



Truth is faceted and holistic

Talmud Bavli Shabbat 55a

And Reish Lakish said: The letter tav is the last letter of the seal of the Holy One, Blessed be He, as Rabbi Hanina said: The seal of the Holy One, Blessed be He, is truth [emet],

וריש לקיש אָמַר: "תָּיו" — סוֹף חוֹתְמוֹ שֶׁל הַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא, דָּאָמַר רַבִּי חַנִּינָא: חוֹתְמוֹ שֶׁל הַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא "אֱמֶת".

What is the difference between the truth being where a story begins and where it ends?

What tools/frames of understanding are requires to seek truth at origin? Which are needed to seek it in wholeness of articulation, at the end?

Midrash Numbers Rabbah 13:16

"One silver basin" was brought as a symbol of the Torah which has been likened to wine, as it says "And drink of the wine which I have mingled" (Mishlei 9:5). Now because it is customary to drink wine in a basin, you may gather from the text, "that drink wine in bowls" (Amos 6:6) -- he on that account, brought a basin. "Of seventy shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary" (Numbers 7:13). Why? As the numerical value of yayin (wine) is seventy, so there are seventy modes of expounding the Torah.

מִזְרֵק אֶחָד כֶּסֶף, כְּנֶגֶד הַתּוֹרָה הַמְשׁוּלָה בֵּינָן, שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר (מִשְׁלֵי ט'): וּשְׁתוּ בֵּינָן מִסַּכְתִּי, וּלְפִי שְׁדֵרֶךְ הַיַּיִן לְשִׁתּוֹת בְּמִזְרֵק, כִּמְהָ דְתִימָא (עֲמוֹס ו'): הַשּׁוֹתִים בְּמִזְרְקֵי יַיִן לִכְךָ הֵבִיא מִזְרֵק שִׁבְעִים שֶׁקֶל בְּשֶׁקֶל הַקֹּדֶשׁ. לְמָה? כִּשֵּׁם שֵׁיין, חֲשַׁבְנוּ שִׁבְעִים, כִּךְ יֵשׁ שִׁבְעִים פָּנִים בַּתּוֹרָה.

The Sages also speak of seventy languages, seventy nations, seventy Divine and more. The Hebrew Bible references seventy members of Yaakov’s family that descended to Egypt, seventy elders that make up a council, seventy years of exile...

What does the number seventy mean?

Doe “seventy modes of expounding Torah” mean that one can explain it however they like?

**Talmud Bavli Nedarim 38a**

Rab and Samuel both said, Fifty gates of understanding were created in the world, and all but one were given to Moses, for it is said, For thou hast made him [sc. Moses] a little lower than God. (Psalms 8:6).

רב ושמאל דאמרי תרוייהו: חמישים שערי בינה נבראו בעולם, וכולם נתנו למשה חסר אחת, שנאמר "ותחסרהו מעט מאלוקים." (תהילים ח:ו)

Midrash Psalms, 12

Rabbi Yanai said: The Torah was not given in a clear cut manner, rather on every statement G-d said to Moses, He would say forty-nine reasons the matter could be pure, and forty-nine reasons why the matter could be impure. He (Moses) said to Him, 'Master of the Universe, when will we know the truth of the matter?' He said to him (Moses): 'Go according to the majority: if the majority rules it is impure – it is impure, if the majority rules it is pure – it is pure.

אמר ר' ינאי לא ניתנה דברי תורה חתיכין, אלא על כל דבור שהיה אומר הקב"ה למשה היה אומר מ"ט פנים טהור, ומ"ט פנים טמא, אמר לפניו רבונו של עולם עד מתי נעמוד על ביורו של דבר, אמר ליה אחרי רבים להטות, רבו המטמאין טמא, רבו המטהרין טהור

These two texts imply that absolute truth exists, but cannot be known. What is the difference between 49 and 50 gates of understanding?

Does the end of the second midrash mean that the majority creates truth in reality, or that they set the conventions by which we relate to truth?

