

They shall take for you pure, pressed olive oil for illumination. (27:20)

The *Midrash Tanchuma* questions the fact that pure, pressed olive oil is required for illumination – although it is not ingested. Yet, the oil used for the *Korban Minchah*, Meal-offering, which is consumed, does not require such a degree of purity. **Horav Eliyahu Meir Kovner** explains that there is a difference whether one is acting for himself or when one is acting on behalf of others. The *Korban Minchah* is a personal offering, which is eaten by the one who offers it. It is a personal “thing”. When it concerns oneself, one’s own comfort zone, the Torah does not demand that the oil must be of the highest quality.

The *Menorah*, however, shed its light outward; its designation being to illuminate the world. The oil used for the *Menorah* is oil that serves a purpose for others. When one seeks to brighten the hearts and lives of others – he must use the clearest, purest and finest quality “oil”. Indeed, he must carefully introspect his own motives to determine their purity level. “Am I really doing this to help others; or am I just seeking an opportunity to promote my ego?” When dealing with others, there is no room for personal “sediment” (person himself must be above reproach). To be effective, one’s motive must be all pure.

Furthermore, when reaching out to others, not only must it be pure, it should be real. All too often, we empathize emotionally with those in need, but we do very little about bringing our heartfelt emotions to reality. The Torah states, *V’lo yizach haChoshen mei’al ha’Eiphod*, “And the Breastplate shall not be detached upon the *Eiphod*” (Ibid. 28:28). The Breastplate was worn by the *Kohen Gadol* over his heart. Since the Breastplate bore the names of the Tribes on it, the *Kohen Gadol* was inspired to pray for the Jewish People – who were always close to his heart. The *Eiphod* was a garment that the *Kohen Gadol* wore over his Tunic and Robe. It was similar to an apron, extending over his shoulders by means of straps. The Torah admonishes us not to permit the Breastplate from being disconnected from the *Eiphod*.

The **Mishkoltzer Rebbe, Shlita**, offers a homiletic reason for this. The names of the Tribes were inscribed on the *Avnei Shoham*, stones, which were at the top of the *Eiphod* straps. Likewise, the names of the Tribes were engraved on the *Avnei Choshen*, stones of the Breastplate. The lesson, explains the *Rebbe*, is that the stones representing *Klal Yisrael* which are over the heart, should not be separated from the stones worn over the shoulders. Why? We often feel in our hearts for our fellow Jews, but are we ready to carry him on our shoulder?

It is not enough to just empathize and feel bad. We must lift him up over our shoulder and do something about expressing our empathy.