

INTRINSICALLY CONNECTED

How intrinsically attached are we with the values and ideas we espouse? We confess to believing in certain principles, but do they really form part of our core being? Are they really the guiding light in our lives?

Do we really believe in G-d? What about Jews who state emphatically that they are agnostics or even atheists. Are they being absolutely honest? How do we really know if we believe in something or not?

The name of this week's *Torah* portion is *Bechukotai* which loosely translated means "statutes", which our sages explain alludes to the *Torah*. However as with all words in Hebrew language, this word is multi layered in meaning. In this case the word *Bechukotai* is etymologically related to the word *chakikah*, which means engraved.

It is this underlying layer of meaning that conveys a powerful insight into the Jewish people's relationship with G-d and his *Torah*. As much as we might sometimes feel alienated from our heritage and the traditional Jewish way of life, the reality is that that it is embedded into the very fibre of our being.

Yes, we may challenge or even feel indifferent to our faith and to our history. We may feel uncomfortable with many of its precepts. We might want to shout out to the world that we do not believe or that we want nothing to do with our Jewish destiny. The message from this week's *Torah* portion is loud and clear. It teaches us that the relationship between a Jew and his heritage is not something that is imposed upon him by external forces. The connection is intrinsic. It is who we are. In the very same way as the letters that are engraved upon the stone are one and the same with the stone upon which it is engraved.

Our Jewish destiny is a responsibility, but more than that, it is a privilege with which every Jewish soul is intertwined.

May we all be blessed to always enjoy a relationship with our Judaism that is positive and filled with Jewish pride and a profound connection to G-d.

Warm regards,

Yosef Vogel

16th May – **Bechukotai**

Shabbat Begins: 8.33pm

Shabbat Ends: 9.47pm