

Truth and Integrity

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ
בְּמִצְוֹתָיו, וְצִוָּנוּ לְעִסּוֹק בְּדִבְרֵי תוֹרָה.

*Baruch atah, Adonai Eloheinu, Melech haolam, asher kid'shanu b'mitzvotav v'tzivanu laasok
b'divrei Torah*

Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Sovereign of all, who hallows us with mitzvot, commanding us to engage with words of Torah.

Prayer for Beginning Study from Rabbi Mordecai Kaplan

From the cowardice that shrinks from new truth
From the laziness that is content with half-truths,
From the arrogance that thinks it knows all truth,
O God of Truth deliver us.

(Reconstructionist Mahzor p.190)

Exodus 3:1-5 Now Moses, tending the flock of his father-in-law Jethro, the priest of Midian, drove the flock into the wilderness, and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. 2An angel of the LORD appeared to him in a blazing fire out of a bush. He gazed, and there was a bush all aflame, yet the bush was not consumed. 3Moses said, "I must turn aside to look at this marvelous sight; why doesn't the bush burn up?" 4When the LORD saw that he had turned aside to look, God called to him out of the bush: "Moses! Moses!" He answered, "Here I am." 5And He said, "Do not come closer. Remove your sandals from your feet, for the place on which you stand is holy ground.

ויקרא יי"ט:א'-ל"ז

(א) וַיְדַבֵּר יי אֶל-מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר (ב) דַּבֵּר אֶל-כָּל-עַדְת בְּנֵי-יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאָמַרְתָּ אֲלֵהֶם
קְדוֹשִׁים תְּהִינּוּ כִּי קָדוֹשׁ אֲנִי יי אֱלֹהֵיכֶם: ... (יא) לֹא תִגָּבּוּ וְלֹא תִכְחָשׁוּ וְלֹא-
תִשְׁקְרוּ אִישׁ בְּעֵמִיתוֹ: לֹא-תִלְךָ רֶכֶל בְּעַמִּיךָ לֹא תַעֲמֹד עַל-יָדָם רַעְךָ אֲנִי יי (יז)
לֹא-תִשָּׂא אֶת-אֲחִיךָ בְּלִבְבְּךָ הוֹכַח תּוֹכִיחַ אֶת-עַמִּיִּתְךָ וְלֹא-תִשָּׂא עָלָיו חֲטָא: (יח)
לֹא-תִקַּח וְלֹא-תִטַּר אֶת-בְּנֵי עַמְּךָ וְאֶת-בְּתוּלָתָם לְרַעַךְ כַּמִּוֶּד אֲנִי יי ... (לה) לֹא-תַעֲשֶׂה

עָנַל בַּמִּשְׁפָּט בַּמִּדָּה בַּמִּשְׁקָל וּבַמִּשׁוּרָה: (לו) מֵאַזְנֵי צְדָק אֲבִי-צְדָק אֵיפֹת צְדָק
וְהִיוּ צְדָק יִהְיֶה לָּכֶם אֲנִי יי אֱלֹהֵיכֶם אֲשֶׁר-הוֹצֵאתִי אֶתְכֶם מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם:

Leviticus 19:1-37

(1) The Eternal spoke to Moses, saying: (2) Speak to the whole Israelite community and say to them: You shall be holy, for I, the Eternal your God, am holy... (11) You shall not steal; you shall not deal deceitfully or falsely with one another. ...(16) Do not tell false tales about your countrymen. Do not stand by the blood of your fellow: I am the Eternal. (17) You shall not hate your kinsfolk in your heart. Reprove your kinsman but incur no guilt because of him. (18) You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against your countrymen. Love your neighbor as yourself: I am the Eternal. ... (35) You shall not falsify measures of length, weight, or capacity. (36) You shall have an honest balance, honest weights, an honest *ephah*, and an honest *hin*. I the Eternal am your God who freed you from the land of Egypt.

