

In the beginning God created... --- Gen. 1:1
Hebrew = **BeresheeT... barA...ElohiM**

If we take the last three letters (**aleph, mem, tav**) of the very first three words of the Torah, we derive the Hebrew word, “**emet**”. So too, the first word of the Ten Commandments begins with the letter **aleph (anokhi)**; the first word of the Mishnah (**me’eimatai**) begins with the letter **mem** and the Gemara of the Talmud begins with the letter **tav** in the word **tanna**. Thus, we learn that Torah knowledge begins with a search for **emet**, truth, as it is written, *Your word is truth from the beginning* (Ps.119:160) --- A.Y. Greenberg, Torah Gems, p. 11.

The seal (signature) of the Holy One Praised Be He is truth. --- Talmud, **Shabbat 55a**

Rabbi Shimon ben Gamliel said: The world stands on three foundation stones: on truth, on justice and on peace. --- **Pirkei Avot 1:18**

Keep far from falsehood... (Exod. 23:7) The Hebrew word for “falsehood” is **sheker** which is spelled **shin, koof, resh**. These three letters are next to each other in the Hebrew alphabet. Accordingly, we have to “keep far from falsehood” by shattering **sheker** when it comes together as is its natural tendency. In contrast though, the three letters of the word **emet** - “truth” - are the furthest apart possible in the Hebrew alphabet. The **aleph** is at the beginning, the **tav** is at the end and **mem** is in the very middle. This teaches us that to reveal genuine truth, an extremely great effort on our part is required. --- Rabbi David Blumenfeld

Does the halakhah prohibit all forms of lying? Not at all... Jewish tradition permits lying when the motive is altruistic... For example, it is permissible to lie for the sake of peace. When Sarah heard she would have a son, *she laughed to herself, saying, Now that I am withered, am I to have enjoyment - with my husband so old?* God changed Sarah’s insulting remark when repeating it to Abraham: *Shall I in truth bear a child, old as I am?* (Gen. 18:12-13) Similarly, it is permissible to stretch the truth when praising an ugly bride at her wedding (**Ketubot 16b-17a**) and to make a false vow to a robber or murderer (**Mishnah Nedarim 3:4**). Lastly, in three things rabbis may deviate from the truth: regarding their knowledge (so as not to boast), regarding their sexual relations with their wives (out of modesty) and about their host (so that he will not be inundated with freeloaders) - **Bava Metzia 23b-24a**.

Author Joan Gould wrote of her husband's struggle with cancer. One day, they went shopping for gifts and talked of the future. She asks the reader, "Was I lying to him if I let him think his illness was under control? Was I pretending if we stopped to have lunch and talked of the future?" Late one night, she relates, he rose and got a pill from the bathroom, to help him fall asleep. When he returned to bed, he left the bathroom light on. When she got up to turn it off, he said, "Please don't. I'll be in the dark long enough."

...In theory, we may certainly conceal the truth from terminally ill patients if it is for their own good, since Judaism commands us to do everything to heal and preserve the life of the patient. The dilemma, therefore, is not "may we lie to terminally ill patients", but rather "is lying to terminally ill patients good or bad for them"... --- David Golinkin, Responsa In A Moment, pp. 57-58

The heavens and the earth were finished and all their array. On the seventh day God finished the work that He had been doing, and He ceased on the seventh day from all the work that He had done. And God blessed the seventh day and declared it holy, because on it God ceased from all the work of creation that He had done. --- Gen. 2:1-3

*Behold I will rain down bread for you from the sky (Exod. 16:4). Come and see that the manner of the Blessed Holy One is not like the manner of flesh and blood humans. For a human, when the sponge is in his hand, if he opens his hand, not a drop descends, if he clenches his hand he lowers water. But the Holy Blessed One is not like this. The sponge is in His hand as it says, *God's stream is full of water* (Ps. 65:10). If He holds back, the waters don't descend, as it says, *He will hold back the heavens and there will be no water* (Deut. 11:17). When He opens His hand, the rain descends, as it says, *You open your hand and satisfy the desire of all that lives* (Ps. 145:16).*

It doesn't say **mazon**, food for all that lives, rather it says **ratzon**, the desire of all that lives. When He gives, it is to each individual according to his request. And similarly in the coming future, God will give each person what he requests. And if you are surprised about this matter, see what God did for Israel in this world when He lowered man for them, which had all different tastes in it. And each person

would taste what he desired. So it is written, these forty years, God is with you, you lacked no thing (**davar**). What is **davar**? When he wanted to eat something and he would say with his mouth, “If I only had a fattened animal to eat!” [the manna] would immediately take on the taste of fattened animal in his mouth. They would say one thing, **davar**, and God would do their desire. --- **Midrash Exodus Rabbah** 25:3

Rabbi Shimon says: One of flesh and blood, who cannot know precisely what instant of time it is, must begin sacred time earlier than necessary, and end it later than necessary, including a bit of non-sacred time at either end. The Holy One, Who knows time precisely, can enter sacred time within a hair of the actual moment. So it appeared as if by the time He finished the work of creation, it was already the seventh day.

Another reading: What was the world lacking at the end of six days? Rest. Came Shabbat, and with it came rest. Then the work of creation was finished and complete. --- Rashi, based on various midrashim

And God blessed the seventh day and declared it holy: He blessed it with regard to the manna, providing for it with a double portion on Friday, and declared it holy with regard to the manna as well, seeing to it that no manna would fall on the seventh day. --- Rashi

The natural way to understand the verse is not that it is speaking about something in the future...The blessing on Shabbat is a fount of blessing, and it is the foundation of the world. Making it holy really means arranging that it would draw from the realm of holiness. --- Ramban