



SIMCHAT SHMUEL

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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. Not to be confused with today's *barad*- the sweet slushy, icy drinks that our children find refreshing on a hot summer day. The *makka* of *barad* was an intense and unusual downpour of heavy, icy hail.

The *Torah* spells out that this was no ordinary ice storm by any stretch of the imagination.

וַיְהִי בַרְדַּד וְאֵשׁ מִתְלַקַּחַת בְּתוֹךְ הַבָּרָד כִּבְדָּד מֵאֹד אֲשֶׁר לֹא הָיָה כְּמֹהוּ 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 the *Midrash Rabbah*, offers a particularly insightful comment:

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. יָסַם בְּתוֹךְ יָסַם, הָאֵשׁ וְהַבָּרָד מֵעַרְבִיּוֹ, וְהַבָּרָד מִיַּם הוּא וְלִעֲשׂוֹת רָצוֹן קוּנָם עָשׂוּ שְׁלוֹם בֵּינֵיהֶם:מִתְלַקַּחַת בְּתוֹךְ הַבָּרַד

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.

Similarly, **the *Ohr HaChaim HaKadosh zy'a***, explains the phenomena of the fiery hail:

Though water and fire are opposites, one of which is bound to prevail over the other in any encounter, in this instance they demonstrated the ability to co-exist. This was possible since both were performing Hashem's will by doing so.

Rabbi Gamliel Rabinowitz, *shlita*, based on the insights of *Rashi* and the *Ohr Hachaim*, suggests that the *makka* of *barad* actually communicates 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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