



November 21-22, 2025

ב כסלו תשפ"ו

Candle Lighting 4:26 PM

Parashat Toledot תולדות Genesis 25:19-28:9
Stone - p 124 Hertz - p 93 Etz Hayim - p 146

Haftarah מלאכי א Malachi 1:1-2:7
Stone - p 1137 Hertz - p 102 Etz Hayim - p 163

Kiddush following services
is sponsored by the congregation

Shabbat ends 5:25 PM

TRADITIONAL CONGREGATION

Rabbi Seth D Gordon - Rabbi.Gordon@yahoo.com
Marian S. Gordon, Executive Director - traditionalcong@gmail.com

WEEKDAY AND SHABBAT SERVICES

Tuesday - 6:30 PM

Shabbat - 9:30 AM

Board of Directors:

Governance Committee:

Florence Schachter, Chair

Marty Levy, Vice-Chair

Ken Bohm, Ellis Frohman, Ron Green, Dina Rinder, Mindy Strauss

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We welcome new members!

If you or someone you know would like to receive membership information,
please contact our office at 314-576-5230
or traditionalcong@gmail.com

On This Week's Parashah - Toledot

In the book of Genesis we read how Jacob, heeding his mother's request, disguised himself as his older brother Esau so that he could successfully receive the blessings that his father Isaac had intended to give to Esau—despite the fact that Jacob was a spiritual giant and the paradigm of truthfulness. Indeed, the attribute of truth is most associated with our patriarch Jacob, as stated, "Give truth to Jacob."

It seems that the pressing need to receive these blessings overrode the general prohibition against deception. This article will explore the importance of truth and the permissibility of deception under extenuating circumstances.

The Virtue of Truth

The Torah says: "Distance yourself from words of falsehood." This is the only sin regarding from which the Torah warns us to "distance" ourselves.

In telling the truth we emulate our Creator regarding whom it says: "The seal of G-d is truth."⁵ The Sefer Chassidim writes that one who speaks only truth can actually change destiny by decreeing something to happen—and it will.

It is evident from the Talmud that being careful to only speak truthfully is a *segulah* (spiritually propitious activity) that allows one to complete the years allotted to him by G-d.

The Talmud says that there are four groups of people that do not merit to greet the Divine presence. One of them is liars. This punishment is measure for measure: through lying they demonstrated that they sought to find favor in the eyes of men and in doing so, ignored the presence of the omniscient Almighty. Therefore, they do not merit to be in His presence.

The Talmud also says that there are three types of people that G-d despises. One of them is those that say one thing, while having completely different feelings in their heart.

On a very practical level, it is clear that when a person accustoms himself to speaking truthfully, people come to trust him, as the verse says: "A true tongue will be established forever." On the other hand, one who is a habitual liar will not be trusted, as the verse continues: "But a lying tongue, just for a moment"; i.e., his believability is short lived.

Understanding the Permissibility to Lie

Despite the above, we find that in certain circumstances it is permissible or even commendable to lie. The reason for this is that the biblical commandment against lying only includes a lie that will be harmful to someone else, as the verse says: "Distance yourself from words of falsehood; do not kill an innocent or righteous man." That is, it is forbidden to lie in a way that might cause death or harm to any person.

It is only by rabbinic law that it is forbidden to tell white lies as well, as the verse says: "Indeed, they deceive one another and do not speak the truth; they have taught their tongues to speak lies, they commit iniquity [until] they are weary." And in the words of King Solomon: "Distance falsehood and the lying word from me." Nevertheless, in cases of extenuating circumstances, as will be explained, the rabbis were lenient.

And we are told that a lie told to promote peace (as shall be explained) is not included at all in the prohibition of telling lies. It seems then that since the ultimate goal of this lie is a positive one, it is not prohibited.

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Examples of Permissible Lying

One may "change the truth" for reasons of peace. We derive this from a conversation between G-d, Sarah and Abraham in Genesis. Sarah said to herself: "After I have withered will I get smooth skin, and my husband is old." When G-d repeated her comments to Abraham, he said that Sarah had said: "How can I give birth when I am old." As Rashi explains, G-d changed Sarah's words so that Abraham would not realize that Sarah had made a denigrating remark about him.

Aaron the High Priest would employ this method when he would try to make peace between quarrelling spouses and friends. He would approach one party and tell him that the other party really is sorry and wants to reconcile. When the person would hear this, he would express an interest in resolving the dispute. Aaron would then go to the other party and tell him this fact. At which point, everybody would make up. The Rif says that it's actually a mitzvah to lie in this way in order to maintain peace.

