

## תְּפִילַת יִצְחָק *Tefillat Yitzhak* -- Rabbi Jon's commentary on words of prayer

The worshipper must direct his heart to each and every word. He is like a man who walks in a garden collecting roses and rare flowers, plucking them one by one, in order to weave a garland.... Every word seizes hold of him... entreats him not to abandon it, not to break their bond, saying: *Consider my light, my grace, my splendor. Am I not the word 'Baruch'? Harken to me when you pronounce me. Consider me when you utter me.*"

--Rabbi Nachman of Bratslav, quoted in Rabbi Abraham Joshua. Heschel, *Quest for God*, p. 34

As you are learning the prayers, one goal is to find a word or a phrase here and there that is meaningful and that you can add to your "repertoire". If you find a phrase meaningful, stop and try to say it to yourself in Hebrew, whether you are reading the Hebrew or the transliteration. Say it slowly, or more than once, or in a quiet chant that your ears can just hear. Let whatever meaning or feeling sink in, and don't rush to move on with the congregation.

### Siddur Sim Shalom, pp. 113-114

אֱמֶת *Emet* True, reliable

Between the Shma and the Amidah, the word אֱמֶת *Emet* repeats over and over in our prayers. In English, the first associations of "true" refer to honesty. In early Hebrew, אֱמֶת *Emet* is related to words like אָמֵן *amen*, a statement of affirmation, and אֱמוּנָה *emunah*, which means faith or faithfulness.

These meanings are not contradictory, but perhaps they are complementary. How does honesty in our relationships flow from faithfulness? How is related to reliability? When we choose not to be honest, or completely honest, are we being careless or thoughtless, or does that choice flow from a deeper perspective on what faithfulness means in that situation?