

The Shape of Absence: Parents and Creation in Rosh Hashana

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1: Binding and conquest

Genesis 22:1-10

(1) Some time afterward, God put Abraham to the test, saying to him, "Abraham." He answered, "Here I am."
 (2) "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, "It is God who will see to the sheep for this 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.

בראשית כ"ב:א-י'

(א) ויהי אחר הדברים האלה והאלקים נסה את אברהם ויאמר אליו אברהם ויאמר הנני. (ב) ויאמר קח-נא את-בנך את-יחידך אשר-אהבת את-יצחק ולה-לה אל-ארץ המריה והעלהו שם לעלה על אחד ההרים אשר אמר אליה: (ג) וישכם אברהם בבקר ויחבש את-חמרו ויקח את שני נעריו אתו ואת יצחק בנו ויבקע עצי עלה ויקם וילך אל-המקום אשר-אמר-לו האלקים: (ד) ביום השלישי וישא אברהם את-עיניו וירא את-המקום מרחק: (ה) ויאמר אברהם אל-נעריו שבו-לכם פה עם-החמור ואני והנער נלכה עד-כה ונשתחנה ונשובה אליכם: (ו) ויקח אברהם את-עצי העלה וישם על-יצחק בנו ויקח בידו את-האש ואת-המאכלת וילכו שניהם יחדו: (ז) ויאמר יצחק אל-אברהם אביו ויאמר אבי ויאמר הנני בני ויאמר הנה האש והעצים ואיה השה לעלה: (ח) ויאמר אברהם אלקים יראה-לו השה לעלה בני וילכו שניהם יחדו: (ט) ויבאו אל-המקום אשר אמר-לו האלקים ויבן שם אברהם את-המזבח ויערף את-העצים ויעקד את-יצחק בנו וישם אתו על-המזבח ממעל לעצים: (י) וישלח אברהם את-ידו ויקח את-המאכלת לשחט את-בנו:

Machzor Rosh Hashanah Ashkenaz, Musaf, First Day of Rosh Hashana, Amidah 49

...and let there appear before You the binding with which our father Avraham bound his son Yitzchak upon the altar, and how he suppressed his compassion to do Your will with a whole heart; so may Your compassion suppress Your anger against us, and in Your great goodness turn Your fierce anger away from Your people, and from Your city, from Your land, and from Your territorial heritage...

מחזור אשכנז לראש השנה, תפילת מוסף, יום ראשון של ראש השנה, עמידה

מ"ט

... ותראה לפניך עקדה שעקד אברהם אבינו את יצחק בנו על גבי המזבח וכבש רחמיו לעשות רצונה בלבב שלם פן יכבשו רחמיה את כעסה מעלינו ובטובה הגדול ישוב חרון אפה מעמה ומעירך ומארצך ומנחלתך...

2: No-longer-barren

Genesis 21:1-7

(1) ה' took note of Sarah as promised, and ה' did for Sarah what had been announced. (2) Sarah conceived and bore a son to Abraham in his old age, at the set time of which God had spoken. (3) Abraham gave his newborn son, whom Sarah had borne him, the name of Isaac. (4) And when his son Isaac was eight days old, Abraham circumcised him, as God had commanded him. (5) Now Abraham was a hundred years old when his son Isaac was born to him. (6) Sarah said, "God has brought me laughter; everyone who hears will laugh with me." (7) And she added, "Who would have said to Abraham That Sarah would suckle children! Yet I have borne a son in his old age."

בראשית כ"א:א'-ז'

(א) וַה' פָּקַד אֶת-שָׂרָה כַּאֲשֶׁר אָמַר וַיַּעַשׂ ה' לְשָׂרָה כַּאֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר: (ב) וַתְּהַרֵּ וַתֵּלֵד שָׂרָה לְאַבְרָהָם בֶּן לְזָקְנָיו לְמוֹעֵד אֲשֶׁר-דִּבֶּר אֲתָן אֱלֹקִים: (ג) וַיִּקְרָא אַבְרָהָם אֶת-שֵׁם-בְנוֹ הַנּוֹלָד-לָו אִשָּׁר-יָלְדָה-לָו שָׂרָה יִצְחָק: (ד) וַיִּמַּל אַבְרָהָם אֶת-יִצְחָק בְּנוֹ בְּיוֹם-שְׁמֹנֶת יָמִים כַּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה אֲתָן אֱלֹקִים: (ה) וְאַבְרָהָם בְּיוֹם-מֵאָה שָׁנָה בִּהְיוֹלָד לוֹ אֶת יִצְחָק בְּנוֹ: (ו) וַתֹּאמֶר שָׂרָה צָחֵק עָשָׂה לִי אֱלֹקִים כֹּל-הַשְּׂמֵעַ יִצְחָק-לִי: (ז) וַתֹּאמֶר מִי מִלֵּל לְאַבְרָהָם הַיְגִיכָה בְנִים שָׂרָה כִּי-יֵלְדָתִי בֶן לְזָקְנָיו:

