

Genesis Chapter 22

¹ Some time afterward, God put Abraham to the test. He said to him, "Abraham," and he answered, "Here I am." ² And He said, "Take your son, your favored one, Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the heights that I will point out to you." ³ So early next morning, Abraham saddled his ass and took with him two of his servants and his son Isaac. He split the wood for the burnt offering, and he set out for the place of which God had told him. ⁴ On the third day Abraham looked up and saw the place from afar. ⁵ Then Abraham said to his servants, "You stay here with the ass. The boy and I will go up there; we will worship and we will return to you."
⁶ Abraham took the wood for the burnt offering and put it on his son Isaac. He himself took the firestone and the knife; and the two walked off together. ⁷ Then Isaac said to his father Abraham, "Father!" And he answered, "Yes, my son." And he said, "Here are the firestone and the wood; but where is the sheep for the burnt offering?" ⁸ And Abraham said, "God will see to the sheep for His burnt offering, my son." And the two of them walked on together.
⁹ They arrived at the place of which God had told him. Abraham built an altar there; he laid out the wood; he bound his son Isaac; he laid him on the altar, on top of the wood. ¹⁰ And Abraham picked up the knife to slay his son. ¹¹ Then an angel of the Lord called to him from heaven: "Abraham! Abraham!" And he answered, "Here I am." ¹² And he said, "Do not raise your hand against the boy, or do anything to him. For now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your favored one, from Me." ¹³ When Abraham looked up, his eye fell upon a ram, caught in the thicket by its horns. So Abraham went and took the ram and offered it up as a burnt offering in place of his son. ¹⁴ And Abraham named that site Adonai-yireh, whence the present saying, "On the mount of the Lord there is vision."
¹⁵ The angel of the Lord called to Abraham a second time from heaven, ¹⁶ and said, "By Myself I swear, the Lord declares: Because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your favored one, ¹⁷ I will bestow My blessing upon you and make your descendants as numerous as the stars of heaven and the sands on the seashore; and your descendants shall seize the gates of their foes. ¹⁸ All the nations of the earth shall bless themselves by your descendants, because you have obeyed My command." ¹⁹ Abraham then returned to his servants, and they departed together for Beer-sheba; and Abraham stayed in Beer-sheba.

בראשית כב

א ויהי אחר הדברים האלה והאלהים נסה את-
 אברהם ויאמר אליו אברהם ויאמר הנני ב.
 ויאמר קח-נא את-בנך את-יחידך אשר-אהבת
 את-יצחק ולך-לך אל-ארץ המצרים והעלהו שם
 לעולה על אחד ההרים אשר אמר אליך ג.
 וישכם אברהם בבקר ויחבש את-חמורו ויטח
 את-שני נעריו אתו ואת יצחק בנו ויבקע עצי
 עולה ויקם וילך אל-המקום אשר-אמר-לו
 האלהים ד. ביום השלישי וישא אברהם את-
 עינו וירא את-המקום מרחק ה. ויאמר
 אברהם אל-נעריו שבו-לכם פה עם-החמור
 ואני והנער גלכה עד-כפה ונשתחנה ונשוכה
 אליכם ו. ויטח אברהם את-עצי העולה וישם
 על-יצחק בנו ויטח בידו את-האש ואת-המזבחת
 וילכו שניהם יחדו ז. ויאמר יצחק אל-אברהם
 אביו ויאמר אבי ויאמר הנני בני ויאמר הנה
 האש והעצים ואיזה הששה לעולה ח. ויאמר
 אברהם אל הים ויראה-לו הששה לעולה בני וילכו
 שניהם יחדו ט. ויבאו אל-המקום אשר-אמר-
 לו האלהים ויבן שם אברהם את-המזבח
 ויערף את-העצים ויעקד את-יצחק בנו וישם
 אתו על-המזבח ממעל לעצים י. וישלח
 אברהם את-ידו ויטח את-המזבחת לשחט את-
 בנו יא. ויקרא אליו מלאך יהוה מן-השמים
 ויאמר אברהם אברהם ויאמר הנני יב.
 ויאמר אל-תשלח ידך אל-הנער ואל-תעש לו
 מאומה פי עתה ידעתי כי-ירא אל הים אתה
 ולא חשכת את-בנך את-יחידך ממני יג. וישא
 אברהם את-עיניו וירא והנה-איל אחר נאחו
 בסבך בקרניו וילך אברהם ויטח את-האיל
 ויעלהו לעולה תחת בנו יד. ויקרא אברהם
 שם-המקום ההוא יהוה יראה אשר יאמר היום
 בקר יהוה יראה טו. ויקרא מלאך יהוה אל-
 אברהם שנית מן-השמים טז. ויאמר בי
 נשבעתי נאם-יהוה כי יען אשר עשית את-
 הדבר הזה ולא חשכת את-בנך את-יחידך יז.
 כי-ברוך אברכך והרבה ארבה את-זרעך ככוכבי
 השמים וכחול אשר על-שפת הים וירש זרעך
 את שער ארצו יח. ויהתברכו בזרעך כל-גוי
 הארץ עקב אשר שמעת בקולי יט. וישב
 אברהם אל-נעריו ויקמו וילכו יחדו אל-באר
 שבע וישב אברהם בבאר שבע.

