

ברוך אתה יהוה  
אלהינו מלך העולם  
אשר קדשנו במצוותיו  
וצונו לעסוק  
בדברי תורה.

Barukh Atah Adonai  
Eloheinu melekh ha-olam  
asher kidshanu b'mitzvotav  
v'tzivanu la'asok  
b'divrei Torah.

Blessed are You, YHVH,  
our God, eternal sovereign, who  
sanctifies us in God's connecting  
command to busy ourselves  
in words of Torah.

Genesis 11:31-12:4

ויקח תֵּרַח אֶת-אַבְרָם בְּנוֹ וְאֶת-לוֹט בֶּן-  
הָרָן בֶּן-בְּנוֹ וְאֶת שָׂרַי כְּלֵתוֹ אִשְׁתּוֹ אַבְרָם  
בְּנוֹ וַיֵּצְאוּ אֹתָם מֵאִוּר קַסְדִּים לְלֶכֶת  
אֶרֶצָה כְּנַעַן וַיָּבֹאוּ עַד-חָרָן וַיֵּשְׁבוּ שָׁם:  
וַיְהִי יְמֵי-תֵרַח [ר"ה] שָׁנָה וּמֵת תֵּרַח  
בְּחָרָן:

31-32. Terah took Avram his son, and Lot son of Haran his son, and Sarai his son Avram's wife; and they went out from Ur Kasdim toward the land of Canaan. They came to Haran, and lived there. Terah's days were 205 years; Terah died in Haran.

וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל-אַבְרָם לֵךְ-לְךָ מֵאֶרֶץ  
וּמִמּוֹלַדְתְּךָ וּמִבֵּית אָבִיךָ אֶל-הָאָרֶץ  
אֲשֶׁר אֲרָאֶךָ: וְאֶעֱשֶׂה לְגוֹי גָדוֹל וְאַבְרָכְךָ  
וְאַגְדָּלְהָ שְׁמִי וְהָיָה בְרָכָה:

1-2. YHVH said to Avram: "Lekh lekha from your land, and from your birth place, and from your father's house, to a land that I will show you. I will make you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great; and you will be a blessing.

= Torah examples of being with

וְאַבְרָכָה מְבָרְכִיךָ וּמְקַלְלֶךָ אֲאִיר וּנְבָרְכֶנּוּ  
בְּךָ כָּל מִשְׁפְּחוֹת הָאֲדָמָה: וַיֵּלֶךְ אַבְרָם  
כְּאֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר אֵלָיו יְהוָה וַיֵּלֶךְ אִתּוֹ לוֹט  
וְאַבְרָם בֶּן-חָמֵשׁ שָׁנִים וְשִׁבְעִים שָׁנָה  
בְּצֵאתוֹ מִחָרָן:

3-4. "I will bless who bless you, and curse who curse you, and all the families of the earth will bless themselves by you," Avram went forth as YHVH told him, and lot went with him. Avram was 75 years old when he left Haran.

וַיִּקַּח אַבְרָם אֶת-שָׂרַי אִשְׁתּוֹ וְאֶת-לוֹט  
בֶּן-אָחִיו וְאֶת-כָּל-רְכוּשָׁם אֲשֶׁר רָכְשׁוּ  
[אֶת-הַנֶּפֶשׁ אֲשֶׁר-עָשׂוּ] בְּחָרָן וַיֵּצְאוּ  
לְלֶכֶת אֶרֶצָה כְּנַעַן וַיָּבֹאוּ אֶרֶצָה כְּנַעַן:  
וַיַּעֲבֵר אַבְרָם בְּאֶרֶץ עַד מְקוֹם שְׁכֵם עַד  
אֶלְוֵן מוֹרָה וְהַכְּנַעֲנִי אָז בְּאֶרֶץ:

5-6. Avram took his wife Sarai and his brother's son Lot, and all the wealth that they amassed, and the persons they acquired in Haran; and they set out for the land of Canaan. When they arrived in the land of Canaan, Avram passed through the land as far as the site of Shekhem, at the terebinth of Moreh. The Canaanites were then in the land.

why is this here?

