



ROSH HASHANAH 5781/2020

Oh, The Places You'll Go! **A Yamim Noraim Virtual Tour**

Travel Prayer

Without You, this road
is thorns and thistles.

Allow me to search Your ways and to find
my feet walking in a furrow
and may pleasantness be upon them.
May the one who gives strength to the weary
give my life paved roads
on which to go to come and to arrive
wherever my heart carries me, like a caravan of the self
and may blessings be granted to the work of my feet.

May the one hears
the prayer of all mouths
hear my footsteps.

Asher Reich (tr. by David Jacobson)
(Siddur Lev Shalem, p. 278)

Day 1, Our Starting Point... HaMAKOM (“THE PLACE”)

The Kotzker Rebbe says:
One who does not see haMakom in every place, will not see [God] in any place.

וַיִּפְגַּע בַּמָּקוֹם (בראשית כח, יא),
רַב הוֹנָא בְּשֵׁם רַבִּי אַמִּי אָמַר מִפְּנֵי מָה מְכַנֵּין שְׁמוֹ
שֶׁל הַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא וְקוֹרְאִין אוֹתוֹ מָקוֹם, שֶׁהוּא
מְקוֹמוֹ שֶׁל עוֹלָם וְאִין עוֹלָמוֹ מְקוֹמוֹ...
“And he [Jacob] encountered **the Place (haMakom)**” (Gen. 28:11). Rav Huna said in Rabbi Ammi's name: Why do we use an expression for the name of the Holy Blessed One, calling God “The Place”? Because God is the Place of the world; the world is not God's place... (Bereshit Rabbah 68:9)

Rabbi Simcha Bunam prays:
“We thank You, who are blessed and are the source of blessing, and are manifest and hidden.” Then he says: “The person of feeling must feel God's divinity as one feels the place on which one stands. And just as one cannot imagine one's self without such a place, so in all simplicity one ought to become aware of the One who is the Place of the world, the manifest locus comprising the world; but at the

same time, one must know that it is God who is the hidden life which fills the world.” (Martin Buber, *Tales of the Hasidim* II p 249)

Rabbi Zalman Schachter-Shalomi writes:

Reb Shneur Zalman talks about the sun and the shield. He wants to tell us that nature, what we see with our eyes, is the shield. However, if it weren't for the sun behind the shield, we wouldn't have life. We wouldn't exist. It is the shield that makes the light accessible to us and gives us a chance to have our separate existence. So the world lives by that light that shines forth from Ain Sof, from the Infinite. It is like Huxley's consensus reality filter: if we directly perceived the nature of what is, we couldn't handle it. There would not be anything left to apprehend. Hence there is a filter. And yet the filter is there not to obstruct but to allow the information we can handle to pass through to us. So how clean is the filter? A filter can get clogged, you know. In fact, this is what Yom Kippur is about. Like the sanctuary of the Holy Temple, the sanctuary was like a God-filter, to let God into our world—and to let the world up to God, because that is what we did; we offered sacrifices. And every Yom Kippur, the filter had to be cleaned out because it was clogged. That is one of the images that is being used. It had to be wiped, it had to be cleaned up. So follow me through another step, because this is going to get complicated.

If I say, "The Light that flows out from God is giving me life and invigorating me," what do I mean? Could there be an "out" from God? What do I mean, "out from God?" We are all inside of God. Think about this. All these miles away from the sun we receive sunlight. Do you think there is any sunlight an inch into the surface of the sun? Of course there is. Then what being does the sunlight inside the sun have? Reb Shneur Zalman says, "That is the being that all of reality has in God." Since it is happening inside of the Divine, what is going on in this seeming reality? How do we have a world?...

So [Reb Shneur Zalman] begins to teach us about *Tzimtzum*. He says that God has to remove that light so that there should be space for the world. And then he says, "There are some people who claim that God has removed Himself completely, because they understand the idea of *Tzimtzum* in a simple way. What did God do? God removed Himself and made a place for the empty space to be in"... So how does God create this empty space? As Reb Yitzhak Luria says, *Tzimtzem et ha'or lits'dadin*, -- "It sort of shoved the light over to both sides, and where the light was not, space was created for the world." So the question is, "Is God still there, or is God not there?" If you say that God is there as God was before, then there is no place for the world. But if you say God is not there anymore, there couldn't be a world either. He isn't there to invigorate it. Do you see the paradox? Reb Shneur Zalman says, "I cannot agree with those people who say that God has truly removed Himself from the space that the world is in. Those people are wrong; God is still there." And he quotes another one of those phrases that he is fond of quoting, *Leyt atar panui miney*, "No space is empty of Him." It is another way of saying *yachid u'm'yuchad*, "one, unique, unified." (*Wrapped in a Holy Flame*, pp. 191-92)

Rev. Dr. Howard Thurman writes:

The awareness that the universe is dynamic gives to the individual the quiet assurance that wherever he may be located he is in immediate candidacy for the strength that comes from a boundless vitality. This fact makes for a universal kinship among all living things. The blessing of self-consciousness makes possible a deliberate relatedness out of which arise all of the joyous overtones of human relations. To understand another human being even dimly is to bring to a point of focus an Infinite Resource. The Psalmist states it by insisting that "the earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof." (*Meditations of the Heart*, p. 99)

מֵה־נֹרָא הַמָּקוֹם הַזֶּה

Mah nora HaMakom ha-zeh

“How awe-inspiring/awe-filled is this Makom”

(Gen. 28:17)

Day 1, First Stop... THERE WHERE YOU ARE

The Kotzker Rebbe teaches:

עלה אלי ההרה והיה שם (שמות כד יב). וקשה כי אם יעלה להר ודאי שיהיה שם אלא יכול אדם לעלות לפסגה וראשו יהיה במקום אחר, והעיקר הוא לא העליה אלא להיות שם בפועל ממש.

“Come up to me, to the mountain, **and be there**” (Exod. 24:12). This raises a difficulty, for if one goes up to the mountain, of course one will be there. Rather, it is possible for a person to ascend to the peak, but their head will be elsewhere. The key is not the ascent, but actually really being there. (בפועל - actually, actively, creatively, effortfully)

Rabbi Abraham answers a question:

“Our sages say, ‘And there is not a thing that has not its place.’ And so man too has his own place. Then why do people sometimes feel so crowded?”

He replied: “Because each wants occupy the place of the other.”

(Martin Buber, *Tales of the Hasidim* II, p. 72)

From today's Torah portion:

וַיִּשְׁמַע אֱלֹהִים אֶת־קוֹל הַנֶּעֱר וַיִּקְרָא
מִלְאָךְ אֱלֹהִים | אֶל־הָגָר מִן־הַשָּׁמַיִם
וַיֹּאמֶר לָהּ מַה־לָּךְ הָגָר אֶל־תִּירְאִי
כִּי־שָׁמַע אֱלֹהִים אֶל־קוֹל הַנֶּעֱר בְּאֶשֶׁר
הוּא־שָׁם:

God heard the voice of the boy, and an angel of God called to Hagar from heaven, saying to her, “What troubles you, Hagar? Do not fear. For God has heeded the cry of the boy **there where he is.**” (Genesis 21:17)

The rabbi of Kobryn teaches:

God says to [us], as God said to Moshe:

“Put off your shoes from your feet” -- put off the habitual which encloses your foot, and you will know that the place on which you are now standing is holy ground. For there is no rung of human life on which we cannot find the holiness of God everywhere and at all times.

(Martin Buber, *Tales of the Hasidim* II, p. 170)

Rabbi Nachman of Bratslav cautions:

עקר האדם הוא הושכל והדעת, ועל כן במקום שחושב הושכל שם כל האדם. על כן צריך לברח מאד ממחשבה רעה כדי שלא יקנה מקומו שם, חס ושלום...

כשבאים על מחשבתו הרהורי זנות והוא משבר תאותו ומסיח דעתו מהם, זהו עקר תשובתו ותקונו על פגם הברית שפגם מקדם, כל אחד כפי ענינו, כי זהו בחינת תשובת המשקל ממש. על כן אל יפול בדעתו כשרואה, שמתגברים עליו הרהורים רעים ומגונים מאד, כי אדרבא, זהו דיקא תקונו ותשובתו, כי דיקא על ידי זה שבאים עליו עתה הרהורים והוא מתגבר עליהם, על ידי זה דיקא הוא עקר תקונו ותשובתו, כנזכר לעיל...

עקר התשובה של כל אדם הוא, שישוב בכל פעם מהמחשבות רעות שנלכד בהם למחשבות קדושות... וזה עקר התשובה, לשוב במחשבתו ממקום שהוא שם למחשבות קדושות, ואפלו אם נתעה במחשבתו כמו שנתעה, אף על פי כן צריך שיאמין, שבכל מה שמנתק עצמו במחשבתו מרע לטוב הוא יקר בעיני השם...

The mind is a person's very essence. Wherever a person's thoughts are, that is where he himself is -- all of him. This explains why it is so important to avoid all bad thoughts. Otherwise that is where your place will be... (Likutei Etzot, Da'at, #9). A person can't always stop bad thoughts from entering his mind in the first place. But he does have the power to reject them once he becomes conscious of them... (Likutei Etzot, Machsh'vot v'Hirhurim, #2)

The essence of teshuvah for each person is that one return each time from negative thoughts in which one is ensnared, to holy thoughts... This is the core of teshuvah, to return in one's thoughts from the place where one is to holy thoughts. And even if one is completely confused by one's thoughts, nevertheless one needs to believe that in whatever measure one disconnects oneself from negative thoughts and turns toward good this is precious in the eyes of God... (Sefer Etsot Y'sharot, Teshuvah, #7)

Poet Merle Feld explores presence... and absence:

His wife's Prayer

A prayer has come down to us from Pearl, the rabbi of Berditchev's wife. Whenever she kneaded and baked the loaves for the sabbath, she prayed: "Lord of the world, I beg you to help me that, when my husband Levi Yitzhak says the blessing upon these loaves on the sabbath, he may have in his mind what I have in my mind this very hour that I knead them and bake them." -- Martin Buber, Tales of the Hasidim, Early Masters

Eddie wondered, is the point that she's using her husband as an intercessor to bring her prayers to God.

No I said -- in these very words she herself is addressing God, so clearly she doesn't believe she needs her husband for that.

Rather the reverse -- she is using God as an intercessor with her husband: how can I reach him how can I communicate my thoughts and feelings to him.

God is right there for her -- in the dough, in the kneading, in the braiding, in the fire. Levi Yitzhak is far away.

Rev. Dr. Howard Thurman writes:

It is a simple story, simply told. One day, a man walked into an antique shop and asked permission to look around. It was a rather exclusive shop frequented only by those who could afford to purchase articles made rare by their scarcity and age. The visitor seemed strangely out of place because he was poorly dressed though clean; indeed it was clear from his appearance that he was a laborer whose face had been etched by sun and rain and whose hands were rough and worn. After more than a half hour, he left. In about ten days he returned. This time he found a very beautiful piece of old glass and asked if he could make a deposit on it. Each week he made a payment, until at last the article was his. With much curiosity, the owner of the shop engaged him in conversation to determine, if he could, the use to which such a man would put his new purchase. "I bought it for my little room. It isn't much, but I bring to it, from time to time, through the years, only the very best and most beautiful things. You see, that is where I live." To bring to the place where you live only the best and most beautiful—what a plan for one's life! This is well within the reach of everyone. Think of using one's memory in that way. As one lives from day to day, there are all sorts of experiences, good, bad, beautiful, ugly, that become a part of one's past. To develop the ability to screen one's memory so that only the excellent is retained for one's own room! All kinds of ideas pass through one's mind, about oneself, about the world, about people. Which do you keep for your own room? Think it over now; which ideas do you keep for the place where you live?... The place where you live is where your treasures are. Where your treasures are is where your heart is. Where your heart is, is where your God is. (*Deep Is the Hunger*, pp. 24-25)

Day 1, Back to Basecamp... HaMAKOM REDUX

וַיִּפְגַּע בַּמָּקוֹם (בראשית כח, יא),
רַב הוּנָא בְּשֵׁם רַבִּי אַמִּי אָמַר מִפְּנֵי מָה מְכַנֵּין שְׁמוֹ שֶׁל
הַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא וְקוֹרְאִין אוֹתוֹ מָקוֹם, שֶׁהוּא מְקוֹמוֹ
שֶׁל עוֹלָם וְאֵין עוֹלָמוֹ מְקוֹמוֹ...