Derech emet – the path of truth**Genesis 24:27**

And he said, "Blessed is the Lord, the God of my master, Abraham, Who has not forsaken His loving kindness and His truth from my master. As for me, the Lord led me on the road to the house of my master's kinsmen."



<p>וַיֹּאמֶר בְּרוּךְ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי אֲדֹנָי אֲבֹרָתָם אֲשֶׁר לֹא־עָזַב חֶסְדּוֹ וְאַמְתּוֹ מֵעַם אֲדֹנָי אֲנֹכִי בְדַרְדְּרִי נִתְּנִי יְהוָה בֵּית אֲתֵי אֲדֹנָי:</p>

Genesis 24:48
And I kneeled and prostrated myself to the Lord, and I blessed the Lord, the God of my master Abraham, Who led me on the true path, to take the daughter of my master's brother for his son.
וַאֲקַד וְאֶשְׁמַתֵּנָה לַיהוָה וְאֶבְרַךְ אֶת־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי אֲדֹנָי אֲבֹרָתָם אֲשֶׁר הִנְחֵנִי בְדַרְדְּרִי אֶמֶת לְקַחַת אֶת־בַּת־אֲתֵי אֲדֹנָי לְבָנוֹ:

The first appearance of *emet* in the text of the Torah is in context of relationship. What does that teach you about the essential meaning of the word?

What does it mean to be true to someone?

Is there truth outside of relationship?

If truth is a path, how was Eliezer following it? How would/do you?

Psalms 85:11-12
Kindness and truth have met; righteousness and peace have kissed. Truth will sprout from the earth, and righteousness will look down from heaven.
חֶסֶד־וְאֵמֶת נִפְגְּשׁוּ צְדָק וְשָׁלוֹם נִשְׁקִי: אֵמֶת מֵאֲרֶץ תִּצְמַח וְצְדָק מִשָּׁמַיִם נִשְׁקָר:

The first appearance of truth is relational, the second process. In each the relationship/process is provided with a parallel example.

What does the kiss of righteousness and peace teach you about the relationship between kindness and truth?

What does righteousness looking down from heaven teach you about what it means that truth will sprout from the earth?



Midrash Genesis Rabbah 8:5

Rabbi Simon said: When the Holy One blessed be He came to create Adam the first man, the ministering angels divided into various factions and various groups. Some of them were saying: 'Let him not be created,' and some of them were saying: 'Let him be created.' That is what is written: "Kindness and truth met; righteousness and peace touched" (Psalms 85:11). Kindness said: 'Let him be created, as he performs acts of kindness.' Truth said: 'Let him not be created, as he is all full of lies.' Righteousness said: 'Let him be created, as he performs acts of righteousness.' Peace said: 'Let him not be created, as he is all full of discord.' What did the Holy One blessed be He do? He took Truth and cast it down to earth. That is what is written: "You cast truth earthward" (Daniel 8:12). The ministering angels said before the Holy One blessed be He: 'Master of the universe, why are You demeaning Your very seal? Let Truth ascend from the earth.' That is what is written: "Truth will spring from the earth" (Psalms 85:12).

The Rabbis say in the name of Rabbi Hanina bar Idi, and Rabbi Pinhas and Rabbi Hilkiya said in the name of Rabbi Simon: Meod, this refers to Man [adam]. That is what is written: "God saw everything that He had made, and, behold, it was very [meod] good" (Genesis 1:31) – Man [adam] was good.

Rav Huna, the rabbi of Tzipori, said: While the ministering angels were busy deliberating with one another and engaging with one another, the Holy One blessed be He created him. He said to them: 'Why are you deliberating? Man has already been created.'

