led by the Ruach HaKodesh?

Will we believe and act motivated by our love for the one who first loved us and gave himself for us?

Will I? Will you? Will we?

May Abba bless you as you prayerfully consider this study and diligently study the Torah of Abba being led by the Ruach HaKodesh into all truth. His word is truth.

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This study is a work in progress so your constructive criticism, comments, suggestions, and encouragements are welcome. You may address them to the author via e-mail at [mrensign@arn.net](mailto:mrensign@arn.net) or by mail to P. O. Box 3220, Amarillo, Texas 79116-3220. Your communications will be received with appreciation but may or may not be acknowledged in the discretion of the author who does not intend to become involved in protracted debates about this study.

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