Jewish Tribune – Vaeira

**The Hand of Hashem**

Both the sedrah and the haftorah speak about the punishment that befell the Egyptians. The sedrah speaks about the plagues that the Egyptians were smitten with in the times of Moshe Rabbeinu. The haftora predicts that Babylon would conquer Egypt almost one thousand years later as a punishment for Egypt promising to help Klal Yisroel against their Babylonian enemies but not keeping their word.

When you explore the makkos and the nature of the Egyptian punishment, you see the “Yad Hashem” clearly in action.

In fact, the possuk says this clearly. For the third plague, Aharon smote the earth with his staff and swarms of lice attacked Egypt. Even Pharaoh’s magicians were amazed by this and saw the hand of G-d.

וַיֹּאמְרוּ הַחַרְטֻמִּם אֶל פַּרְעֹה אֶצְבַּע אֱלֹקִים הִוא

And the magicians said to Pharaoh, “It is the finger of G-d” (Shemos 8,15)

It is not just in the makkos that Heavenly puppeteering can be seen. In many areas of life, if we look carefully enough, we see the Divine hand at play. One area where this is more manifest than others, is shidduchim.

The following episode in Rabbi Dovid Hoffman’s Torah Tavlin (p.143) is a case in point. A young lady was travelling to Eretz Yisroel to visit friends and relatives, as she needed a break after the past few unsettling weeks.

After a year in sem in Eretz Yisroel, she had started shidduchim with a positive outlook and a quiet confidence that Hashem would find her just the right Torah-minded boy, with marriage, a family and a fulfilling life all ahead of her in the near future. Unfortunately, it didn’t seem to be working out that way.

None of the suggestions she received were even close to what she was looking for and the boys she had gone out with fell short of her expectations. At first, she took it all in her stride but after a few years, her resolve began to crumble. Her parents were suffering too and whilst trying to be upbeat and supportive, they were secretly worried.

Many suggestions came and went, but the most recent incident had been crushing. A fine young man had been suggested and seemed very promising. By all accounts, he was kind, learned and serious. She had heard wonderful things about him and for the first time in months, she actually began to get excited about it and davened that this should be the one.

However, a negative response came back from the boy’s side with no clear-cut explanation. They refused to even let their son meet her. Why? What was wrong with her? She felt so badly hurt. Her friends and parents told her she needed a break and she decided to spend a week in Eretz Yisroel.

As she was sitting on the plane absorbed in her thoughts, a flight attendant brought her pre-ordered kosher meal. She wasn’t very hungry, and she left the meal in front of her untouched. A few minutes later, she overheard a conversation between the same flight attendant and a young man sitting a few rows behind her. Apparently, he had ordered a kosher meal but, for some unexplained reason, his name was not on the list.

“Sorry,” the stewardess told him, “We do not have any extra kosher meals for you.”

Moments later, as the flight attendant made her way past the girl’s seat, she motioned to her. “Hi. I have a meal here that I am not eating. Perhaps you can give it to the person who didn’t get a kosher meal?”

The flight attendant was so grateful. “Are you sure? That would be so kind and much appreciated.” She happily brought the meal over to the young man who gratefully accepted it and asked who had given away their meal. The stewardess pointed to the girl’s seat.

Feeling a bit uncomfortable, the boy waited until all the meals were eaten and cleared away before he got out of his seat to thank the young lady.

“Excuse me. I’m Levinson, the one you gave your meal to. I just wanted to thank you. It was really kind of you.”

The young lady smiled and said, “You’re very welcome. It was my pleasure. I’m glad you enjoyed it.”

The boy nodded again pleasantly. “Enjoy your flight,” he said. He began to move away, but she suddenly stopped him.

“Wait! Did you say your name is Levinson?” she asked quickly. He halted in mid-step and nodded yes. She asked him his first name and where he was from. She knew who he was. He was the last shidduch suggestion that had ended inexplicably in a refusal. She swallowed hard. She just had to know what happened.

“I believe I was recently suggested for you,” she began very hesitantly. The boy blushed slightly and when she told him her name, his face flushed entirely. “May I ask why you said no to me?”

After a few uncomfortably long moments, he answered almost in a whisper, “We were told that you went to a seminary that was very career-oriented and that chessed was not made a high priority. I’m looking for someone with a bigger focus on chessed.”

And then, recognising the irony of the situation, he mumbled in an embarrassed voice, “I guess we were wrong!”

Now, happily married many years later, they’re still amazed at the אֶצְבַּע אֱלֹקִים, the glorious finger of Hashem!

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