

Parshas Matos Masei

This week's two Parsheos conclude the fourth book and generally describe the tribes and their travels.

In the command to gather arms against the Midianites, the Posuk says that the Jews should arm themselves against the Midians, who caused significant damage to the Jews. The pesukim then inventories all the spoils of war and organizes their distribution to those who fought and the rest of the community.

In our modern time, we are in a battle against our own Midian, whether that is the war in Israel or the increasing antisemitism and pogrom attitude of the Jews in the diaspora. There is a physical assault against us. The Pesukim, in some ways, gives us hope that the battle will be won and ultimately lead to winning the war.

The gathering of arms is Heichaltzu, on which the Rebbe Rashad (the fifth Lubavitcher Rebbe) expounds in detail on the nature of loving your fellow Jew. It is with unity that we can not only wage war but also win it. The Rebbe Rashab explains that the soul's purpose is in constant 'war' with its surroundings. Loving a fellow Jew is one way for a unified community to win collectively.

But the Posuk also tells us in Masei 33:52 that conquering the land means dislocating (according to Rashi) that which is impure and idolatrous. This means that Posuk is telling us that there is a specific end game with the war: to remove the impurities. This way, we can

serve Hashem, be hyper-focused, and always live with Hashem and Torah.

In comparison to the Vayikra, the conclusion of this Sefer is explained by the Emek Davar because there were added Halachik implications expounded by Moshe in this Sefer, which is why the word Mishpatim is added. Rabbeinu Bachaya adds that in the conclusion of Bamidbar, it says "Byad Moshe," whereas, in Vayikra, it says "Es Moshe." The difference is that the first Luchos were destroyed because of the Eigel. Still, in Bamidbar, after the Jews were forgiven, there would be an indelible unbreakable bond with Hashem. Between the conclusion of Vayikra and Bamidbar, the nuanced differences highlight the indelible bond between Hashem and the Jews and Moshe's role in securing this bond, notwithstanding the sinning that took place. Because even when the Yidden ebb and flow, we are always connected to Hashem, especially if we are united, we can conquer any foe coming our way.

Good Shabbos