

Dor L'Dor
by
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Dor l'dor (“generation to generation”) is a concept that is foundational to biblical Jewish life because it professes that, though we be individuals, we are also the product of those who came before us, and contributors to those who come after. Scripture is replete with multigenerational references; for example:

Daniel 4:3: “How great are His signs, and how mighty His wonders! His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and His dominion is from generation to generation.”

Exodus 3:15: “Moreover God said to Moses, ‘Thus you shall say to the children of Israel: ‘The LORD God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you. This is My name forever, and this is My memorial to all generations.’”

And even this profound truth uttered in the midst of cynicism:

Ecclesiastes 1:4: “One generation passes away, and another generation comes; But the earth abides forever.”

The cycle of life and death, of receiving from our parents and passing on to our children, is central to God’s plan for redeeming mankind. Jewish generational preservation (i.e. preserving Jewish identity) is particularly important because Israel was called to be a nation of priests (Exodus 19:6) and a light to the nations (Isaiah 60:3). Were Jews to disappear through assimilation or other means, there would be no “olive tree” into which Gentiles could be grafted (Romans 11:16-25) and Israel, as a nation, could not fulfill its destiny to be saved (Romans 11:26) and to herald Yeshua’s return by proclaiming: “Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord (Matthew 23:39; Luke 13:35).”

In all biblical references to *Dor l'dor*, preserving ourselves from generation to generation is of secondary importance to preserving God’s dominion, influence, and work among us and through us. Yes, our generational integrity must be preserved – but not for our own aggrandizement; rather because we are a people chosen for servant-hood in order that the world may be blessed through us.

Over the years, *Dor l'dor* has become thoroughly imbedded in the Jewish way of life and reflected in its traditions. This is especially true of traditions that implement God’s commandments to all generations such as the annual festivals / holy days (*moedim*: appointed times), and the weekly Sabbath. There is nothing that connects Jewish generations as warmly as memories of family gathered around the Sabbath table – lighting the Shabbat candles, blessing the bread and wine, reciting psalms, singing Sabbath songs, enjoying good food, and experiencing the love of a father blessing his wife and children (Proverbs 31). Although not commanded in Scripture, these Sabbath traditions were adopted by Jewish communities over the millennia in order to give substance to God’s commandment to observe the Sabbath – to keep it

holy – and the same is true of the traditions surrounding the *moedim*, and of the sights and sounds of the synagogue.

A chief way that Jews promote *Dor l'dor* is through seriously implementing God's commandment to "honor your father and your mother" (Exodus 20:12; Matthew 19:19), and the Scriptures that instruct us to bring up their children in the ways of the Lord:

Genesis 18:17-19: "And the LORD said, "Shall I hide from Abraham what I am doing, since Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him? For I have known him, in order that he may command his children and his household after him, that they keep the way of the LORD, to do righteousness and justice, that the LORD may bring to Abraham what He has spoken to him."

Psalms 34:11: "Come, you children, listen to me; I will teach you the fear of the LORD."

Proverbs 22:6: "Train up a child in the way he should go, And when he is old he will not depart from it."

And of course, Deuteronomy 6:6-7:

"And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up."

The Jewish way of implementing Scriptures such as these is through education, prayer, acknowledging the prior generations that have blessed us, and being proactive in blessing the generations that come after us:

Proverbs 17:6: "Children's children are the crown of old men, and the glory of children is their father."

It is in the spirit of remembering and honoring generations that we encounter traditions such as calling readers to *Torah* by their names linked to their father's names, reciting the Kaddish prayer during times of mourning, and honoring the memory of departed loved ones on the anniversaries of their deaths (*yahrtzeit*) and at other times. It is also why we have such *simcha* (joy) over births.

Ohev Yisrael is moving toward deepening its appreciation of Jewish traditions that enhance our *dor l'dor* walk with God and with each other. This is not only for the Jews in our midst, but for our Gentile family members as well. How we go about doing this is key, and we must be discerning about which traditions we adopt and the level of importance we give them (Mark 7:9). Let us proceed with happy anticipation that, as we follow God's leading, He will continue to use Ohev Yisrael's traditions to "turn the hearts of the fathers to their children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers," *Dor l'dor* (Malachi 4:6)!

September 2006