אמר רבי סימון, בשעה שברא הקדוש ברוך הוא לבראת את אדם הראשון, נעשו מלאכי השרת כתיים כתיים, וחבורות חבורות, מהם אומרים אל יברא, ומהם אומרים יברא, הדין הוא דכתיב (תהלים פה, יא): חסד ואמת נפגשו צדק ושלוה נשקו. חסד אומר יברא, שהוא גומל חסדים. ואמת אומר אל יברא, שכלו שקרים. צדק אומר יברא, שהוא עושה צדקות. שלום אומר אל יברא, דכוליה קטטה. מה עשה הקדוש ברוך הוא נטל אמת והשליכו לארץ, הדין הוא דכתיב (דניאל ח, יב): ותשלך אמת ארצה, אמרו מלאכי השרת לפני הקדוש ברוך הוא, רבון העולמים מה אתה מבזה תכסיס אלטיכסיה שלך, תעלה אמת מן הארץ, הדין הוא דכתיב (תהלים פה, יב): אמת מארץ תצמח. רבנן אמרי לה בשם רבי חנינא בר אידי ורבי פינחס ורבי חלקיה בשם רבי סימון אמר, מאד, הוא אדם. הדין הוא דכתיב (בראשית א, לא): וירא אלהים את כל אשר עשה והנה טוב מאד, והנה טוב אדם. רב הונא רבה של צפורין אמר עד שמלאכי השרת מדינין אלו עם אלו ומתעסקין אלו עם אלו בראו הקדוש ברוך הוא. אמר להן מה אתם מדינין כבר נעשה אדם.

Is this midrash optimistic or pessimistic about the creation of humanity?



Yaakov as the archetype of emet

Micha 7:20

You shall give the truth of Jacob, the loving-kindness of Abraham, which You swore to our forefathers from days of yore.

תתן אמת ליעקב תסד לאברהם אשר נשבעת לאבותינו מימי קדם:

Take a look at this verse in context, Micah 7:18-20. These three verses are known in the mystic tradition as an expression of the thirteen attributes of Divine mercy parallel to those in Exodus 34:6-7

Now look at these two sources from the book Tomer Devorah (by R' Moshe Cordevero, written mid-16th century Tzfat.) Use his teaching as a frame for understanding the work of "being true."

Tomer Devorah 1:1

Chapter 1 - That it is fitting for a person to resemble his Creator: It is fitting for a person to resemble his Creator and then he will be [configured] in the secret of the Highest Form, [both] in image and likeness. As if he is alike in his body but not in his actions, he betrays the Form; and they will say about him, "A lovely form, but ugly deeds." As behold, the essence of the Highest Image and Likeness is His actions. And what will it benefit him to have the structure of his limbs like the Highest Form, but not resemble his Creator in his actions? Therefore it is fitting that he should [make his actions] resemble the actions of the Crown (Keter), which are the thirteen highest traits of mercy. And they are hinted to in the secret of the verses (Michah 7:18-20), "Who is a power like You; He will again have mercy on us; You shall give truth." If so, it is fitting that these thirteen traits [also] be found in man. And now we will explain these thirteen actions that are fitting to be with him.

האדם ראוי שיתדמה לקונו: האדם ראוי שיתדמה לקונו ואז יהיה בסוד הצורה העליונה צלם ודמות, שאלו ידמה בגופו ולא בפעולות הרי הוא מכזיב הצורה ויאמרו עליו צורה נאה ומעשים כעורים. שהרי עיקר הצלם והדמות העליון הן פעולותיו, ומה יועיל לו היותו כצורה העליונה דמות תבנית אבריו ובפעולות לא יתדמה לקונו. לפיכך ראוי שיתדמה אל פעולות הכתר שהן י"ג מדות של רחמים עליונות. ורמוזות בסוד הפסוקים (מיכה ז, יח) מי אל כמוך. ישוב ירחמנו. תתן אמת. אם פן ראוי שתמצאנה בו י"ג מדות אלו. ועכשו נפרש אותן הפעולות י"ג שראוי שתהיינה בו:

Tomer Devorah 1:23

The tenth: "You shall give truth to Yaakov" - this trait is that Israel has a virtue. Those average people that do not know how to act beyond the [letter] of the law - and they are called Yaakov, since they only act with true behavior; and also the



<p>Holy One, blessed be He, has a trait of truth, which is from the angle of the existence of straight judgement. And with these who act with straightness in the world, the Holy One, blessed be He, acts with truth. He has mercy upon them from the angle of straightness and judgement.</p>

