



GUEST CONTRIBUTOR RABBI ISAAC KAHN

A Conflict of Wills and a Desire for Peace

When you will go out to war against your enemies, and Hashem, your G-d, will give them over into your hand... (21:10)

THISWEEK'S TORAH PORTION DETAILS MANY of the laws pertaining to war. The Torah describes two types of wars that the Jewish people may fight—a "mitzvah war," one which Hashem commands the people to wage, and a "r'shus war," which is discretionary.

What is the cause of war?

Abarbanel writes that religious intolerance is the cause of all wars. When the nations all call upon the name of one G-d, they will dwell in peace.

Similarly, *Degel Machane Ephraim* (by Rabbi Moshe Chaim of Sedulkov) writes that wars only exist because G-d's Kingdom (i. e., mankind) is divided. When oneness is restored, the forces of evil will be dispersed.

However, Rabbi Eliyahu E. Dessler writes in *Michtav me'Eliyahu*:

All conflicts and hostilities between nations are caused by G-d... Human beings have no choice as to whether or not a war will be waged. Individuals can only decide whether the war will be fought by them, personally, or by others. (Vol. 3, p. 70)

The question that then begs to be asked is this: What does G-d need war for, in the first place?

In order to answer this question, we must look at another piece by Rav Dessler (Vol. 3, p.97), in which he writes that Man was created with the ability to pursue his *ratzon*—whatever his will dictates—and, if that power is used properly, he can accomplish great things. It is a taste of G-dly power! If a person is unable to get the objects of his will, it's only because the wills of other people oppose it.

If all of mankind were to join together in willing all the material good in the world, to the neglect of spirituality, they would be successful! However, this would violate the purpose of Creation—which was, and still is, the revelation of the Honor of G-d.

Rabbi Dessler continues:

Therefore, G-d decreed that mankind would never be able to unite for a cause that is not for the sake of Heaven... There can never be a lasting peace between the nations—they will always be feuding. Only with the coming of Mashiach, when G-d in all His Glory is revealed and the nations recognize the purpose of Creation, will they unite to wholeheartedly serve G-d. Then, and only then, will there be peace in the world.

This idea is expressed in the *Targum* of Yeshaya (62:1): "Until I work salvation in Zion, I will not let the nations rest, and until I

bring comfort to Jerusalem, I will not quiet the kingdoms."

That is amazing!

According to Rabbi Dessler, the purpose of war is to prevent the nations of the world from violating the purpose of Creation—which they otherwise would have the ability to do, by collectively using their will. This is a real eye-opener as to how strong our ability to accomplish goals really is. As our Sages teach us, "Nothing stands in the way of desire."

When I was in yeshiva, the *mashgiach*, Rabbi Yisrael Solomon, *shlit"a*, used to tell us that we should not pray for the will to do well in our spiritual growth, because if a person has a real desire for something, it will happen. Rather, he said, we should pray for the desire to have a will to do well.

He was admonishing us, in a nice way, telling us that we didn't *really* want to grow, even though we claimed to; it was just lip service. If we sincerely wanted to grow, nothing would get in our way. Therefore, we should ask Hashem to give us the desire to want to grow. Then everything would fall into place.

We can glean a second point from Rabbi Dessler.

The Talmud (Shabbos 10b) points out what seems to be a contradiction:

G-d is a warrior; "G-d" is his name. (Sh'mos 15:3)

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Chavrusos are available noon–1 PM on weekdays, and 8–9:45 PM Sun.–Thurs.

Sunday *Free brunch!*

🖐️🖐️🖐️ **America Runs on Torah**
(Jewish Law & Parasha)
Rabbis Dani Schon
and Yisroel Kaufman.....10 AM
Grand Deluxe breakfast served

Tuesday

🚺🚻🖐️ **Partners in Torah
at the Mayerson JCC**
Rabbi Binyamin Teitelbaum.....8 PM

Wednesday

🚺🚻🖐️ **Torah Treasures for
Seniors at the Mayerson JCC**
Rabbi Yitzchok Preis..... 10:30–11:15 AM

🚺🚻🖐️ **Downtown Lunch-n-Learn
at Strauss & Troy**
Rabbi Yitzchok Preis..... 12–1 PM

Thursday

🖐️🖐️🖐️ **Halacha** (based on the parasha)
Rabbi Chaim Heinemann.....9:10–10 PM
Homemade refreshments served.

Minyanim Daylight Time

Shacharis
Sunday8:15 AM
Monday–Friday7:20 AM
ShabbosN/A

Mincha
Sunday7:45 PM
Monday–Thursday5:45 PM
Shabbos6:30 PM

Ma'ariv
In the Beis Midrash:
Sunday–Wednesday9:45 PM
Thursday10 PM
ShabbosN/A

Every Day

🖐️ **“Dirshu” Gemara Shiur**
(Maseches B'choros)
Rabbi Yitzchok Preis.....
Sunday 7:15–8:15 AM
Monday–Friday 5:50–6:45 AM

🖐️🖐️ **Kollel Yisgaber K'ari**
(amud-a-day of Mishnah B'rurah)
Rabbi Chaim Heinemann.....
Monday–Friday 6:55–7:20 AM

🖐️🖐️ **Kitzur Shuchan Aruch**
Live video conference!
Rabbi Dani Schon.....
Monday–Friday 12:05–12:20 PM

🖐️ **Daf Yomi**
Rabbi Meir Minster.....
Sunday–Thursday 8–8:45 PM
Shabbos (at CZE) 1:00 pre-mincha

🖐️🖐️ **Nightly Halacha Chabura**
Rabbis Dani Schon
& Binyamin Teitelbaum
Monday–Thursday 9–9:45 PM

Chavrusa Learning
(private & small groups).....times vary

A Conflict of Wills and a Desire for Peace CONTINUED

On the other hand, G-d's name is “Peace” (*Shalom*)—

[Gid'on] called [the altar] “G-d is Shalom.” (Shof'tim 6:24)

A similar question arises over a verse in B'midbar:

Pin'chas... turned back My anger from upon the Children of Israel, when he avenged My vengeance among them, [and as a result] I did not destroy [them] in My vengeance. Therefore... I give him my covenant of Peace. (25:11)

Is Hashem a waver of war, or a lover of peace?

Based on what we quoted from *Michtav me'Eliyahu*, one may be able to answer both of these questions *al pi d'rush* (homiletically).

There is a time for everything...
A time of war, and a time of peace.
(Koheles 3:8)

When the purpose of Creation is not being properly fulfilled, that is not the time to sit back and make peace—rather, we must fight, to avenge the disgrace of G-d's Honor, and G-d is ready to lead us, as it were, into that war. However, once that war has been won, we can bask in the glory of the Hashem's Presence, in *true* peace.

That is why Pin'chas, who truly understood this, was given the covenant of Peace. This is also why G-d is referred to as both a “warrior” and “Peace.”

As we near Rosh Hashanah, let's make it our “will” to fulfill the prayer we say on Rosh Hashanah:

[The peoples of the world]

will all be made into one group, together, to do Your will with complete hearts.

In return, we can hope to merit to see the fulfillment of the prophecy:

It will come to pass, at the end of days, that the mountain of G-d's house will be established... and all of the nations will stream to it... for Torah will go forth from Zion, and G-d's word from Jerusalem... They will beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not raise sword against nation; neither will they learn war anymore. (Y'shaya 2:2-4) 🕊️