



THE MUSSAR INSTITUTE



Getting our Footing:
Preparing to Walk
the Path of Truth

EMET

אמת

TRUTH

Kallah 2022
The Mussar Institute



The path of Mussar is the path of the soul. Through the centuries, generation after generation of experimentation has honed and refined its theory and practices in order to make these correspond closer and closer to reality, starting with our inner reality: how we are constructed and how we function.



The acute understanding that the Mussar teachers have evolved offers us precious guidance to awaken us to the reality of being a soul. Their methods offer us a hand as well, showing us how we can become conscious partners in the journey of life, so we can advance with surer steps toward its highest purpose.

Alan Morinis



Rabbi Yisrael
Salanter
1809-83



Mussar is . . .

“Making the heart feel
what the mind already knows.”

Rabbi Elya Lopian (1876-1970)

	English	Trans-literation	Hebrew	Key-Phrase
1	Humility	Anavah	עֲנָה	I am dust and ashes.
2	Gratitude	Hakarat HaTov	הַכֶּרֶת הַטוֹב	Awaken to the good and give thanks.
3	Patience	Savlanut	סְבִלּוּת	Bear the burden of the situation.
4	Honor	Kavod	כְּבוֹד	Each one, holy soul.
5	Generosity	Nedivut	נְדִיבוּת	The generous heart gives freely.
6	Kindness	Chesed	חֶסֶד	The world stands on kindness.
7	Strength	Gevurah	גְּבוּרָה	Holding boundaries
8	Tranquility	Menuchat Ha'Nefesh	מְנוּחַת הַנֶּפֶשׁ	Rising above the good and bad.
9	Trust	Bitachon	בִּטְחוֹן	Under the wing of Hashem.
10	Enthusiasm	Zerizut	זְרִיזוּת	Don't delay.
11	Order	Seder	סֵדֶר	Each thing in its place.
12	Awareness	Zehirut	זִהִירוּת	Shining inner light.
13	Truth	Emet	אֱמֶת	Truth is the seal of Hashem.

Emet/Truth

אמת

Alan Morinis and Rabbi Avi Fertig (The Mussar Institute)

Rav Yisrael Salanter defines *emet*/truth as when something follows the path for which it was intended without veering to either side. Similarly, Rav Shlomo Wolbe writes, “The most basic parameter of truth is consistency. Truth requires not only that there be no discrepancy between knowledge and awareness on one hand, and reality on the other hand— but also that there be no contradictions within a person’s essential nature.” When a life is consistent and has integrity, then it can express truth.

The path of consistency and integrity must lead us to stand others on truth. We are called to bring others to their truth, to allow them to realize their potential, to enable each individual to live with consistency and integrity as the *Tzelem Elohim* [divine image] that God has fashioned him or her to be.

אמת

Emet - Truth

Truth stands forever, falsehood has no legs.

Talmud Shabbat 104a

With lies you can go far, but not back again.

Yiddish Proverb



Truth or *emet* is God's own seal. According to the rabbis: the three letters of the word constitute the first, middle and last letters of the Hebrew alphabet. Truth has to be broad and open enough to encompass all letters, all words, all of existence. By contrast, *sheker*, or "lie" consists of three letters huddled together near the end of the alphabet. They make their own closed little circle, and do not allow the light of truth to shine in.

God's seal of truth commands us to be honest and to live with integrity. This has to do with every aspect of our lives, from our business dealings to the way we express our faith in God. What we do and say should be out in the open, accessible to all who want to see it, and capable of passing common human tests of truth.

Rabbi Arthur Green, These Are the Words

***Bilvavi Mishkan Evneh* (In My Heart I will Build a Sanctuary) – 21st c - Jerusalem**

The Abilities of Truth and Peace

We find two great people who led our nation. One leader was *Moshe Rabbeinu*. “Moses is true, and God’s Torah is true.” Moses represents the trait of *emet*, the absolute truth. We also find that Aaron at one point led the nation; this was when Moses was temporarily absent. Aaron is called the “pursuer of peace and lover of peace.”

What was the difference between the way that Moses led the nation, with the way Aaron led the nation? When Aaron led the nation, the people pressured him to allow the Golden Calf, and he listened to them. He was mainly concerned that there should be peace among the nation, so he listened to their requests; the people were able to sway him and get him to listen to their demands. But Moses would not budge under any pressure, and he only followed absolute truth. For example, when he saw the people sinning with the Calf, he immediately shattered the Tablets. Both Moses and Aaron possessed their own unique traits, and our Sages learn from this that there are two ways how to lead the nation. One way is through truth, and the other way is through peace.

In actuality, both abilities are needed, for it is written, “Truth and peace together.” We need both the abilities of truth and peace, together, or else we will be sorely mistaken. We are not, God forbid, speaking disparagingly about the approaches of either Moses (the emphasis on truth) or Aaron (the emphasis on peace). We are speaking about ourselves - that it is we who have to use both the abilities of truth and peace, or else we will be imbalanced and wreak havoc upon the world and upon ourselves.



THE LETTERS OF THE WORD
SHEKER - A LIE
SHAKE UPON THEIR POINTS AND WILL EASILY FALL
BUT THE LETTERS OF THE WORD
EMET - TRUTH
REST FIRMLY ON THEIR BASES
AND WILL NEVER BE SHAKEN

When I was a young man, I wanted to change the world. I found it difficult to change the world, so I tried to change my nation. When I found I couldn't change the nation, I began to focus on my town. I couldn't change the town, so, as an older man, I tried to change my family.

Now, as an older man, I realize that the only thing I can change is myself. And suddenly I realize that if, long ago, I had changed myself, I could have made an impact on my family. My family could have made an impact on our town. The town's impact could have changed the nation, and I could indeed have changed the world.

Rav Yisrael Salanter

appreciating the good
shalvah
gevurah
yirah
zerizut
security
forgiveness
slichah
modesty
Honor
savlanut
hakarath ha'tov
Gratitude
patience
Enthusiasm
bitachon
agility
anavah
emeth
faith
hoda'ah
kavod
strength
dmamah
Silence
emunah
anger
tsiniut
Humility
Fear/Awe
Truth
ka'as
MUSAR

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**And we need to know . . . and
remember**

We are not in this alone!

