

# “So True...”

## תורת אמת



A happy camper at one of the early summers at Camp Gan Yisroel shared with his father:

“You know?” he asked with excitement, “the Lubavitcher Rebbe visited us in camp!”

“Wow, did he speak to the children?”

“Yes, he told us that Moshiach is coming!”

“We always say that,” father told him. “You’ve heard that many times at home too.”

“I know. Everyone says it, but he meant it!” came the reply.



This little boy observed what would be evident in every *sicha* the Rebbe said for decades to come. The Rebbe’s approach to everything Torah says, promises, and predicts, is absolute. It is true in every aspect and real to the utmost. Nothing in Torah is random, mistaken or even exaggerated, *chas v’shalom*.

True, this principle is shared by many. Few, however, truly understand the weight it carries under the Rebbe’s direction. Below we will attempt to convey the intricacies and fine points that can be gleaned from the Rebbe’s *sichos* in regards to אמיתית התורה.

### Authentic Encouragement

In Torah, everything is real. There is nothing in it that even slightly deviates from the complete truth. This is a characteristic unique to Torah and cannot be emulated in any other field of wisdom. On the contrary, all other *chachmos* will occasionally warrant the use of falsehood.

Take medicine for example. Even the greatest doctor or specialist is limited to the confines and capabilities of medical science. Therefore, if he stumbles on an illness that has no cure, the use of misleading information is *required* in some situations. For instance, if a patient is very weak, it may be harmful to tell

him the full truth about his physical state. His only chance for recovery is by intentionally misleading him, for the sake of strengthening his optimism and in turn, his health.

The same is true in child-rearing. It is impossible to educate one’s child while he is in the midst of throwing a temper-tantrum. If the only way to calm him down is by the means of a mistruth, then that is the most practical solution, since it will then allow the educator to continue teaching in a truthful fashion. (Below we will explain how this does not apply to Torah education.)

Some may assume that in Yiddishkeit we use similar tactics, stretching the truth for the sake of a beneficial outcome.

But in reality this is not the case. In Torah there is no exaggerated inspiration or empty promise. An instruction from Hashem is real in every aspect, free of illusions and fantasies.

לע"נ  
הרה"ת ר' שלום דובער  
בן הרה"ת ר' יעקב יוסף ע"ה  
ראסקין  
נלב"ע ח"י חשוון ה'תשע"ד  
וזוגתו מרת רבקה  
בת הרה"ת ר' אברהם ישעי' ע"ה  
נלב"ע י"א סיון ה'תשע"ד  
תנ"צ'ב'ה'  
נדבת משפחתם שיחיו

In fact, this is quite self-evident. After all, the Creator of the solution is also the Creator of the predicament itself. Nothing is beyond His reach, so the reality can be adjusted to His proposed solution.

For example, some people don't believe that their prayers are actually a satisfactory replacement for the *korbanos* in the *Beis Hamikdash*.

This idea was cited merely for encouragement, they say, so that we have better *kavana* in our *tefillos*.

In truth, however, once Hashem told us "ונשלמה פרים שפתינו", there is nothing in the way of actually making *your* lip-service just as powerful as the service of our ancestors in the *Beis Hamikdash*. There is obviously no plight too hard for Hashem to resolve, so He doesn't need to resort to deception.<sup>1</sup>

Indeed, all words of reassurance and similar expressions in *Torah Shebaal Peh* are consistent with this principle as well. Not only are they the whole truth, but as a part of *Toras Emes* they are an actual and accurate portrayal of reality.

Hence, the guarantee of "יגעתו" teaches that it is impossible to be unsuccessful in the face of proper effort. When the Gemara says "ריקנין שבך מלאין מצות" ("Even the empty among you are filled with mitzvos like a

pomegranate"), this means nothing other than the literal translation of the words.

The Torah's loyalty to *emes* is infallible, to the point that the Rebbe taught that even when Torah *tells* us to "imagine" something, the implication is that we are envisioning the actual reality, not just thinking motivational thoughts.