“And he [Jacob] encountered **the Place (haMakom)**” (Gen. 28:11). Rav Huna said in Rabbi Ammi's name: Why do we use an expression for the name of the Holy Blessed One, calling God “The Place”? Because God is the Place of the world; the world is not God's place... (Bereshit Rabbah 68:9)

Maimonides teaches:

שָׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ ה' אֶחָד (דברים ו ד). אֲתָה הִרְאֵתָ לְדַעַת פִּי
ה' הוּא הָאֱלֹהִים אֵין עוֹד מִלְּבַדּוֹ (דברים ד לה). וְיָדַעְתָּ הַיּוֹם
וְהִשְׁבַּתְתָּ אֶל לְבָבְךָ פִּי ה' הוּא הָאֱלֹהִים בְּשֵׁמַיִם מִמַּעַל וְעַל-הָאָרֶץ
מִתַּחַת אֵין עוֹד (דברים ד לט).
כָּל פְּסוּק מֵאֵלוֹ מַלְכוּת הוּא עֲנִינוּ אָף עַל פִּי שְׂאִין בּו זְכַר מַלְכוּת
וְהָרִי הוּא כְּמוֹ ה' יִמְלֹךְ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד (שמות טו יח), וַיְהִי בִישְׁרוּן
מִלְךָ וְכו' (דברים לג ה):

“Hear Israel, Adonai, our God, Adonai is one”
(Deut. 6:4); “You have been shown to know that Adonai alone is God; there is none other” (Deut. 4:35); “You shall know today and place upon your hearts that Adonai is God in heaven above and on earth below, there is no other.” (Deut. 4:39). Any

verse of these is the subject of malkhuyot, even though there is no mention of “kingship”, it is surely like, "Adonai will reign forever and ever" (Exod. 15:18); [and] "And then He became King in Jeshurun, etc." (Deut. 33:5). (Mishneh Torah, Shofar, Sukkah and Lulav 3:9)

Abudarham, a 14th century Spanish commentator on the liturgy, notes:

ותמצא באלו השלשה ובכן ובכן רמז למלכויות זכרונות ושופרות כי הראשון הוא ובכן תן פחדך ה' אלקינו וייראוך כל המעשים ויעשו כלם אגודה אחת כנגד מלכויות כי כל זה ענין הממלכה שממליכין אותו...

And you find in these three “*uv'kben*” paragraphs a hint of *malkhuyot*, *zikbronot shofarot*. Because the first is “*uv'kben*, place the fear of You, Adonai Eloheinu [on all of your creations]...” and “[so that all created beings] be in awe of You,” and “**all will be made into a single bond**” -- corresponding to *malkhuyot*, for all this is the matter of sovereignty with which they crown God... (Rosh Hashanah Prayers, 18)

The Baal Shem Tov teaches:

“I let sinners come close to me, if they are not proud. I keep the scholars and the sinless away from me if they are proud. For the sinner who knows that he is a sinner, and therefore considers himself base -- God is with him, for [God] ‘dwelleth with them in the midst of their uncleanness.’ But concerning him who prides himself on the fact that he is unburdened by sin, God says, as we know from the Gemara: “There is not enough room in the world for myself and him.”” (Martin Buber, *Tales of the Hasidim* I, pp 71-72)

Scholars Moshe Halbertal and Stephen Holmes write:

In the political theology typical of the great land powers surrounding ancient Israel, the king was either a God, an incarnation of a God, or a semi-mythic human king who was elected by the gods to serve as a necessary mediator between the divine order and the human world... [I]he deification of kingship and general veneration of political authority meant that an unblinking look into the moral trespasses, ambiguous virtues, and personal shortcomings of monarchs and emperors was exceedingly rare.

The biblical political theology... upended this ancient Near Eastern formula. **Rather than declaring that “the king is a God,” the new theology postulated instead that “God is the king.”** The sole or exclusive kingship of God was fundamentally irreconcilable with a consolidated political monarchy. The kingship of God entailed... a divine monopoly on sovereign authority that essentially precluded the creation of self-sustaining political institutions...

The conditions for the emergence of genuine *political* thought... were established only when a third alternative emerged between these two radically opposed outlooks, between “the king is a God” and “God is the king.” The first part of the Book of Samuel narrates, among other events, a dramatic break from God's direct sovereignty over political events. **This is the essence of the shift from “God is the king” to “the king is not a God.”** (Moshe Halbertal & Stephen Holmes, *The Beginning of Politics: Power in the Book of Samuel*, pages 4-5, 7) (emphasis added)

Biblical Scholar Walter Brueggemann writes:

In the imperial world of Pharaoh and Solomon, the prophetic alternative is a bad joke either to be squelched by force or ignored in satiation. But we are a haunted people because we believe the bad joke is rooted in the character of God himself, a God who is not the reflection of Pharaoh or of Solomon. He is a God with a name of his own, which cannot be uttered by anyone but him. He is not the reflection of any, for he has his own person and retains that all to himself. He is a God uncredentialed in the empire, unknown in the courts, unwelcome in the temple. **And his history begins in his attentiveness to the cries to the marginal ones.** He, unlike his royal regents, is one whose person is presented as passion and pathos, the power to care, the capacity to weep, the energy to grieve and then to rejoice. **The prophets after Moses know that his caring, weeping, grieving, and rejoicing will not be outflanked by royal hardware or royal immunity because this one is indeed God. And kings must face that.**

So this is the paradigm I suggest for the prophetic imagination: **a royal consciousness committed to achievable satiation. An alternative prophetic consciousness devoted to the pathos and passion of covenanting. The royal consciousness with its program of achievable satiation has redefined our notions of humanness, and it has done that to all of us. It has created a subjective consciousness concerned only with self-satisfaction. It has denied the legitimacy of tradition that requires us to remember, of authority that expects us to answer, and of community that calls us to care. It has so enthroned the present that a promised future, delayed but certain, is unthinkable.**

The royal program of achievable satiation:

- * Is fed by a management mentality that believes there are no mysteries to honor, only problems to be solved. This, the Solomonic evidence urges, was not a time of great leadership, heroic battles, or bold initiatives. It was a time governed by the cost-accounting of a management mentality.
- * Is legitimated by an "official religion of optimism," which believes God has no business other than to maintain our standard of living, ensuring his own place in his palace.
- * Requires the annulment of the neighbor as a life-giver in our history; it imagines that we can live outside history as self-made men and women.

It is mind-boggling to think that, of the Mosaic innovation, only the prophetic word is mobilized against this compelling reality. (Walter Brueggemann, *The Prophetic Imagination*) (emphasis added.)

Rev. Dr. Howard Thurman writes:

What are the conditions under which men tend to lose their nerve?... It is not particularly difficult to handle a loss of nerve where the facts surrounding the circumstances are clear cut and definite. A man knows what he is dealing with and draws on all of the resources of his personality to rise to the occasion. Where the loss of nerve is a result of a general breakdown in society it is infinitely harder to manage. The classic illustration is to be found in the closing days of the Roman Empire when the average Roman citizen had lost his sense of responsibility for the fate of the Empire. Everywhere there was a sense of impending crisis. A period, somewhat similar in effect, is upon us. We are rapidly becoming a nation of panic-ridden people. The present tendency is to make of everyone a scapegoat for our collective fears. This means that we are losing our sense of destiny as a people and are relaxing our faith in the ideals which gave birth to our nation and for whose high fulfillment we have in the past marshaled the resources of our common life. We cannot fight an idea with threats, investigations and scares. We can fight an idea only with a greater idea, to which, in all phases of our life, we are dedicated with high purpose and deep resolve. This is the answer to our present loss of nerve. (*Deep Is the Hunger*, pp. 6-7)

FOR FURTHER THOUGHT AND DISCUSSION ON HAMAKOM/THE PLACE:

A) The Thread, by Denise Levertov (*Machzor Lev Shalem*, page 155)

This poem is intentionally juxtaposed with the liturgy of Malkhuyot, which focuses on God as *Melekh*/King; it provides an alternative metaphor for something having a claim on us, or authority over us.

- What and whom do you feel obligated to in general, and as a Jew? Is it God, Jewish tradition, mitzvot, Jewish peoplehood? Something else? What makes you want to be at a Rosh Hashanah service?
- Why do you feel those obligation(s)? Which obligations -- or claims on you -- have you freely chosen? Are there any obligations or claims that you experience as having been “born with”, as the poet wonders?
- Can you think of a moment in your life when you felt the pull of the thread as described by the poet? What evoked that feeling? How did you respond?
- The traditional imagery offers the metaphor of king, while the poem uses the image of a thread. What different understandings of obligation and authority do these metaphors express? What attracts and challenges you about each metaphor? Do you prefer one to the other?
- What alternative metaphor(s) might you suggest to describe what keeps you connected or obligated as Jew?
- The poet speaks of “not fear but a stirring of wonder.” The Hebrew word *yirah* is sometimes translated as fear, and sometimes wonder or awe. What is the difference? Which experience is more likely to lead you to thoughts of God?
- Have you ever “tried the strength” of your threads of obligation, or felt their strength tested by outside circumstances? What did you discover about their strength or weakness? Have you ever felt the thread to have “loosened and gone,” only to pull you back?

B) Malkhuyot as an expression of Oneness.

If “crowning God as Sovereign” means affirming that I’m part of a Oneness which is larger than me and has a claim on me, we are prompted to ponder two questions:

- What is the request/demand/need to which my life is/can be/should be a response?
- What is demanded of me right now and how might I respond?

C) Malkhuyot and the Boundaries of Free Will

On the one hand, Rosh Hashanah’s emphasis on *Malkhuyot* challenges us to fully claim our power and agency, and to accept responsibility for the exercise of our free will. On the other hand, it also challenges us to examine the boundaries of our free will and agency: limits inherently stemming from our mortality and vulnerability as humans, and chosen limits, stemming from our sense of ourselves as moral beings.

Questions to ponder:

- How might fully facing and accepting limits on our free will and our power change the way we live, individually and societally? Can you imagine such acceptance being freeing, or leading to greater happiness? How so?
- As Jews living in Western democracies, we operate within two entirely different thought systems. In Western democracy “individual rights” is the key concept, while in Judaism *mitzvah*/obligation is the key concept. How might shifting from a focus on rights to a focus on obligations change your thinking about some of the issues in our society? How might obligation offer a “third way” in conflicts when individual’s rights infringe on each other?

D) Malkhuyot and Partnership with God

Rosh Hashanah is said to be God’s Coronation Day. It is also Yom HaDin, the Day of Judgment, in which all creatures including human beings are judged. **And** Rosh Hashanah marks the anniversary of the Creation -- either the creation of the world (Day 1) or the creation of humanity, made in God’s image (day 6).

Questions to ponder:

- How are each of these themes of God as Sovereign, Judge and Creator both humbling and ennobling to human beings?
- How do the roles of Creator and Enforcer of Justice relate to the legitimacy of God’s sovereignty or authority? What about human authority?

וַיֹּאמֶר ה' אֶל-אַבְרָם לֵךְ-לְךָ
 מֵאֶרֶץ וּמִמּוֹלֶדְתְּךָ וּמִבֵּית אָבִיךָ
 אֶל-הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר אֲרָאָה:

Adonai said to Abram, "Go forth from your native land and from your father's house **to the land that I will show you...**" (Gen. 12:1)

From tomorrow's Torah reading...