TREES!

וַיֵּרָא יְהוָה אֶל-אַבְרָם וַיֹּאמֶר לֵרְעֶךָ  
אֶתְּךָ אֶת-הָאָרֶץ הַזֹּאת וַיְבָנֶה שָׁם מִזְבֵּחַ  
לַיהוָה הַנִּרְאָה אֵלָיו:

7. YHVH appeared to Avram and said, "To your offspring I will give this land." He built an altar there to YHVH who had appeared to him....

What here says darsheini?

- First time God speaks to Avram
- Wealth
- Why is God telling / asking?
- How can Avram be an ancestor?
- The Canaanites?
- The people they acquired...?

So what? What work would midrash do?

- What must Avram have thought? = prophesy
- Why would Avram actually go? Things were good!
- Did Avram had a choice? What if he'd said no?
- Sarai is barren —> ancestor to whom? how? what?
- What kind of promise is all of this?
- Who are these people? what's the socioeconomics? values?

"conversion"

**Bereishit Rabbah 39:1** =WHY DID AVRAM GO?

וַיֹּאמֶר ה' אֶל אַבְרָם לֵךְ לְךָ מֵאֶרֶץ כְּנָעַן  
אָמַר רַבִּי יִצְחָק מְשַׁל לְאַחַד שְׁהִיָּה עוֹבֵר  
מִמְקוֹם לְמִקוֹם וְרָאָה בֵּינָה אַחַת דּוֹלֶקֶת  
אָמַר תֵּאמַר שְׁהִבִּירָה הִיא בְּלֹא מְנַהֵג,  
הַצִּיץ עָלָיו בְּעַל הַבֵּירָה, אָמַר לוֹ אֲנִי בְּעַל  
הַבֵּירָה. כֵּן לְפִי שְׁהִיָּה אַבְרָהָם אוֹמֵר  
תֵּאמַר שְׁהַעוֹלָם הִזָּה בְּלֹא מְנַהֵג, הַצִּיץ  
עָלָיו הִקְב"ה וְאָמַר לוֹ אֲנִי בְּעַל הַעוֹלָם.  
unism / monotheism  
light as metaphor for the infinite  
light as metaphor for ... revelation

*YHVH said to Avram: Lekh lekha from your land.*  
R. Yitzhak said: ... One going place to place sees a  
castle glow and says, "Can this castle lack one to  
make it glow?" The castle's owner looks at him  
and says, "I am the master of the castle." So too  
with Avraham. He said, "Can it be that this world  
lacks one to make it glow?" God looked at him  
and said, "I am the Master of the Universe."  
HUMAN REASON —> relationship  
ATTITUDE —> positivity in the search

**Sefer HaYashar, Noah 19**

Terah said to Avram: "Behold my son, these gods are they that have created all you see in this world, you and me, and all the sons of man." Terah bowed before each of his gods, and finally left the chamber taking Avram along with him.

When Avram left the house of the gods, he hastened to his mother and said to her: "Behold, my father has shown me those that created the heavens, the earth, and all the sons of man. Please take a kid from the sheep, and prepare savory meat so I may bring it as an offering to the gods of my father, that they may eat of it: perhaps thus I might find grace before them."

His mother took a kid from the flock, made savory meat and brought it to Avram. Avram took the savory meat to the gods and served it to them, as if inviting them to eat – but there was no sound and no motion: none put forth a hand to take and eat. Terah knew nothing of what Avram did. Avram sat quietly in the house of the gods, but seeing that the gods were unwilling to partake of his offering, he said: "Maybe I brought too little or perhaps my offering is not of the kind to be acceptable to them? So tomorrow I will prepare much more and better meats than today...."

