

# The Three Pillars of Truth— Lessons from the Hebrew Alphabet

Haim Shore

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Truth is a sublime concept. But what does it stand on? What are the required ingredients for something to be “Truth”?

As it turns out, observing the two words **Emeth** (Truth) and **Sheker** (Falsehood/lie), as their letters appear in an orderly sequence of the Hebrew Alphabet, teaches us powerful lessons on what constitute “Truth”.

*Emeth* is written in Hebrew: אמת

*Sheker* is written in Hebrew: שקר

The letters of these words appear emphasized in the sequence of orderly Hebrew Alphabet below (read from right to left; letters in parentheses are “final letters”, appearing only as last letters of words):

*Emeth*:

א ב ג ד ה ו ז ח ט י כ ל מ (נ) ס ע פ (ף) צ (ץ) ק ר ש ת

*Sheker*:

א ב ג ד ה ו ז ח ט י כ ל מ (נ) ס ע פ (ף) צ (ץ) ק ר ש ת

Based on these two sequences, three observations are called for that define the three pillars of “Truth”:

## Pillar 1: Completeness

The letters of *Emeth* (Truth) “scan” the whole spectrum, from first to last of the Hebrew Alphabet, with the middle letter appearing exactly as a middle term in the sequence. By contrast, the Hebrew letters for “Falsehood” are **concentrated** together in a small segment of the sequence, conveying an impression of “Half-truth”, of an incomplete picture.

The tendency to make judgements or general assertions based on partial truths produces the worst form of falsehood. Partial truths contain seeds of truth, thus conveying an impression of truth when such is non-existent. This renders it difficult, at times impossible, to tell truth from non-truth. We judge a person based on a single wrong deed or utterance, ignoring a lifetime of righteous and fruitful deeds. We take part of a sentence, or paragraph, to slander someone ignoring the context and the true meaning of the complete pronouncement.

The book of Psalms regards “Completeness” as main feature of truth, which we have to account for observing and attempting to understand Divine righteous intervention in the world:

“Judgments of Jehovah are true (*Emeth*), they are righteous **altogether**” (Psalms 19:10).

Only in its totality may one appreciate Divine judgement as righteous.

Components of that judgment, on their own, do not constitute righteousness; and only when taken **altogether** may these components be regarded as *Emeth*.

## Pillar 2: Correct Order

The letters of *Sheker* appear in a perverted order in the sequence above, unlike the correct order of appearance of *Emeth*.

Falsehood is often generated, and truth violated, by placing “things” not in their correct order. Violating correct order can appear in all forms and shapes. When two warring parties are engaged in war, and we ignore the correct order of events that have “rolled” the parties into a state of war, or at times portraying real events, however in a perverted order of occurrence – we create falsehood (lie).

Interchanging cause and effect, calling cause effect and calling effect cause, displaying thereby an incorrect cause-effect relationship, also obscure truth and generate falsehood. When a person blames his business partner for a certain adverse reaction to his own conduct, portraying his own conduct as reacting to that reaction (rather than as a trigger for the latter), he is engaged in creating falsehood. Preserving correct order is an essential ingredient for preserving truth.

### **Pillar 3: Supportive Evidence**

Observing the two sets of Hebrew letters that constitute *Emeth* and *Sheker*, one discerns a major characteristic that tell them apart: The letters of *Emeth* look stable, well rooted in the ground (as shown by two “legs” or by a horizontal base, as in the middle letter). Conversely, all letters of *Sheker* seem shaky, not well rooted in the ground, two standing on one leg and a third (the first letter) “prone” to swing from one side to the other. Observing these letters an impression is conveyed of instability, as though the letters do not really have anything to support them. One is led to the conclusion that lack of evidence, grounded in reality, is main feature that distinguishes “truth” from “falsehood”, *Emeth* from lack thereof.

**In conclusion:** The Hebrew Alphabet teaches us that to tell truth from falsehood one needs only examine and confirm to what degree do the three essential ingredients of truth prevail; to what degree do **Completeness**, **Correct order** and **Evidence** permeate given descriptions of world affairs.