3: Not-yet-bereaved

Genesis 21:14-20

(14) 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 Beersheba. (15) When the water was gone from the skin, she left the child under one of the bushes, (16) and went and sat down at a distance, a bowshot away; for she thought, "Let me not look on as the child dies." And sitting thus afar, she burst into tears. (17) God heard the cry of the boy, and a messenger of God called to Hagar from heaven and said to her, "What troubles you, Hagar? Fear not, for God has heeded the cry of the boy where he is. (18) Come, lift up the boy and hold him by the hand, for I will make a great nation of him." (19) Then God opened her eyes and she saw a well of water. She went and filled the skin with water, and let the boy drink. (20) God was with the boy and he grew up; he dwelt in the wilderness and became skilled with a bow.

בראשית כ"א:י"ד-כ'

(יד) וַיִּשְׁכֶּם אַבְרָהָם וּבִבְקָר וַיִּקַּח-לֶחֶם וְחֹמֶת מַיִם וַיִּתֵּן אֶל-הַגֵּר שָׁם עַל-שִׁכְמָהּ וְאֶת-הַיֶּלֶד וַיִּשְׁלַחַהּ וַתֵּלֶךְ וַתִּתַּע בַּמִּדְבָּר בְּאֵר שֶׁבַע: (טו) וַיִּכְלוּ הַמַּיִם מִן-הַחֲמַת וַתִּשְׁלַח אֶת-הַיֶּלֶד תַּחַת אֶחָד הַשִּׁיחִים: (טז) וַתֵּלֶךְ וַתִּשָּׁב לָהּ מִצְּנֹד הַרְחֵק כַּמֶּטְחָה קָשָׁת כִּי אָמְרָה אֶל-אַרְאֶה בְּמֹת הַיֶּלֶד וַתִּשָּׁב מִצְּנֹד וַתִּשָּׂא אֶת-קִלְעָהּ וַתִּבְהַ: (יז) וַיִּשְׁמַע אֱלֹקִים אֶת-קוֹל הַנֶּעֱר וַיִּקְרָא מִלְּאֵה אֱלֹקִים וְאֶל-הַגֵּר מִן-הַשָּׁמַיִם וַיֹּאמֶר לָהּ מִה-לָּךְ הַגֵּר אֶל-תִּירְאִי כִּי-שָׁמַע אֱלֹקִים אֶת-קוֹל הַנֶּעֱר כַּאֲשֶׁר הוּא-שָׁם: (יח) קוּמִי שֹׂאִי אֶת-הַנֶּעֱר וְהַחֲנִיקִי אֶת-יָדָהּ בּוֹ כִּי-לֹגִי גְדוֹל אֲשִׁימְנוּ: (יט) וַיִּפְקַח אֱלֹקִים אֶת-עֵינֶיהָ וַתֵּרָא בְּאֵר מַיִם וַתֵּלֶךְ וַתִּמְלֵא אֶת-הַחֲמַת מַיִם וַתִּשָּׂק אֶת-הַנֶּעֱר: (כ) וַיְהִי אֱלֹקִים אֶת-הַנֶּעֱר וַיִּגְדַּל וַיִּשָּׁב בַּמִּדְבָּר וַיְהִי רֶבֶה קָשָׁת:

Rashi on Genesis 21:17:2

WHERE HE IS — According to the actions he is now doing shall he be judged and not according to what he may do in future.

