

Hashem, Man of All Wars, from Rav Moshe Feinstein, Zt'l by Rabbi Eliyahu Kirsh

In the song that was sung by Bnai Yisroel after the miracle of kriyas Yam Suf there is the verse, 'Hashem is the man of War, Hashem is his name.' Rashi comments that this shows one of the many ways that Hashem is not like human beings. When a person is at war or at anger all of his/her energies are channeled at that anger and cannot focus on being compassionate. Hashem is different. At the very same time Hashem is waging war against his enemies he is still the same Hashem who is merciful, compassionate and benevolent as many of his names denote. We also understand from this verse that it really Hashem who fights all of the wars that are fought here on earth. There are many verses in the Bible that support this idea.

My Rosh Yeshiva, Rav Moshe Feinstein, Zt'l, discusses this idea in one of his drashas on the Parshah. Rav Moshe brings that Bar Kochba was punished for asking Hashem not to help the Romans. Rav Moshe explained that the punishment was for thinking that in the natural order Rome would lose if they were not helped so he asked Hashem not to help them. However, the reality is that war there is no nature and the strong and weak are equal because Hashem is the director or the 'man of war'.

Rav Moshe also explained that the challenge for us has always been proving this idea that Hashem alone is fighting the war and bringing about the victories. Yalkut Shimoni that four kings made requests. Dovid Hamelech asked for victory in his battles. Asa Ahmelech would ask only to do the chasing and that Hashem should complete the victory for him. Yehoshafat said shira to show that the battle was really Hashem's and that success was not due to fierceness and proficiency at war. Finally Chizkiyahu and his army went to sleep and Hashem's angel destroyed Sancheriv's army while they slept. It would seem that would seem on the surface that Chizkiayhu and his generation were on the highest level because they made no effort to fight at all and won while sleeping. Rav Moshe explained,

however, that each generation required a bigger miracle because each generation was actually on a lower level and required more proof that Hashem was really doing the fighting.

In truth all wars are the same in Hashem's eyes, whether big or small. Hashem is the master and planner of all wars. From the smallest skirmish to a full scale world war, Hashem is the Ish Milchamah, man of war. We should always bear this idea in mind till the final war of Gog and Magog before Moshiach which will end all wars and bring eternal peace to mankind.