

# ***Akeidah: From a Poetic Perspective***

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I want to speak freely about the relationship between my love of metaphor and my search for meaningful metaphor in structures in Jewish text, and what it is I seek from sermons, and especially in relation to, of course, the *Akeidah*. Here's my conceit: If I was in a dialogue with rabbis, I would say, "I want to understand Torah as deeply as I am able. As a member of your congregation, this is what I'm hoping you will investigate in the text." I come to a sermon hoping to be offered much of what the study of poetry offers, the beauty of the lyric, and the relationship of lyric to meaning, and the revelation and resolution of life's complexities within those metaphors.

"After these things, God tested Abraham, saying to him, 'Abraham,' and he said, 'Here I am.' 'Take your son, your only one, the one you love, Isaac, and go forth to the land of Moriah.'" The suddenness with which the story takes up is like the excitement of a line break. The passages, cadences, and its haunting mix of beauty and sorrow are like an inverted lullaby. The lines seem to play an existing cut on our mind, but rarely do those lines carry the very same resonance from one year to the next. As a congregant, I hope the rabbi is going to explicate the text, as she would a classic piece of literature. I love clarification through close observations and contrasts, because meaning through metaphor is my stock in trade. In a recent book of poems, Connie Wanek describes the head of garlic as a "hobo's bundle." If this strikes you as truly as it struck Wanek, the association of garlic with

What do you come to a sermon hoping? What do you want to ask of your rabbi(s)? How does your answer differ depending on the time of year (i.e., High Holy Days versus the average Shabbat)?

Have you ever read a book over and over again? If so, why? How can this literary practice help us to understand the Jewish ritual of reading the same Torah and haftarah portions every year?