<p>ה' - תתן אמת ליעקב - מדה זו היא, שיש בישׂראל מעלה, אתם הבינוניים שאינם יודעים להתנהג לפנים משורת הדין והם נקראים יעקב מפני שאינם מתנהגים אלא עם הנהגות אמתיות גם הקדוש ברוך הוא יש לו מדת אמת שהוא על צד מציאות המשפט הישר, ואלו הם המתנהגים בעולם בישר והקדוש ברוך הוא מתנהג עמקם באמת מרחם עליהם על צד הישר והמשפט.</p>
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Genesis 25:27

<p>And the youths grew up, and Esau was a man who understood hunting, a man of the field, whereas Jacob was an innocent man, dwelling in tents.</p>

<p>ויגדלו הנערים ויהי עשו איש ידע ציד איש שדה ויעקב איש תם ישב אהלים</p>
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What does “innocent man” mean in contrast to one who knows hunting?

Genesis 27:12

<p>If my father touches me, I shall appear to him as a trickster and bring upon myself a curse, not a blessing.”</p>
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<p>אולי ימשוני אבי והייתי בעיניו כמתעטע והבאתי עלי קללה ולא ברכה:</p>

Genesis 27:36

<p>And he said, "Is it for this reason that he was named Jacob? For he has deceived me twice; he took my birthright, and behold, now he has taken my blessing." And he said, "Have you not reserved a blessing for me?"</p>

<p>ויאמר הכי קרא שמו יעקב ויעקבני זה פעמים את-בכרתי לקוח והגה עתה לקוח ברכתי ויאמר הלא-אצלת לי ברכה:</p>
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The Ibn Ezra explains the word trickster (שׂוֹטֵר) saying “It comes from the same root as *to’eh* (err). The meaning of *ki-metate’a* is: as one who misleads his fellow man.”

Yaakov does this at the behest of his mother Rivka, who is guided by the prophecy she received before he was born – which Yitzchak apparently did not know, or understood otherwise. He was mistaken. If ‘two wrongs don’t make a right,’ can two errors make a truth?

Genesis 28:12
And he dreamed, and behold! a ladder set up on the ground and its top reached to heaven; and behold, angels of God were ascending and descending upon it.
וַהֲגִידָהּ יְהוָה בְּנֹצֵב עָלָיו וַיֹּאמֶר אֲנִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי אַבְרָהָם אָבִיךָ וְאַלֹהֵי יִצְחָק הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר אַתָּה שׁוֹכֵב עָלֶיהָ לָךְ אֶתְנַנֶּה וְלִזְרַעֲךָ:

This symbol must be understood in its context (Genesis 28:11-22).

What does it mean to you?

Why was Jacob’s response to his revelatory dream make a physical marker and take a vow?

How do you react when exposed to a previously unimagined truth?

Genesis 32:25-29
And Jacob was left alone, and a man wrestled with him until the break of dawn. When he saw that he could not prevail against him, he touched the socket of his hip, and the socket of Jacob's hip became dislocated as he wrestled with him. And he (the angel) said, "Let me go, for dawn is breaking," but he (Jacob) said, "I will not let you go unless you have blessed me." So he said to him, "What is your name?" and he said, "Jacob." Said he, “Your name shall no longer be Jacob, but Israel, for you have striven with beings divine and human, and have prevailed.”
וַיִּנְוֹתֵר יַעֲקֹב לְבַדּוֹ וַיִּיאָבֵק אִישׁ עִמּוֹ עַד עֲלֹת הַשָּׁחַר: וַיֵּרָא כִּי לֹא יָכֹל לָוּ וַיִּגַע בְּכַף־יָרְכוֹ וַתִּמְקַע כַּף־יָרְכוֹ יַעֲקֹב בְּהֶאָבֵקוֹ עִמּוֹ: וַיֹּאמֶר שְׁלַחֲנִי כִּי עָלָה הַשָּׁחַר וַיֹּאמֶר לֹא אֲשַׁלְּחֶךָּ כִּי אִם־בְּרַכְתָּנִי: וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו מַה־שְּׁמֶךָ וַיֹּאמֶר יַעֲקֹב: לֹא יַעֲקֹב יֵאמָר עוֹד שְׁמֶךָ כִּי אִם־יִשְׂרָאֵל כִּי־שָׁרִית עִם־אֱלֹהִים וְעִם־אָנָּשִׁים וַתִּוְקַל:



Genesis Rabbah 77:3

Rabbi Hama ben Rabbi Hanina said: It was Esau's guardian angel. That is what he said to him: "For therefore, I have seen your face, as the sight of the face of angels, and you welcomed me" (Genesis 33:10).

