

Life's Tapestry

by Rabbi Zev-Hayyim Feyer

I remember, when I was a child, my mother making a needlepoint copy of Gainsborough's *Blue Boy*. It took her forever. One day, shortly before she finished, I remember picking it up and thinking to myself, "Mommy, you may be the best mother in the world, but when it comes to needlework, this is a mess! There's a piece of red sticking out here. Over here, there's a turquoise thread that seems to go nowhere." The whole thing looked like chaos.

Suddenly, my fingertips detected smooth regular stitching on the other side of the piece. I turned it over and saw the most beautiful sight – an exquisite and precise copy of Gainsborough's *Blue Boy*. The stitches were so regular and well formed; the colors all blended so beautifully. A divine tapestry! All the disjointed threads that I saw on the other side harmonized into a complete and beautiful whole.

Sometimes it's difficult to see sense in world events. We hear about suffering and evil, and wonder how this can be the handiwork of a Merciful Creator.

When we feel that way, we're in good company. Even Moses questioned how G*d was running the show. Moses went to Pharaoh to ask him to let the Jewish people go. Now, Pharaoh was not the easiest of negotiating partners. In reply to Moses' request, Pharaoh told the taskmasters to stop giving the Jews straw, but he still required them to produce just as many bricks as before. The Jews complained bitterly to Moses, and Moses went back to G*d and said, "Why hast Thou done evil to this people? From the time I came to Pharaoh to speak in Thy Name, he did evil to this People, but Thou didst not rescue Thy People."

Moses wasn't just complaining about the problems he was having then with Pharaoh; he was saying that from its very beginning the whole plan to take the Jews out of Egypt was fatally flawed. Moses saw no order in what was going on.

When we look at life's tapestry from the wrong side, it looks like a complete mess. Moses didn't see the Divine needlework of the Creator; he was looking at events from the wrong perspective. But, as we know, the Plan finally worked.

Imagine a Martian with an incredibly powerful telescope looking at the earth. He zooms in on an apparently tragic scene. A woman in a hospital room is surrounded by a doctor and nurses. She seems to be on the verge of expiring from pain. "What can this terrible scene be?" he thinks to himself.

A more knowledgeable Martian, an expert in Earthology, leans across, looks at the monitor, and says, "Ah, you're witnessing how Earthlings bring forth their young. It's always amazed me that the human race exists at all. One would think that after the first generation, no-one would have been prepared to go through such torment."

Even the easiest of deliveries aren't that easy. As Genesis predicts, "In pain shall you bear children." Once a new life emerges into the world, however, it becomes the time of the greatest joy, a time of completion, a reason to sing.