4: Not-yet-fertile

I Samuel 1:1-16

(1) There was a man from Ramathaim of the Zuphites,^a in the hill country of Ephraim, whose name was Elkanah son of Jeroham son of Elihu son of Tohu son of Zuph, an Ephraimite. (2) He had two wives, one named Hannah and the other Peninnah; Peninnah had children, but Hannah was childless. (3) This man used to go up from his town every year to worship and to offer sacrifice to the LORD of Hosts at Shiloh.—Hophni and Phinehas, the two sons of Eli, were priests of the LORD there. (4) One such day, Elkanah offered a sacrifice. He used to give portions to his wife Peninnah and to all her sons and daughters; (5) but to Hannah he would give one portion only—though^b Hannah was his favorite—for the LORD had closed her womb. (6) Moreover, her rival, to make her miserable, would taunt her that the LORD had closed her womb. (7) This happened^c year after year: Every time she went up to the House of the LORD, the other would taunt her, so that she wept and would not eat. (8) Her husband Elkanah said to her, “Hannah, why are you crying and why aren’t you eating? Why are you so sad? Am I not more devoted to you than ten sons?” (9) After they had eaten and drunk at Shiloh, Hannah rose.—The priest Eli was sitting on the seat near the doorpost of the temple of the LORD.— (10) In her wretchedness, she prayed to the LORD, weeping all the while. (11) And she made this vow: “O LORD of Hosts, if You will look upon the suffering of Your maidservant and will remember me and not forget Your maidservant, and if You will grant Your maidservant a male child, I will dedicate him to the LORD for all the days of his life; and no razor shall ever touch his head.” (12) As she kept on praying before the LORD, Eli watched her mouth. (13) Now Hannah was praying in her heart; only her lips moved, but her voice could not be heard. So Eli thought she was drunk. (14) Eli said to her, “How long will you make a drunken spectacle of yourself? Sober up!”^e (15) And Hannah replied, “Oh no, my lord! I am a very unhappy woman. I have drunk no wine or other strong drink, but I have been pouring out my heart to the LORD. (16) Do not take your maidservant for a worthless woman; I have only been speaking all this time out of my great anguish and distress.”

שמואל א א:א-ט"ז

(א) ויהי איש אחד מן־הרמתיים צופים
מהר אפרים ושמו אלקנה בן־ירחם בן־
אליהוא בן־תחו בן־צוף אפרתי: (ב) ולוֹ
שתי נשים שם אחת חנה ושם השנית
פננה ויהי לפננה ילדים ולחנה אין ילדים:
(ג) ועלה האיש ההוא מעירו
מימים ו למימה להשתחית ולזבח לה'
צבאות בשלה ושם שני בני־עלי חפני
ופנחס כהנים לה': (ד) ויהי היום ויזבח
אלקנה ונתן לפננה אשתו ולכל־בנייה
ובנותיה מגות: (ה) ולחנה יתן מנה אחת
אפים כי את־חנה אהב וה' סגר רחמה: (ו)
וכעסה צרתה גם־כעס בעבור הרעמה
כי־סגר ה' בעד רחמה: (ז) וכוֹ יעשה שנה
בשנה מדי עלתה בבית ה' כן תכעסה
ותבכה ולא תאכל: (ח) ויאמר לה אלקנה
אישה חנה למה תבכי ולמה לא תאכלי
ולמה ירע לבבך הלא אנכי טוב לך
מעשרה בנים: (ט) ותקם חנה אחר אכלה
בשלה ואחרי שתה ועלי הכהן ישב על־
הכסא על־מוזות היכל ה': (י) והיא מרת
נפש ותתפלל עליה ויבכה תבכה: (יא)
ותדר נדר ותאמר ה' צבאות אם־ראה
תראה ו בעני אמתך וזכרתני ולא־תשכח
את־אמתך ונתתה לאמתך זרע אנשים
ונתתני לה' פל־ימי חיי ומורה לא־יעלה
על־ראשו: (יב) והיה כן הרבה לה תפלל
לפני ה' ועלי שמר את־פיה: (יג) וחנה
היא מדברת על־לבה רק שפתייה נעות
וקולה לא ישמע ויחשבה עלי לשכרה:
(יד) ויאמר אליה עלי עד־מתי תשתכרין
הסירי את־יניך מעליה: (טו) ותען חנה
ותאמר לא אדני אשה קשת־רוח אנכי וני
ושכר לא שתיתי ואשפה את־נפשי לפני
ה': (טז) אל־תתן את־אמתך לפני בת־
בלעל כי־מרב שיחי וכעסי דברתי עד־
הנה:

5: No-longer-united

Jeremiah 31:15-20

(15) Thus said the LORD: A cry is heard in Ramah^e—Wailing, bitter weeping—
Rachel weeping for her children. She refuses to be comforted
For her children, who are gone. (16) Thus said the LORD:
Restrain your voice from weeping, Your eyes from shedding tears;
For there is a reward for your labor —declares the LORD:
They shall return from the enemy's land. (17) And there is hope for
your future —declares the LORD: Your children shall return to
their country.

