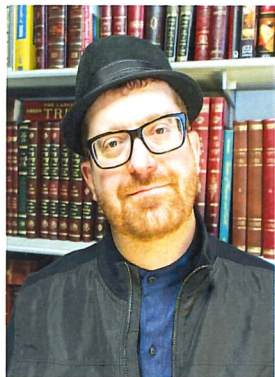


## AT HOME ON THE ROAD: TRAVELER'S PRAYER

Rav Aubrey Glazer



Summer overflows with festivals locally and globally. It is a time of year that invites us to discover new landscapes, fresh vistas, sights,

sounds and tastes. As we climbed the mountain of Sinai to receive Torah anew together at the beginning of June for Shavuot - made all the sweeter redeeming Rav's Graeter's Omer Challenge - each of us can sense more deeply the fragrance of Sinai through these summer months. A time of movement is how the Hebrew calendar marks this month of Sivan, as we are moving with and within Torah, upon our lifelong journey in search of meaning and learning from life. Like those refreshing summer breezes we welcome carrying enticing fragrances of the world in blossom, we feel the power of Jewish living has its own fragrance. If Torah is seen by our sages as a current of words in motion, whether akin living waters or cool breezes, then we know it continues to guide our journeys on the road during this season. When we journey with our Torah of life, we are open and willing to change course, even be surprised by what we discover along the path. Keeping a sense of home when we are on the road is important given how many generations our ancestors have been wandering. Yet we continue to adapt and find ways to feel at home even when we are away from that physical place. Whenever the sage Samuel was on the road he felt at home because he traveled with his tent and favorite cooking

utensils. So consider: what do you bring with you on the road for a sense of home? You might pack favorite photos, artwork, a dog-eared book, a mosaic tile from your garden, maybe a hard to find snack. If you are away for the Sabbath, you can pack your portable candles and wine for Kiddush. Wherever we find ourselves on the road, a sense of security and groundedness is always key. Our tradition gifts us with just the right prayer to guide our journeys, called *Tefilat Ha-derekh*. Also known as the *Traveler's Prayer*, it is recited for a safe journey.

It is fascinating to consider that its origins trace back as early as the 3<sup>rd</sup> century CE in the Babylonian Talmud (*Berachot* 29b-30a), where we rediscover one of many versions of this prayer that was composed for the protection of an individual traveler. However, despite the aforementioned, individualized approach of Samuel to pack his favorite things for himself to feel at home, another sage Abaye, later advised that the prayer should be recited in the plural form, emphasizing communal protection. Even when we are away from home, we are part of something greater than our individual selves - a people of Torah. We also notice that the prayer is traditionally recited at the beginning of a journey, whether by land, sea, or air. This *Traveler's Prayer* asks for divine guidance, safety from dangers such as road blocks and robbers, from wild animals to ferocious frustrations at check-in, and it seeks the rebalancing power of blessing wherever our travels may take us for protection upon the journey.

While I shift back and forth between different versions of the *Traveler's Prayer*, I remain moved by this contemporary version of it by my teacher, Rabbi Sheila Peltz Weinberg. May this *Traveler's Prayer*

inspire your journeys - whether on the road or at home or somewhere in between - always guiding each of us to be more aware and grateful in being accompanied by our abundant blessings of discovery, wisdom, joy and peace together:

*A prayer for the journey.  
We could say it every day  
When we first leave the soft warmth of our beds  
And don't know for sure if we'll return at night,  
When we get into the trains, planes and automobiles  
And put our lives into the hands of strangers,  
Or when we leave our homes for a day, a week, a month or more-  
Will we return home to a peaceful home?  
Untouched by fire, flood or crime?  
How will our travels change us?  
What gives us the courage to go through the door?*

*A prayer for the journey,  
For the journey we take in this fragile vessel of flesh,  
A finite number of years and we will reach  
The unknown, where it all began.  
Every life, every day, every hour is a journey.  
In the travel is the discovery,  
The wisdom, the joy.  
Every life, every day, every hour is a journey.  
In the travel is the reward,  
The peace, the blessing.*



## PrayerLab Shabbat

Are you curious about the choreography of prayer and ritual life in the synagogue services? Join us on Saturday, June 14<sup>th</sup> and July 19<sup>th</sup> for the next installments of our interactive prayer lab service that will explore key sections of the Amidah prayer. Bring your questions and curiosities.

**Saturday, June 14th & July 19th @ 9:30 am**