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## Tefillah - 014 Balanced Compassion

**וְאֵלֹקֵי יַעֲקֹב** - “And the G-d of Yaakov”, refers to the trait which Yaakov Avinu embodied - the trait of *emes*, truth. “Give truth to Yaakov.”

Avraham Avinu had two wives - Sarah Imeinu and her maidservant, Hagar. Yitzchok Avinu had only one wife - Rivkah. Yaakov Avinu had four wives - Leah, Rachel, Bilhah and Zilpah. The children of Yaakov, the 12 *Shevatim*, did not all come from just Rachel and Leah; they also came from the maidservants Bilhah and Zilpah. Here we see the following novel concept: besides for the *middos* which we inherited from our *Avos* and *Imahos*, we also inherited *middos* from the maidservants.

The maidservants (Bilhah and Zilpah) do not come from Avraham Avinu's family, yet, a third of *Klal Yisrael* comes from the maidservants! What do we have to do with the maidservants??

We find that our forefathers Avraham and Yitzchok had differing approaches. Avraham is called *av hamon b'goyim*, the “father of the nations”; he fathered Yishmael, and he wanted Yishmael to remain in his household. If not for Sarah's pressure, he wouldn't have sent Yishmael away. [This is because Avraham is the *middah* of *ahavah*\chessed.]

Sarah, however, came with *din*. She wanted Yishmael out of the house. Yitzchok Avinu was like his mother Sarah - he represented *din*, because Yitzchok's trait is *yirah* and *pachad* (awe and fear). Sarah wanted all evil to be expelled from the home, and this is like Yitzchok's *middah* of *pachad*, which is to sift out the bad from the good.

Yaakov, however, combines the two approaches. On one hand, Yaakov is the trait of *emes*, which goes with *din*\judgment. Truth cannot stand falsity, and it demands that the bad be sifted out from the good and expelled. On the other hand, Yaakov is also the trait of *rachamim*\compassion. The ability of compassion comes to bring harmony. He combined both the approaches of Avraham and Yitzchok and harmonized them. On his outside, he showed *emes*, strict truth and judgment, but Yaakov's inner essence is *rachamim*\compassion.

Chazal say that “Yaakov is the choicest of the Avos.” Yaakov is the paradigm of perfection, for he possesses the trait of compassion. When Hashem created the world, originally He created it with *middas hadin* (judgment), and He saw that the world could not survive, so He created it with *middas harachamim* (compassion), and then Creation was complete. Thus, the trait of compassion completed and “perfected” Creation, and therefore Yaakov is the most “perfect” of all the Avos, because he possessed the quality of *rachamim*\compassion.

A person cannot survive with just *emes* alone (except for a few rare individuals who can). If a person would live his life purely based upon *emes*, he would disassociate himself completely from the world. To live with just *emes* alone would also cause a lot of disagreement and strife with people.

On the other hand, if a person goes on in the opposite extreme, and he is being too compassionate with people, he will compromise on the truth. He will become too naïve. If someone steals from him, he will judge the person favorably and think, "The stealer took what was rightfully his."

We must be balanced in our *Avodas Hashem* - we need to harmonize the traits of *emes* and *rachamim* together.

The first part of our Avodah is that we need to clarify what the truth is. After we are burning for the truth in life, we can then develop our trait of *rachamim*, and the *rachamim* will be a balanced kind of *compassion*, because it is built upon truth.

We must know what the *emes* is and clarify it - and burn with it.

If not, a person is in mortal danger. "The *yetzer hora* is evil from a man's youth" and he continues to get worse and worse each day - unless a person clarifies what truth is, he will succumb to the *yetzer hora*, without a doubt.

Yaakov exercised the trait of *emes* on his outside, but his essence is *rachamim*. The outside protects the inside - so when a person has *emes*, his *rachamim* is protected. If a person seeks *emes*, he will have protection.

Our actual essence, though, is to strive for *ahavah*\love and *achdus*\unity with Creation. It is just that *emes* is the protection that we need in order for our *rachamim* on Creation to be balanced.

May we merit to combine both *emes* and *rachamim* - which is expressed through the words [יאלוקי יעקב.1\]](#)

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[1] See also **Tefillah #089: Truth and Peace Together**

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**Source:** <https://bilvavi.net/english/tefillah-014-balanced-compassion>