רבי חמא ברבי חנינא אמר שרו של עשו היה, הוא דהנה אמר ליה (בראשית לג, י: (פי על כן ראיתי פניך כראת פני אלהים ותרחצני

Kli Yakar on Genesis 32:25

And Jacob was left alone, and a man wrestled with him until the break of dawn.
When it comes to Jacob's wrestling there are many opinions, and one curtain could not cover all the opinions of the commentators. But I said, "do not interpretations belong to God?!" and so I will also give my answer. The majority agree that this angel with whom he struggled was Samael, the guardian of Esau. He is called Sameal Esau because his whole desire (and his salvation) is to blind (l'sama) the eyes of a man and to strike him with sightlessness, to make the eye of his intellect blind to the point where he is no longer able to see true visions, to come and see the face of God, entering into the secrets of God which are given to those who fear Him, the secrets of the Torah. This is because he is the satan, he is the angel of death, he is the evil inclination (Baba Batra 16a)...

יותר יעקב לבדו ויאבק איש עמו עד עלות השחר. בענין התאבקות עם יעקב רבו הדעות, הן קצרה אורך היריעה האחת מלהעלות עליה כל דעות המפרשים, אמרתי הלא לאלהים פתרונים אענה גם אני חלקי ואומר, אחר שהסכימו רוב המפרשים שמלאך זה הוא סמא"ל שרו של עשו הנקרא סמא"ל עשו, כי כל חפצו וישעו לסמא עיני האדם ולהכותו בעורון ולעשותו סומא מעין השכלי, עד אשר לא יוכל הרואה לראות במראות האמת לבא ולראות פני ה' ולבוא בסוד ה' ליראיו בסתרי התורה, כי הוא שטן, הוא מלאך המות, הוא יצה"ר (בי"ב טז)...

What changed in Yaakov through this contest that made him better prepared for the "real world" meeting with Esau that followed?

What does it mean that Yaakov's name change is a blessing here? Why does he ask his opponent's name as well?

This change is affirmed by God in Genesis 35:9-15. That scene ties together the dream of the ladder and this wrestling match. How else are they connected?



Some sources from Carl Jung on the shadow archetype

Everything that man should, and yet cannot, be or do – be it in a positive or a negative sense – lives on as a mythological figure and anticipation alongside his consciousness, either as a religious projection or – what is still more dangerous – as unconscious contents which then project themselves spontaneously into incongruous objects, e.g. hygienic and other “salvation” doctrines or practices. All these are so many rationalized substitutes for mythology, and their unnaturalness does more harm than good.

“The Psychology of the Child Archetype” (1940). CW 9 Part I: The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious, p.287

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Filling the conscious mind with ideal conceptions is a characteristic of Western theosophy, but not the confrontation with the shadow and the world of darkness. One does not become enlightened by imagining figures of light, but by making the darkness conscious. The later procedure, however, is disagreeable and therefore not popular.

The Philosophical Tree (1945) Collected Works 13: Alchemical Studies. Paragraph 335

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To confront a person with his shadow is to show him his own light. Once one has experienced a few times what it is like to stand judgingly between the opposites, one begins to understand what is meant by the self. Anyone who perceives his shadow and his light simultaneously sees himself from two sides and thus gets in the middle.

“Good and Evil in Analytical Psychology” (1959) Collected Works 10. Civilization in Transition. P.872

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The meeting with oneself is, at first, the meeting with one’s own shadow. The shadow is a tight passage, a narrow door, whose painful constriction no one is spared who goes down to the deep well. But one must learn to know oneself in order to know who one is.

The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious p. 21