

Also, in *Days of Awe*, Agnon retells the Chasidic homiletic called “Secret Language,” which reads:

The reason for the blowing of the ram’s horn was revealed to me in a dream. It is as though two friends or a father and son, who do not wish that what the one writes to the other should be known to others, were to have a secret language known to no one but themselves. So it is on Rosh Ha-Shanah. It was not the will of the Omnipresent that the accuser should know of our pleas. Therefore, he made up a language for us. That is the ram’s horn, which is only understood by him.

Agnon, *Days of Awe*, 73–74

Maybe for some of you this homily is the starting point. Maybe “Secret Language” is a metaphor that allows you to enlarge on the story of Isaac’s binding. For instance, could this story be God’s concession of insecurity in a secret language that we are privileged to share? In a midrash I wrote about the *Akeidah* in a class taught by Rabbi Ellen Lippmann, I surmised that Abraham always knew he was performing a pantomime for the ages. He knew he was being chosen to play out a dark skit about faith, and he never thought for a moment he was going to kill his son. Maybe the secret language he shared with God allowed him to know that.

Finally, I’ll just mention a tale in Agnon’s anthology about the Baal Shem Tov that ends, “When a man truthfully breaks his heart before God, he can enter into all the gates of the apartments of the king above all kings, the Holy One, blessed be He.” That metaphor of the brokenhearted Jew having broken all of the locks and having access to Juda-

Agnon, *Days of Awe*, 74

How does this metaphor of the brokenhearted Jew speak to you? What other metaphors help you to grapple with the *Akeidah*?