

But Will They Listen?

This week's Torah portion, *Ha'azinu*, is the last Torah portion that will be read on Shabbat before we roll the Torah to Genesis and begin the new cycle of readings. With the exception of a brief coda, this Torah portion is a memorable poem which Moses wrote and taught to the people. At the heart of his message, nearly the last words Moses would share with our ancestors, is an admonition for us to learn from our parents and grandparents:

Remember the days of old, consider the years of ages past; ask your father, he will inform you, your elders, they will tell you (Deuteronomy 32:7).

Like all caring leaders, Moses is worried about the future generations. He worried that they will forget what it took for the Israelite family to survive the years of exile and wandering. He was concerned that as soon as the new generation entered into the Promised Land of milk and honey, security and comfort, that they'd lose their values, their ideals, their faith, and their sense of purpose. So Moses urged each one of us to ask our elders, talk to our parents and grandparents and learn about the harsh ordeals they had to endure. He wanted each generation to realize that our people are made of hardy and determined stock. That yes, there will be setbacks and challenges ahead. But as long as the new generations have the determination, the will, and the faith of their elders, there is no obstacle they can't overcome.

As much as Moses's teaching is directed to the children, it is doubly so to the parents and grandparents. Each of us has a vital role in helping to teach, counsel and, okay, nudge our children and grandchildren. As we recite the *Sh'ma*, we are reminded every day, *V'shinantam l'vanekha, teach your children*. But ask yourself first: "Do my children even know the story of our family? Do they know how your grandparents or grandparents came to this country? Do they know what sacrifices they made in order for us to enjoy the life we lead?"

This Shabbat, take the time to teach your children and grandchildren some of your family history. Show them some of your treasured family artifacts. Show them photos. And inspire the children by pointing out some of the wonderful characteristics they share with their beloved ancestors. Will they listen? How will you ever know if you don't try? And here's a secret: try and keep trying!

Just a friendly reminder: **the First Day of Sukkot begins Sunday night with a service at 6pm. On Monday morning our Festival service will be at 10am.** Share time with us under the beautiful Temple Sinai Sukkah, lift up the Lulav and Etrog and participate in this most joyous Biblical Festival!

Shabbat Shalom v'Chag Sukkot Sameiach!

Rick

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