



HA'AZINU

This week, on the heels of Rosh Hashana, we will read Parshat Ha'azinu, which is actually a "song" recited by Moshe on the day of his death, before giving his final blessing to each of the tribes. In it, he literally calls upon heaven and earth to bear witness to everything he has reminded and warned the Jewish people about, including their past, present and future. This is the second to last parsha in the Torah; the final one DOES NOT get its own Shabbat as all the others do, but rather, will be read on Simchat Torah, in a few weeks.

Moshe poetically gives the nation some good pieces of advice, amongst them, “remember the days of old; reflect upon the years of [other] generations. Ask your father, and he will tell you; your elders, and they will inform you.”

Many of us like to think that we are self-sufficient. We can figure out everything for ourselves; we don't need any help or any guidance, especially from someone older than we are. The ways of the past are antiquated and outdated, and we certainly know better (just ask any teenager!).

While it may be true that in areas such as science and technology, we have surpassed our previous generations by light-years, we lack one important factor, something called “life experience.” We may know how to advance life, simplify (or further complicate!) life, but we haven't yet LIVED the life of our older generations.

So before assuming that we have all the answers, Moshe reminds us to stop for a second, ask those who came before you, ask your fathers, consult your elders. Their opinions will prove more valuable than the latest rantings on some blog. People who've “been through life” tend to know what they're talking about.

On behalf of my family, and the entire Gottesman RTW Academy family, allow me to wish you a Happy, Healthy, and Sweet New Year, filled with all the blessings that G-d has to offer. Amen.

Shana Tova and Shabbat Shalom,
Rabbi Cohen