In the morning, Avram instructed his mother concerning the offering he had decided upon, and his mother took accordingly three kids from the flock, and she made savory meats as her son desired, and she placed them in Avram's hands – also unknown to Terah his father. Avram took the meats from his mother and carried them to the chamber of the gods. He divided the meats among the gods and, placing a dish before each, he invited them to eat of his offering. Avram sat before them and waited the whole day to see if they would eat or not. But there was no sound and no motion: none of the gods put forth a hand to taste the meats.

God's spirit came over Avram on the evening of that day, and he cried out: "Woe unto my father and woe unto this entire wicked generation, whose hearts are bent on vanities, worshipping idols like these made of wood and stone! Images that can neither eat nor smell, nor hear or speak! They have a mouth but cannot speak, eyes but cannot see, ears but cannot hear, hands but cannot grasp, feet but cannot walk. Those who made them, serve them or bow down to them are like them!"

Avram became angry at his father. He rushed and took an axe, went into the chamber to the gods of his father, broke them all to pieces except the largest god. He put the axe into the hands of the largest god, and left the chamber hastily.

Terah heard noise, went into his house and rushed into the chamber to determine the cause of all that noise. He met Avram just coming out. When Terah entered the house of his gods, he saw them all shattered to pieces, except the largest one holding the axe in his hand. Terah also saw the savory meats before each idol.

Seeing the destruction, Terah's wrath kindled, and he ran out to Avram. Terah said to Avram: "What did you do to all my gods?" Avram replied to Terah: "Not so! I brought them a savory meat offering. As I came before them with the meat, each of the gods put forth his hand to eat before the largest god could take some for himself. When the large god saw their poor manners, his anger rose. He seized an axe in the house and broke the others to pieces. You can see the axe in his hands even now!"

Terah grew furious at his son, and he screamed: "What are you saying? You dare lie to your father? Will you try to make me believe such things, as if I did not know that these gods have no soul, and no spirit, and no strength within them? For are these gods anything but pieces of wood and stone that I myself have shaped into images? And now you dare to tell me the lie, that the greatest god among them broke all the other ones to pieces, while it is you that did all this mischief and then put the axe into the hands of the greatest of the gods – all to deceive me?"

Avram replied to his father: "If you know all that, how can you worship these idols that have neither strength nor power to do the least thing? Can those idols, in whom you trusted, save you in the hour of danger, or hear your prayers when you call on them, or thee you from the hands of your enemies, or fight battles for you? Can these idols of wood and stone, which can neither hear nor speak, do all that – that you should worship them?"

**Midrash Tanhuma, Lekh Lekha 3:4**

אל הארץ אשר אראך, לא אמר לו למקום פלוני, זו נסיון בתוך נסיון. יש אדם שהולך ואינו יודע לאיזה מקום הוא הולך. ואעשה לגוי גדול, אין כתיב ואשימה, אלא ואעשה. אמר לו: אותך אני בורא ברית חדשה, שנאמר: ויעש אל הים את הרקיע ויעש אל הים את שני המארות.

*To the land that I will show you* – God did not say a specific place, so it was a trial within a trial – one who goes without knowing the destination.

*I will make you a great nation* – It is not written "I will establish you as a great nation," but "I will make you a great nation." That is, I will create anew, as in "God made the firmament" (Gen. 1:7) and "God made the two great lights" (Gen. 1:16).

