

Discussion, rather than *drasha*:

Deut 29

**9** Ye are standing this day all of you before the LORD your God: your heads, your tribes, your elders, and your officers, even all the men of Israel, **10** your little ones, your wives, and thy stranger that is in the midst of thy camp, from the hewer of thy wood unto the drawer of thy water; **11** that thou shouldest enter into the covenant of the LORD thy God--and into His oath--which the LORD thy God maketh with thee this day; **12** that He may establish thee this day unto Himself for a people, and that He may be unto thee a God, as He spoke unto thee, and as He swore unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob. **13** Neither with you only do I make this covenant and this oath; **14** but with him that standeth here with us this day before the LORD our God, and also with him that is not here with us this day--"

Rashi comments: " 'Whoever is not here' means also to include the generations that will exist in the future."

Rashi's comments are based on Midrash Tanchuma, Nitzavim 3: "The souls of all Jews were present at the making of the covenant even before their physical bodies were created. This is why the verse says 'with us today' and not 'standing with us today.'"

Midrash Rabba, [Song of Songs 1:4](#)

*Rabbi Meir said: When the Jews stood before Sinai to receive the Torah, G-d said to them: "I swear, I will not give you the Torah unless you provide worthy guarantors who will assure that you will observe its laws."*

*The Jews responded, "Master of the world, our forefathers will be our guarantors!"*

*"Your guarantors themselves require guarantors!" was G-d's reply.*

*"Master of the world," the Jews exclaimed, "our prophets will guarantee our observance of the Torah."*

*"I have grievances against them, too. 'The shepherds have rebelled against Me' ([Jeremiah 2:8](#))," G-d replied. "Bring proper guarantors and only then will I give you the Torah."*

*As a last resort, the Jews declared, "our children will serve as our guarantors!"*

*"They truly are worthy guarantors," G-d replied. "Because of them I will give the Torah."*

Merle Feld's "We all stood together"

My brother and I were at Sinai

He kept a journal

of what he saw

of what he heard

of what it all meant to him

I wish I had such a record

of what happened to me

It seems like every time I want to write

I can't

I'm always holding a baby

one of my own

or one of my friend

always holding a baby

so my hands are never free

to write things down

And then

As time passes

the particulars

the hard data

the who what when where why

slip away from me

and all I'm left with is

the feeling

But feelings are just sounds

The vowel barking of a mute

my brother is so sure of what he heard

after all he's got a record of it

consonant after consonant after consonant

If we remembered it together

we could recreate holy time

sparks flying

So tell me: were you there? What does it mean for you to have been there?