

The Rock! – Perfect is His work, for all His paths are justice; A G-d of faith without iniquity, righteous and fair is He. (32:4)

The term *tamim*, perfect, is a reference to the totality of Hashem's work – the big picture. Individual life is part of a large puzzle with countless pieces of all shapes and sizes, representing good fortune, failure, joy and sadness, tragedy and celebration. When these are all factored together by Hashem, everything fits in perfectly. Human cognition is limited; thus, we are able to grasp very little. If it makes sense to the human mind, it is good. If it does not make sense, it is not good. This is the human way of understanding a situation. It sees the here and now – not the yesterday or the tomorrow. Hashem sees it all and knows how to put it all together – perfectly. Accepting Divine Judgment is one of the primary Articles of Faith.

Horav Yeruchem Levovitz, zl, explains the *middah*, character trait, of *nosei b'ol im chaveiro*, sharing in a friend's burden. We are not here for ourselves, but rather, to share with others – in both their joy and sadness. The *Mashgiach* suggests that following the formula of *nosei b'ol im chaveiro*, one has the opportunity to help his friend, to the point that he could actually be the reason that his friend's life is spared. Imagine, a Heavenly decree is issued against Reuven that his life on this world will be halted abruptly. Hashem factors in the pain that Reuven's premature demise will cause others, including his relatives and friends. If one of them is not deserving of this pain, that person could be an advocate on behalf of Reuven. In the interim, Reuven might repent and be spared the decree's realization.

Earthly justice does not take the feelings of others into consideration. The larger picture does not apply to them. In a court of law, the judge or jury renders a decision. No one else has any bearing on their decision. Only one who is perfect can render a perfect decision. He can punish the defendant in such a manner that others will not be affected.

Furthermore, if a good friend is taken ill and it troubles us, we should introspect and wonder what it is that we did to warrant this pain. Hashem is not merely speaking to the stricken patient; He is conveying a message to all those who are affected by his troubles. Indeed, **Horav Eliyahu Lopian, zl**, would remark that one should see to it that he has many friends who care about him. Who knows? They might become the reason that he is spared from misfortune.

The **Chafetz Chaim**, quoted by *Rav Yerachmiel Chasid*, addresses the fact that upon occasion – probably more often than we care to acknowledge- one will complain about his health, financial status and lack of good fortune. He wonders, "Why is this happening to me? To the best of my knowledge, I have been pretty good. I certainly do not warrant such punishment."

The *Chafetz Chaim* explains that we often ignore the fact that *Yom Kippur* serves as atonement only for those sins which one commits against Heaven. Hashem doesn't forgive the individual for sins against his fellow man – such as slander, humiliation, cheating in finances, loan repayment –

without the victim's forgiveness. The person leaves this world and, when he arrives at his eternal rest, he is informed that he is returning to this world until that time that he appeases his victim. When the person hears that he must return, he begins to weep bitterly, begging for mercy, claiming that the reason he acted so inappropriately to others was arrogance born of wealth, power and success. He was blessed with an attractive and healthy physical countenance which catalyzed within him a sense of superiority. At least this time, if he must be sent back, will the Almighty please not grant him such success, such good health, such incredible good fortune, such wealth? He could do with the bare minimum – even ill-health is something with which he could live. The fewer reasons for feeling superior to others, for inducing arrogance – the better. Therefore, without realizing it, it is quite possible that what we are going through now is a fulfillment of our own request.