

“TRUTH IN A MILLION LITTLE PIECES”

Truth, runs the old Yiddish proverb, never dies, but it lives a wretched life.

Memoir has become interlaced with fiction, stories dominated by ideology, children encouraged to admire those whose lives are more about profit than probity. We suffer from an overload of information and a deficiency of truth.

Judaism does not view truth as an instrumental value. Many people, when asked about lying, will immediately say “whom does it hurt?” If no harm is apparent, then it is considered permissible.

But each Shabbat, before the ark, we read in our prayers a beautiful passage from the Zohar that insists that God is truth, God’s messengers are truth, God’s Torah is truth. The Talmud teaches that God’s seal is truth. A world in which lying is not seen as intrinsically wrong is a world at odds with purpose and grandeur of creation...

The Hebrew word for truth is Emeth, made up of the first, middle and last letters of the Hebrew alphabet. Truth should be at the beginning of our path in life -- we should be trained for truth. We should be truthful when we are making our way in this world, and we should be truthful when we are summing up and fashioning our legacy. As Philo wrote more than two thousand years ago, what honor can there be where there is no truth?