משלי י"ב:י"ה-כ"ג

(יח) יֵשׁ בֹּטָה כַּמְדַּקְרוֹת תָּרַב וּלְשׁוֹן חֲכָמִים מְרַפָּא: (יט) שְׁפַת-אֱמֶת תִּכּוֹן לְעַד
וְעַד-אַרְגִּיעָה לְשׁוֹן שָׁקֵר: ... (כב) תוֹעֵבֶת יי שְׁפַת-שָׁקֵר וְעֹשֵׂי אֲמוּנָה רְצוּנוֹ:

Proverbs 12:18-23

(18) There is blunt talk like sword-thrusts, but the speech of the wise is healing. (19) Truthful speech abides forever, a lying tongue for but a moment. ... (22) Lying speech is an abomination to the Eternal, but those who act faithfully please God.

שבת ק"ד א:ט'

ש"ן שֵׁקֶר תִּי"ו אֱמֶת מֵאֵי טַעֲמָא שֵׁקֶר מִקְרָבֵן מִלִּיָּה אֱמֶת מִרְחֻקָא מִלִּיָּה שִׁיקְרָא
שְׂכִיחַ קוֹשְׁטָא לֹא שְׂכִיחַ וּמ"ט שִׁיקְרָא אַחְדָא כְרַעִיָּה קֵאִי וְאֱמֶת מִלְּבָן לְבֹנִיָּה
קוֹשְׁטָא קֵאִי שִׁיקְרָא לֹא קֵאִי

Shabbat 104a:9

They further taught: **Shin: Falsehood** [*sheker*]. **Tav: Truth** [*emet*]. **Why are the letters of the word *sheker* adjacent** to one another in the alphabet, while **the letters of *emet* are distant** from one another? That is because while **falsehood is easily found, truth is found** only with great difficulty. **And why do** the letters that comprise the word *sheker* **all stand on one foot, and** the letters that comprise the word *emet* stand on bases that are wide like **bricks**? Because the **truth stands** eternal and **falsehood does not stand** eternal.

שבת נ"ה א:י"ב

אמר רבי חנינא חותמו של הקב"ה אמת

Shabbat 55a:12

Rabbi Ḥanina said: The seal of the Holy One of Blessing is truth.

תהילים פ"ה:י"א-י"ב

(יא) חֶסֶד־וְאֱמֶת נִפְגְּשׁוּ צְדָק וְשָׁלוֹם נִשְׁקָו: (יב) אֱמֶת מֵאֲרֶץ תִּצְמַח וְצְדָק מִשָּׁמַיִם נִשְׁקָו:

Psalms 85:11-12

(11) Faithfulness and truth meet; justice and well-being kiss. (12) Truth springs up from the earth; justice looks down from heaven.

בראשית רבה ח':ה'

(ה) אמר רבי סימון: בשעה שבא הקב"ה לבראת את אדם הראשון, נעשו מלאכי השרת כיתים כיתים, וחבורות חבורות, מהם אומרים: אל יברא, ומהם אומרים: יברא, הדא הוא דכתיב (תהלים פה): חסד ואמת נפגשו צדק ושלוה נשקו. חסד אומר: יברא, שהוא גומל חסדים. ואמת אומר: אל יברא, שכולו שקרים. צדק

אומר: יברא, שהוא עושה צדקות. שלום אומר: אל יברא, דכוליה קטטה.
מה עשה הקדוש ברוך הוא? נטל אמת והשליכו לארץ, הדא הוא דכתיב (דניאל
ח): ותשלך אמת ארצה. אמרו מלאכי השרת לפני הקב"ה: רבון העולמים! מה
אתה מבזה תכסיס אלטיכסייה שלך? תעלה אמת מן הארץ, הדא הוא דכתיב
(תהלים פה): אמת מארץ תצמח....
ר' הונא רבה של צפורין אמר: עד שמלאכי השרת מדיינין אלו עם אלו,
ומתעסקין אלו עם אלו, בראו הקדוש ברוך הוא. אמר להן: מה אתם מדיינין,
כבר נעשה אדם:

Bereishit Rabbah 8:5

Rabbi Simon said: When the Holy Blessing One was about to create Adam, the ministering angels formed themselves into groups and factions, some saying, "Let him be created," while others urged, "Let him NOT be created." Thus it is written, "Love and Truth met, righteousness and peace kissed" (Psalm 85:11).