**Ramban, Gen. 12:1-2(2)**

וטעם להזכיר "ארצה ומולדתך ובית אביך", כי יקשה על האדם לעזוב ארצה אשר הוא יושב בה ושם אוהביו ורעיו, וכל שכן כשהוא ארץ מולדתו ששם נולד, וכל שכן כשגיש שם כל בית אביו. ולכך הצריך לומר לו שיעזוב הכל לאהבתו של הקב"ה:

*From your land, and from your birth place, and from your father's house* – The reason is that it is difficult for a person to leave one's country, where one has [the security and familiarity] of friends and companions. All the more so one's native land, and even more if one's whole family is there. So it was necessary to tell Avraham to leave all for the sake of his love of the Holy Blessed One

אל הארץ אשר אראך היה נודד והולך מגוי אל גוי ומממלכה אל עם אחר, עד שבא אל ארץ כנען ואמר לו "לורעה אתו את הארץ הזאת", אז נתקיים "אל הארץ אשר אראך", ואז נתעבב וישב בה. ומה שאמר "ויצאו ללכת ארצה כנען", לא להתישב בה, כי עדין לא נדע כי על הארץ תהיה נצטווה, אלא שאחזו צדיק דרכו דרך ארץ כנען כי כן היה בדעתו ובדעת אביו...

*To the land that I will show you* – He wandered and went "from nation to nation, from kingdom to another" (Ps. 105:13), until he came to the land of Canaan, where God said to him (Gen. 12:7), "To your offspring I will give this land." Only then the promise was fulfilled "to the land that I will show you." He did head for Canaan in order to settle there since he did not yet know that he would be commanded concerning this land. The righteous grasps one's way as the "way of the Land of Canaan" as one's *da'at* and the supernal *da'at*.

### Bereishit Rabbah 39:9

וְלָמָּה לֹא גִלָּה לּוֹ, כִּדְּבַר לְחַבְּבָהּ בְּעֵינָיו  
וְלָתֵן לּוֹ שְׂכָר עַל כָּל פְּסִיעָה וּפְסִיעָה,  
הוּא דְעֵתִיָּה דְרַבִּי יוֹחָנָן, דְּאָמַר רַבִּי יוֹחָנָן:  
וַיֹּאמֶר קַח נָא אֶת בְּנֶךְ אֶת יְחִידְךָ, אָמַר  
לוֹ זֶה יְחִיד לְאִמּוֹ וְזֶה יְחִיד לְאִמּוֹ. אָמַר  
לוֹ אֲשֶׁר אֶהְבֶּתְךָ, אָמַר לוֹ וְאֵיךְ תְּחַוֵּמֶינִי  
בְּמַעֲנֵי. אָמַר לוֹ אֵת יִצְחָק, וְלָמָּה לֹא  
גִלָּה לּוֹ, כִּדְּבַר לְחַבְּבָהּ בְּעֵינָיו וְלָתֵן לּוֹ שְׂכָר  
עַל כָּל דְּבָר וְדָבָר.

דְּאָמַר רַב הוּנָא מִשְׁם רַבִּי אֱלִיעֶזֶר בְּנֵי  
שֶׁל רַבִּי יוֹסִי הַגָּלִילִי, מִשְׁהָה הַקְּדוּשׁ  
בְּרוּךְ הוּא וּמְתַלָּא עֵינֵיהֶם שֶׁל צְדִיקִים,  
וְאַחַר כֵּן הוּא מְגַלֵּה לְהֶם טַעְמוֹ שֶׁל  
דְּבָר. כֵּן אֵל הָאֱרֶץ אֲשֶׁר אֲרָאָה. עַל אַחַד  
הַהָרִים אֲשֶׁר אָמַר אֱלֹהִים: וַיִּקְרָא אֵלָיָהּ  
אֶת הַקְּרִיאָה אֲשֶׁר אָנִי דֹבֵר אֲלֵיךְ....

Why did [God] not reveal the destination at once?  
To endear [Avram's] eyes and give reward for  
each step. This is much as R. Yoḥanan said of  
(Gen. 22:2) "Take your son, your only son."  
Avraham said to God: "This one is the 'only one' to  
his mother, and that one is the 'only one' to his  
mother." God said to him (Gen. 22:2): "Whom you  
love." He said to God: "Can I split my innards?  
God said to him (Gen. 22:2): "Yitzhak." Why did  
God not reveal the matter at once? To endear his  
eyes and give reward for each word (*or* thing).

