



## GEULAS YISRAEL

RABBI MOSHE TARAGIN  
RAM YESHIVAT HAR ETZION  
MAGGID SHIUR ALL PARSHA AND ALL DAF, OU.ORG

# The Mountain of Faith

All religion rests upon a leap of faith. Believers see the traces of Hashem in nature and history, while atheists attribute history to human decisions and nature to evolutionary forces. Faith is ultimately a choice. We choose whether to accept the traditions handed to us by our parents and teachers, and whether to see the hand of Hashem within the world around us.

What makes Judaism distinct is not that it can be proven through pure reason or rational argument. What makes it distinct is where that leap carries us. Our mesorah does not ask us to leap back to the dream of a lone mystic or to the private prophecy of a single individual claiming divine revelation. We leap back to a singular moment in history when Hashem spoke directly to an entire people assembled at the foot of Har Sinai.

We did not merely witness signs or wonders, nor did we rely upon someone else's prophecy. We heard His voice and received His word directly. Ma'amad Har Sinai cannot

be proven with certainty any more than any other faith claim can. But once we choose to trust our mesorah and return to Har Sinai, our faith rests upon direct divine revelation and not merely upon dreams, visions, or private prophecy.

Only Hashem can deliver absolute truth. Human beings live within a maze of half-truths. As much as we strive for truth, it always remains somewhat elusive. Even in our interpersonal relationships, as much as we try to be honest, we rarely expose the full truth. Tact and social etiquette require us to choose carefully what to reveal and what to withhold about others. At times, halacha itself permits, and even encourages, partial distortion of truth for the sake of darchei shalom and harmonious social interaction.

Even within our own hearts, honesty is rarely complete. We construct narratives about who we are, and those narratives are not always fully true. To some degree, we need them in order to cope with failure, disappointment, and frustration. When those self-narratives drift too far from reality, we begin living duplicitous lives. Yet most people, even those sincerely striving for honesty, still reshape parts of the truth in order to preserve a workable image of themselves.

The closest we come to absolute truth is through Torah and through commitment to His will. Truth is the foundation of our

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encounter with Hashem. As David HaMelech asks in Tehillim, “Who may reside in the tent of Hashem and who may dwell upon His holy mountain?” One who “speaks truth within his heart.” The more we strive for truth, the closer we draw to Hashem, who is the ultimate source of truth.

This is why dishonesty is treated so severely in the Torah, especially falsehood uttered under oath or within a courtroom. A legal system represents humanity’s attempt to come as close as possible to truth in order to uphold justice and moral order. False testimony harms not only the immediate victim. It undermines the fragile human effort to uncover truth itself.

Modern society is facing a crisis of truth. The internet revolutionized the manner in which we exchange information. It was assumed that free and effortless access to information would lead humanity toward greater truth. Unfortunately, the sheer volume of information and the resulting overload have made it increasingly difficult to separate fact from fiction. Social media delivered the next blow to humanity’s ability to distinguish truth from falsehood.

The internet provided a vast library of information, while social media became a cultural force shaping human perception. Algorithms further distort the search for truth. Earlier forms of the internet still required people to actively search for information. Social media constantly pushes information toward us, selecting content designed to keep our attention. Since anger, conflict, and sensationalism attract more attention than careful thought or nuance, distortion spreads more quickly than truth.

And now we stand before a tsunami that may further sabotage humanity’s ability to

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detect truth. Artificial intelligence allows for the manufacture of information, videos, images, and even human voices that can appear entirely authentic. It can generate an exponential flood of content, making the search for truth feel like searching for a needle in a thousand haystacks. We still have little understanding of where this revolution will ultimately lead or how deeply it may reshape humanity’s relationship with truth itself.

The further we drift from truth, the further we drift from Hashem. This danger is not merely social or moral; it is deeply religious.

It therefore should not surprise us, even if it is deeply frustrating, to watch our enemies weaponize falsehood against our people and our country. They fabricate bizarre myths about the way we conduct our wars and level wildly disproportionate accusations against us. Neither our country nor our army is entirely free of mistakes or wrongdoing, but

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the scale and imagery used to portray us often bear little resemblance to reality.

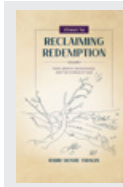
During the recent confrontation with Iran, this contrast became even more pronounced. Iran poured enormous resources into an endless stream of fabricated videos and manipulated images designed to conceal the scale of its actual losses on the battlefield. At times it felt as though two entirely different realities were being presented: one rooted in distortion and the other far closer to reality.

None of this is incidental. Our struggle in Eretz Yisrael is not merely about building a Jewish state. It is about bringing Hashem into this world through His people, in His Land. Those who oppose us may not articulate it in theological language, but beneath the hatred often lies a deeper resistance to the presence of Hashem within history. It is therefore not incidental that falsehood becomes one of the primary weapons used against us, while we struggle to hold firmly to truth.

Every year on Shavuot we renew that choice. We once again take that leap and return to the mountain of faith. We return not only to strengthen our emunah, but to deepen our inner religious life and reaffirm our commitment to Hashem's word and His will. Shavuot also renews our mission of bringing Hashem into a world that often refuses to believe.

That process began at Har Sinai, when

Hashem first revealed Himself to our people. We were tasked with representing His will and modeling a life of covenant and commitment. Part of that mission is to spread the truth of Hashem throughout the world. By standing up for truth and battling falsehood, we strengthen His presence within this world. ■



Rabbi Moshe Taragin's latest sefer entitled: **Reclaiming Redemption, Vol. II: Faith, Identity, Peoplehood, and the Storms of War**, is available at: [mtaraginbooks.com](http://mtaraginbooks.com).

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