(18) I can hear Ephraim lamenting:
You have chastised me, and I am chastised
Like a calf that has not been broken. Receive me back, let me
return,
For You, O LORD, are my God. (19) Now that I have turned back,
I am filled with remorse; Now that I am made aware, I strike my
thigh. I am ashamed and humiliated, For I bear the disgrace of my
youth. (20) Truly, Ephraim is a dear son to Me, A child that is
dandled! Whenever I have turned against him, My thoughts would
dwell on him still. That is why My heart yearns for him; I will
receive him back in love —declares the LORD.

ירמיהו ל"א:ט"ו-כ"י

(טו) כה ו אמר ה' קול בְּרַמָּה נִשְׁמָע־
נְהִי בְּכִי תִמְרוּרִים רָחֵל מִבְּכָה עַל־
בְּנֵיהָ מֵאֲנָה לְהַנְתֵּם עַל־בְּנֵיהָ כִּי
אֵינְנָה: {ס} (טז) כה ו אמר ה'
מִנְעִי קוֹלִי מִבְּכִי וְעֵינַי מִדְּמִיעָה כִּי
לֹא שָׁכַר לִפְעֻלְתֶּךָ נְאֻם־ה' וְשָׁבוּ
מֵאֶרֶץ אוֹיֵב: (יז) וַיִּשְׂתַּקְּנָה
לְאַחֲרֵיתֶךָ נְאֻם־ה' וְשָׁבוּ בָנִים
לְגִבּוֹלָם: (יח) שְׁמוֹעַ שְׁמֹעַתִּי אֶפְרַיִם
מִתְנוּדָד יִסְתַּנְּוּ וְאִסֹּר כְּעַגֹּל לֹא
לְמַד הִשְׁבַּנִּי וְאִשׁוּבָה כִּי אֶתֶּךָ ה'
אֵלָקִי: (יט) כִּי־אַחֲרַי שׁוֹבֵי נְחֻמְתִּי
וְאַחֲרַי הַגִּדְעִי סִפְקוֹתַי עַל־יָרֵךְ בְּשֵׁתִי
וְגַם־נִכְלַמְתִּי כִּי נִשְׂאֵתִי חֲרַפְתִּי
נְעוּרַי: (כ) הִבֹּן יִקְרֶה לִּי אֶפְרַיִם אִם
יִלְדֵּ שֶׁעֲשָׂעִים כִּי־מִדֵּי דַבְּרִי בּוֹ זָכַר
אֲזַכְרֶנּוּ עוֹד עַל־כֵּן הִמּוֹ מַעֲלִי לֹא רַחֵם
אַרְחֻמְנוּ נְאֻם־ה': {ס}

6: Rachel as mother

Genesis 30:1-2

(1) When Rachel saw that she had borne Jacob no
children, she became envious of her sister; and Rachel
said to Jacob, “Give me children, or I shall die.” (2)
Jacob was incensed at Rachel, and said, “Can I take
the place of God, who has denied you fruit of the
womb?”

Genesis 30:22-24

(22) Now God remembered Rachel; God heeded her
and opened her womb. (23) She conceived and bore a
son, and said, “God has taken away my disgrace.”
(24) So she named him Joseph, which is to say, “May
ה' add another son for me.”

