

CREATING PEACE IN THE WORLD!

by Rabbi Label Lam

*Therefore this it is told in the Book of the Wars of HASHEM, "What He gave at the [Sea of] Reeds **and the streams of Arnon**. (Bamidbar 21:14)*

***and the streams of Arnon:** Just as we recount the miracles of the Red Sea, so should we recount the miracles that happened at the streams of Arnon, for here too, many great miracles were performed. What were those miracles... (Rashi)*

*And **the spilling of the streams** that turned to settle at Ar and leaned toward the border of Moab. (Bamidbar 21:15)*

The spilling of the streams: ...the spilling of the streams, for [there] the blood of the Amorites who were hidden there was spilled. The mountains were high and the gorge deep and narrow, and the mountains were so close to each other, that a man standing on the mountain on one side [of the gorge] could speak to his fellow standing on the mountain on the other side. A road passed along [the floor of] the gorge. The Amorites said, "When the Israelites enter the land by passing through the gorge, we will come out of the caves in the mountains above them and kill them with arrows and stones shot from catapults." There were clefts in the rock on the Moabite side [of the canyon], and directly opposite those clefts, on the mountain on the Amorite side, there were protrusions, [appearing] like horns... When the Israelites prepared to pass through, the mountain of the Land of Israel trembled, like a maidservant going out to greet her mistress, and moved toward the mountain of Moab. Then those ...protrusions entered the clefts, killing them [the Amorites]. This is the meaning of, "that turned to settle at Ar." The mountain swung from its place and moved toward the side of the Moabite border, and attached itself to it. And so it is written, "and leaned on the border of Moab." - [Midrash Tanchuma Chukos 20, Bamidbar Rabbah 19:25] (Rashi)

There's a lot of hidden information contained in these few short obscure verses. The spilling of the streams: The Aramaic translation of שֶׁפָּךְ, "spilling," is שֶׁפָּךְ -the spilling of the streams, for [there] the blood of the Amorites who were hidden there was spilled. The mountains were high and the gorge deep and narrow, and the mountains were so close to each other, that a man standing on the mountain on one side [of the gorge] could speak to his fellow standing on the mountain on the other side. A road passed along [the floor of] the gorge. The Amorites said, "When the Israelites enter the land by passing through the gorge, we will come out of the caves in the mountains above them and kill them with arrows and stones shot from catapults." There were clefts in the rock on the Moabite

side [of the canyon], and directly opposite those clefts, on the mountain on the Amorite side, there were protrusions, [appearing] like horns and breasts. When the Israelites prepared to pass through, the mountain of the Land of Israel trembled, like a maidservant going out to greet her mistress, and moved toward the mountain of Moab. Then those breastlike protrusions entered the clefts, killing them [the Amorites]. This is the meaning of, "that turned to settle at Ar." The mountain swung from its place and moved toward the side of the Moabite border, and attached itself to it. Thus, "[it] leaned on the border of Moab." - [Midrash Tanchuma Chukkath 20, Num. Rabbah 19:25]. It's impossible to understand the cryptic terminology without the help of Rashi, who fills in the missing pieces, the rest of the story, with the help of the Midrash. Quiet miracles happened and an invisible war occurred much like many of the events recorded by the splitting of the sea. The success of this war too is credited to "HASHEM".

We also learn, almost as a side bar, that there is a something called a "Book of Wars of HASHEM!" We are left to wonder, "Where is that book?" Maybe it is contained in the entire 24 Books of Tanach and the Midrash or maybe it is a supernal document hidden from the eyes of man, in the meantime. We get a glimpse here of some aspect of the contents of that the book historians may never be able to perceive because of its veiled nature. We can never know to what extent wars are being prosecuted and forestalled on our behalf without our awareness. Perhaps, some aspect of the dynamics of "how" it works may be within the grasp of our free will.

I once heard from one of my Rebbeim almost 28 years ago at a Siyum for Tractate Brochos the following compelling concept. Amongst the concluding words of Brochos is the statement of the sages, "Talmud Scholars increase peace in the world!" He asked, "How does it work?" Don't we see with our own eyes that Talmud Scholars are notoriously argumentative!? Everywhere there are lines being drawn and strong opinions are being debated with ferocity. It's difficult to find universal agreement many topics. What can it mean that Talmud Scholars increase peace in the world?

He asserted from a high and credible source that on Rosh HaShana we all know many great and frightening determinations are made. Who will live and who will die!? The livelihood each individual is decided on Rosh HaShana! So too the number of wars that will be fought in the world is also fixed. Let us say that it is determined from Heaven that 1000 wars will take place. That is scary!

Then one morning two old lions of Torah, Talmud Scholars, enter the ring together and battle over the truth in the study hall. They debate with war-like passion, as can be found in houses of study all over the world. As a result of that impassioned battle for "what is right", not "who is right", one less war is manifest in the world. Tomorrow is another fight! Now 999 wars are left to take place. By deducting from the number of physical wars in the world, they are helping fight the Wars of HASHEM and **creating peace in the world!**

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