



**5782 Divrei Torah on Jerusalem by Rabbi Yosef Bronstein Parashat Vayikra/ויקרא  
Shabbat Zachor/שבת זכור**

**God's Celestial and Terrestrial Thrones**

After the Jewish people's initial war against Amalek, Moshe declares that there will be an ongoing battle throughout the generations: "For a hand is on the throne of God, a war between God and Amalek from generation to generation."<sup>1</sup> While the second half of the verse clearly expresses an ongoing battle, what is the meaning of there being a hand on God's throne? And how does this connect with the intergenerational battle between God and Amalek?

Rashi explains that Moshe is describing God taking an oath. God places His "hand" on His heavenly throne and swears that He will fight Amalek until they are decimated. According to this approach, Moshe is describing a battle between God and Amalek, with the Jewish people being relegated to the sidelines.

Interestingly, though, other commentators offer a different identification for God's throne and together with that a different role for the Jewish people. For example, R. Yosef Bechor Shor explains that God's throne does not refer to a celestial entity but a terrestrial and political reality. Understanding the word "hand" to refer to "greatness and sovereignty", the Bechor Shor explains the meaning of the verse as follows:

When there will be greatness and sovereignty on the throne of God, meaning that [God] will appoint a king to sit on the throne of God as the verse states "and Shlomo sat on the throne of God as a king."<sup>2</sup> This refers to Jewish kingship as the verse states "they will call Yerushalayim the throne of God."<sup>3</sup> Then there will be a war against Amalek.

God's throne refers to a Jewish king, particularly in Yerushalayim. After the establishment of a strong national government the Jewish people will have the wherewithal to wage war with Amalek.

<sup>1</sup> Shemot 17:16.

<sup>2</sup> Divrei HaYamim 1, 29:23.

<sup>3</sup> Yirmiyahu 3:17.



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Juxtaposing the two interpretations of God's throne yields an important principle. We believe that God exists beyond the confines of this world and has total power over this world. This assertion is expressed in Rashi's approach that God is swearing on His celestial throne. But what does this mean for those of us who are bound to this world? How are we, who "dwell in mud,"<sup>4</sup> supposed to recognize and experience God's sovereignty and dominion over this world?

One answer is encapsulated in the interpretation of Bechor Shor. God appointed the Jewish people to be His representatives on earth. The situation of proper Jewish sovereignty based in Yerushalayim is referred to as "God's throne." This is the reason that in the future "they will call Yerushalayim the throne of God."

May we soon merit the complete revelation of God's throne in this world through the rebuilding of Yerushalayim.

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<sup>4</sup> Iyov 4:19.