The Destination/ Franz Kafka

I gave orders for my horse to be brought round from the stable. The servant did not understand me. I myself went to the stable, saddled my horse and mounted. In the distance I heard a bugle call, I asked him what this meant. He knew nothing and had heard nothing. At the gate he stopped me, asking: "Where are you riding to, master?" "I don't know," I said, "only away from here, away from here. Always away from here., only doing so can I reach my destination." "And so you know your destination?" he asked. "Yes," I answered, "didn't I say so? Away-From-Here, that is my destination." "You have no provision with you," he said. "I need none," I said, "the journey is so long that I must die of hunger if I don't get anything on the way. No provision can save me. For it is, fortunately, a truly immense journey."

<p><u>Pesikta Rabbati 44:5</u></p> <p>A king had a son who had gone astray from his father a journey of a hundred days. His friends said to him: "Return to your father." He said: "I cannot". Then his father sent to him to say: "Return as far as you can, and I will come to you the rest of the way." So God says, "Return to me, and I will return to you." (Malachi, 3:7)</p>	<p><u>פסיקתא רבתי (איש שלום) פרשה מד ד"ה</u></p> <p>[דבר אחר] שובה ישראל עד ה' אלהיך לבן מלך שהיה רחוק מאביו מהלך מאה יום, אמרו לו אוהביו חזור אצל אביך, אמר להם איני יכול, שלח אביו ואמר לו הלך מה שאתה יכול לפי כחך (ואם) [ואני] בא אצלך (כשאר) [בשאר] הדרך, כך אמר להם הקדוש ברוך הוא שובו אלי ואשובה אליכם (מלאכי ג' ז').</p>
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<p><u>Ecclesiastes Rabbah 3:3</u></p> <p>In three cases the Satan stands as prosecutor (there is a danger of someone dying):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) the person sitting in a house that is about to cave in, 2) the person who sets off on a journey alone and 3) someone who sails the great sea (and some say those who make a vow and do not fulfil it). <p>Rabbi Shimon Bar Abba in the name of Rabbi Hanina says: All the pathways are considered a source of danger?</p>	<p><u>קהלת רבה פרשה ג:ג</u></p> <p>בשלשה מקומות השטן מצוי לקטרג, השרוי בבית המרועע, והמהלך בדרך יחידי, והמפרש בים הגדול ויש אומרים מי שנדר ולא עשה, ר' שמעון בר אבא בש"ר חנינא כל הדרכים בחזקת סכנה</p>
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The Journey (by Rabbi Jonathan Magonet)

There is a story that is told in every culture, in every religion, in folk tales, in legends and in our dreams. It is the story of the journey of a hero or heroine in search of a treasure. Every version of it is different, yet every version is also really the same. The hero is called out of his usual life – by seeing a burning bush, by hearing a voice saying: “Lech I’cha! Go! For your own sake, go!”

Ahead lie many adventures and on the way he meets an enemy who tries to stop him and a friend who tries to help. At the end he reaches the entrance to the underworld, or the world of gods – Jonah entering the fish, Moses climbing to heaven to receive the Torah. With luck or skill or aid he crosses the threshold and enters this mysterious land of darkness and beauty where the treasure is to be found. It is a land where the usual rules no longer hold, where he discovers that the enemy and the friend he had met on his journey are really one and the same, and sometimes they turn out to be the guardian of the treasure that this mysterious world conceals. Whether the treasure is given or it must be stolen, there begins the journey back to the familiar world again.

At the entrance there is a moment of reluctance – why return from paradise, or even the underworld, to a limited human reality? But something pushes or pulls him back through for this treasure has to be given to mankind, this secret gained by such labour and courage. The hero’s journey is completed and life begins again – somehow changed by the experience he has gone through. Whether it is sung as a medieval ballad, told as a Red Indian legend, re-enacted in a religious festival or pieced together from the Bible tales and midrash of our own tradition, it is in some way a tale about the journey of each one of us to discover who we are, what our life means.

One day a year we make that journey in the company of the whole community of Israel – all of us together, each of us alone. That day is ‘The Day,’ the Day for Atonement, the day of death in life. It is the day we wear the kittel, the white gown that will one day be our shroud. It is the day when eating, drinking, tasting, excreting cease. It is a day when the world recedes, and we are set free to undertake our own personal journey of discovery.

The story of Reb Ayzik

The story is told of Ayzik of Krakow , the son of Reb Yekl who dreamt night after night of a great treasure that lay hidden under the Prage Bridge that crossed the Vistula in Warsaw. Unable to ignore his dream any longer, Reb Ayzik journeyed to the city believing his prayers would be answered. As he searched unsuccessfully a soldier stopped him, demanding an explanation for Reb Ayzik's strange behaviour. Upon hearing of this fruitless journey in search of treasure he laughed and replied, "If I dreamt of a great treasure in the oven in the house of Reb Ayzik of Krakow, do you think I would have to drop everything and seek it out." Thereupon, Reb Ayzik turned around to begin the journey home. There in his oven in Krakow lay a great treasure. Sometimes, only on the return from a great journey do we find the treasure which was the goal of the journey in the beginning.

Taken from "Jewish Journeys" by Jeremy Leigh,