Love (Hesed) said, "Let him be created, because he will preform acts of love."

Truth (Emet) said, "Let him NOT be created, because he will be all falsehood."

Righteousness (Tzedek) said, "Let him be created, because he will do righteous deeds (tzedakah)."

Peace (Shalom) said, "Let him NOT be created, because he will be all strife."

What did the Holy Blessing One do?

God took Truth (Emet) and cast it to the ground, as it says, "You did cast down Truth to the ground" (Dan. 8:12).

The ministering angels dared say to the Holy Blessing One, "Master of the Universe, why do You humiliate Your seal (Truth)? 'Let truth arise from the earth'"(Psalm 85:12)!

The elder Rabbi Huna of Tzipori said, While the ministering angels were arguing one with the other, the Holy Blessing One created Adam, and then said, "What are you arguing about? Adam is already created."

סידור אשכנז, ימי חול, תפילת שחרית, הכנה לתפילה, עול מלכות שמים א'
() לְעוֹלָם יְהִי אָדָם יִרָא שָׁמַיִם בְּסִטְרָה וּמוֹדָה עַל הָאֱמֶת וְדוֹבֵר אֱמֶת

**Siddur Ashkenaz, Weekday, Shacharit, Preparatory Prayers, Sovereignty of Heaven
(*L'olam, Shema) 1**

A person should always revere God, in private (and in public),
acknowledging truth and speaking truth in one's heart (see Psalm 15)...

Emmanuel Levinas

...It is as if the multiplicity of persons ... were the condition for the plentitude of 'absolute Truth'; as if every person, through his uniqueness were the guarantee of the revelation of a unique aspect of truth, and some of its points would never have been revealed if some people had been absent from mankind... **the totality of the true is constituted from the combination of multiple people:** the uniqueness of each act of listening carrying the secret of the text; the voice of Revelation, as inflected, precisely, by each person's ear, would be necessary to the 'Whole' of the Truth...

**Deborah Lipstadt, author of
"Denying the Holocaust: The Growing Assault on Truth and Memory,"
Behind the lies of Holocaust denial
TED talk Posted May 2017**

...Many of us have been taught to think there are facts and there are opinions — after studying deniers, I think differently. There are facts, there are opinions, and there are lies. And what deniers want to do is take their lies, dress them up as opinions — maybe edgy opinions, maybe sort of out-of-the-box opinions — but then if they're opinions, they should be part of the conversation. And then they encroach on the facts.

...

So why is my story more than just the story of a quirky, long, six-year,

difficult lawsuit, an American professor being dragged into a courtroom by a man that the court declared in its judgment was a neo-Nazi polemicist? What message does it have? I think in the context of the question of truth, it has a very significant message. Because today, as we well know, truth and facts are under assault. Social media, for all the gifts it has given us, has also allowed the difference between facts — established facts — and lies to be flattened.

...

Truth is not relative. Many of us have grown up in the world of the academy and enlightened liberal thought, where we're taught everything is open to debate. But that's not the case. There are certain things that are true. There are indisputable facts — objective truths. ... The Earth is not flat. The climate is changing. Elvis is not alive...

...

And most importantly, truth and fact are under assault. The job ahead of us, the task ahead of us, the challenge ahead of us is great. The time to fight is short. We must act now. Later will be too late.

TED Talk by Pamela Meyer: How to Spot a Liar

Lying is a cooperative act. Think about it, a lie has no power whatsoever by its mere utterance. Its power emerges when someone else agrees to believe the lie.