

“Emulating HaShem’s Compassion”

We see from this and next week’s parasha that the makot [plagues] sent by Gd were not simply random punishment but were actually a Divine plan to teach the Egyptians and the world some fundamental lessons that Jewish blood is not cheap.

Using the first maka as an example, the plague of blood can be viewed as a Mida K’neged Mida [measure for measure] punishment. Since, according to the Midrash, the Egyptians drowned Jewish children, shedding their blood in water, therefore, their water was turned into blood.

According to the Maharal, the makot reveal Gd’s unlimited power. The first three are attacks from below the ground, turning the land and sea[blood, frogs and lice] against the Egyptians, The next three are attacks from the ground level, turning the beasts, pestilence and boil upon the Egyptians. And the final three, hail, locusts and darkness emerge from the heavens above.

But most important, the Makot reveal to the world a Gd of love and compassion and not a G-d of vengeance and hate. We note that for the first [blood], fourth [beasts] and seventh [hail] maka, Par’oh was warned near the Nile. For the second [frogs], fifth [epidemic] and eighth [locusts] maka he is warned in the privacy of his palace. But for the third [lice], Sixth [boils], and ninth there are no warnings, as the first two of each of the triplets serve that purpose.

So too do we see Gd’s compassion by No’ach. No’ach could have been saved in many ways. Why did HaShem burden him with the task of constructing an Ark for 120 years? So when the curious would see him cutting down lumber and working on the Ark for so long, they would ask him why. He would answer, “Gd is about to bring a Flood on the world because of your sins,” and they would hopefully do Teshuva [Repent]. We find a similar theme in the story of the Tower of Bavel and the Dispersion that followed.

So the entire book of Bereishit is the story of a Gd unleashing his power to create the world. Chazal [Sages] say that “with ten sayings the world was created” [Avot 5:1] And in Shemot, with ten plagues, a section of the world was being decimated. As creation began with a world that was potentially “very good” [Bereishit 1:31], so too were the Makot a carefully designed plan to undo part of that creation that had gone wrong. When Gd undoes creation, He does so slowly and with a heavy heart. He is a Gd who is reluctant to inflict pain. He is a Gd of endless mercy who hesitates to destroy; and even when punishing He does so with the hope that those affected will examine themselves and learn from their mistakes.

Is it any wonder then why the I.D.F., the Israeli Defense Forces, will fly over an intended targeted enemy area and drop flyers warning civilian residents to vacate the area before it’s going to be bombed?. Causing harm and injury to civilian residence is not in the interest of our people. Or the fact that you will find Arab patients in our hospitals being treated by our finest physicians, using state of the art medical facilities. Sometimes, they are even the injured Arab murderous terrorists who are being treated under Jewish care and supplied with Jewish blood! You can rest assured that there are many vocal Israeli citizens who criticize the government for these actions. But then again, it is Hakadosh Baruch-Hu who is our Mentor and we are his pupils, and HE teaches us the attitude of showing kindness, compassion and mercy –even to our enemies, **when they are helpless and injured**. It’s in our genes. We are rachamanim, bnei rachamainm. But when they are caught engaging in an act of terrorism-the same Hakadosh Baruch-Hu commands us to summarily eliminate them-“*Haba le’horgecah-Hashkem le’horgo*”

Shabbat Shalom, from Deerfield Beach

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