

Thought for the Day
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The World Cup commences tomorrow. Aspirations are high in Brazil, where the hotly favoured national team is hoping to win the competition on home soil. Within such a climate of expectation, there is a danger that some Brazilians could settle for nothing less than the trophy. For them, the destination would mean everything, while the journey is of little significance.

Just a week ago the Jewish community celebrated the festival of Shavuot, or Pentecost, which marks the anniversary of the giving of the 10 Commandments by God to Moses on Mount Sinai.

Remarkably, the Bible does not give a date for this major festival. We are told to count 49 days from the beginning of Passover and Shavuot then follows immediately on the 50th day. By doing so, we recall the 7 week journey of the Israelites, commencing with the exodus from slavery in Egypt and concluding at the foot of Mount Sinai, where they were transformed from a group of slaves into a nation with a purpose and mission.

In this way, we focus on the journey in addition to the destination. We recognise that happiness and fulfilment are primarily to be found through engaging in an activity and not exclusively in completing it.

Jewish history was launched when God addressed Abraham for the first time and said: “Depart for your own sake from your land, from your birthplace and from your father’s home to the land that I will show you”. No destination was given. Abraham responded by embarking on a journey through which he walked with God on a spiritual mission to ennoble his life.

Abraham discovered that it’s not only the result that counts, but also the way you play the game.