וַיְהִי אַחֲרֵי הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה
 וַהֲאֵלֹהִים נִסָּה אֶת-אַבְרָהָם
 וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו אַבְרָהָם וַיֹּאמֶר הֲנִנִּי:
 וַיֹּאמֶר קַח-נָא אֶת-בְּנֶךָ אֶת-יִצְחָק
 אֲשֶׁר-אַהַבְתָּ אֶת-יִצְחָק וְלֵךְ-לְךָ
 אֶל-אֶרֶץ הַמּוֹרְיָה וְהַעֲלֵהוּ שָׁם
 לְעֹלָה עַל אֶחָד הַהָרִים אֲשֶׁר אָמַר
 אֱלֹהֶיךָ:

Some time afterward, God put Abraham to the test, saying to him, "Abraham," and he answered, "Here I am." [God] said, "Take your son, your favored one, Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriyah, and bring him up there as a burnt offering **on one of the heights that I will point out to you.**" (Gen. 22:1-2)

The Midrash asks:

אל הארץ אשר אראך, לא אמר ליה למקום פלוני זו נסיון בתוך נסיון יש אדם שהולך ואינו יודע לאיזו מקום הוא הולך
 "To the land that I will show you." God did not say to him "to such and such a place." This is a test within a test. Is there a person who goes without knowing to which place he is going? (Tanhuma, Lekh Lekha 3)

The Sfat Emet re-interprets:

"To the land that I will show you." Where I shall make you visible, where your potential being will be realized in multiform and unpredictable ways. (quoted in Avivah Zornberg, *Genesis -- the Beginning of Desire*, p. 88)

Even Hasidic masters can only see so far ahead:

A man comes to Reb Elimelech of Lizhensk and asks if he should go forward with a certain business deal. And the Rebbe says, "Yes. It's going to be good; God will help. You'll do very, very well." The man then goes to the Rebbe's disciple, the Lubliner, Reb Ya'akov Yitzhak, and asks him the same question. And Reb Ya'akov Yitzhak says, "You're going to get wiped out." So the man says to himself, "I asked the teacher, and he says I'm going to do well, and I asked the disciple, and he says I'm not going to make it. Which one should I listen to, the teacher or the disciple?" He decides to go with the teacher and makes the deal. It goes exceedingly well in the beginning, but he loses his shirt in the end. The man comes back to Reb Ya'akov Yitzhak of Lublin and asks him, "How come things turned out this way?" Reb Ya'akov Yitzhak says, "Because my master, my teacher, Elimelech, saw only until his dying day. And to his dying day, you were successful. But he didn't see any further. I can't see past my dying day either, but I saw further because your failure was within my lifetime." (Rabbi Zalman Schachter-Shalomi, *Wrapped in a Holy Flame*, pp. 65-66)

The Kotzker Rebbe on the benefits of wandering:

מי שהוא מקודם נע ונד, שרוי אח"כ בשמחה
 One who at first wanders here and there,
 will dwell afterwards in joy.

Rebecca Solnit inspires:

[The term hope] navigates a way forward between the false certainties of optimism and pessimism, and the complacency or passivity that goes with both. Optimism assumes that all will go well without our effort; pessimism assumes it's all irredeemable; both let us stay home and do nothing. Hope for me has meant a sense that the future is unpredictable, and that we don't actually know what will happen, but know we may be able to write it ourselves.

Hope is a belief that what we do might matter, an understanding that the future is not yet written. It's an informed, astute open-mindedness about what can happen and what role we might play in it. Hope looks forward but draws its energies from the past, from knowing histories, including our victories, and their complexities and imperfections. It means not fetishizing the perfect that is the enemy of the good, not snatching defeat from the jaws of victory, not assuming you know what will happen when the future is unwritten, and part of what happens is up to us...

To be hopeful, we need not only to embrace uncertainty but also to be willing to know that the consequences may be immeasurable, may still be unfolding, may be as indirect as poor people on other continents getting access to medicine because activists in the United States stood up and refused to accept things as they were. Think of hope as a banner woven from those gossamer threads, from a sense of the interconnectedness of all things, from the lasting effect of the best actions, not only the worst. Of an indivisible world in which everything matters...

To believe it matters -- well we can't see the future, but we have the past. Which gives us patterns, models, parallels, principles, and resources; stories of heroism, brilliance, and persistence; and the deep joy to be found in doing the work that matters. With those in hand, we can seize the possibilities and begin to make hopes into actualities. ("In Praise of Indirect Consequences" in *Call Them by Their True Names -- American Crises (and Essays)*, pp 174, 176-77, 185)

Rev. Dr. Howard Thurman writes:

Sometimes it takes a lifetime to determine whether or not a single act was a mistake or not. There are some acts that carry with them a swift and decisive judgment. Their effect is immediate and traceable...Much of life involves us in actions growing out of decisions that work out their fulfillment through many months and often years... Since, at our best, we must act again and again on the basis of inadequate evidence, it is quite unworthy of our responsibility as human beings to use less than our highest wisdom in making up our minds. There is no guarantee that the decision I make will not, in the end, form a mistake, a bad judgment, a movement in error. But I shall bring to bear upon it the fruits of my cumulative wisdom in living, the light from as many lamps along the way as I can see, and the greatest spiritual resources available to me. (*Deep Is the Hunger*, pp. 8-9)

The fact that a man can always be in error with reference to the things that he thinks he understands most clearly is an ever present reminder of human frailty. It is a challenge to humility even in the presence of one's deepest convictions. The truth is we are never able to get our hands on all the facts in a given situation; something that is important always escapes our consideration and may lead us to a false conclusion honestly arrived at. The fact that it is honestly arrived at may not alter the fact that the conclusion is false. We are all creatures of limitation and it behooves us to recognize this fact at every point. This does not mean that we are excused for our errors due to a lack of knowledge, experience or patience. But it does mean that even when we have done our best thinking, our most honest probing of our own motives, plumbed the depths of our innermost cumulative experience of living, we may arrive at a point less than the right. If this is true, then carelessness in attitudes, slovenly thinking, half-hearted attempts at understanding, all these are simply without justification. Each person is under obligation to do, to the limit of his powers, the very best thinking, the most honest feeling of which he is capable, as he faces even the simplest alternatives of life... (*Deep Is the Hunger*, pp. 21-22)

SONGS AND POEMS FOR THE JOURNEY...

Stephen Sondheim sings:

Move on...
Stop worrying where you're going
Move on
If you can know where you're going
You've gone
Just keep moving on

I chose, and my world was shaken
So what?
The choice may have been mistaken
The choosing was not
You have to move on

Look at what you want
Not at where you are
Not at what you'll be

I want to move on
I want to explore the light
I want to know how to get through
Through to something new
Something of my own
Move on
(“Move On,” *Sunday in the Park with George*)

Watch Sarah Stiles sing “What’s Gonna Happen”

(from *Tootsie*, by David Yazbek)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FNV76IEknqc>

The Place Where We Are Right

From the place where we are right
flowers will never grow
in the spring.

The place where we are right
is hard and trampled
like a yard.

But doubts and loves
dig up the world
like a mole, a plow.
And a whisper will be heard in the place
where the ruined
house once stood.

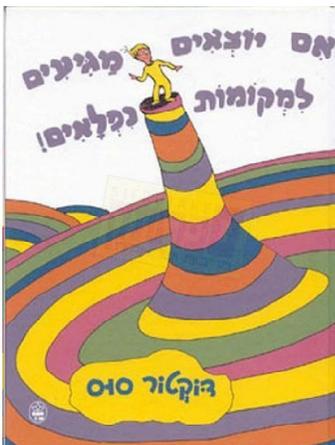
Yehudah Amichai

Lekhi Lakh

by Debbie Friedman, ז"ל & Savina Tenbal

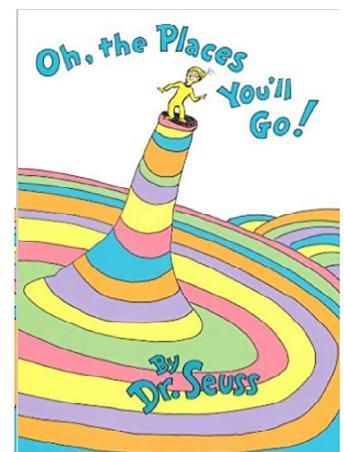
Lekhi lakh to a land that I will show you
Lekh l'kha to a place you do not know
Lekhi lakh on your journey I will bless you
And you shall be a blessing, you shall be a blessing
You shall be a blessing lekhi lakh

Lekhi lakh and I shall make your name great
Lekh l'kha and all shall praise your name
Lekhi lakh to the place that I will show you
L'simkhat hayyim, l'simkhat hayyim
L'simkhat hayyim lechi lach.
And you shall be a blessing, you shall be a blessing
You shall be a blessing lekhi lakh.



Listen to Dr. Seuss' *Oh, the Places You'll Go!* on “Storytime with Miss Jeannie”:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fmOCyP4VyP4>



From today's Torah reading -- Hagar at the wells...

וַיִּשְׂכַּם אַבְרָהָם | בַּבֹּקֶר וַיִּקַּח לֶחֶם וְחָמַת מִיַּם וַיִּתֵּן
 אֶל-הָגָר שֵׁם עַל-שִׂכְמָהּ וְאֶת-הַיֶּלֶד וַיְשַׁלְּחָהּ וַתֵּלֶךְ
 וַתִּתַּע בְּמִדְבַר בְּאֵר שֶׁבַע: וַיִּכְלוּ הַמַּיִם מִן-הַחֲמַת
 וַתִּשְׁלַךְ אֶת-הַיֶּלֶד תַּחַת אֶחָד הַשִּׁיחִים: טו וַתֵּלֶךְ
 וַתֵּשֶׁב לָהּ מִנְגֵד הַרְחֹק כַּמֶּטְחָיו קָשָׁת כִּי אָמְרָה
 אֶל-אֶרְצָהּ בְּמוֹת הַיֶּלֶד וַתֵּשֶׁב מִנְגֵד וַתִּשָּׂא
 אֶת-קֹלָהּ וַתִּבְדֹּ: ... וַיִּפְקַח אֱלֹהִים אֶת-עֵינֶיהָ
 וַתֵּרָא בְּאֵר מַיִם...

Early next morning Abraham took some bread and a skin of water, and gave them to Hagar. He placed them over her shoulder, together with the child, and sent her away. And she wandered about in the wilderness of Beer-sheba. When the water was gone from the skin, she left the child under one of the bushes, and went and sat a distance; for she thought, "Let me not look on as the child dies." And sitting thus afar, she burst into tears... Then God opened her eyes and she saw a well of water... (Gen. 21:14-16, 19).

Hagar at the well - the prequel...

וַתִּקְרָא שֵׁם-יְהוָה הַדֹּבֵר אֵלֶיהָ אֵתָה אֵל רָאִי כִּי אָמְרָה
 הַגַּם הַלֵּם רָאִיתִי אַחֲרַי רָאִי: עַל-כֵּן קָרָא לְבָאֵר בְּאֵר
 לַחַי רָאִי הַנֵּה בֵּין-קֶדֶשׁ וּבֵין בְּרֵד:

And she [Hagar] called Adonai, who spoke to her, by the name "You Are El-roi," for she thought, "Have I not gone on seeing after being seen by God!" **Therefore the well was called Beer-lahai-roi;** it is between Kadesh and Ba'red. (Gen. 16:13-14)

Hagar at the well - the sequel...

וַיִּצְחַק בָּא מִבּוֹא בְּאֵר לַחַי רָאִי וְהוּא יוֹשֵׁב בְּאֶרֶץ הַנֶּגֶב: וַיֵּצֵא יִצְחָק לְשׁוֹנָה בְּשָׂדֵה לַפְּנוֹת עָרֵב וַיִּשָּׂא עֵינָיו וַיֵּרָא וְהִנֵּה גְמָלִים בָּאִים:
 וַתִּשָּׂא רִבְקָה אֶת-עֵינֶיהָ וַתֵּרָא אֶת-יִצְחָק...

Isaac came back from coming to Beer-lahai-roi -- for he was dwelling in the Negev area -- and Isaac went out walking in the field toward evening. He raised his eyes and saw - behold! camels approaching. Rivka raised her eyes and saw Isaac... (Gen. 24:62-64)

The midrash makes a connection:

וַיִּצְחַק בָּא מִבּוֹא אֵתָה מִמִּיתָא וְלֵהִיכֹן הַלֵּךְ בָּאֵר לַחַי רָאִי הַלֵּךְ לַהֲבִיא אֵתָה הַגַּר אֵתָה שִׁישְׁבָה עַל הַבָּאֵר וְאֵתָה לַחַי הַעוֹלָמִים
 רָאֵה בַעֲלֹבוֹנִי...

"And Isaac came from coming, etc." (Gen. 24:62): ... And where had he gone? "To Beer-Lahai-Roi": he had gone to fetch Hagar, the one who had sat by the well (*be'er*) and besought the One who is the life (*lahai*) of all worlds, saying, Look upon (*re'eh*) my misery. (Bereshit Rabbah 60:14)

From today's Torah reading - Abraham at the wells...