As Rav Huna said in the name of R. Eliezer son of  
R. Yosei HaGalili: At first the Holy Blessed One  
delays [complete revelation], to keep righteous  
eyes fixed on God, then reveals particulars of the  
matter. Thus: "to the land that I will show you,"  
and (Gen. 22:2) "one of the mountains I will tell  
you," and (Jonah 3:2) "Call out what I tell you...."

### Avot d'Rabbi Natan 33:2

עֶשֶׂר נִסְיוֹנוֹת נִתְּנָה אַבְרָהָם אַבְנֵינוּ לִפְנֵי  
הַקַּב"ה וּבְכוּלָן נִמְצָא שְׁלֵם אֵלּוֹ הֵן שְׁנַיִם  
בְּלֶךְ לֶךְ ב' בְּשֵׁתֵי בְנוֹי ב' בְּשֵׁתֵי נְשֵׁי אַחַד  
עִם הַמַּלְכִים וְאַחַד בֵּין הַבְּתָרִים אַחַד  
בְּאוּר כַּשְׂדִים וְאַחַד בְּבֵרִית מִלְחָה.... כִּנְגַד  
עֶשֶׂר נִסְיוֹנוֹת שֶׁנִּתְּנָה אַבְרָהָם אַבְנֵינוּ  
וּבְכוּלָן נִמְצָא שְׁלֵם וּכְנֻגָד עֶשֶׂה הַקַּב"ה  
י' נִסִּים לְבָנָיו בְּמִצְרַיִם כִּנְגַד הַבֵּיא עֶשֶׂר  
מִכּוֹת....

Avraham our ancestor was tested with ten trials  
before the Holy Blessed One, and emerged from  
each one complete. They are as follows: Two  
when God said to him, "Go forth!" Two with his  
two sons. Two with his two wives. One with the  
war of the kings. One at the Covenant of the Parts.  
One in Ur Kasdim. One with circumcision....

As Avraham was tested with ten trials and  
emerged from each one complete, the Holy  
Blessed One did ten miracles for God's children in  
Egypt by the ten plagues...

### Foundational Tens

Pirkei Avot 5:1-6

"Let there be" (Gen. 1)  
Spiritual generations from Avraham to Noah  
Spiritual generations from Noah to Avraham  
Minimum for Avraham's negotiation for Sodom  
Trials of Avraham  
Dreams in the Book of Genesis  
Plagues of Egypt  
Commandments  
Scouts who misled at precipice of entering the Land  
  
Days of Teshuvah  
Praises of Psalm 150:1-6  
Levels of Angels (Maimonides)  
Tithing

## Midrash Tanhuma, Lekh Lekha 1:1

וַיֹּאמֶר ה' אֶל אַבְרָם לֵךְ לְךָ. יִלְמְדוּנוּ רַבְנֵינוּ,  
אָדָם מִיִּשְׂרָאֵל מֵהוּ שֵׁיִקְבֵּל עָלָיו מ"ש  
כְּשֶׁהוּא מֵהֶלֶךְ. אֲסוּר לְקַבֵּל עָלָיו עַל  
מַלְכוּת שָׁמַיִם כְּשֶׁהוּא מֵהֶלֶךְ, אֶלָּא יַעֲמֹד  
בְּמָקוֹם אֶחָד וַיִּכְוֶן לְבוֹ לְשָׁמַיִם בְּאֵימָה  
וּבִירְאָה בְּרִתּוֹת וּבְזִיעַ בִּיחּוּד הַשֵּׁם, וַיִּקְרָא  
שְׁמֵעַ יִשְׂרָאֵל ה' אֶלֶּהֵינוּ ה' אֶחָד, כָּל  
אֶחָד וְאֶחָד בְּכֹונֵת הַלֵּב, וְאַחַר כֵּן, בְּרוּךְ  
שֵׁם כְּבוֹד מַלְכוּתוֹ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד.  
וּכְשֶׁמִּתְחִיל וְאֶהֱבֵת, רָצָה מֵהֶלֶךְ, רָצָה  
עוֹמֵד, רָצָה יוֹשֵׁב, שֶׁכֶּף פְּתִיב: בְּשִׁבְתָּךְ  
בְּבֵיתְךָ וּבְלִכְתָּךְ בַּדֶּרֶךְ וּבְשִׁכְבְּךָ וּבְקוּמָךְ.

