

This is the book (account) of the descendants of Adam. (5:1)

The *Torah* enumerates the generations that descended from *Adam Ha'Rishon*. In his inimitable manner, *Horav Moshe Swift, zl*, suggests a homiletic interpretation of this *pasuk*. "*The book of life is the generations of man.*" There are all kinds of books. Some are worth reading, while others are nothing more than trash. Some books teach valuable lessons with profound meaning, while other books leave no lasting impression. We are pages in the book of life written by our parents. They are the cover, the binding that holds the pages together. We write the pages based upon the way that we act and our adherence to the path which they have forged for us. The length of the book is determined by the amount of work the children contribute to it. Parents hope and pray that their children will write creditable pages in their book of life.

Sometimes, however, the pages are well-written but the binding is worthless, causing the pages to scatter and the book to fall to pieces. The parents are weak; they are irresolute, giving in to every foolish notion that arises. Their own legitimacy as committed Jews is at best placid. Thus, the book's binding falls apart. Before the children grow up and add their own pages to the book, it falls to pieces and the pages scatter.

How tragic a scene: a book that had so much potential, but has fallen apart because the covers were weak. How often parents bemoan the decisions they have made for their children! Every author needs a good editor, one that will be objective, advising to supplement or -- at times -- to delete. Parents have the opportunity to avail themselves of help as they prepare their book of life. Some accept the advice of their editor, while others make their own subjective decisions. Unfortunately, when we are dealing with a book of life, there is no room for error.