

Remember the days of yore, understand the years of generation after generation. (32:7)

Moshe *Rabbeinu* pleads with the Jewish nation to wake up from its self-imposed slumber and ponder the lessons to be gleaned from the past. A refusal to delve into the occurrences of the past and what preceded various adversities, a lack of perspective, has become the basis of much human error. We are blessed with *gedolei Torah*, Torah sages, whose perspective on the past is honed by a wisdom borne of penetrating analysis of Torah and the wisdom and Divine Assistance that results from such immersion in it. Furthermore, as has been noted by many, we have no Hebrew word for history, unless one considers *historia* a Hebrew word. We find, however, the word *z'chor* in its various forms relate to history. *Z'chor* means memory, which is personal. One remembers what has meaning to him. Thus, our approach to history must be personal. It is our history. In some manner, we relive what has happened to our people throughout the millennia – because what happened to them happened to us.

Horav Elchanan Wasserman, zl, writes (*Kovetz He'aros* 12) that the above *pasuk* teaches that it is a *chiyuv d'Oraisa*, Biblical injunction, to study and understand our people's history. It is through such penetrating study that we are availed a window into understanding Hashem's ways. He knows what to expect. *Chazal* (*Tamid* 32b) ask: "Who is wise? One who sees what will be born, i.e., the consequences of one's actions." The word *nolad*, literally translated, means "what was born." The word that should have been used is (*yivaleid*) *yulad*, what will be born. Apparently, if one studies what has happened in the past, the consequences of our actions, he will know what will be born, i.e., what to expect. The *Alter, zl, m'Kelm*, writes: "There is no wise man/wisdom, like 'yesterday.'" In order to determine whether the path we are about to take is straight, we should just look back and see what happened to our forebears who took this path. If it worked for them, then it is straight. If it did not, then we know which path not to take. "Yesterday" teaches us how to act today.