

This is why this anguish has come upon us. (42:21)

Yosef challenged his brothers, declaring that they were spies. They, of course, denied his allegations. As proof to their insistence that they were all brothers, Yosef demanded that they leave one brother in Egypt as “security,” while the rest would return home and come back with Benjamin. The brothers now realized that all was not well. Something was wrong. Hashem was sending them a message. The word *eileinu*, which is translated “upon us,” really means “to us.” The *pasuk* should rather have been written with the word *aleinu*, which means upon/on us.

In his *Lekutei MoHaran*, *Horav Nachman Breslover, zl*, explains that Hashem sends us messages in the guise of occurrences, incidents. Things do not “just happen” as the popular maxim of contemporary, secular society would have us think. Everything that occurs concerning a person is all by design – Hashem’s design. He is to use his head to discern why this is happening to him: “What does Hashem want of me?”

The brothers knew that the issue concerning Yosef was no simple occurrence. This was obviously retribution for something. They were being judged for something that they had done. They immediately began to think: “What could we have done; how far back does it go? They decided that the issue was their lack of compassion concerning Yosef. They erred and their inaction now required reparation. Thus, they said *eileinu* – “to us.” It is a message that Heaven sent to us. On us/upon us would not accurately define their feelings.

Hashem speaks to us all of the time. Alas, we are not always listening. At times, it is just simple incidents which occur, observations to be made, which make the difference in our lives. These, too, are messages – to those who take “time off from their busy schedules to listen.”

Horav Aryeh Levin, zl, was reverently known as the *Tzaddik* of Yerushalayim. He distinguished himself in his empathy for all Jews, regardless of religious persuasion, background, or financial portfolio. *Rav Aryeh* was known for his perpetual smile. Once queried concerning the origin of his “smile,” he said, “When I came to the Holy Land, I was utterly alone – and quite hungry. [Being alone and hungry can have a seriously depressing effect upon a person.] I went to the *Kosel*, put my hands firmly upon the massive stones and said, ‘Hashem, *Ribbono Shel Olam*, I am so lonesome here. Please, I beg of You, be with me.’

“At that moment,” he continued, “I had a strong, clear feeling that Hashem was really with me, and I returned home with a smile on my face.” That smile never left his visage. His countenance was a trademark. When an individual came in contact with him, he would feel the smile on *Rav Aryeh*’s face permeate the visitor. After all, the smile represented *Rav Aryeh*’s recognition that Hashem had listened to him.

Hashem speaks to us; it is a pity that we do not take the time to listen. Hashem listens to us; we unfortunately, do not always pay attention to Him. As the saying goes, “Wake up and smell the

roses,” but one must first open up his eyes and see the roses.