

TEFILLAH TIPS

TEFILLAT SHACHARIT—SHABBAT

Emet Veyatziv Venachon

After the *Shema* we recite a third blessing called *Emet Veyatziv* which surrounds *Shema* and serves as a prelude to the *Amida*-Silent Meditative Prayer. The *Talmud Berachot* 11B states that if one does not recite *Emet Veyatziv* each morning, he does not fulfill his daily prayer obligation.

The book *Seder Hayom* documents that the prayer was authored by leaders of the ancient Babylonian Jewish community during the times of Ezra the Scribe (348 BCE) and the return of the people of Israel to Israel in order to rebuild the Holy Temple. Ezra invited the Babylonian Jewish community to join in the return to Jerusalem. For several reasons they chose not to participate. In order to demonstrate that despite their decision to remain in Babylonia they nevertheless remained loyal and believing Jews, they penned this *Tefillah-Emet Veyatziv* and presented it to Ezra and the leaders of Israel.

Although the prayer starts with the word *Emet*-Truth, in practice we recite *Emet* as the final word of the previous *Tefillah* – *Hashem Elokeychem Emet*. The *Talmud* teaches that this practice is based on the verse in Jeremiah 10:10 that states, *Hashem Elokim Emet-G-d*, is the ultimate truth.

Emet Veyatziv begins with sixteen seemingly similar affirmations of the unwavering truth of G-d, Torah and *Mitzvoth*. The obvious questions are A) Why sixteen? And B) Why so seemingly repetitious?

HaRav Pinchas Altshul of Plotsk zt"l (a disciple of the Vilna Ga'on) in *Sidur Sha'ar Ha Rachamim* writes that the sixteen affirmations of truth reflect the sixteen verses in *Shema* and *Vehaya Im Shamo'a*; and each word corresponds directly to that particular verse. Therefore, the verse *Shema* corresponds to *Emet*, the verse *Baruch Shem* corresponds to *Veyatziv*... and *Rav Pinchus* explains the sixteen connections (to read the commentary in full see *Siddur Otzar Hatefillot* pp284 on the bottom right hand corner).

HaRav Shimon Schwab zt"l writes that the sixteen affirmations are divided up into eight sets of two. – *Emet Veyatziv/ Venachon Vekayam/ Veyashar Veneeman*..... He explains the reason there are eight is to symbolize the eight strands of *Tzitzith* on each corner of a *Tallith*. Since we are affirming the truth of G-d just mentioned in the passage about *Tzitzith*, the structure of *Emet Veyatziv* embodies *Tzitzith*.

If something is genuinely true, it means that it is true in all circumstances, for all time, everywhere. The next two verses in *Emet Vayatziv* proclaim that G-d, our protector and His Divine truth are for all times, and in all places that have ever or will ever exist.

Take Home Tip: Although in our technologically advanced society whatever we buy will soon be outdated, the priceless divine heritage of truth we received from our forefathers can never and will never become obsolete.

Shabbat Shalom.

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