וַיְהִי בַעַת הַהוּא וַיֹּאמֶר אַבִּימֶלֶךְ וּפִיכֹל שַׂר-צְבָאוֹ אֶל-אַבְרָהָם
 לֵאמֹר אֱלֹהִים עִמָּךְ בְּכֹל אֲשֶׁר-אַתָּה עֹשֶׂה: וְעַתָּה הִשְׁבְּעָה לִּי
 בְּאֱלֹהִים הַנֵּה אִם-תִּשְׁקַר לִי וּלְנִינִי וּלְנִכְדֵי כַּחַסְדֵי אֲשֶׁר-עָשִׂיתִי
 עִמָּךְ תַּעֲשֶׂה עִמָּדִי וְעַם-הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר-גִּרְתָּה בָּהּ: וַיֹּאמֶר אַבְרָהָם
 אֲנֹכִי אֲשַׁבֵּעַ: וְהוֹכַח אַבְרָהָם אֶת-אַבִּימֶלֶךְ עַל-אֲדוּת בְּאֵר הַמַּיִם
 אֲשֶׁר גָּזְלוּ עִבְדֵי אַבִּימֶלֶךְ: וַיֹּאמֶר אַבִּימֶלֶךְ לֹא יָדַעְתִּי מִי עָשָׂה
 אֶת-הַדָּבָר הַזֶּה וְגַם-אַתָּה לֹא-הִגַּדְתָּ לִּי וְגַם אֲנֹכִי לֹא שָׁמַעְתִּי
 בְּלַתִּי הַיּוֹם:

וַיִּקַּח אַבְרָהָם צֹאן וּבָקָר וַיִּתֵּן לְאַבִּימֶלֶךְ וַיִּכְרְתוּ שְׁנֵיהֶם בְּרִית:
 וַיֵּצֵב אַבְרָהָם אֶת-שֶׁבַע כְּבָשֹׁת הַצֹּאן לְבְדָהּ: וַיֹּאמֶר אַבִּימֶלֶךְ
 אֶל-אַבְרָהָם מָה הִנֵּה שֶׁבַע כְּבָשֹׁת הָאֵלֶּה אֲשֶׁר הִצַּבְתָּ לְבְדָנָה:
 וַיֹּאמֶר כִּי אֶת-שֶׁבַע כְּבָשֹׁת תִּקַּח מִיָּדִי בְּעִבּוֹר תִּהְיֶה-לִּי לְעֵדָה כִּי
 חִפְרָתִי אֶת-הַבָּאֵר הַזֹּאת: עַל-כֵּן קָרָא לְמָקוֹם הַהוּא בְּאֵר שֶׁבַע
 כִּי שָׁם נִשְׁבְּעוּ שְׁנֵיהֶם:

At that time Abimelech and Phicol, chief of his troops, said to Abraham, "God is with you in everything that you do. Therefore swear to me here by God that you will not deal falsely with me or with my kith and kin, but will deal with me and with the land in which you have sojourned as loyally as I have dealt with you."

And Abraham said, "I swear it."

Then Abraham reproached Abimelech for the well of water which the servants of Abimelech had seized. But Abimelech said, "I do not know who did this; you did not tell me, nor have I heard of it until today."

Abraham took sheep and oxen and gave them to Abimelech, and the two of them made a pact.

Abraham then set seven ewes of the flock by themselves, and Abimelech said to Abraham, "What mean these seven ewes which you have set apart?"

He replied, "You are to accept these seven ewes from me as proof that I dug this well."

Hence that place was called Beer-sheba, for there the two of them swore an oath. (Bereshit 21:22-31)

Day 2, First Stop... WHERE THE ALTAR MEETS THE LAW

מִזְבֵּחַ אֲדָמָה תַעֲשֶׂה לִּי וְזָבַחְתָּ עָלָיו
אֶת־עֹלֹתֶיךָ וְאֶת־שְׁלֹמֶיךָ אֶת־צֹאֲנֶךָ
וְאֶת־בְּקֻרְךָ בְּכָל־הַמְּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר אֶזְכֵּר
אֶת־שְׁמִי אָבוֹא אֵלֶיךָ וּבֵרַכְתִּיךָ: וְאִם־מִזְבֵּחַ
אֲבָנִים תַעֲשֶׂה־לִּי לֹא־תִבְנֶה אֹתוֹן גִּזִּית כִּי
חֲרָבָה הַנִּפְתָּ עָלָיָה וַתַּחֲלִלָהּ: וְלֹא־תַעֲלֶה
בְּמַעֲלֹת עַל־מִזְבְּחִי אֲשֶׁר לֹא־תִגָּלֶה עֲרוֹתָךְ
עָלָיו:

וְאֵלֶּה הַמִּשְׁפָּטִים אֲשֶׁר תִּשִׂים לִפְנֵיהֶם:

Make for Me an altar of earth and sacrifice on it your burnt offerings and your sacrifices of well-being, your sheep and your oxen; in every place where I cause My name to be mentioned I will come to you and bless you. And if you make for Me an altar of stones, do not build it of hewn stones; for by wielding your tool upon them you have profaned them. Do not ascend My altar by steps, that your nakedness may not be exposed upon it.

And these are the laws that you shall set before them...
(Exodus 20:21-23; 21:1)

Rashi comments...

וְלָמָּה נִסְמְכָה פְּרֻשֶׁת דִּינֵינוּ לְפָרֻשֶׁת מִזְבֵּחַ? לֵאמֹר לָךְ, שְׂתִישִׂים סִנְהֶדְרִין אֶצְלַת הַמִּקְדָּשׁ (מכילתא):

...Why is this section dealing with the “civil laws” placed immediately after the section about the altar? **To tell you that you should place the Sanhedrin adjacent to the Temple (*Mikdash*).**

The Avnei Azel adds...

Among the other nations, social laws -- those between one person and another -- have no religious basis, but are purely social and civil, and are needed to ensure the welfare of the state. With us, though, the civil laws are commandments of God, and they have the sanctity of the commandments. Just as the sacrifices are the worship of God in the Temple, the civil law is the worship of God in our daily lives.

Day 2, Second Stop... THE BURNING BUSH

From the Torah, Exodus 2...

וַיִּגְדַּל הַיֶּלֶד וַתְּבִאֶהוּ לְבַת־פַּרְעֹה וַיְהִי־לָהּ לְבָן
 וַתִּקְרָא שְׁמוֹ מֹשֶׁה וַתֹּאמֶר כִּי מִן־הַמַּיִם מָשִׂיתָהוּ
 וַיְהִי | בְּיָמִים הָהֵם וַיִּגְדַּל מֹשֶׁה וַיֵּצֵא אֶל־אֶחָיו וַיֵּרָא
 בְּסִבְלַתָּם וַיֵּרָא אִישׁ מַצְרִי מַכֶּה אִישׁ־עִבְרִי מֵאֶחָיו:
 וַיִּפְּן כֹּה וְכֹה וַיֵּרָא כִּי אֵין אִישׁ וַיִּדְ אֶת־הַמַּצְרִי
 וַיִּטְמְנֵהוּ בַחֹל: וַיֵּצֵא בַיּוֹם הַשֵּׁנִי וְהַנָּה שְׁנֵי־אֲנָשִׁים
 עִבְרִים נֹצִים וַיֹּאמֶר לְרִשֶׁע לָמָּה תִכֶּה רֵעִי: וַיֹּאמֶר מִי
 שָׁמַדְ לְאִישׁ שֶׁר וְשִׁפְטָ עֲלֵינוּ הַלְהִרְגְנִי אֵתְּהָ אָמַר
 כִּאֲשֶׁר הִרְגִּית אֶת־הַמַּצְרִי וַיֵּרָא מֹשֶׁה וַיֹּאמֶר אָכֵן
 נֹדַע הַדָּבָר: וַיִּשְׁמַע פַּרְעֹה אֶת־הַדָּבָר הַזֶּה וַיִּבְקֶשׁ
 לְהַרְגוֹ אֶת־מֹשֶׁה וַיִּבְרַח מֹשֶׁה מִפְּנֵי פַרְעֹה וַיָּשָׁב
 בְּאֶרֶץ־מִדְיָן וַיָּשָׁב עַל־הַבְּעָר:

When the child grew up, she brought him to Pharaoh's daughter, who made him her son. She named him Moses, explaining, "I drew him out of the water." Some time after that, when Moses had grown up, he went out to his kinsfolk and witnessed their labors. He saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, one of his kinsmen. He turned this way and that and, seeing no one about, he struck down the Egyptian and hid him in the sand. When he went out the next day, he found two Hebrews fighting; so he said to the offender, "Why do you strike your fellow?" He retorted, "Who made you chief and ruler over us? Do you mean to kill me as you killed the Egyptian?" Moses was frightened, and thought: Then the matter is known! When Pharaoh learned of the matter, he sought to kill Moses; but Moses fled from Pharaoh. He arrived in the land of Midian, and sat down beside a well...

וַתֹּאמְרוּן אִישׁ מַצְרִי הֲצִילָנוּ מִיַּד הָרָעִים וְגַם־דָּלָה
 דָּלָה לָנוּ וַיִּשְׁקֵךְ אֶת־הַצֹּאן:

They answered, "An Egyptian rescued us from the shepherds; he even drew water for us and watered the flock."...

וַיִּשְׁמַע אֱלֹהִים אֶת־נַאֲקָתָם וַיִּזְכֹּר אֱלֹהִים אֶת־בְּרִיתוֹ
 אֶת־אֲבֹרָהֶם אֶת־יִצְחָק וְאֶת־יַעֲקֹב: הוֹיָרָא אֱלֹהִים
 אֶת־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיִּדַע אֱלֹהִים:

God heard their moaning, and God remembered [God's] covenant with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob. God looked upon the Israelites, and God took notice of them.

(Exodus 2:10-15, 19, 24-25)

From the Torah, Exodus 3...

וּמֹשֶׁה הָיָה רֹעֶה אֶת־צֹאן יִתְרוֹ חֹתְנוֹ כִּתְּרוֹ מִדְיָן
 וַיִּנְהַג אֶת־הַצֹּאן אַחַר הַמִּדְבָּר וַיָּבֹא אֶל־הַר
 הָאֱלֹהִים חֹרֵב: וַיֵּרָא מִלְּאֵךְ יְהוָה אֵלָיו בְּלַבַּת־אֵשׁ
 מִתּוֹךְ הַסִּנֵּה וַיֵּרָא וְהָיָה הַסִּנֵּה בַעַר בָּאֵשׁ וְהַסִּנֵּה
 אֵינְנוֹ אֵכָל: וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה אֶסְרֶה־נָּא וְאֶרְאֶה
 אֶת־הַמְּרָאָה הַגָּדֹל הַזֶּה מִדּוֹעַ לֹא־יִבְעַר הַסִּנֵּה:
 וַיֵּרָא יְהוָה כִּי סָר לְרַאֲוֹת וַיִּקְרָא אֵלָיו אֱלֹהִים
 מִתּוֹךְ הַסִּנֵּה וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה מֹשֶׁה וַיֹּאמֶר הֲנִנִּי וַיֹּאמֶר
 אֶל־תִּקְרַב הֲלָם שֶׁל־נִעְלִיד מֵעַל רִגְלֶיךָ כִּי הַמָּקוֹם
 אֲשֶׁר אַתָּה עוֹמֵד עָלָיו אֲדַמְתִּי־קֹדֶשׁ הוּא: וַיֹּאמֶר
 אֲנֹכִי אֱלֹהֵי אַבְיָד אֱלֹהֵי אֲבֹרָהֶם אֱלֹהֵי יִצְחָק
 וְאֱלֹהֵי יַעֲקֹב וַיִּסְתֵּר מֹשֶׁה פָּנָיו כִּי יָרָא מִהַבֵּיט
 אֶל־הָאֱלֹהִים:

Now Moses, tending the flock of his father-in-law Jethro, the priest of Midian, drove the flock into the wilderness, and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. An angel of Adonai appeared to him in a blazing fire out of a bush. He gazed, and there was a bush all aflame, yet the bush was not consumed. Moses said, "I must turn aside to look at this marvelous sight; why doesn't the bush burn up?" When Adonai saw that he had turned aside to look, God called to him out of the bush: "Moses! Moses!" He answered, "Here I am." And [God] said, "Do not come closer. Remove your sandals from your feet, for the place on which you stand is holy ground. "I am," [God] said, "the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God.

וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה אֶל־הָאֱלֹהִים מִי אֲנִי כִּי אֵלֵךְ
 אֶל־פַּרְעֹה וְכִי אוֹצִיא אֶת־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל מִמִּצְרָיִם:
 וַיֹּאמֶר כִּי־אֶהְיֶה עִמָּךְ וְזֶה־לְךָ הָאוֹת כִּי אֲנִי
 שְׁלַחְתִּיךָ בְּהוֹצִיאֲךָ אֶת־הָעָם מִמִּצְרָיִם תַּעֲבֹדוּן
 אֶת־הָאֱלֹהִים עַל הַהָר הַזֶּה:

But Moses said to God, "Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and free the Israelites from Egypt?" And [God] said, "I will be with you; that shall be your sign that it was I who sent you. And when you have freed the people from Egypt, you shall worship God at this mountain."

(Exodus 3:1-6, 11-12)

The poet responds...

BURNING

it happens gradually
like the softest
tone an electric
hum that you're
not sure
is even there so you say it's nothing but maybe
it's not
until you're shouting over it and everyone
around you is too and the fact that your voice
is starting to
break is how you know
a living thing
is being tortured is both
dying and not allowed to
die a never empty kettle screaming
Hannah's holy heart
wrapped in wet wool and some
stop to marvel leaning
against the glass making
erudite comments how terribly
exotic how mar
velous and others that they can't
listen really it's just
annoying don't care how it stops
just make it but you
stop
see it
hear it recognize it's your own
reflection
drawn of water then chronically
smelted
your sick burdened
your infants
straw
you blink for relief but your
gut turns from you
falls open retching and slowly
slowly the hand
passes by
reading your skin telling you
what you didn't
know you know
and it's been waiting and
you are late and
I am and now
you must

go

(Rabbi Michael Boino)

Day 2, Third Stop... MOUNT GERIZIM AND MOUNT EBAL

רָאָה אֲנֹכִי נָתַן לְפָנֶיכֶם הַיּוֹם בְּרָכָה וּקְלָלָה...
וְהָיָה כִּי יָבִיֵאֵד ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֶל־הָאָרֶץ
אֲשֶׁר־אַתָּה בָּא־שָׁמָּה לְרִשְׁתָּהּ וְנִתְּתָה
אֶת־הַבְּרָכָה עַל־הַר גְּרִזִים וְאֶת־הַקְּלָלָה
עַל־הַר עֵיבָל:

See I set before you today a blessing and a curse...It shall be that when Adonai your God brings you to the land... then you shall place the blessing on Mount Gerizim and the curse on Mount Ebal. (Deut. 11:26, 29)

Rashi interprets:

על הר גרזים. כְּלַפֵּי הַר גְּרִזִים הוֹפְכִין פְּנֵיהֶם וּפְתִיחוּ בְּבְרָכָה בְּרוּךְ הָאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר ... וְאַחַר כֵּן הִפְכוּ פְּנֵיהֶם כְּלַפֵּי הַר עֵיבָל וּפְתִיחוּ בְּקְלָלָה (סוטה ל"ג):

“On Mount Gerizim” means “*towards* Mount Gerizim.” They **turned their faces** towards it and began with a formula of blessing: “Blessed be the one who...” Afterwards they **turned their faces** towards Mount Ebal and began to recite the corresponding curse. (Rashi on Deut. 11:29)

Day 2, Fourth Stop... EVEN HaSHETIYAH - THE FOUNDATION STONE

בְּרֵאשִׁית בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת
הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת הָאָרֶץ: וְהָאָרֶץ
הַיְתֵה תְהוֹ וּבְהוֹ וְחֹשֶׁךְ עַל פְּנֵי
תְהוֹם וְרוּחַ אֱלֹהִים מְרַחֶפֶת עַל
פְּנֵי הַמַּיִם:

When God began to create heaven and earth — the earth being unformed and void (*tohu va'vohu*), with darkness over the surface of the deep (*tehom*) and a wind from God sweeping over the water. (Gen. 1:1-2)

The Zohar imagines:

הַנְּטָה יְמִינוֹ, וּבָרָא הָעוֹלָם שֶׁל מַעְלָה. נְטָה שְׂמָאלוֹ, וּבָרָא הָעוֹלָם הַזֶּה, הִדָּא הוּא דְכַתִּיב, (ישעיהו מ"ח:יג) אֶף יָדֵי יְסֻדָּה אֶרֶץ וַיִּמְיֵי טַפְחָהּ שְׁמַיִם. קוֹרָא אֲנִי אֱלֹהִים יַעֲמִדוּ יַחְדָּו. וְכֻלָּם בְּרַגַע אַחַת (ובשעה אחת) נִבְרָאוּ, וְעָשָׂה הָעוֹלָם הַזֶּה, כְּנִגְדֵי הָעוֹלָם שֶׁל מַעְלָה. וְכָל מָה שֵׁינֵשׁ לְמַעְלָה, כְּדוּגְמָתוֹ לְמַטָּה. וְכָל מָה שֵׁינֵשׁ לְמַטָּה, כְּדוּגְמָתוֹ בָּיִם. וְהִכַּל אֶחָד.

God stretched forth God's right hand and created the world above. God stretched out God's left hand and created this world... They were all created in a single moment, at the same time, and **God made this world to match the world above, and whatever exists above has its counterpart below**, and whatever exists below has its counterpart in the sea, and all is one. (Zohar II, 20a) (Midrash ha-Ne'elam)

וְעֵלְמָא לֹא אֶתְבְּרִי, עַד דְּנִטְל אֲבָנָא חֲדָא, וְאִיהוּ אֲבָנָא דְאֶתְקְרִי אֶבֶן שְׁתִּיָּה, וְנִטְל לָהּ קוֹדֶשָׁא בְּרִידָא הוּא, וְזָרַק לָהּ לְגוֹ תְהוֹמָא, וְאֶתְנַעֵץ מַעֲלָא לְתַתָּא, וּמִנִּיהּ אֲשְׁתִּיל עֲלֵמָא. וְאִיהוּ נִקְוֶדָה אֲמֻצְעִיתָא דְעֲלֵמָא, וּבְהָאֵי נִקְוֶדָה קִיּוּמָא קֹדֶשׁ הַקְּדוּשִׁים. הִדָּא הוּא דְכַתִּיב, (איוב ל"ח:ו) אוֹ מִי יָרָה אֶבֶן פְּנֵתָהּ. כִּמָּא דְאֶתְ אֲמִר, (ישעיהו כ"ח:ט"ז) אֶבֶן בַּחֹן פְּנֵת יִקְרָת. וְכַתִּיב, (תהילים קל"ח:כב) אֶבֶן מַאֲסוֹ הַבּוֹנִים הִיְתֵה לְרֹאשׁ פְּנֵה.

The world was not created until [God] had cast a single stone; this stone is called *even shetiyah* (“foundation stone”). The Holy Blessed One took it and threw it into the abyss (*tehom*) and it got lodged there from the upper to the lower worlds, and from it the world was founded. It is the central point of the world; at this point the Holy of Holies stands. This is the meaning of “Who cast its

cornerstone?” (Job 38:6), as it is said, “A tested stone, a precious cornerstone of sure foundation” (Isaiah 28:16), and it is written, “The stone the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone” (Ps. 118:22).

תָּא חֲזִי, הָאֵי אֶבֶן אֶתְבְּרִי מֵאֲשָׁא וּמְרוּחָא וּמִמַּיָּא, וְאֶתְגְּלִיד מִכְּלָהּ, וְאֶתְעֵבִיד אֲבָנָא חֲדָא, וְקִיּוּמָא עַל תְּהוֹמֵי, וְלִזְמַנֵּי נִבְעִין מִנִּיהּ מַיָּא, וְאֶתְמַלְיִין תְּהוֹמֵי. וְהָאֵי אֲבָנָא קִיּוּמָא לְאֶת בְּאֲמֻצְעִיתָא דְעֲלֵמָא, וְהָאֵי אִיהוּ אֶבֶן דְקִיּוּמָא וְאֶשְׁתִּיל יַעֲקֹב, שְׁתִּילוֹ וְקִיּוּמָא דְעֲלֵמָא. הִדָּא הוּא דְכַתִּיב, (בראשית ל"א:מ"ה) וַיִּסַּח יַעֲקֹב אֶבֶן וַיְרִמֶה מִצְבָּה.

Come and see. This stone was created from fire, air, and water. It was composed of them all and became a single stone, and it stands above the deeps (*tehomot*). Sometimes waters flow from it and the deeps are filled. This stone stands as a sign in the center of the world. It is the stone that Jacob set up and established, the basis and sustenance of the world. This is the significance of, “And Jacob took a stone and set it as a pillar” (Genesis 31:45).

וְהָאֶבֶן הַזֹּאת אֲשֶׁר שְׂמַתִּי מִצְבָּה וְגו', (בראשית כח כב) וְכִי הָאֵי אֶבֶן שְׂוִי לִיהּ יַעֲקֹב. וְהָאֵי אֶבֶן אֶתְבְּרִי בְּקִדְמִיתָא, כִּד בָּרָא קוֹדֶשָׁא בְּרִידָא הוּא עֲלֵמָא. אֲלָא דְשְׂוִי לָהּ קִיּוּמָא דְלַעֲלָא וְתַתָּא, וְעַל דָּא אֲשֶׁר שְׂמַתִּי מִצְבָּה כְּתִיב. מֵאִי אֲשֶׁר שְׂמַתִּי, דְכַתִּיב, יְהִיָּה בֵּית אֱלֹהִים, דְשְׂוִי מְדוּרָא דְלַעֲלָא הַכָּא.

But was this stone really set up by Jacob? Surely it had been created at the very beginning, when the Holy Blessed One created the world? But [Jacob] set it up in order to sustain the upper and the lower worlds. Therefore it is written, “which I have set up for a pillar”. What is the meaning of “which I have set up”? It is written, “it shall be the house for God”. He set up here the abode of the upper world.

תָּא חֲזִי, הָאֵי אֶבֶן אִית עֲלָהּ שְׁבַע עֵינַיִם. כִּמָּא דְאֶתְ אֲמִר, (זכריה ג:ט) עַל אֶבֶן אַחַת שְׁבַע עֵינַיִם, עַל מָה אֶתְקִרְיָאָת שְׁתִּיָּה. חַד דְמִנְהּ אֲשְׁתִּיל עֲלֵמָא. וְחַד, שְׁתִּיָּה. שְׁתִּיָּה, דְשְׂוִי קוֹדֶשָׁא בְּרִידָא הוּא לָהּ, לְאֶתְבְּרָכָא מִנְהּ עֲלֵמָא, בְּגִין דְעֲלֵמָא מִנְהּ מִתְבְּרָכָא.

Come and see. There are seven eyes on this stone, as it is said, “Upon one stone are seven eyes” (Zechariah 3:9). Why is it called *shetiyah*? First, because from it the world was founded (*ashtih*); and second, *shetiyah* is *shat Yah* (Adonai placed), for the Holy Blessed One placed it so that the world might receive blessing from it... (Zohar Vayehi 1:231a-b)

Rabbi Hanokh explains a verse in the Psalms:

“The heavens are the heavens of the Lord, but the earth God has given to human beings,” he paused and then went on to say: “The heavens are the heavens of the Lord’ -- you see they are already of a heavenly character. ‘But the earth hath God has given to human beings’ -- so that they might make of it something heavenly.” (Martin Buber, *Tales of the Hasidim* II, p 317)

Parker Palmer writes

In *Healing the Heart of Democracy*, I write about the importance of learning how to stand and act in “the tragic gap” — if we want to hang in for the long haul with birthing a better world. On one side of that gap are the harsh and discouraging realities around us. On the other side is the better world we know to be possible — not merely because we wish it were so, but because we have seen it with our own eyes. We’re surrounded by greed, but we’ve seen great acts of generosity. We’re surrounded by violence, but we’ve seen people make peace. The tragic gap will never close once and for all, a fact that can lead us into despair and resignation. But if we recall the ample evidence that “the better angels of our nature” are still with us, we are more likely to keep working at making the world a better place.

THE TWO TALMUDS TELL A STORY:

How the Talmud of Jerusalem tells it...

