

## "And the Choshen shall not be loosened from the Eiphod. " (28:28)

Every one of Hashem's *mitzvos* is eternal in nature. They are applicable forever. If so, how do we reconcile the *mitzvah* of not loosening/separating the *Choshen* from the *Eiphod*? After all, we have neither a *Bais Ha'Mikdash* nor *Kohanim* who serve with their priestly vestments. **Degel Machne Efraim** responds that the *mitzvah* serves as an analogy for the *middah* of *emes*, attribute of truth. The *Torah* adjures everyone to speak the truth. At no time shall the *Choshen*, which alludes to the heart, since it is placed directly over it, be separated from the *Eiphod*, which signifies the mouth, as its numerical equivalent is the same as *vp*, mouth. The *pasuk* teaches us a formidable lesson. One should not distance his mouth from his heart. He must always speak the truth.. He must articulate with his mouth that which is in his heart. *Emes*, truth, must flow through every fibre of a Jew's body.

This idea is a departure from the standard concept of *sheker*, falsehood. The *Torah* forbids us from speaking falsely. What about one who speaks the truth, but his words do not emanate from his heart? He speaks from his mouth, not from his heart. That is considered *sheker*, since it does not represent unity.

**Orchos Tzaddikim** writes that one who prays to Hashem must be sure that his supplication is in total harmony with his heart. He should not say one thing, while thinking another. His intentions should be synchronized with the words he utters. He means the words he says. None of the following represents a *tefillah* of *emes*: one who prays in a manner to attract the attention of those around him; one who is more concerned with the sound of his voice than the conviction of his prayers; one whose vested interests motivate his prayers. David *Ha'Melech* says in *Tehillim* 145:18, "*Hashem is close to all who call upon Him - to all who call upon him sincerely.*" Hashem responds to those who pray with *emes*, whose words reflect conviction, not simply superficial form.

When we pray for our own well-being, whether it is spiritual or physical in nature, our prayers must be truthful, originating from the heart. When we ask for Divine assistance in *Torah* study or forgiveness for sin, it must be founded in sincere motivation. **Avodas Penim** presents a fascinating observation regarding veracity in prayer. He questions why one who implores Hashem for his physical/material needs does not necessarily receive a positive response. Certainly when one prays for himself, his supplication is truthful and sincere. He desires to be healthy and to have sufficient material provision, so that he can enjoy a comfortable lifestyle. Is that not "true"? The error we make, he posits, is that we do not really believe with all of our heart that Hashem is the sole source of health and welfare. As long as one thinks that his close friends or relatives will help to support him, or his doctor will be the one to heal him, then his prayers lack the necessary integrity. We turn to Hashem completely only when the situation is very bleak, when we no longer see the light at the end of the tunnel. The problem is that by that time our sincere prayers might be too late.