This is the truth of the Rambam's advice "לעולם יראה עצמו שקול, וכל העולם" ("a person should always see himself, and the entire world, as on an even scale between meritorious and guilty"). It is not just a meditative exercise to help make the right decision, rather every Jew is indeed on a scale perfectly balanced and can, at any moment, choose to bring salvation to the whole world.<sup>2</sup> Likewise, when studying the work of a *gadol b'Yisroel* we are instructed to – "יראה כאילו" – "בעל השמועה עומד כנגדו". One is not expected to "pretend as if" the author is standing in front of him; instead he must realize that the spirit of the *tzadik* is actually with him as he learns his teachings, and therefore must behave accordingly.<sup>3</sup>

## In the Details

*Toras Emes* does not only mean that there is nothing false in Torah. More than that, it teaches that every detail is precise and nothing is extra

or superfluous. The Rebbe would thoroughly analyze even the most fine points of every topic in Torah, to verify that each detail contributes to the matter at hand.

This is especially apparent when discussing comparisons and examples given in Torah itself. The Rebbe's pointed attention to the details of a *mashal* is a perfect illustration of this. Where most people would suffice with taking a general lesson from a metaphor, the Rebbe pointed out that because it is offered by *Toras Emes* it must be accurate down to the last detail.

The Rebbe would often explain how Rosh Hashanah is referred to as the "head" not just because it begins a period of time, but because it resembles the human head. Just like one's head is the source of his body's life force, so too Rosh Hashanah is a day that contains in it the *chayus* for the rest of the year.

Furthermore, the Rebbe learned that each word in Torah implies the truest connotation possible.

With this perspective, "big" means "big without limits" and a "continuation" must be endless, since the truest definition of a word is not in the relative sense (e.g. big compared to other entities), but in the intrinsic and independent meaning that it can imply. Therefore, in a Torah of utmost

truth, this is the correct understanding of the terminology used.

This is a key in understanding terms that characterize Jewish concepts. The chosen phrase is not merely an imaginative expression, rather each word is used to impart its greatest emphasis and significance.

With that said, “יפוצו מעיינותיך” חוצה (which is understood not just as a catchy motto, but as a guideline in spreading Chassidus) will teach us that the wellsprings of Chassidus must reach the outermost posts that may exist. “חוצה”—which means outside—cannot mean anything other than the farthest point imaginable.

So too, with the term מעשים טובים—the Torah must be referring to the very best deeds that can be done, with no shortcoming or defect whatsoever.

## Rejected Yet Welcomed: The הוה אמינא

Anyone familiar with Gemara knows that it is built of שקלא וטריא, a dialogue of keen logical deduction. In it, an assumption will be rejected, and any sharp argument can be disproved. The *Amoraim* will rebut a rationale that has all but one small discrepancy, to favor the solid irrefutable final logic that decides the *halacha*. All previous notions are disregarded when we finally arrive at the *psak din*.

But every word is *Elokus*. Every opinion is true. Even the opinions that were denied entry into our Shulchan Aruch because they were refuted, are *emes*.

This point is stressed in a fascinating letter the Rebbe received from his father in 5692.<sup>4</sup> In it, Harav Levi Yitzchok puts forth a revolutionary idea that perhaps shaped

the Rebbe’s own approach and became a cornerstone in his future teachings.

Not only is there truth also in the theories that were disregarded, the letter tells us, but much more than that. Harav Levi Yitzchok goes on to say that “everything recorded in *Torah Shebichsav* and *Torah Shebaal Peh...* and even the *halachos* that the *Gemara* itself calls a “*bedusa*,” a mistake—all of them were said by Hashem himself, and He said it exactly as it is written; Hashem himself said the *halacha* and He himself said that it is a mistake... all of them were said by Hashem, and He also said the *teiku* or *teyuvtva...*” (emphasis added).

But how can that be? How can an opinion be invalidated for a good reason on one hand, and yet be true and holy — the word of Hashem, no less — on the other?

