



Torah for Turbulent Times

"Anxious for the Journey"

Anxious, bleary-eyed, distracted, tired, emotional, glued to the tv, smartspeaker and phone, kishkes churning, fearful, red-blue-purple, 270 to win, conversation after conversation...As I write this, we're still waiting, and will likely still be waiting for the results of the election. (Excuse me for a moment while I check the app on my phone one more time...) Ok, I'm back. In Jewish thought we're taught to pray for the welfare of the state we live in, and not just because it's a good universal principle. History teaches us that the land we live in also has affected and will continue to affect the lives of our people. As we wait, and wait, and wait, I reflected this morning on our conversation this past Shabbat about Abraham, his journey, and what got him through it.

Abraham receives the "call" from G-d and is told "*lech l'cha*/go, go for yourself, for your benefit, dig inside yourself." The directive sounds something like this to Abraham. "Leave your home, your parents, your homeland, everything you have known, including your own comfort zone." Of course Abraham wasn't sitting around waiting anxiously for the results of an election, but he had to be feeling somewhat anxious, emotional, and even a bit fearful of what's to come. The origin story of the Jewish people begins with this journey. The next four-year chapter of our country begins with the journey of today's election results.

The Torah doesn't let us know what's going on inside Abraham's heart and mind. Perhaps there's a bit of excitement for something new, but I imagine it's more questions, anxiety and even fear, especially as he learns what comes next. Where does G-d guide him to go? Simply, "to the land that I will show you." (Genesis 12:1) Talk about uncertainty! In his own journey Abraham will become a father, endure the ultimate test, and find blessing for himself, his people and all the families on earth. (12:3) How did he get through all of this? How will we get through all of this? It's not for naught that Abraham becomes the "man or person of faith." Somehow, somehow, he perseveres and traditionally, faith is understood to be the way. I share with you my current understanding of faith with the hope that it is helpful in our ongoing journey. "We can't hope to find certainty and proof, but only pointers for what you yourself have to look for and investigate, since the world is created in such a way as to offer only hints and no certainties of faith...In the end what is important about faith is that you seek. (Alan Morinis, *Everyday Holiness*, pgs. 225-26, 231)

Rabbi Hayim of Tzanz used to tell this parable: A person, wandering lost in the forest for several days, finally encountered another. They called out: "My friend, show me the way out of this forest." The other replied: "Friend, I too am lost. I can only tell you this: The ways I have tried lead nowhere; they have only led me astray. Take my hand, and let us search for the way together." Rabbi Hayim would add: "So it is with us. When we go our separate ways, we may go astray. Let us join hands and look for the way together."

We are not alone. We can be seekers together.

-Rabbi Mark