

"May He make you so many more like you a thousand times, and may He bless you as He has promised you." (1:11)

Just as *Moshe Rabbeinu* was on the verge of leaving *Am Yisrael*, he offered up a *tefillah*, prayer, that the nation be blessed with amazing future growth. He adds one word, however, which sheds light on the *Torah's* perspective upon Jewish survival. Moshe says, "*May He make you so many more like you.*" The true blessing is that the future generations are "*like you*," following in the traditional path paved by their ancestors with blood, sweat, and tears.

In order to insure that the Jewish children of today and tomorrow serve as links in the chain of tradition, it is essential that they be imbued with the values of yesterday. Every incident which has occurred throughout our history, sad as well as joyous events, must become part of our children's personal "experience." They must be sensitized to our past, so that their future will reflect our heritage.

In contemporary times, we find many individuals who are searching for a common ground upon which to interface the lifestyle of the old traditional grandfather with that of his modern day grandchild. Alas, they have very little in common, unless the child was raised with off, "*like you*," in mind. Many have been blessed with abundance, but Jewish survival is subject to another criteria, off, "*like you*." Today's blessing must coincide with the pattern of yesterday's values.

Horav M. Swift, z.l., homiletically applies this idea to a remarkable *Midrash*. The *Midrash* states that when Moshe was about to bid farewell to the people whose troubles he had shouldered for forty years, he began repeating the entire *Torah* to them. They looked at him and questioned his presence of mind. Perhaps he was old and had no rational understanding of the new country and the lifestyle that they were about to encounter. They immediately held up their children and asked Moshe, "*What have you provided for the future of these children? What pleasures can they enjoy out of life? What careers can they establish for themselves?*"

Moshe's response was to relate *Klal Yisrael's* history. He knew that the emotional approach would not stand the challenge of time. You can appeal to children not to neglect their old father and mother, but the response will be short-lived. Their retort is simple, "Times have changed, our parents are living in a different time frame. They are old fashioned. This is not the old country; it is a new world." Moshe did not appeal to their emotions. Instead, he presented them with an historical account of *Klal Yisrael's* existence as a nation. He gave them facts, figures, dates, and places. He recounted their iniquities and their strife. "Do you think that Hashem has allowed you to survive and has vanquished your enemies for naught? Hashem has cared for you for a reason, and He will continue to care for you throughout your future!" To paraphrase *Horav Swift*, "*No man is senile who cries 'look to history and take the lesson to heart.'*"

Both as a collective nation and as individuals, we have prevailed over the challenges of oppression

and survived the most tragic catastrophes. The idea that we were liberated from tyranny and miraculously saved from terrifying death in order to enable our children to enjoy the pleasures of life (relegating *Torah* and tradition to the old fashioned grandparents) is not only absurd, but blasphemous! We must take the lesson of history. We were saved for a purpose. Our mandate is to live as our ancestors lived and build as they built, so that when our numbers increase, they will increase off, "*like you*," in the tradition of our ancestors.