בשעה שבא דוד לחפור תימליוסים של בית המקדש חפר
חמש עשר מאוין דאמין ולא אשכח **תהומא** ובסופא אשכח
חד עצין ובעא מירמיתיה. א"ל לית את יכיל א"ל למה א"ל
דנא הכא כביש על תהומא. א"ל ומן אימת את הכא א"ל מן
שעתא דאשמע רחמנא קליה בסיני אני ה' אלקיך רעדת
ארעא ושקיעת ואנא יהיב הכא כביש על תהומא
אע"ג כן לא שמע ליה כיון דרימיה סליק תהומא ובעא מטפא
עלמא.
והוה אחיתופל קאים תמן אמר כדן דוד מתחנק ואנא מליך.
אמר דוד מאן דחכם דידע מקימתיה ולא מקים ליה ייא
סופיה מתחנק. אמר מה דאמר ואוקמיה.
התחיל דוד אומר שירה שיר המעלות שיר למאה עולות
על כל מאה אמה היה אומר שירה
אע"ג הוה סופה מתחנקה.

When David came to dig the foundations of the Temple he dug five thousand cubits and did not find the **Tehom (Deeps)**.

Finally he found a pottery shard and was about to lift it. It said to him: “You cannot”. He said to it: “Why?” It said to him: “I was placed here to block the *Tehom*.” He said to it, “How long have you been here?” It said to him: “Since the time that the Merciful One’s voice was heard at Sinai, ‘I am Adonai your God’, the earth trembled and sank, and I was placed here to block the *Tehom*.”

Nevertheless, he did not listen to it. When he lifted it and the *Tehom* rose and sought to flood the world.

Achitophel was standing there. He thought, “David will be choked to death and I will rule.”

David said: “One who is wise and knows how to fix it and does not fix, may his end be to choke to death.”

He said what he said and fixed it.

David began to sing, “*Shir HaMa’alot* (A Song of Ascent), a song for one hundred ascents. For each of the one hundred amot, he would sing a song.

Even so, in the end [Achitophel] choked to death. (J Sanhedrin 52b:1)

How the Talmud of Babylonia tells it...

בשעה שכרה דוד שיתין קפא **תהומא** ובעא למשטפא עלמא
אמר דוד מי איכא דידע אי שרי למכתב שם אחספא ונשדיה
בתהומא ומנח ליכא דקאמר ליה מידי
אמר דוד כל דידע למימר ואינו אומר יחנק בגרונו
נשא אחיתופל ק"ו בעצמו

ומה לעשות שלום בין איש לאשתו אמרה תורה שמי שנכתב
בקדושה ימחה על המים לעשות שלום לכל העולם כולו על
אחת כמה וכמה אמר ליה שרי
כתב שם אחספא ושדי לתהומא ונחית תהומא שיתסר אלפי
גרמידי כי חזי דנחית טובא אמר כמה דמידלי טפי מירטב
עלמא אמר חמש עשרה מעלות ואסקיה חמיסר אלפי גרמידי
ואוקמיה באלפי גרמידי

At the time that David dug the drainpipes, the **Tehom (Deeps)** rose and sought to inundate the world.

David said: “Is there anyone who knows whether it is permitted to write the sacred name on an earthenware shard to throw it into the *Tehom* so they subside?” No one said anything to him.

David said: One who knows to say and does not say may he be choked in his throat.

Achithophel raised an a fortiori argument on his own: “If to make peace between spouses the Torah said: ‘My Name that was written in holiness will be erased in water,’ to make peace for the whole world in its entirety, all the more so.” He said to him: “It is permitted.”

He [David] wrote the Name on an earthenware shard and cast it into the *Tehom*. The waters of the *Tehom* subsided sixteen thousand cubits.

When he saw that they subsided too much, he said: The higher the waters, the moister the world. He recited the fifteen Songs of Ascents and elevated them fifteen thousand cubits, and established them at a depth of one thousand cubits.

(B Sukkah 53a)

The Maggid of Mezritch says:

Nothing in the world can change from one reality into another, unless it first turns into nothing, that is, into the reality of the between-stage. In that stage it is nothing and no one can grasp it, for it has reached the rung of nothingness, just as before creation. And then it is made into a new creature, from the egg to the chick. The moment when the egg is no more and the chick is not yet, is nothingness. And philosophy terms this the primal state which no one can grasp because it is a force which precedes creation; it is called chaos. It is the same with the sprouting seed. It does not begin to sprout until the seed disintegrates in the earth and the quality of seed-dom is destroyed in order that it may attain to nothingness which is the rung before creation. And this rung is called wisdom, that is to say, a thought which cannot be made manifest. Then this thought gives rise to creation, as it is written: "In wisdom hast Thou made them all." (Martin Buber, *Tales of the Hasidim* I, p. 104)

Haim Nahman Bialik writes about our relationship to the Tehomot:

For it is clear that language with all its associations does not introduce us at all into the inner area, the essence of things, but that, on the contrary, language itself stands as a barrier before them. On the other side of the barrier of language, behind its curtain, stripped of its husk of speech, the spirit of man wanders ceaselessly. "There is no speech and there are no words," but only a perpetual search, an eternal "what?" frozen on man's lips. In truth, there is no place even for this "what?", implying as it does the hope of a reply. Rather there is -- "nothingness"; man's lips are closed. If, nevertheless, man does achieve speech and with it contentment, it is only because of the extent of his fear at remaining alone for one moment with that dark void, face-to-face with the nothingness, with no barrier between them. "For man shall not look on me and live," says the void, and every speech, every pulsation of speech, partakes of the nature of a concealment of nothingness, a husk enclosing within itself a dark seed of the eternal enigma. *No word contains the complete dissolution of any question. What does it contain? The question's concealment.* It makes no difference what the particular word is -- you can exchange it for another -- just as long as it contains the power momentarily to serve as concealment and barrier. Dumb music and symbolic mathematics -- two hostile kin at two parallel extremes -- attest unanimously that the word is not necessarily what it seems, that it is nothing but a manifestation of the void. Or rather, just as physical bodies become sensible to the eye and determinate because they serve as barriers before light in space, so the world's existence takes place by virtue of the process by which it closes up the small aperture of the void -- constructing a barrier to prevent the void's darkness from welling up and overflowing its bounds...

And again, in that final analysis, it is that very eternal darkness that is so fearsome -- that darkness that from the time of Creation has always secretly drawn man's heart to it, arousing his hidden yearning to gaze on it for a brief moment. Every man is afraid of it, and every man is drawn to it. With our very lips we construct barriers, words upon words and systems upon systems, and place them in front of the darkness to conceal it; but then our nails immediately begin to dig at those barriers, in an attempt to open the smallest of windows, the tiniest of cracks, through which we may gaze for a single moment at that which is on the other side. But alas, vain is the labor of man! At the very moment when the crack is apparently opened -- another barrier, in the shape of a new word or system, suddenly stands in the place of the old, shutting of the view again...

So much for the language of words. But, **in addition, "there are yet to the Lord" languages without words: songs, tears, and laughter. And the speaking creature has been found worthy of them all. These languages begin where words leave off, and their purpose is not to close but to open. They rise from the void. They are the rising up of the void. Therefore, at times they overflow and sweep us off in the irresistible multitude of their waves;** therefore, at times they cost a man his wits, or even his life. Every creation of the spirit which lacks an echo of one of these three languages is not really alive, and it were best that it had never come into the world" ("Revelment and Concealment in Language" in *Revelation and Concealment -- Five Essays*, pp. 15-17, 19-20, 26) (1915).

Rebecca Solnit writes:

And yet in crises, as I found out when I studied disasters such as earthquakes and hurricanes, people often revert spontaneously to a more communitarian sense of self, and in that deeper connection find meaning, purpose, power -- and sometimes even joy amid the ruins... People find that that they are members of civil society, that they care about strangers and about the collective good, that they will sometimes change or risk their lives for these things, and that their sense of self expands as they move into a more public and collective arena. ("Hope in Grief" in *Call Them By Their True Names - American Crises (and Essays)*, p. 169).

Rev. Dr. Howard Thurman writes on upheaval and the deeps:

There is much discussion concerning what seems to be an increasing restlessness among people. This restlessness takes many forms. Sometimes it appears in easy irritation over matters of little or no consequence. Sometimes it results in the sudden rupturing of old ties of family, job and friends. It may be a general instability making for an unwillingness to assume responsibilities and to fulfill obligations. In its simplest and often most crucial form, it makes concentration on anything difficult because of an apparent futility. One of the reasons for this restlessness is not far to seek. During the past decade, the world has gone through a series of tremendous social upheavals, upsetting the equilibrium of the daily lives of millions of people everywhere. What has happened in Russia, Europe, Asia, the Orient and the United States has been more than the mind could adjust to without leaving in its wake a residue of impending uncertainty and, perhaps, even doom. In addition, there is upsetting of the balance in nature, whose children we are, by the far-reaching effects of atomic research and developments. This development has undoubtedly communicated to the physical organism a subtle unbalance creating overtones of ill-at-easeness in the mind and in the consequent behavior of us all. The list is by no means exhausted. **But there is a deeper restlessness that belongs to the very structure of personality.** "Always roaming with a hungry heart," this is man in his essential nature. This characteristic has been and continues to be a primary concern of religion. Sometimes it is referred to as the "divine discontent" in the heart. Certain mystics call it the "homing instinct" in the human spirit. One characterizes it as the "flight of the alone to the Alone"... In quietness and meditation, one must distinguish between the two dimensions of restlessness so as not to confuse them. After all, they may be one and the same. To the man who has found his rest in God, there comes the strength to reduce all the ill-at-easeness to manageable units of control, making for tranquility in the midst of change and upheaval. (*Deep Is the Hunger*, pp. 4-5)

...and speaking of speaking up:

In one of Petrarch's Letters of Old Age appear these words:

When a word must be spoken to further a good cause, and those whom it behooves to speak remain silent, anybody ought to raise his voice, and break a silence which may be fraught with evil. . . . Many a time a few simple words have helped further the welfare of the nation, no matter who uttered them; the voice itself displaying its latent powers, sufficed to move the hearts of men.

It is so easy to underrate the potential power of one word spoken at the critical moment. We say to ourselves sometimes that, because we are not famous or learned or rich or powerful or gifted, our word means nothing in the presence of a great injustice. Who would pay attention to us? Many good causes are hindered, often nameless persons are brought to an untimely end, because "those whom it behooves to speak remain silent"; and because they do not speak, we do not speak. It is important to remember that there is no limit to the power of any single voice when it is the only outlet, the only channel for justice or righteousness in a given situation. The silence of the high and mighty sometimes gives greater power to the simple voice of a solitary individual. During practically any week, you may be faced with some great wrong or some simple but gross expression of injustice and there is no one to speak but you. Do not be silent; there is no limit to the power that may be released through you. (*Deep Is the Hunger*, pp. 24-25)

The Psalmist cries from the depths:

