

Parshas V'Eschanan

In this week's Parsha, we read the repetition of the 10 commandments, with their meaningful differences from the first version said at Har Sinai. As well, this week marks Shabbos Nachamu, as we had "celebrated" 9 Av, which marks the saddest day in the Jewish Calendar. Now we come out with condolences, and in the coming weeks, we read various Haftaras from Yeshayahu that talk about the future times, especially Mashiach, and as we lead up to the coming weeks, bringing us to the High Holidays.

The fact that Shabbos Nachamu coincides with V'Eschanan is divine. That is, the way for there to be Nechama in the world is through learning Torah, which Moshe's version, preparing the Jews ahead of their arrival in Eretz Yisrael, was the version that relays the Avoda of a Jew in the physical world.

The first Pesukim of the Parsha are Moshe's prayers to Hashem to see if there could be a reversal of the decree not to allow Moshe into the land. Moshe even begs to be an animal or bird, who could just get a sense of the land, and not remain outside of it. The parallel I think to the message of the Parsha is that a behaima (animal) has the power to feel holiness, spirituality, and G-dliness in this world, and the Nefesh Habihamis (animal soul) can be refined to that spirituality. Only Moshe can ask to be a proper animal and still achieve a spiritual connection to

Hashem. Whereas us humans, who have both an animal and G-dly soul, can therefore achieve being a servant to Hashem, and Moshe instructs us on that path. Meaning Moshe wanted to experience the land even as an animal, because Torah is Lo Bashamayim, it is for us, with our animal and G-dly soul to experience, use and learn from, and with it spread the light out to the world, which will achieve the ultimate goal in bringing Mashiach.

The Baal Shem Tov explains that even Moshe, with his greatness, had only begun his relationship with Hashem, and he was never able to experience the Avoda in a post-Torah world, which allows us to partake and participate in the Mitzvos that apply to the land and the world around us. His desire to enter the land, was about being able to achieve the ultimate connection to Hashem through, Avoda, and service as a Jew, learning and living with the Torah. That challenge, and achievement can only be done by a body and soul on this earth. This power exists in every one of us, and is a power that ought not be squandered. We know this power exists, just look at how jealous the antisemites are of our nation, there must be something that even a non-Jew can understand is great within a Jew. That power must be seized and used, especially in the service of Hashem and strengthening our love for Torah and Mitzvos.

Good Shabbos