בראשית ל"א:ב"י

(א) וַתֵּרָא רָחֵל כִּי לֹא יִלְדָה לְיַעֲקֹב
וַתִּקְנֶא רָחֵל בְּאַחֲתָהּ וַתֹּאמֶר אֶל־יַעֲקֹב
הִבָּה־לִּי בָנִים וְאִם־אֵין מִתְּךָ אֲנֹכִי: (ב)
וַיַּחֲרֶאֱף יַעֲקֹב בְּרָחֵל וַיֹּאמֶר הֲתַחַת
אֱלֹקִים אֲנֹכִי אֲשֶׁר־מָנַע מִמֶּנּוּ פְרִי־בֶטֶן:

בראשית ל"א:כ"ב-כ"ד

(כב) וַיִּזְכַּר אֱלֹקִים אֶת־רָחֵל וַיִּשְׁמַע
אֲלֶיהָ אֱלֹקִים וַיִּפְתַּח אֶת־רַחְמָהּ: (כג)
וַתֵּהָרֵ וַתֵּלֶד בֵּן וַתֹּאמֶר אֶסְפֹּר אֱלֹקִים אֶת־
חֲרַפְתִּי: (כד) וַתִּקְרָא אֶת־שְׁמוֹ יוֹסֵף
לֵאמֹר יוֹסֵף ה' לִי בֵּן אַחֵר:

7: The second beginning

Genesis 2:4-7

(4) Such is the story of heaven and earth when they were created. When the LORD God made earth and heaven— (5) when no shrub of the field was yet on earth and no grasses of the field had yet sprouted, because the LORD God had not sent rain upon the earth and there was no man to till the soil, (6) but a flow would well up from the ground and water the whole surface of the earth— (7) the LORD God formed man from the dust of the earth. He blew into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living being.

Genesis 2:18-20

(18) The LORD God said, “It is not good for man to be alone; I will make a fitting helper for him.” (19) And the LORD God formed out of the earth all the wild beasts and all the birds of the sky, and brought them to the man to see what he would call them; and whatever the man called each living creature, that would be its name. (20) And the man gave names to all the cattle and to the birds of the sky and to all the wild beasts; but for Adam no fitting helper was found.

Genesis 2:21-25

(21) So the LORD God cast a deep sleep upon the man; and, while he slept, He took one of his ribs and closed up the flesh at that spot. (22) And the LORD God fashioned the rib that He had taken from the man into a woman; and He brought her to the man. (23) Then the man said, “This one at last is bone of my bones And flesh of my flesh. This one shall be called Woman, For from man was she taken.” (24) Hence a man leaves his father and mother and clings to his wife, so that they become one flesh. (25) The two of them were naked, the man and his wife, yet they felt no shame.

בראשית ב':ד-ז

(ד) אלה תולדות השמים והארץ בהבראם ביום עשות יהוה אלהים ארץ ושמים: (ה) וכל ו שייח השדה טרם יהיה בארץ וכל עשב השדה טרם יצמח כי לא המטיר יהוה אלהים על הארץ ואדם אין לעבד את האדמה: (ו) ואד יעלה מן הארץ והשקה את כל פני האדמה: (ז) וייצר יהוה אלהים את האדם עפר מן האדמה ויפח באפו נשמת חיים ויהי האדם לנפש חיה:

בראשית ב':יח-כ

(יח) ויאמר יהוה אלהים לא טוב היות האדם לבדו אעשה לו עזר כנגדו: (יט) ויצר יהוה אלהים מן האדמה כל חית השדה ואת כל עוף השמים ויבא אל האדם לראות מה יקרא לו וכל אשר יקרא לו האדם נפש חיה הוא שמו: (כ) ויקרא האדם שמות לכל בהמה ולעוף השמים ולכל חית השדה ולאדם לאמצא עזר כנגדו:

בראשית ב':כ"א-כ"ה

(כא) ויפל יהוה אלהים ותרדמה על האדם וישן ויקח אחת מצלעותיו ויסגר בשר תחתנה: (כב) ויכו יהוה אלהים ואת הצלע אשר לקח מן האדם לאשה ויבאה אל האדם: (כג) ויאמר האדם זאת הפעם עצם מעצמי ובשר מבשרי לזאת יקרא אשה כי מאיש לקחה זאת: (כד) על כן יעזב איש את אביו ואת אמו ודבק באשתו והיו לבשר אחד: (כה) ויהיו שניהם ערומים האדם ואשתו ולא יתבשו:

8: Humanity, revisited

Rashi on Genesis 2:5:2

כי לא המטיר BECAUSE GOD HAD NOT CAUSED IT TO RAIN — And what is the reason that God had not caused it to rain? כי אדם אין לעבוד את האדמה BECAUSE THERE WAS NO MAN TO TILL THE GROUND, and there was, therefore, no one to recognize the utility of rain. When Adam came (was created), however, and he realised that it was necessary for the world, he prayed for it and it fell, so that trees and verdure sprang forth.

Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik, *Family Redeemed*:

The uniqueness of man-*persona* expresses itself in the *mysterium magnum* which no one except God can penetrate. In order to escape loneliness, man-*absconditus* had to meet woman-mystery. They have a lot in common... However, they are also different... The I-awareness in Adam is totally incomprehensible to Eve, and vice-versa. Each of them has a secret which neither will ever betray. Man-*persona* and Woman-*persona* resemble each other and at the same time do not understand each other. She is *ezer ke-negdo*, his helper and his opponent at the same time. For man and woman differ not only psychologically as male and female, of whom the first account of creation tells us, but also spiritually and personality-wise... Because the woman is not the shadow of man but an independent *persona*, because the woman projects a totally different existential image, her companionship helps man to liberate himself from his loneliness. In the interpersonalistic existential tension both man and woman find redemption. (21-22)

Judy Klitsner, *Subversive Sequels in the Bible*:

In her original manifestation as *Ha-adam*, woman is fully half of the human creature who is master of the physical world, formed in God's image, and privy to His word... For a large portion of this second creation story, woman, who was formerly an essential, equal part of humanity, is entirely absent. She has no part in tending to the garden, and she is excluded from God's conversation. (97-98)

...unlike the fully enabled *Ha-adam*, woman depicted in this chapter is derivative. She exists in relation to man: *his* loneliness leads to her creation; she is bone of *his* bones and flesh of *his* flesh, a "helper corresponding to him." Even the seemingly idyllic description of the future union of males and females as becoming "one flesh" is phrased from the point of view of the male... Woman's perspective on this meeting is entirely absent. Is she as elated as man? Does she consider him to be her perfect complement, her *ezer kenegdah*? Woman's silence in this passage only intensifies these questions and affirms the male-centered lens of Genesis 2. (99)

9: Unbinding Isaac

Genesis 22:11-19

(11) Then a messenger of ה' called to him from heaven: "Abraham! Abraham!" And he answered, "Here I am."
 (12) "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 ה' there is vision." (15) The messenger of ה' called to Abraham a second time from heaven, (16) and said, "By Myself I swear, ה' 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 כ"ב:א-י"ט

(יא) ויקרא אליו מלאך ה' מן השמים ויאמר
 אברהם אברהם ויאמר הנני (יב) ויאמר
 אל-תשליח ידה אל-הנער ואל-תעש לו מאומה
 כי ועתה ידעתי כי-ירא אלקים אתה ולא
 חשכת את-בנה את-יחידה ממני (יג) וישא
 אברהם את-עיניו וירא והנה אליל אחר נאיתו
 בסבב בקרניו וילה אברהם ויקח את-האליל
 ויעלהו לעלה תחת בנו (יד) ויקרא אברהם
 שם-המקום ההוא ה' ויראה אשר-יאמר היום
 בתר ה' יראה (טו) ויקרא מלאך ה' אל-
 אברהם שנית מן-השמים (טז) ויאמר כי
 נשבעתי נאם-ה' כי יעז אשר עשית את-הדבר
 הזה ולא חשכת את-בנה את-יחידה (יז) כי-
 ברה אברכה והרבה ארבה את-זרעה ככוכבי
 השמים וכחול אשר על-שפת הים וירש זרעה
 את שער איביו (יח) והתברכו בזרעה כל גויי
 הארץ עקב אשר שמעת בקלי (יט) וישב
 אברהם אל-נעריו ויקמו וילכו יחדו אל-באר
 שבע וישב אברהם בבאר שבע {פ}

10: Affirming life

"The years forget our errors and forgive our sins, but they punish our inaction with living death."

"To those of us who spend entire days, if not lifetimes, concentrating on a series of brief and insignificant things, the present has barely any meaning at all; we become tiny timorous things, caught in the inch of space between the "in" box and the "out" box. While we may share the common illusions about a mobile present and a free future, we spend most of our lives housecleaning the past – maintaining commitments, counterbalancing errors, living up to expectations, mopping up our own postponements. In this sense, as in others, we shuffle backward into the future, unaware of our enslavement to time or of the simple freedom of new beginnings."

Robert Grudin, *Time and the Art of living*