א לַמְנַצֵּחַ מִשְׁכֵּיל לְבַנֵּי-קֹרַח:	1 For the leader. A <i>maskil</i> of the Korahites.
ב כָּאֵיל תַעֲרַג עַל-אֶפְיקֵי-מַיִם כִּן נַפְשִׁי תַעֲרַג אֶלֶיךָ אֱלֹהִים:	2 Like a hind crying for water, my soul cries for You, O God; 3 my soul thirsts for God, the living God; O when will I come to appear before God!
ג צִמְאָה נַפְשִׁי לֵאלֹהִים לֵאלֹהִים חֵי מִתֵּי אָבוֹא וְאַרְאֶה פָּנַי אֱלֹהִים:	4 My tears have been my food day and night; I am ever taunted with, "Where is your God?"
ד הֵיטֵה-לִי דַמְעָתַי לְחֵם יוֹמָם וְלֵילָה בְּאִמֹר אֵלַי כִּלְהִיּוֹם אֵינִי אֱלֹהִיךָ:	5 When I think of this, I pour out my soul: how I walked with the crowd, moved with them, the festive throng, to the House of God with joyous shouts of praise.
ה אֵלֶּה אֶזְכְּרָה וְאֶשְׂפָּכָה עָלַי נַפְשִׁי כִּי אֶעֱבֹר בְּסֶף אַדְדִּים עַד-בַּיִת אֱלֹהִים בְּקוֹל-רִנָּה וְתוֹדָה הַמּוֹן חוֹגֵג:	6 Why so downcast, my soul, why disquieted within me? Have hope in God; I will yet praise God for God's saving presence.
ו מֵהִתְשַׁתְּחַחֵי נַפְשִׁי וְתִהְיֶה עָלַי הוֹחִילִי לֵאלֹהִים כִּי-עוֹד אֲדֹנָי שְׁוֹעוֹת פָּנָיו:	7 My God, my soul is downcast; therefore I think of You in this land of Jordan and Hermon, in Mount Mizar.
ז אֵלֶּהי עָלַי נַפְשִׁי תִשְׁתַּחֲוֶה עַל-כֵּן אֶזְכְּרֶךָ מֵאֲרָץ יַרְדֵּן וְחֶרְמוֹנִים מֵהַר מִצְעָר:	8 Deep calls to deep in the language of Your channels; all Your breakers and waves have swept over me.
ח תְּהוֹם-אֶל-תְּהוֹם קוֹרָא לְקוֹל צְנֻרִיךָ כִּלְמִשְׁבְּרִיךָ וְגִלְיָךָ עָלַי עֶבְרָה:	9 By day may Adonai ensure God's loving care; at night may a song be with me, a prayer to the God of my life.
ט יוֹמָם יְצוּהַ יְהוָה חֲסִדוֹ וּבְלִילָה שִׁירָה [שִׁירוֹ] עִמִּי תִפְלֶה לֵאלֹהִים חֵי:	10 I say to God, my rock, "Why have You forgotten me, why must I walk in gloom, oppressed by my enemy?"
יֵא וּמָרָה לֵאלֹהִים סִלְעִי לָמָּה שָׁכַחְתָּנִי לָמָּה-קִדְר אֶלְךָ בְּלַחֲץ אוֹיֵב:	11 Crushing my bones, my foes revile me, taunting me always with, "Where is your God?"
יֵא בְרִצַּח בְּעֶצְמוֹתַי חֶרְפוֹנֵי צוּרֵי בְּאִמְרָם אֵלַי כִּלְהִיּוֹם אֵינִי אֱלֹהִיךָ:	12 Why so downcast, my soul, why disquieted within me? Have hope in God; I will yet praise Him, my ever-present help, my God. (Psalm 42)
יב מֵהִתְשַׁתְּחַחֵי נַפְשִׁי וּמֵהִתְהַמְּי עָלַי הוֹחִילִי לֵאלֹהִים כִּי-עוֹד אֲדֹנָי שְׁוֹעוֹת פָּנַי וְאֵלֶּהי:	

MORE ON THE FOUNDATION STONE...

A Midrash imagines Jonah's encounter with the Foundation Stone and the Deeps:

רבי טרפון אומר: ממונה היה אותו הדג בלבוש את יונה מששת ימי בראשית, שנאמר (וינה ב, א): "וַיִּמְן ה' דָּג גָּדוֹל לְבָלֵעַ אֶת יוֹנָה" נכנס בפיו כאדם שהוא נכנס בבית הכנסת הגדולה ועמד, והיו שתי עיניו של דג כחלונות אפומיות מאירות ליונה. ר' מאיר אומר: מרגלית אחת היתה תלויה במעיו של דג מאירה ליונה כשמש הזה שהוא מאיר בצהרים ומראה לו כל מה שבים וּבְתֵהוֹמוֹת, ועליו הכתוב אומר (תהלים צז, יא): "אוֹר יִרְעַ לְצַדִּיק".	Rabbi Tarfon said: That fish was specially appointed from the six days of Creation to swallow up Jonah, as it is said, "And the Lord had prepared a great fish to swallow up Jonah" (Jonah 2:1). He entered its mouth just as a man enters the great synagogue, and he stood. The two eyes of the fish were like windows of glass giving light to Jonah. Rabbi Meir said: One pearl was suspended inside the belly of the fish and it gave illumination to Jonah, like this sun which shines with its might at noon; and it showed to Jonah all that was in the sea and in the <i>tehomot</i> (deeps), as it is said, "Light is sown for the righteous" (Ps. 97:11).
--	--

אמר לו הדג ליונה: אין אתה יודע שבא יומי להאכל בפיו של לוייתן? אמר לו יונה: הולכיני אצלו, אמר יונה ללוייתן: בשבילך ירדתי לראות מקום מדורך שאני עתיד ליתן חבל בלשונך ולהעלותך ולבוח אותך לסעודה הגדולה של צדיקים, הראהו חותמו של אברהם, אמר: הבט לברית, וראה לוייתן וברח מפני יונה מהלך שני ימים.	The fish said to Jonah, "Do you not know that my day had arrived to be devoured in the midst of Leviathan's mouth?" Jonah replied, "Take me beside it, and I will deliver you and myself from its mouth." It brought him next to the Leviathan. He said to the Leviathan, "On your account have I descended to see your abode in the sea, for, moreover, in the future will I descend and put a rope in your tongue, and I will bring you up and prepare you for the great feast of the righteous." He showed it the seal of our father Abraham, saying, "Look at the Covenant," and Leviathan saw it and fled before Jonah a distance of two days' journey.
---	--

אמר לו: הרי הצלתיך מפיו של לויטן, הראני כל מה שבים ובתהומות, והראהו נהר גדול של מימי אוקיינוס, שנאמר (יונה ב, ו): "תהום יסבבני", והראהו ים סוף שעברו בתוכו ישראל, שנאמר (יונה ב, ו): "סוף חבוש לראשי" והראהו מקום משברי ים וגליו יוצאים ממנו, שנאמר (יונה ב, ד): "כל משבריה וגלגיה עלי עברי", והראהו עמודי ארץ ומכונה, שנאמר (יונה ב, ז): "הארץ ברחיקה בעדי לעולם", והראהו גיהנם, שנאמר (יונה ב, ז): "נתעל משחת תמי ה' אלקי", והראהו שאל תחתית, שנאמר (יונה ב, ב): "מבטן שאל שועתי שמעת קולי", והראהו היכל ה', שנאמר (יונה ב, ז): "לקצבי הרים נרדתי", מכאן אנו למדין שירושלים על שבעה הרים היא עומדת

הראהו אבן שתיה קבועה בתהומות תחת היכל ה' ובני קרח עומדים ומתפללים עליה אמר לו הדג: יונה, הרי אתה עומד תחת היכל ה', התפלל ואתה נענה. אמר יונה לדג: עמוד במקום עמדך שאני מבקש להתפלל.

עמד הדג והתחיל יונה להתפלל לפני הקב"ה, ואמר לפניו: רבש"ע, נקראת מוריד ומעלה, ירדתי העלני; נקראת ממית ומחיה, הרי נפשי הגיעה למות החייני, ולא נענה, עד שיצא מפיו דבר זה ואמר: אשר נדרתי אשלמה, אשר נדרתי להעלות את לויטן ולזבוח אותו לפניך אשלם ביום ישועת ישראל, מיד רמוז הקב"ה והשליך את יונה, שנאמר (יונה ב, יא): "ויאמר ה' לדג ונקא את יונה אל הקבשה".

Jonah said to it (i.e. the fish), "Behold, I have saved you from the mouth of Leviathan, show me what is in the sea and **in the Tehomot.**" It showed him the great river of the waters of the Ocean, as it is said, "The deep was round about me" (Jonah 2:6), and it showed him the paths of the Sea of Reeds through which Israel passed, as it is said, "The reeds were wrapped about my head" (ibid.); and it showed him the place whence the waves of the sea and its billows flow, as it is said, "All your waves and billows passed over me" (Jonah 2:4); and it showed him the pillars of the earth in its foundations, as it is said, "The earth with her bars for the world were by me" (Jonah 2:7); and it showed him the lowest Sheol, as it is said, "Yet You have brought up my life from destruction, O Adonai, my God" (ibid.); and it showed him Gehinnom, as it is said, "Out of the belly of Sheol I cried, and thou didst hear my voice" (Jonah 2:2); and it showed him (what was) beneath the Temple of God, as it is said, "(I went down) to the bottom of the mountains" (Jonah 2:7). Hence we learn that Jerusalem stands on seven hills. **And he saw there the Even Shetiyah (Foundation Stone) fixed in the depths, under the Heikhal of Adonai.** He saw there the sons of Korah standing and praying over it. The fish said to him, "Jonah, behold you stand beneath the Temple of God, pray and you will be answered." Jonah said to the fish, "Stand in the place where you are standing, because I wish to pray."

The fish stood, and Jonah began to pray before the Holy Blessed One, saying: "Sovereign of all the Universe! You are called 'Who brings down and raises up.' I have been brought down; bring me up. You are called 'Who brings death and life.' Behold, my soul has reached near to death, now restore me to life." But he was not answered until this word came forth from his mouth, "What I have vowed I will perform" (Jonah 2:9), namely, "I vowed to draw up Leviathan and to prepare it before You. I will perform (this) on the day of the Salvation of Israel, as it is said, 'But I will sacrifice unto You with the voice of thanksgiving'" (ibid.). Immediately the Holy Blessed One hinted (to the fish) and it spewed Jonah out upon the dry land, as it is said, "And Adonai spoke to the fish, and it spewed Jonah out upon the dry land" (Jonah 2:10). (Pirkei D'Rabbi Eliezer, Ch. 10)

The Mishnah speaks of the Foundation Stone's role in the Yom Kippur service:

היה מהלך בהיכל, עד שמגיע לבין שתי הפרכות המבדילות בין הקדש ובין קדש הקדשים, וביניהן אמה. ... הגיע לארון. נותן את המחנה בין שני הבדים... יצא ונא לו בדרך בית כניסתו, ומתפלל תפלה קצרה בבית החיצון, ולא היה מאריך בתפלתו, שלא להבעית את ישראל: משנטל הארון, אבן היתה שם מימות נביאים ראשונים, וישתיה היתה נקראת, גבוהה מן הארץ שלש אצבעות, ועליה היה נותן:

He walked through the Heikhal until he came to the place between the two curtains which separated the Holy from the Holy of Holies... When he reached the Ark he put the pan of burning coals between the two poles... He came out by the way he entered and in the outer house he uttered a short prayer. He did not make the prayer long so as not to frighten Israel. Once the Ark was gone [i.e., in the Second Temple], there was **a stone from the days of the prophets, it was called "shetiyah"**, three fingers above the ground, **on which he would place [the pan].** (M Yoma 5:1-2)

From today's Torah reading...

וַיְהִי אַחֲרֵי הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה וְהָאֱלֹהִים נִסָּה אֶת־אַבְרָהָם וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו אַבְרָהָם וַיֹּאמֶר הִנְנִי וַיֹּאמֶר קַח־נָא אֶת־בְּנֶךָ אֶת־יִחִידְךָ אֲשֶׁר־אַהַבְתָּ אֶת־יִצְחָק וְלֶךְ־לְךָ אֶל־אֶרֶץ הַמִּרְיָה וְהַעֲלֵהוּ שָׁם לְעֹלָה עַל אֶחָד הַהָרִים אֲשֶׁר אָמַר אֱלֹהִים:
Some time afterward, God put Abraham to the test, saying to him, “Abraham,” and he answered, “Here I am.” [God] said, “Take your son, your favored one, Isaac, whom you love, and **go to the land of Moriyah**, and bring him up there as a burnt offering on one of the heights that I will point out to you.” (Gen. 22:1-2)

What's in a name? According to the Midrash, quite a lot:

