

A G-d of faith without iniquity. (32:4)

Horav Eliyahu Lopian, zl, explains the concept of *ein avel*, there is no iniquity. Hashem's judgment is perfect. This means that absolutely everyone who is affected in some way in the ripple effect of the sinner's punishment, himself deserves some form of punishment. Human judgment does not take the ramifications upon others into its verdict. If someone committed a crime – he must pay – regardless of who may suffer as a result of this verdict. A man is incarcerated for a crime that he unquestionably committed; a person is taken ill, and, as a result of his illness is incapacitated and unable to support his family. It goes without saying that illness brings with it a traumatic effect on the rest of the invalid's family. *Keil emunah v'ein avel* asserts that anyone who is affected, even in the most remote manner, somehow (on the Heavenly scale) deserves it! We do not have to understand this, but we should believe it. Therefore, *Rav Elya* would exhort his *talmidim*, students, to make every effort to involve themselves in avenues of *zikui ha'rabim*, bringing merit to the multitudes. These meritorious deeds possess the power to delay or even mitigate the negative consequences of inappropriate behavior on the members of the *tzibbur*.

The *Brisker Rav, zl*, offered a similar explanation to the *middah*, attribute of *emes*, truth, which is one of the *Yud Gimmel*, Thirteen, *Middos Ha'rachamim*, Attributes of Divine Mercy. We assert that Hashem is an honest Judge Who adjudicates with utmost integrity. What is special about this accolade? Is it not obvious that Hashem will judge with utmost veracity and not permit the slightest vestige of falsehood to enter into the judicial equation? The *Rav* explains that when Hashem decrees that a person be punished, He takes into consideration the pain and anxiety that his family and friends will experience as a result of his punishment. A decree whose ramifications result in an adverse effect on others who are undeserving is a false verdict. It does not represent Heavenly *emes* – which is absolute. Human adjudication addresses the crime and the criminal. It does not factor in the pain which the offender's family experiences. Hashem's *mishpat*, judgment, takes it all into account, because it is *emes*.

The *Ponovezher Rav, zl*, was once in the hospital as a patient, awaiting surgery. He searched for something he could possibly do *l'to'eles ha'rabim*, that would benefit the masses. He called his students and asked them to think of something he could initiate. He explained that he saw that now, at a time in which he was in the hospital, was a time that required extra *zechusim*, merits, to stand in his support. They asked why he could not wait until after the surgery. He replied that he heard that once the *Koznitzer Maggid, zl*, was very frail, and the doctors despaired for his life. Despite their dire predictions, he lived many more years. His students asked him in what merit he had been blessed to live beyond the medical predictions. He explained that throughout his life, he had always accepted upon himself to undertake a new endeavor, to initiate something that he had previously not done. As soon as he completed one endeavor, he immediately went to the next. This went on throughout his life. In this manner, the community would also be in need of his services. It was in this *zechus* that he had out-lived the dire prediction.

This should inspire each and every one of us. I have yet to meet someone whose life is perfect,

who is not in need of some Heavenly intervention. What greater *zechus* than *zikui ha'rabim*, bringing merit to the wider community? We never know when the *zechus* we are providing for others actually saves us.