*YHVH said to Avram: Lekh lekha from your land*  
– May a Jew may take on heaven's yoke while  
traveling? No. One stands in one place directing  
one's heart to heaven in love and awe, trembling  
and reverence, while proclaiming the oneness of  
God: *Hear, Israel, YHVH our God, YHVH is One.*  
One speaks each word with heartfelt sincerity, and  
then "Blessed be God's Name, whose glorious  
*malkhut* is forever" (B.T. Berakhot 13b). But when  
starting "Love YHVH your God with all your  
heart...", one may either walk, stand or sit, as one  
desires, for it is written: "Sitting in one's home,  
going on the way, laying down and rising up."

## Ein Yaakov, Pesahim 10:12

וְאֶעֱשֶׂךָ לְגוֹי גָדוֹל - אִמְרֵי רִישׁ לְקִישׁ זֶה  
שְׂאוֹמְרִים אֱלֹהֵי אַבְרָהָם. וְאִבְרַכְךָ זֶה  
שְׂאוֹמְרִים אֱלֹהֵי יִצְחָק. וְאִגְדֵּלְהָ שְׂמִדָּה זֶה  
שְׂאוֹמְרִים אֱלֹהֵי יַעֲקֹב. יִכּוֹל יְהוָה חוֹתְמֵינִי  
בְּכֹולָם ת"ל וְהִיא בְּרַכָּה בְּךָ חוֹתְמֵינִי.

*I will make you a great people* – Resh Lakish said:  
This refers to *God of Avraham*. "And I will bless  
you" refers to *God of Yitzhak*. "And I will make  
your name great" refers to *God of Yaa'kov*. It  
should finish to embrace them all, and therefore  
"And you will be a blessing."

## Liturgy, Amidah - Avot

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ  
וְאֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ וְאִמּוֹתֵינוּ

Blessed are You, YHVH our God  
and God of our fathers and **mothers** –

אֱלֹהֵי אַבְרָהָם,  
אֱלֹהֵי יִצְחָק,  
וְאֱלֹהֵי יַעֲקֹב,  
אֱלֹהֵי שָׂרָה  
אֱלֹהֵי רִיבְקָה  
אֱלֹהֵי רַחֵל  
וְאֱלֹהֵי לֵאָה

God of Avraham  
God of Yitzhak  
God of Ya'akov  
**God of Sarah**  
**God of Rivkah**  
**God of Rahel**  
**and God of Leah**

הָאֵל הַגָּדוֹל הַגִּבּוֹר וְהַנּוֹרָא, אֵל עֲלִיוֹן,  
גּוֹמֵל חֲסָדִים טוֹבִים, וְקוֹנֵה הַכֹּל, וְזוֹכֵר  
חֲסָדֵי אֲבוֹת, וּמְבִיא גּוֹאֵל לְבָנֵי בְּנֵיהֶם  
לְמַעַן שְׁמוֹ בְּאַהֲבָה:

The Great, Strong and Awesome God, supernal  
God, lovingly bestowing goodness, creator of all,  
remembering our ancestors' goodness, and  
bringing a redeemer from the children of their  
children, for the sake of Your Name in love,

מְלִךְ עוֹזֵר וּמוֹשִׁיעַ וּמְגַן:  
בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה, מְגֵן אַבְרָהָם וְשָׂרָה:  
שָׂרָה:

Sovereign of help, redeeming and defending,  
Blessed are You, shield of Avraham **and help of**  
**Sarah**