

## Shalom Zachar – Sidrat Ha-Azinu 5783

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Seeing a new baby come into the world is an experience that causes us to pause. No matter what our age, the arrival of a new child reminds us of our own existential journey through life. This new person has infinite possibilities and pathways to be followed, relationships to develop, and adventures to experience.

Moshe reminds us in Sidrat Ha-Azinu that the transmission of legacy across the generations is an imperative, that through looking at our past we can better understand our present and be prepared for the future.

Zechor yemot olam: Explains the Izbitcher Rav – Rabbi Mordechai Yosef Leiner – in his Sefer Mei HaShiloach:

“Remember the DAYS of old” – we look back to the beginning of the Torah from Breishit until VaYeChulu HaShamayim – those first six time periods within which G-d established the cosmos and crowned the creation with the emergence of humanity.

“Binu Shnot Dor vaDor” – these words take us back to the latter section of Breishit through Noah where the Torah chronicles the 10 dorot from Adam to Noah and the 10 dorot from Noah to Avraham Avinu. During this gestational period in the development of Yahadut, the Torah explains how G-d interacted with humanity culminating in Avraham’s recognition of the True, One G-d.

“Sh’al avicha v’yaged’cha” – the trials and tribulations of Avraham (**Avicha**) that are chronicled in Lech Lecha, VaYera, and Chayei Sarah, where the Torah describes the everlasting Brit/Covenant between the Divine and the Jewish people.

“Z’kaynecha v’yomru lach” – the narratives of the lives of Yitzchak and Yaakov that extend through to the end of Sefer Breishit – the Torah informs us of the special relationships G-d had with each of the Avot and Imahot in developing the nascent Am Yisrael.

With this explanation of the pasuk in HaAzinu, the Izbitcher asks - why is the word “V’yaged’cha” in a apparently condensed form used with Avraham Avinu and not “V’yaged lecha”. His answer is one that we can all take to heart: Avraham Avinu was a unique personality, as we each are. Avraham was a מרעיש העולם - he jolted, cajoled, and challenged the people of his “dor” to understand the opportunities and beauties of identifying as Jewish and aligning with the Creator. He supported and encouraged those around him to recognize the Infinite around us:

ויגדך – שיוכל כל אדם להגיד נפלאות השם מעצמו

Savta and I bless our newest grandson that he should have a life filled with meaning and depth, that he, with the support of his parents, siblings, and extended family will come to understand his historical legacy, and that, as he grows, his relationship with Hakadosh Baruch Hu and the Torah will always be a source of wisdom, strength, and resolve. Savta and I bless him with our love and support and our deep hope that he will reach the point where his recognition of G-d’s blessings in all parts of his life will come – מעצמו. Mazel tov to all!