



SIMCHAT SHMUEL

BY RABBI SAM SHOR

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In our *Sedra* this week we read of the first seven plagues that Hashem brought upon *Mitzrayim*. Each of these plagues not only brought fear and destruction to Egypt, but also defied the laws of science and nature.

One particularly telling example of this is the plague of *barad*, hail. The *Torah* spells out that this was no ordinary ice storm, by any stretch of the imagination.

וַיְהִי בָרָד וְאֵשׁ מִתְלַקַּחַת בְּתוֹךְ הַבָּרָד כִּבְדָּד מֵאֵד אֲשֶׁר לֹא הָיָה כִּמְהוֹ בְּכָל־אֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם מֵאָז הָיְתָה לְגוֹי

The hail was very heavy—fire flashing in the midst of the hail—such as had not fallen on the Land of Egypt since it had become a nation.

What is the significance of this supernatural occurrence, of ice forming around a fiery core, and both the ice and fire continuing to remain - the ice did not melt, and the flame was not extinguished?

Rashi, based on Midrash Rabba, offers a particularly insightful comment:

מתלקחת בתוך הברד. גם בתוך גשם, האש והברד מערבים. והברד מים הוא, ולעשות רצון קונם עשו שלום ביניהם:

A miracle within a miracle! Fire and hail mingled, although hail is water! But in order to perform the will of their Creator they made peace one with the other.

Rabbi Gamliel Rabinowitz, *shlit"a*, based on this comment of *Rashi*, suggests that the *makka* of *barad* actually is communicating an important eternal message for all of us. If two seemingly polar opposing forces such as fire and ice can miraculously mix and be joined together, then we as mankind should be able to push aside our conflicts to make peace with one another in order to better serve *HaKadosh Baruch Hu*.

Yehi Ratzon, may we be blessed to heed this sacred message, and find ways to heal the world together. ■



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