- מהו ארץ המוריה? חבילה של חכמים כאן
נאמר כל אחד ואחד
R' Yanai says 'what is Moriyah? The place from which **awe and fear** (*morah v'yirah*) go out to the world'...
- והיראה יוצאת לעולם...
R' Hiyya the Elder says 'the land from which **instruction** (*bora'ah*) goes out to the world,'...
- ורבי חייא הגדול אומר ארץ שהוראה יוצאת משם...
Another explanation: Moriyah, says Rabbi Yishmael, is the land from which, in the future, the Holy One will teach that the wicked will descend to Gehinnom...
- ד"א המוריה אומר רבי שמואל הארץ שמתוכה עתיד הקב"ה להורות על הרשעים שירדו לגיהנם....
Another explanation of the land of Moriyah. R' Yehoshua ben Levi said 'the land from which the **righteous teach (morim) and make decrees upon the Holy One which He does**,' as it says "...And David said to God, "Did I not say to count the people?... I beg that Your hand be against me and against my father's house, but not against Your people for a plague." (I Chron. 21:16-17)
- דבר אחר ארץ המוריה אומר רבי יהושע בן לוי הארץ שהצדיקים מורים מתוכה וגוזרים על הקדוש ברוך הוא והוא עושה שנאמר... ויאמר דוד אל האלקים הלא אני אמרתי למנות בעם וגו' תהי נא ידך בי ובבית אבי ובעמך לא למגפ] (דה"א כ"א ט"ו וט"ז).
Another explanation of the land of Moriyah. R' Yehudah bar Padiyya said 'Moriyah. He said to God, where is it? He replied – to the land which I will show (*mareh*) you.'
- דבר אחר מוריה אומר לו להיכן הוא אמר לו לארץ שאני מראה אותך.
Another explanation of Moriyah. He said to God, "Master of the World! Am I fit to offer sacrifices? Am I a kohen? Let Shem the High Priest come and receive him from me. The Holy One replied to him – when you arrive at the place I will sanctify you and make you into a kohen. What is the meaning of Moriyah? In exchange (*temurah*) for Shem. His replacement...
- דבר אחר מוריה אומר לו רבון העולמים וכי כשר אני להקריבו כהן אני שם כהן גדול יבוא ויקבלו ממני אמר לו הקב"ה כשתגיע למקום אני מקדשך ועושה כהן אותך מהו מוריה תמורתו של שם חליפיו...
Another explanation. What is Moriyah? R' Pinchas said 'the land in which the master (*maruto*) of the world dwells...
- דבר אחר מהו המוריה אומר רבי שמעון בן יוחי בארץ שהיתה מקושטת כנגד מזבח של מעלן או ירה יירה (שמות י"ט י"ג).
Another explanation. What is Moriyah? R' Shimon bar Yohai said 'the land which was adorned opposite the supernal altar "...or cast down... (*yaro yireh*)"' (Shemot 19:13)
- דבר אחר הארץ שקטורת הסמים קריבי בתוכה אלך לי אל הר המור (שה"ש ד' ו') (Peskita Rabbati Chapter 40)
Another explanation. The land in which the incense is offered – "I will go to the mountain of myrrh (*mor*)..." (Shir HaShirim 4:6)

Abraham renames it:

וַיִּקְרָא אַבְרָהָם שֵׁם הַמָּקוֹם הַהוּא יְיָ יִרְאֶה אֲשֶׁר יֹאמֶר הַיּוֹם בְּהַר יְיָ יִרְאֶה:
Abraham called the name of that place Adonai-Yireh, as it is said today, On the mount of Adonai there is seeing. (Gen. 22:14)

So what else happened at Moriyah?

Ramban says Adam, Cain and Abel all made offerings there:

...דעת אונקלוס שאמר "ארעא פולחנא" ... לומר בארץ אשר יעבדו שם האלהים ויתכוין בזה למה שדרשו בפירקי רבי אליעזר (לא) אמרו באצבע הראה הקדוש ברוך הוא לאברהם אבינו את המזבח אמר לו זהו המזבח הוא המזבח שהיה אדם הראשון מקריב בו הוא המזבח שהקריבו בו קין והבל ...
...The view of Onkelos, who translated it as "a land of service,"... appears to mean a land where they would serve God. And this aligns with what is written in Pirke d'Rabbi Eliezer 31: They said, the Holy Blessed One showed Avraham Avinu the altar by pointing with a finger. God said to him: "This is the altar." This is the altar upon which Adam HaRishon made an offering, it is the altar upon which Cain and Abel made their offerings...

The Midrash says, Adam HaRishon came from there:

ויגרש את האדם, גורש ויצא מגן עדן וישב לו בהר המוריה ששער גן עדן סמוך להר המוריה, משם לקחו ולשם החזירו במקום שנלקח שנאמר ויקח אלהים את האדם מאי זה מקום לקחו ממקום בית המקדש שנאמר לעבוד את האדמה אשר ליקח משם.
"So [God] drove out the Human" (Gen. 3:24). Driving out, i.e., he went forth outside the Garden of Eden and settled on Mount Moriyah, for the gate of the Garden of Eden is adjacent to Mount Moriyah. From there God took him and there God returned him, to the place whence he was taken, as it is said, "And God took Adam", from what place did God take him? From the place of the Temple, as it says "To work/serve the ground whence he was taken" (Gen. 3:23). (Pirkei d'Rabbi Eliezer 20:1)

Kli Yakar says the gate of heaven is there:

ובמלת המוריה נראה יה מיותר שהרי נאמר אלך לי אל הר המור (שיר ד ו). אלא לפי ששם מקום אבן שתיה, אשר ממנו הושתתו שני עולמות שנבראו בשם של יה, כי שער השמים שם הוא...
In the word Moriyah, the *yud-hey* appears superfluous, because it is said "I will go to the mountain of myrrh (*bar ha-mor*)..." (Shir HaShirim 4:6) But, there is the place of the foundation stone, from which two worlds were established, which were created with the Divine name *Yud-Hey*, for the gate of heaven is there...

Rashi says, Jacob met God there:

”ויפגע במקום” He encountered the place (*makom*).” Scripture does not mention which place, but by writing *bamakom*, the place, it refers to the place mentioned already in another passage, i.e., Mount Moriyah of which it is stated (Genesis 22:4) “And he saw the place (*hamakom*). (Rashi on Gen. 28:11)

On fear and courage....

The Baal Shem questions his disciple Rabbi Meir Margaliot:

“Meirly, do you still remember that Shabbat, when you were just beginning to study the Torah? The big room in your father’s house was full of guests. They had lifted you up on the table and you were reciting what you had learned?” Rabbi Meir replied: “Certainly I remember. Suddenly my mother rushed up to me and snatched me down from the table in the middle of what I was saying. My father was annoyed, but she pointed to a man standing at the door. He was dressed in a short sheepskin, such as peasants wear, and he was looking straight at me. Then all understood that she feared the Evil Eye. She was still pointing at the door when the man disappeared.” “It was I,” said the Baal Shem. “In such hours a glance can flood the soul with great light. But the fear of men builds walls to keep the light away.” (Martin Buber, *Tales of the Hasidim* I, p. 42)

Rabbi Mikhal says:

“This is our disgrace, that we fear anyone besides God. That is what is said of Jacob in the words, ‘Then Jacob was afraid and he was distressed.’ We must be distressed because of our fear of Esau.” (Martin Buber, *Tales of the Hasidim* I, p. 148)

Rev. Dr. Howard Thurman writes:

...[W]hat happens when a person is pulled out of the regular routine of his life by some issue and finds himself standing up to be counted. It is a crucial experience. It means that a person is willing to take full responsibility for his actions, actions that extend beyond his little world, actions which may involve him in risk, foreign both to his temperament and to his life plan. We are living in the midst of events that make such demands upon us. The options often are very few. It is well within the possibility of the present that we shall be called upon to take a stand which will be, for us and our kind, decisive, in terms of the life and death of the person. It may not be a bad idea to get in practice now and to develop the climate within, that makes it possible for you to make up your mind—to be counted! (*Deep Is the Hunger*, p. 8)

There is ever a thin line which separates courage from cowardice. Sometimes the distinction between courage and cowardice is not easy to make. Here is a man who seems always to manifest bravery. Even before the issues are clearly defined, he takes his stand, lest he be regarded by himself or others as being a coward. Or, it may be that he moves into a situation with utter recklessness, unmindful of any clear estimate of what is involved, lest his deliberateness might be construed as a fearful hesitance. As a boy he was ever one to take a dare, because he did not want to seem "chicken." He is always first to sense a moment when an issue seems to be side-stepped and is ever eager to grasp the nettle while others wait for reinforcement. He enjoys the reputation of being forthright, direct and unafraid. This estimate of his fellows may be well deserved. But it may not be; for his seeming courage may be but his defense against a deep inner uncertainty and creeping fear. What he has not discovered is that of which true courage consists.

Courage is not a blustering manifestation of strength and power. Sometimes courage is only revealed in the midst of great weakness and greater fear. It is often the ultimate rallying of all the resources of personality to face a crucial and devastating demand. And this is not all. There is a quiet courage that comes from an inward spring of confidence in the meaning and significance of life. Such courage is an underground river, flowing far beneath the shifting events of one's experience, keeping alive a thousand little springs of action. It has neither trumpet to announce it nor crowds to applaud; it is best seen in the lives of men and women who do their work from day to day without hurry and without fever. It is the patient waiting of the humble man whose integrity keeps his spirit sweet and his heart strong. Wherever one encounters it, a lift is given to life and vast reassurance invades the being. To walk with such a person in the daily round is to keep company with angels, to have one's path illumined by the "Light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world." (*Meditations of the Heart*, pp. 52-53)

From today's haftarah...

כֹּה אָמַר ה' קוֹל בְּרָמָה נִשְׁמָע נְהִי בְּכִי תַמְרוּרִים רַחֵל מְבַכָּה עַל-בָּנֶיהָ מֵאֲנָה לְהַנְחִים עַל-בָּנֶיהָ כִּי אֵינָנּוּ: כֹּה אָמַר ה' מִנְעִי קוֹלִי מִבְּכִי וְעֵינַי מִדְּמָעָה כִּי יֵשׁ שָׂכָר לַפְּעֻלָּתִי נְאֻם-ה' וְשָׁבוּ מֵאֶרֶץ אוֹיֵב: וְיִשְׁתַּקְוָה לְאַחֲרֵיתָי נְאֻם-ה' וְשָׁבוּ בְנִים לְגְבוּלָם:

Thus said Adonai: A cry is heard in Ramah -- wailing, bitter weeping -- Rachel weeping for her children. She refuses to be comforted for her children, who are gone (*eineinu*). Thus said Adonai: Restrain your voice from weeping, your eyes from shedding tears; for there is a reward for your labor, declares Adonai. They shall return from the enemy's land. And there is hope for your future, declares Adonai. Your children shall return to their country. (Jeremiah 31:15-17)

The midrash explains:

ותמת רחל ותקבר בדרך אפרת מה ראה אבינו יעקב לקבור את רחל בדרך אפרת אלא צפה יעקב אבינו שהגלויות עתידות לעבור שם לפיכך קברה שם כדי שתהא מבקשת עליהם רחמים וה"ד קול ברמה נשמע נהי בכי תמרורים רחל מבכה על בניה: "And Rachel died, and was buried in the way to Ephrat." (Gen. 35:19). What was Jacob's reason for burying Rachel in the way to Ephrat? Jacob foresaw that the exiles would pass on from thence,

therefore he buried her there so that she might pray for mercy for them. Thus it is written, A voice is heard in Ramah... Rachel weeping for her children.... Thus says Adonai: Refrain your voice from weeping... and there is hope for your future." (Bereshit Rabbah 82:10)

Avivah Zornberg unpacks:

The dialectic of *shever* and *sever*¹, rupture and reintegration, is evoked in the place of Rachel's burial. On his deathbed, Jacob explains the reason for burying her *ba-derekh*, on the way, "no place": "As for me, when I was returning from Padan, Rachel died, to my sorrow, while I was journeying in the land of Canaan, when still some distance short of Ephrath; and I buried her there on the road to Ephrath" (48:7).

Rashi comments on Jacob's emphatic references to her burial "there on the road":

"And I buried her there": I did not even bring her into Bethlehem, to bring her into Israel proper. I know you [Joseph] resent this—but know that it was by the word of God that I buried her there, so that she should be a help to her children: when Nebuzzaradan sends them into exile and they pass by on the road there, Rachel will come out over her grave and weep and beg mercy for them, as it is said, "A voice is heard in Ramah" [Jeremiah 31:15]—and God will reply, "There is a reward for your labor, says the Lord, and your children shall return to their country."

Rachel is buried between fixed places of human concourse, in a no-man's land, which is the metaphysical space her children will traverse on their way into exile. She meets them, as it were, at the border, in that exposed place, where they move off into not-being; she weeps their *einenu* ["they are not"] into provisional absence.

In mystical sources, Rachel becomes a code word for *Kenesset Yisrael*, the principle of cohesion in a dispersed people. As her children scatter, are broken up, the magnetic force of Rachel's desire, of her battle against *ayin*, manifests itself, and generates the dialectical movement of "return to their borders." Rachel becomes a word for imagination and desire, for the essential unity of a diffused Israel.

(*Genesis - The Beginning of Desire*, p. 305)

1. These two Hebrew words, which appear repeatedly in the Joseph narrative in Genesis, are spelled the same (שבר). Pronounced *shever* the root means shatter; pronounced *sever* it means hope.