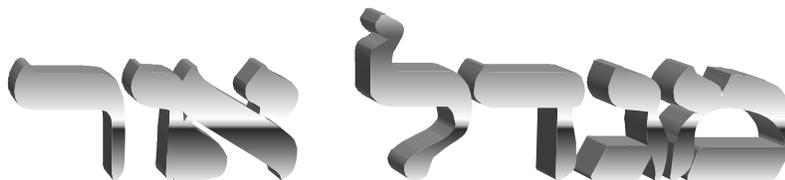


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Discuss at your table:
At the end of Shema we say
HaShem Elokaichem Emes -
Why is truth defined as a
combination of both names, with
precedence given to HaShem, the
one related to mercy?

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A publication dedicated to Harbotzas Torah

Zmanim for שבת

Wesley Hills, NY

- 4:34 - הדלקת נרות
- 4:52 - שקיעה
- 9:06 - זק"ש מ"א
- 9:42 - זק"ש גר"א
- 10:30 - סוף זמן תפילה
- 4:53 - שקיעה
- 5:35 - צאת הכוכבים
- 6:05 - צאת 72

Times Courtesy of MyZmanim.com

⌘ Bit of Bitachon

Chovos HaLevavos, Duties of the Heart, was written by R' Bachya ibn Pakuda in roughly 1040. He wrote it in Arabic so it would be accessible to the common man, and it was subsequently translated several times. It describes certain mitzvos which are not as concrete as putting on Tefillin, for example. Though harder to define, these mitzvos are no less important for a Jew in serving His Creator.

One of these chapters is called, "Shaar HaBitachon, the Gate of Trust," which describes how one can utilize recognition of Divine Providence as a tool. In the coming weeks, we will learn this seminal work and try to bring it into our own lives. He begins:

"Having previously clarified a person's obligation to accept upon himself service of HaShem, it is appropriate to next discuss a tool which is more key for a servant of G-d than anything else, which is: Trust in the L-rd in all aspects. [Bitachon is key] because it offers tremendous benefits, both for reaching wholesomeness in Torah and service of HaShem, and for attaining fortune and happiness in this world.

One of the benefits of Bitachon is that as a person trusts and relies on HaShem he gains peace of mind and freedom from worry. Thus he is able to focus solely on serving HaShem. It is impossible for one to become free of worry unless he feels secure in HaShem...

- To be continued

Thought of the week:
Compassion bestows on Man greater strength than anger, and enables him to perform mightier feats.

"וארא אל אברהם אל יצחק ואל יעקב בקל שקי ושמי ה' לא נודעתי להם" (שמות רג)

"And I appeared to Avraham, to Yitzchak, and to Yaakov as E-I Sha-ddai, but through My name HaShem I did not become known to them.

While the name of "HaShem," being the four letters of yud, hai, vav, and hai, was known to the Avos, the essence of the attribute expressed by it was not experienced by them during their lifetimes. Rashi explains that HaShem made them promises but had not yet fulfilled them. Therefore, they had not recognized Him in His aspect of truth, for which He is called HaShem, which is that He is faithful to uphold His word.

Normally the name HaShem is used to refer to mercy, as opposed to Elokim which represents judgment. If one were to look for an aspect of "truth," it would seem that the name of mercy represents a departure from truth. Really a person deserves something else, but HaShem, in His mercy, gives them something better. Why then does Rashi tell us that HaShem is a name which connotes truth and faithfulness to a decree or promise?

The answer may be that truth is NOT what we think it is. In fact, the Torah perspective on truth is different from modern man's definition thereof. The Gemara discusses how one should dance before a bride [and groom.] We are told that while Bais Shammai says one should "say it like it is." Bais Hillel says that we always say, "She is a beautiful and gracious bride," and that is the halacha. But isn't it lying if the bride is ugly and rude?

No. Truth according to the Torah is not a direct reporting of the facts, but rather a reporting of them which will bring about whatever effect G-d wishes. When a couple gets married, HaShem wants them to be happy and see the virtues in each other. Therefore, we praise them to one another to encourage this feeling and appreciation. If a person buys something, even if he could have done better, or we do not like what he purchased, we praise it to him and do not tell him he made a bad deal. This is not falsehood, but rather the highest form of truth.

The name of HaShem represents a mercy which helps a person through difficulty, reminding him that he is not alone. When Yosef went down to Egypt, the traders who normally carried foul-smelling items were carrying sweet-smelling spices. That does not make slavery better, but the fact that HaShem was with him in his distress made Yosef's suffering easier to bear.

This midda continued throughout the golus Mitzrayim, when for example, the women who drew water to take to their husbands in the fields found small fish in their buckets which they were able to cook and feed to them. This small consolation was the attribute of 'HaShem' mingling with the judgment of exile to form truth. When the makkos hit the Egyptians, the Jews were spared, showing an exceedingly fine Divine Providence. These reminders were the truth that was exhibited for the Jews in Egypt – that G-d is trustworthy and fulfills His promises.

Why then didn't the Avos experience this attribute? The Baal HaTurim says the final letters of the initial words of this posuk are aleph, lamed, mem, spelling 'ilem,' mute. The Avos never had occasion for G-d to show them mercy in difficulty because they never had any claims or complaints against Him. The name He appeared to them with was E-I Sha-ddai, which refers to limitations. The Avos knew that everything HaShem does is calculated perfectly, and that He would fulfill His word at His time and in His way. May we merit to feel His presence that strongly.

R' Avigdor Miller z"l's grandson once walked into his grandfather's home and was puzzled to see his grandfather standing at the sink with his face under water. After a few moments, R' Miller stood up and breathed deeply. "The air is so wonderful!" he exclaimed.

His grandchild asked, "Why was your face in the water for so long that you couldn't even breathe properly?" Replied R' Miller, "On my way home, someone started talking to me and commented that lately, the air has been polluted. I didn't want my appreciation of HaShem's air to lessen, so I decided to deepen my appreciation of air. After depriving myself of air for just a short while, I now am even more thankful to HaKadosh Baruch Hu for providing us with such wonderful air.