



# TOWARDS MEANINGFUL

## TEFILLA

BY REBBETZIN ZEMIRA OZAROWSKI

Director of OU Israel L'Ayla Women's Initiative

## אמת ויציב

**D**id you ever meet a human thesaurus? You know, one of those people who are constantly spitting out a whole list of synonyms to describe something? As we begin the 3<sup>rd</sup> bracha of Birchot Kriyat Shema (the first two came before Shema and this one comes after), it almost feels like we have now become human thesauruses!

אמת ויציב ונכון וקיים וישר ונאמן ואהוב וחסיד ונחמד ונעים ונורא ואדיר ומתקן ומקבל טוב ויפה הדבר הזה *Genuine, established, enduring, upright, loved, faithful, cherished, desirable, pleasant, awesome, mighty, correct, acceptable, good, and beautiful is this statement for us forever.*

What exactly are we referring to here and why are we using so many repetitive words to describe it?

We can answer this question on two levels -

On the one hand, the word אמת follows immediately after the last words of the Shema אני ה' אלוקים (*I am Hashem your G-d*). In fact, one is obligated to make sure to not have any הפסק (break) between those words and the word אמת, and the Chazan must recite these three words together at the conclusion of the Shema. אני ה' אלוקים is the first thing that we are attesting to, the

fact that Hashem is our G-d. This is such a basic truth that we need to emphasize and re-emphasize just how true this fact is.

Beyond that, Tosfot (Berachot 12a) points out that these adjectives are also being used to describe the entire three paragraphs and all of their basic themes.

We use 15 words to describe our strong belief in all of the tenets discussed in the Shema, in order to show just how firmly we believe in them. The **Ateret Zekeinim** divides up these 15 words and says that each group of five refers to a different one of the words of אמת ה' אלוקים. **Rav Eliyahu Munk** in his book *Olam HaTefillot* expands on this as follows.

The first five words of affirmation refer to the word ה', i.e. - the basic concept of belief in Hashem. This in essence is our acceptance of the message of the first paragraph of Shema in which we accept עול מלכות שמים.

The second five words of affirmation refer to the word אלוקים. This name of Hashem refers to the judgement aspect of הקב"ה, in essence pointing to the second paragraph of Shema, in which we discuss שכר ועונש, reward and punishment for doing Mitzvot and Aveirot.

Finally, the last five words of affirmation refer to the word אמת, truth. This truth is the ability to see Hashem's hand in history

and in our own lives presently. This is illustrated in the third paragraph of the Shema when we discuss Yetziat Mitzrayim.

Each of these three concepts are so important that we need to repeatedly express our deep belief in these ideas.

**Gemara Brachot 12a** says one is obligated to say both **אמת ויציב** after the Shema of Shacharit and **אמת ואמונה** after the Shema of Maariv. These two tefillot are very similar so why do we need to repeat them twice? The Gemara answers and quotes a pasuk from Tehillim **להגיד בבוקר חסדך ואמונתך** “*בליחות*,” *in order to tell about Your kindness in the morning and your faith at night*. Our affirmation to all of the great principles of the Shema in the morning is in response to what we have actually see happen in the past. We recognize Hashem as King based on all we have seen and experienced in the past. At night, our beliefs are based on faith and *Emunah* that Hashem will continue to rule and to be there for us in the future.

The concepts of day and night are of course symbolic as well – there are times in history and in our personal lives where we can see Hashem’s hand clear as day and it is easy to recognize and believe in Him; There are other times where all is dark and it is hard to see Hashem in the picture at all. It is at these times that we need to have faith and continue to believe in Hashem even when we can’t see Him.

May we be given the strength and the clarity to be able to continue to make our Shema affirmations with conviction and sincerity on a daily basis, no matter which situation we find ourselves in. ■

**My Tech Tutor to the Rescue!**  
Patient tutor, available worldwide, to  
HELP you ease your tech stress and struggles  
& confidently manage your  
computer or smartphone.

**Bryna Lee Jacobson**  
BL@mytechtutoril.com  
050-7725-767

Mention this ad for FREE  
15 minute introductory call.



My Tech Tutor

**Pinchus Klahr, MD**  
**Rheumatology**  
US Board Certified / Misrad HaBriut recognized specialist  
in all Arthritis conditions Joint and Muscle Pain  
Conscientious “American style” Care  
Conveniently located at  
Refa Na Medical Center, Givat Shaul, Jerusalem  
**052-713-2224**  
Now also seeing patients at the  
LaBriut Health Center in RBS **02-970-1100**

בס"ד

**NEED STORAGE?**

**MAXI BOX**  
The place for extra space

📍 **Jerusalem** 📍 **Beit-Shemesh**  
📍 **Modiin**

**053-7272-815**  
www.premiummoving.co.il  
📘 Like us on facebook  
“חובלות אייל-premium moving”