Other examples of permitted white lies include:

- Changing the truth in order to practice humility. For example, one may claim ignorance of a certain talmudic tractate even if one does actually know it.
- Changing the truth in order to maintain modesty.
- Changing the truth in order to protect someone else from harm or inconvenience. For example, if a host was very gracious, and one is asked about this, one should not tell all about his magnanimity as this may cause too many guests to flock to him.
- On a similar vein, if a person has an incurable illness, and informing him of this will be detrimental to his health, it may be proper to withhold this information from him.
- A white lie said in order to protect someone from embarrassment. An example of this is that one may say that a bride is beautiful and gracious, even if she isn't particularly beautiful or gracious.
- Using exaggerated expressions if it is clear that it's an exaggeration. For example: "You look white like a sheet."
- There are some circumstances under which one is allowed to be deceptive in order to recoup losses that are owed to him. Our patriarch Jacob employed this method to protect his lawfully earned gains from being defrauded by his father-in-law, Laban. The details of this matter are beyond the scope of this article.
- If someone does something for himself, but another understands that it was done to honor him, one does not have to correct this misunderstanding. The Talmud relates that several rabbis were traveling from one city to another. A rabbi who approached them thought that they had come to greet him. In such a case, the Talmud concludes, it is not necessary to correct the mistake.

Exceptions to the Exceptions

- Despite these allowances, one should always attempt not to say an outright lie, but rather to tell half truths.
- Even in these cases, one should try to avoid lying to children, so as not to train them to lie.
- Also, even in these circumstances, one should try not to lie on a constant basis.
- The Magen Avraham says that even in the above circumstances, one may only lie about the past but not about the future. For example, one may not say: "I will do such and such" in order to make peace. Others question this ruling.

**Shabbat shalom,
Rabbi Aryeh Citron**

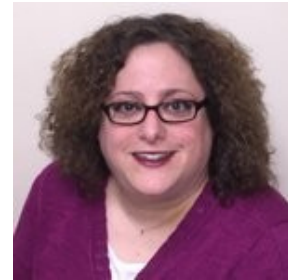
*Rabbi Citron is an Adult Torah Teacher in Florida. He teaches classes on
Talmud, Chassidism, Jewish History & Contemporary Jewish Law*

THIS SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 23!!

Bring your friends & family!

"Organizing & Downsizing"

with Jodi Granok, Certified
Professional Organizer
Brunch & Program,
Sunday, November 23, 2025
10:00 AM



Downsizing your home? Just need to get rid of "stuff" and don't know where to begin? Need help organizing paperwork? Jodi has answers and systems for you!

Join us at 10:00 AM for a light brunch,
followed by Jodi's program.

No charge - (Share the Fare donations are appreciated)

Register at
<http://bit.ly/3X1yViR>

"She is very informative and a great speaker. Everyone that attends will walk away with a great idea to 'get rid of junk.'"

Annette Heller, TradCong member
who has attended Jodi's presentations



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- REMINDER -

**IT'S NEVER
TOO LATE TO
DO SOMETHING
IMPORTANT...**

...like make a High Holyday Pledge!

If you've not yet declared a 5786 pledge,
please contact Marian or Ron Green.

Your support is so important to
everyone at Traditional!!

THANK YOU!!

PRAYER

There is a mystery in human hearts,
And though we be encircled by a host of those who love us well and are beloved,

*To every one of us, from time to time,
There comes a sense of utter loneliness.*

Our dearest friend is “stranger” to our joy,
And cannot realize our bitterness.

*“There is no one who really understands,
No one to enter into all I feel”;*

Such is the cry of each of us in turn.
We wander in a “solitary way.”

*No matter what or where our lot may be,
Each heart, mysterious even to itself, must live its inner life in solitude.*

And would you know the reason why this is?

*It is because God desires our love,
In every heart He wishes to be first,*

He, therefore, keeps the secret key Himself,
To open all its chambers and to bless

*With perfect sympathy and holy peace,
Each solitary soul which comes to Him.*

And when beneath some heavy load you faint,
And say, “I cannot bear this load alone,” you say the truth.

*God made it purposely
So heavy that you must return to Him,*

The bitter grief, which “no one understands,”
Conveys a secret message from the ruler: Entreating you to come to Him again.

*You cannot come too often or too near.
The God of Mercy is infinite in grace,
His presence satisfies the longing soul*

And those who walk with Him from day to day
Can never have “a solitary way.”

Author Unknown (Adapted)

THOUGHT FOR THE MOMENT OF SILENCE

The influence of each human being on others in this life is a kind of immortality.

John Quincy Adams