

Parshas Matos-Masei

This week's Parsheos are Matos and Masei, which conclude Sefer Bamidbar, and it is also Shabbos Mevorchim Av. There are some famous Mamarim by the Rebbe on 31:3 about the Jews arming themselves to go to war with Midian. The Rebbe discusses that this is a spiritual war, in our times, that has to do with overcoming strife that exists within the Jewish nation. Specifically, the need to have Ahavas Yisroel to conquer our enemies. This is truly evident as I elucidated in previous weeks parsheos, about Edom not giving in to the request of Moshe, because they saw the Mey Meriva, versus Balaam, whose curses were turned into blessings, because he saw that the Jews were moral neighbors.

In our times today, there is growing antisemitism. As part of my work, I have conducted extensive research on the topic, particularly on social media. I have monitored and audited data and combed through datasets to gain further insight into what is happening, helping devise strategies and optimize planning based on the data I am seeing. One critical point is that antisemitism is agnostic to a political party, group or religious affiliation; it is a concept and way of being that manifests itself in multiple forms and manifests in those specific silos, but is ultimately connected from a similar root, a disdain for Jews, and a way out of having to give reasonable reasons for something.

This root disdain reveals that so many people have an opinion, even an emotional one, about a group they know very little about. Since the home of antisemitism is agnostic to a group, it means that dealing with it supersedes it being a binary problem, such as this is a problem on the left or right, etc. In a conversation with an expert, I was drawing them to the point that antisemitism is much bigger than a silo, and while he agreed, I posited the following additional point. That is, in order to combat antisemitism, or plan, one must agree that all opinions are illogical, and there is no rhyme or reason, and if we get stuck thinking there is one, then we will circulate a narrative that has circulated for eons. When we realize that we are cut from the same cloth because it's about being a Jew, not whether we agree with our enemies, then we will realize how to deal with the issues. That being said, it goes back to uniting and realizing that we can agree to disagree (if there is an issue with policy or some other mundane matter, we can agree to disagree, and recognize our enemies), we must quit the politicking and try to buy our enemies with some idea of compliance. Foremost, we must unite as one on the parts that make us similar, not on whether we agree on a policy.

Recognizing this as a solution from the Torah and as an antidote to the destruction of the second Beis Hamikdash, which was destroyed for

Sinas Chinam, we are acknowledging Shabbos Mevorchim of Av and the two fasts of the “three weeks.” During this period, we should be mindful of the trials around us and of what we could do better to alleviate our Golus. That is Ahavas Yisoel.

Good Shabbos!