

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

The brothers introspected when they saw a series of misfortunes coming upon them. They realized that these had not been isolated occurrences, but rather, a punishment of sorts. But, for what? These were righteous men who did nothing without first consulting *halachah*. They felt that they had adjudicated Yosef's sale in accordance with the *halachah*, stating that a *rodef*, pursuer, who threatens one's life must be dealt with. Yet, Hashem still found something wrong with their actions. Otherwise, they would not be in this predicament. It must be their lack of compassion in the manner in which they carried out their decision. They regarded their callousness toward their brother – not the actual sale – as the reason for their present sorrowful predicament.

The choice of the word *eileinu*, translated as “to us,” rather than, *aleinu*, “upon us,” is questionable. Troubles come “on” a person, not “to” a person. In the *Likutei Moharan*, **Horav Nachman Breslover, zl**, explains that Hashem creates “situations” in thought, speech and action which serve as messages to man. Therefore, a person must look at every occurrence – whether it is something someone said, a thought that entered his mind, or an incident that took place – as messages which are Heavenly opportunities for moving closer to Hashem. There is, however, one prerequisite: one must think cogently in order to discern and understand the hidden meaning of the message. If one does not think, the message will just go over his head.

Yosef abruptly halted his brothers' daily schedule by placing them in jail for three days. The brothers understood that this three-day period was for a purpose. They must have committed a wrong, and this was an opportunity to introspect and determine what it was that they had done wrong. The three days had their desired effect. The brothers came to the realization that they must answer for the sale of Yosef – not for the actual sale – for they could find nothing inappropriate with it. It must be their impassiveness to his cries, their lack of compassion. They understood that they had done something wrong and were, thus, deserving of punishment. The punishment was directed *eileinu* – to us, as a message to repent and correct our ways. It was not random punishment; No punishment is random. Everything is Heavenly sent with a specific message. Punishment does not come upon us; it comes to us as a wake-up call.

This awareness represents the distinction between one who views the troubles as coming upon him and he who views them as coming to him. *Rav Nachman Breslover* writes that when one is tested by Hashem, his *sheleimus ha'daas*, ability to think coherently, is affected. In other words, under stress, one does not think straight. Nonetheless, if one keeps in mind the notion that every test comprises a message from Hashem, that Hashem is speaking to him, intimating to him to open his eyes and delve into his life, see what is wrong – then he will have the ability to triumph over the test. By viewing Hashem's test for what it really is, a therapeutic opportunity, one conjures up the strength to not only survive the challenge, but to actually grow from it.