

# AVODAH: The Jewish Service Corps

## Torah Portion – Lekh Lekha

### To Be a Blessing

וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־אַבְרָם לֵךְ־לְךָ מֵאֶרֶץ וּמִמּוֹלַדְתְּךָ וּמִבֵּית אָבִיךָ אֶל־הָאָרֶץ  
אֲשֶׁר אֶרְאֶה־בְּוֹאֲעֶשְׂךָ לְגוֹי גָּדוֹל וְאַבְרָכְךָ וְאַגְדִּלְהָ שְׁמֶךָ וְהָיָה בְרָכָה  
גְּוַאֲבָרְכָה מִבְּרַכְיָךָ וּמִקִּלְלָךָ אