

Abraham returned to his wife and tents a very changed man. Everyone could tell, just from his face. But they had learned not to pester the old man with questions. He would say what he needed to say, when he needed to say it. Still, Sara (the wife) was happy when several days later he finally turned to her with an opened mouth.

“I had my dream all set,” he began. “The laughing boy God gave us in our old ages, Sara, that beautiful laughing boy would be the one through whom God blessed the whole world. He would become the world’s mightiest king, or the wisest sage, or the holiest high priest. He would be *the* source of blessing for all human history, and through him you and I would be remembered and blessed forever.”

He paused and his voice began to quiver. “And then God told me to take him up the mountain and make him a human sacrifice. Every instinct recoiled. It was all I could do not to vomit with rage and horror. I didn’t dare tell anyone, especially you, my love.”

The old lady stiffened, then deliberately relaxed and kept silent.

“I thought,” said Abraham, “who am I going to cling to --- to my dream, that I was sure was good and I thought came from God ... or to God, who’s always been faithful and never steered us wrong.

“I went to the mountain with our son, doubting I could ever be able to explain to you ... or even if I’d come back. I tied up our joy, our laughter ...and I raised the flinty knife ...

“And then God put me in a trance. I saw another son, Sara. He was our son too, our fruit ... but many generations distant. I saw him go of his own will and choice, to the top of a hill, and lay himself on a cross, to be God’s perfect human sacrifice. Sinners pounced with whips and thorns, knives and nails and the ghastly spear ... till it was accomplished.

“Yet when he died, that innocent lamb, our son many centuries yet from being born, a tsunami of spirit waved out from his opened heart to bless the whole world. In three days time his body, even his clothes became dazzlingly white ... and the holy spirit that washed away sin worked until age, decay and death itself were gone for good. Sara, we rose from death!”

“Now which dream do you like better, and which dream do you choose,” sighed the angel. “Your dream, and your laughing son Isaac, or the Father’s dream, and his son, the first born of ages?”

“The Father’s dream is better. I rejoice that you let me see his day. And I sacrifice my own delight, my son, my dream ... because I trust in God’s dream more.”

“This is well said,” replied the angel. “Because you trusted in God, you can have your son Isaac back. And you will be the father in faith of all believers. You will be the patron of everyone that God asks to give up a small dream ... because God has a bigger. If God is for you, who can be against you!”