



The Greater Washington Community Kollel

Torah Minute

In memory of *Rabbi Kalman Winter zt"l*

Parshas Eikev 5773

It is an honor to present this week's Torah Minute from our archives. The following was penned by our founder, Rabbi Kalman Winter zt"l, and sent out on July 30, 2010.

In this week's Torah portion of Eikev we are introduced (chapter 11:13-21) to the second paragraph of the time-honored "Shema". Whereas the declaration of the first paragraph of the Shema (chapter 6: 4-9) acknowledges our acceptance of one G-d, this second paragraph binds us to the observance of G-d's commandments and statutes. The Torah continues to delineate in this chapter the rewards for the fulfillment of the commandments and the punishments for the failure to heed and observe them.

It is of note that the introductory word to this paragraph is "ve-hayah", literally meaning, "and it will be". The commentaries teach that the word "ve-hayah" is used to describe the emotion of joy. While our first impression that reward and punishment is an institutional necessity to ensure compliance, it hardly merits an expression of joy. However, in truth, reward and punishment are indeed the foundational stone of joy. G-d's oversight and our personal accountability for every act and deed, large and small is the greatest manifestation of His enduring and all-encompassing love of each and every individual. There can be no greater testimony to G-d's love and concern for us than the very fact that He engages us personally from above, leaving His Heavenly throne to involve Himself in our mundane life and affairs. How distinguished and noble should we feel that we draw G-d's attention so intimately. Every mitzvah and transgression is recorded and evaluated. Nothing is lost or forgotten.

As such the Torah declares "ve-hayah" -- "and it will be". It will be when you listen and perceive the true nature of your accountability to Him that you will truly understand and appreciate the meaning of G-d's love and the joy we should feel in return.

Shabbat Shalom,
Rabbi Kalman Winter