



The Greater Washington Community Kollel

Torah Minute

In memory of *Rabbi Kalman Winter zt"l*

Parshas Va'eschanan 5773

Moshe had previously been told that he would not be allowed to enter the Land of Israel on account of the episode of Mei Meriva - the striking of the rock. Our Parsha begins with Moshe recounting his prayers beseeching G-d to allow him to enter into the Land of Israel.

Fueled by his great love for the land, and hoping that the nation's conquest of Sichon and Og signaled a propitious time, Moshe implores G-d to rescind the decree and allow him to step foot into the Holy Land.

Among his eloquent prayers, one of his petitions is most striking: "Let me please cross [the Jordan River] and see the good Land." The latter part of the appeal appears superfluous. Isn't seeing the land a natural by-product of entering it? What was the meaning of Moshe's request?

Rabbi Chaim Zaitchik provides an astounding insight to answer this question. Seeing and appreciating spiritual beauty requires effort, determination and prayer. In addition to imploring G-d to allow him to enter into the Land, Moshe was beseeching G-d to give him the merit to truly "see" the land - not just its obvious external beauty, but to behold its hidden wonder and holiness. Moshe was intensely conscious of the profoundness of the Land and the acute spirituality resident within its boundaries. More importantly, Moshe understood that a proper appreciation of Eretz Yisroel itself requires going beyond the rote and routine. It requires desire and a special merit from Above.

We can incorporate this principle into our own daily lives. How often do we truly discern the great value in the opportunities that surround us or the depth of the people we encounter? If we open a Siddur and don't instantly feel connected to G-d, what conclusions do we draw? Perhaps with a little more effort and desire we would feel the closeness that we covet. When we engage in Torah study and don't taste its sweetness, what are the lessons we are left with? Maybe with a little more determination and yearning we could grasp its wonder. When we consider the people around us and find them wanting in the qualities we value, what are our judgments? Possibly with a little more contemplation we would see their true beauty.

Unlike much of the material world – where value can be determined at a glance – the spiritual world is too majestic to be appreciated by a superficial review. Indeed, its grandeur demands exertion and contemplation in a proper quest for appreciation; it is, however, well worth the effort.

***Have a great Shabbos,
Rabbi Menachem Winter***