

Parshas Behar Bechukosai

This past week, we witnessed the horrific murder of two people because they were Jewish, not on the streets of Israel or some far-flung place, but the streets of Washington, DC, the US's capital. I don't want to write specifically about that, but I want to mention them, so that learning this week is in their honour, and their souls should rest in high places for dying Al Kiddush Hashem. Modern instances of Kiddush Hashem, for literal death, is unfortunately happening all too much given the strength of our enemies, but this is temporary. Although it feels like forever, we hope and pray every day for the redemption when "Lishpot es Har Eisav" and we will be free of the material and physical confines.

This week's double Parsha, Behar and Bechukosai, ends the Chumash of Vayikra, and as always, we conclude the Chumash by stating, "Be Strong, Be Strong, and may we be strengthened."

The way to accomplish this is by learning and living according to the Torah. As Rashi explains in the beginning of Bechukosai that the word Teleichu goes on learning Torah, as Rashi says, that we must toil in Torah (and it says it by Chok Mitzvos from the word Chakika, which means laws, or inscription, which takes effort to make an inscription indelible. This is accomplished through setting aside time to learn and connect with the letters of the Torah, even for the simplest Jew. By

doing so, one connects their soul to Hashem, because Hashem and Torah are all one. Once we do this, and learn, and set aside time to study Torah, we can have ארץ נתנה יבולה - a land that yields harvest (the next posuk in the Parsha). The metaphor of land yielding harvest means that work went into planting and toiling the land to reap the harvest; This was not an obvious or simple task; it took work, time, energy and effort.

The same is for our time on earth, that by spending the necessary time learning and living with Torah, we will reap the Harvest of our work, and in this way be strong and strengthened with the coming of Mashiach.

Good Shabbos