

Then his master shall bring him to the court... and his master shall bore through his ear with the awl, and he shall serve him forever. (21:6)

Rashi interprets *Elokim* as *bais din*, the Jewish court of law. Why would the court be compared to the Almighty to the point that they carry his Name? While there is no doubt that the members of the court are distinguished scholars, men of repute and distinction, but referring to them with G-d's Name seems to be carrying their distinction a bit too far. **Horav Gamliel Rabinowitz, Shlita**, views this from a practical standpoint. An individual stands before the *Bais Din* and presents his claim in a clear manner. He lays out the proof, clears up any ambiguity that might exist, and is certain that everything fits into place. He is clearly the winner – or, so he thinks. The judges are clearly mistaken; they must be wrong; they are crooks, having certainly been bribed by the other litigant – and it goes on. No one sees the truth any longer and sides are taken, with the judge usually serving as the fall guy, the source of blame.

Therefore, when the Torah refers to *Bais Din* as *Elokim*, a person must realize that all that occurs in his life is part of Hashem's Divine plan. The judges are simply His mouthpiece, articulating His plan for the individual who stands before them. Nothing happens within a vacuum. Everything has its reason and purpose. In the World of Truth it all makes sense. This is true even if the litigant has proof that he is innocent and, concomitantly *Bais Din* rules wrongly.

This attitude of accepting whatever is thrown at us applies equally in the sector of the individual. At times, life throws us a curve and we blame others, we attribute it to the fault of others; we never take responsibility for our actions. The **Chafetz Chaim** writes that when one loses money in *Bais Din*, he should know that the judges are not more than Hashem's agents. One should never fault the judge whose decision does not coincide with what he was hoping to achieve. It all comes from Hashem.

Divine Providence is a part of life, as we see in the *parsha* of *rotzeach b'shogeg*, the unintentional killer. *Chazal* present us with a powerful analogy. Two people – one of whom had killed unintentionally, and one of whom had killed with intention. Neither incident had witnesses who could testify to either case. It seems like they are both going to get off scot-free. The one who killed intentionally will not be executed, and the one who killed unintentionally will not go to the *arei miklat*, cities of refuge. Hashem solves the problem by having them "meet" in the same inn. The one who killed intentionally "just happened" to be sitting beneath a ladder, while the one who killed unintentionally ascended the ladder. Guess what happened? He fell! The fellow who was sitting beneath the ladder was killed and the one who fell goes into exile for his unintentional act of murder. Everybody has their day in "court" and pays their due. Hashem does not permit anything to go unrequited – good or bad.

We must live with this *cheshbon ha'nefesh*, personal soul-searching. Who knows if we did not

unintentionally harm someone – physically, emotionally or spiritually? Sure, we did not harbor any evil intentions. In fact, we are, for the most part, not even aware of it. But Hashem does not forget, nor does He overlook. There is a record of everything we have done, and if it adversely affected someone else, we will be called to task for our actions.