The Rebbe once explained:

Torah is the wisdom of Hashem, and comprehension thereof is a truly spiritual and lofty experience. The way we know it is only how it appears in our reality, in our world. In the bigger picture, however, there are many worlds. *Seder hishtalshelus* has levels upon levels on end and worlds that go on and on. Each layer is another reality and has its unique understanding of Torah. Therefore, no two worlds have identical conclusions, and the truth in one is not the truth in the other.

This can be understood with *chesed* and *gevurah*. In the world of *chesed*, the priority is to dispense liberally to the recipient. In *gevurah*, great care is taken to ensure that the beneficiary is properly deserving of the care he is receiving. Thus, when judging any given subject in Torah,

the outcome will vary based on the outlook of each respective *sefira*, while at the same time they are all entirely true. Each result is the accurate outcome of a certain viewpoint.

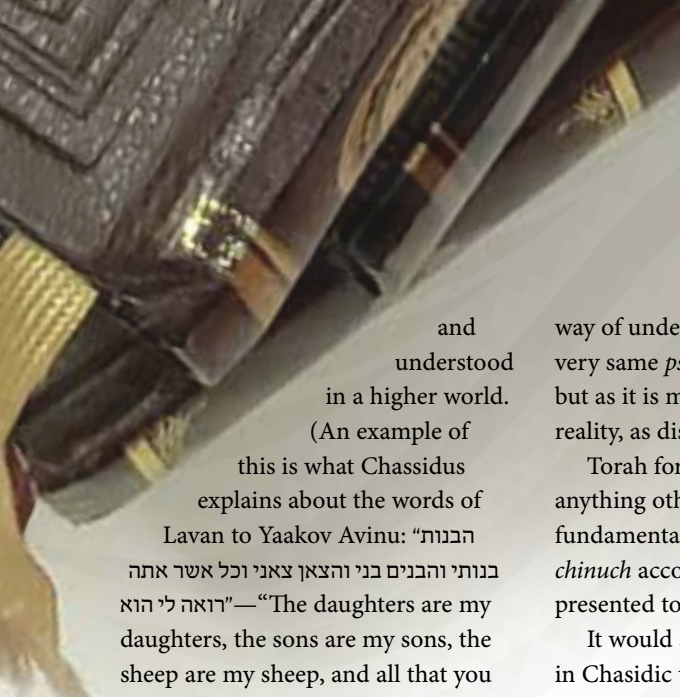
This is the way it works in Gemara. Each *Tanna* or *Amora* presented his argument and logic corresponding to his source in the heavenly spheres. Everyone’s *neshama* is rooted in a specific level in *ruchniyus*, and the sages of the Mishnah and Gemara were finely in tune with it to the extent that it shaped their way of thinking.

At the same time, *halacha* has considerations of its own. So while each view and opinion in the Gemara is true, the *halacha* will be decided according to the one which is most compatible with the priorities of *halacha*. (E.g. Hillel ruled based on his *neshama*’s roots in *chesed*, and Shammai according to his in *gevurah*. Nevertheless, the *halacha* only follows one — usually Hillel.)

From here we see that opinions in Torah that do not form *halacha* are not irrelevant nor untrue. Their truth is not applicable in our reality but it is holy nonetheless. Therefore, even if it cannot be applied in *halacha*, it must have relevance elsewhere. Often, it exists to teach us a lesson in *avodas Hashem* or to help us gain an understanding of the higher *olamos* that it comes from.

This is not only applicable to the discussions of the Gemara but to any questions or claims brought down in Torah (even as a false claim). The very fact that it has place in Torah shows that it is of utmost truth, just manifest





and understood in a higher world. (An example of

this is what Chassidus explains about the words of Lavan to Yaakov Avinu: “הבנות בנותי והבנים בני והצאן צאני וכל אשר אתה ברואה לי הוא”—“The daughters are my daughters, the sons are my sons, the sheep are my sheep, and all that you see is mine...” Even in the false claim of *Lavan harsha*, there is mystical significance.<sup>5</sup>)

Even an idea that is mentioned in Torah only for the sake of refuting it is holy as well and is the truth of a certain reality.

