

But Binyamin, Yosef's brother, Yaakov did not send... for he said, "Lest disaster befall him." (42:4)

The words *yikranu*, spelled with an *aleph*, is related to *kara*, to call, to designate. When Yehudah repeats (to Yosef) his father's fear concerning Binyamin's safety, he says, *Ulekachtem gam es zeh me'im panai v'karahu ason*, "So you should take this one, too, from my presence, and disaster will befall him" (44:29). In this instance *v'karahu* is spelled with a *hay*, related to *karah*, denotes an unrelated occurrence by chance. Thus, we have two words which sound the same: with an *aleph*, it implies deliberation, designation, calling with a purpose; with a *hay*, it denotes a chance meeting, an unrelated occurrence which just happens. Why is there a change in the wording when referring to Yaakov *Avinu* and Yehudah?

Horav Yaakov Galinsky, zl, explains that Yaakov was implying a powerful lesson concerning *Hashgachah Pratis*, Divine Providence. Chance is not a real category, and the word coincidence should not be in the believing Jew's lexicon. Every occurrence is orchestrated by Hashem for a reason and a purpose. Nothing "just happens." Every creature is Hashem's agent, deliberately placed in a designated place at a specific time, to carry out Hashem's will. To send Binyamin on a journey meant subjecting him to a *sakanah*, danger. Travel in those days was not like it is today. We have a rule that *Satan mekatreig b'shaas ha'sakanah*, "Satan prosecutes during a time of danger." When one is in a dangerous position, he is subject to *Satan's* negative denouncements, which can have an adverse effect on his safety. Yaakov *Avinu* knew this. Yehudah also knew and believed this. When Yehudah spoke with the Egyptian viceroy, he had to talk a language that a pagan understood. The pagan does not understand the concept of Providence; he is clueless to the dangers which result from the *Satan's* negative manipulation. To him, it is all coincidence and chance. Thus, Yehudah said *karahu* with a *hay*. Otherwise, the pagan would not have understood.

In his commentary to the beginning of *Sefer Vayikra*, *Rashi* distinguishes between the manner in which Hashem spoke with Moshe *Rabbeinu* and the manner in which he spoke to the pagan prophet, Bilaam. The word *vayikra*, with an *aleph*, is used when Hashem summoned Moshe. It is premeditated and purposeful. Hashem wished to speak with Moshe. Hashem's prophecy to Bilaam, however, is introduced with *vayikar*, lacking the *aleph*, implying *mikreh*, chance. While Hashem did want to speak to Bilaam, He did not do so with great love. It was almost as if he were speaking to him by chance.

Bilaam's philosophy is one of chance. Nothing in this world is deliberate. It is all random occurrence, often without rhyme or reason. Concerning Amalek's attack against the Jewish People, the Torah writes, *Asher karcha baderech*, "That he happened upon you" (*Devarim* 25:18). To Amalek, it is all occurrences, isolated happenings which have no source. Pharaoh thought he could prevail over Moshe's plagues by calling out his magicians. He foolishly thought that he had the power to prevail over Hashem. The frogs, lice – even the splitting of the Red Sea – were all chance occurrences. He could deal with it. How wrong he was.

Indeed, the *Ramban* writes that the primary lesson of the exodus from Egypt was to open up our eyes, to teach us that every occurrence has a reason and a purpose. In his famous commentary (*Shemos* 13:16), he writes, “From the great and awesome miracles, man learns to concede in the hidden miracles.” The overt miracles teach us that everything – regardless of its overt nature – is a miracle. Nothing just happens!

As Yaakov *Avinu* was about to take leave of this world, he gathered together his family, and said, “*Heiasfu v’agidah lachem eis asher yikra eschem b’acharis ha’yamim*, “Assemble yourselves and I will tell you what will befall you in the End of Days” (*Bereishis* 49:1). Here, too, Yaakov uses *yikra* with an *aleph*, because he sought to ingrain in the Jewish psyche the principle that whatever will happen (in the End of Days) will not “just happen,” but will be a purposeful and providential message. What will “happen” will actually be Hashem sending a summons.

Rav Galinsky quotes **Horav Chaim Shmuelevitz, zl**, who observed that people stop their conversation to listen to an announcement. For example, a group of people are gathered together engrossed in conversation when they hear an announcement over the loudspeaker, informing them about a funeral that is about to take place. Immediately, the conversation stops, so that they can find out who has passed away.

Why do we not listen to our messages? Hashem is constantly talking to us. The messages come in various forms. At times, something happens to a friend or acquaintance, and we are supposed to derive a lesson from it. It would be a grave mistake to ignore the subtle and not-so-subtle hints that are occurring around us.