



Emet Veemunah

As opposed to the recital of the morning *Shema* when we recite only one blessing afterwards, we recite two blessings after the evening *Shema* during *Maariv*. The first blessing is the same as in the morning – *Baruch Atoh Hashem Ga-al Yisrael* – Blessed are You G-d that redeems Israel.

The second blessing after *Shema* begins *Emet Veemunah* – Truth and Faith - without the word *baruch*, because it is a continuation of the blessings recited before *Shema*, which began with *baruch*. Like in *Shacharit*, the prayers are utilizing the principle *Brachah Hasemuchah Lechaverta* – if one blessing is juxtaposed to another, the second one need not begin with *Baruch*.

Emet Ve-emunah Kol Zoht – We declare that every single word, vowel and letter of the *Shema* we just recited is faithfully true. The *Etz Yosef* also explains that *Emet Veemunah* refers to *Torah* and *Mitzvot*. The *Torah* is *Emet* – Truth; and *Mitzvot* are expressions of *Emunah* – of our faith. This teaches that the way to demonstrate our faith in the truth of G-d's oneness, which we just declared in the *Shema* is by A) studying His *Torah* and B) fulfilling His *Mitzvot* – Commandments.

After emphasizing the veracity of the *Shema*, the *Tefillah* continues and reflects upon our Exodus from Egypt. *HaRav* Yaakov Emden, zt"l in his *Siddur Beit Yaakov* notes that the symmetry between the post *Shema* prayers in the morning and the evening is puzzling. Since the *Torah* states that we left Egypt in the daytime it makes perfect sense why we invoke the miraculous Exodus after reciting *Shema* in the morning. But why do we mention the Exodus at night?

Perhaps the answer can be learned from the final *Mishnah* in Tractate *Berachot* 9:5 – *Chayav Adom Levarech Al HaRoah, Kesheym Shehu Mevarech Al HaTov* – Just as we are commanded to recite a blessing in times of joy, so must we recite a blessing in bad times. We recite blessings when babies are born; but we also recite a blessing when a loved one passes away. Why? The *Talmud* explains because - *Kol Deovid Rachmana LeTav Ovid* – Everything G-d does is for the good. It may not look good or feel good, but we trust that ultimately it is good. Therefore, we even recite a blessing in difficult times. Not only is it good; it brings us a step closer to the *Geulah* – the final redemption.

Therefore, we invoke the great Exodus from Egypt both in the daytime as well as at night to signify that we trust and understand that even when it seems dark outside and/or in our lives, the *Geulah* – G-d's loving kindness and His redemption are in motion and will arrive soon.

Take Home Tip: It's easy to see the good when everything feels sweet and pleasant in our lives. The challenge is to see and feel G-d's presence and kindness when we experience darkness as well. A way to achieve this to not only look for the good each day, but also to keep a journal of good and difficult times and look back on it from time to time because in hindsight we will often find a blessing we did not originally note.

Shabbat Shalom,

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