When the Torah says, “לא רחוקה היא”—“It is not far away nor across the sea...”; Torah ruled out the notion that Hashem’s words are distant. However if such a conception is offered in the first place, then there must be truth to this as well. (Chassidus interprets it to be a description of Torah beyond the confines of *hishtalshelus*.)<sup>6</sup>

## Spoon Feeding the Truth

Even when teaching Torah to a child (as opposed to education in the secular sense) there is no situation that would call for the use of an untruth. In the curriculum for school-children prescribed by Torah, there is no fictitious *pshat* to better accommodate the young minds of its pupils; rather, we give explanations that are in total conformation with the truth of Torah. If the accepted way of understanding is not taught because it is too deep for the student, the substitute — no matter how different it may seem — must be a (simpler but) equally true

way of understanding. In fact, it is the very same *pshat* as the accepted one, but as it is manifested in an alternative reality, as discussed above.<sup>7</sup>

Torah forbids us from teaching anything other than *emes*. This is a fundamental rule when it comes to *chinuch* according to Torah. Nothing is presented to a child in a false light.<sup>8</sup>

It would seem, however, that in Chasidic tradition there is an exception. When a child is brought to school for the first time, the custom is to throw candies on him and tell him that *Malach Michoel* is throwing them. This *minhag* was practiced by the Rebbeim as well.

Now what about this is true?

The Rebbe explained this based on the principle stated above: In truth, the candies did come from *Malach Michoel*. Not only the candies but every form of *chesed* or *hashpa'a* in this world comes through *Malach Michoel* “*Sar Hachessed*.” The “thrower” is just a conduit through which the blessings come from the *malach* to the child.<sup>9</sup>

So too, anything told to children is of the utmost truth as we are forbidden to deceive them.

## The Truth of Existence

Until now we’ve been exploring the intricacies of the Rebbe’s approach on the truth of Torah, and how dedicated it is to the subtle details. But the Rebbe pushed this idea further, bringing it outside the realm of Torah itself.


The very nature of our world, said the Rebbe on more than one occasion, is shaped by the rules of Torah. The Rebbe explains:

Something can only be termed “*emes*” if it is eternal. Anything temporary is not truly real, since it

does not have its own independent existence and relies entirely on other factors for survival and endurance. How can one ensure that an element in our world is a lasting one? If it was based on the truth of Torah.

People have tried to implement new ideas, change status-quo and introduce novel innovations. Anything that was not established in sync with the guidelines of Torah, came and went as if it had never existed. The only enduring contributions are — and can only be — those that further the values of Torah.

*Emes* is the system on which our world runs, as Hashem sealed it into creation, חותמו של הקב"ה אמת, and anything outside of תורת אמת is a fleeting illusion.

This is a guiding principle that must be taken into account: Anything one may try to accomplish has constancy only when its foundation is the truth of Torah. All actions are otherwise empty and weak and will not last, whereas an initiative firmly grounded in the precepts of *Toras Emes*, is sure to enjoy a perpetual existence until the end of time.<sup>10</sup> 

1. See for example *Toras Menachem* 5744 vol. 3 p. 1779-1780, 1891.
2. See *A World in Balance, Derher Tammuz* 5776
3. *Toras Menachem* 5745 vol. 2 p. 1286-1287.
4. *Likutei Levi Yitzchok, Igros Kodesh* p. 266.
5. See *Hisvaaduyos* 5746 vol. 2, p. 111.
6. *Hisvaaduyos* 5746 vol. 1, p. 545.
7. *Hisvaaduyos* 5744 vol. 2, p. 923.
8. See e.g. *Likutei Sichos* vol. 15 p. 79-80, *Hisvaaduyos* 5743 vol. 3, p. 1599. *Hisvaaduyos* 5747 vol. 2, p. 364.
9. *Toras Menachem* 5745 vol. 3 p. 2184-2186
10. See e.g. *Toras Menachem* 5742 vol. 2 p. 695-696, 926-927.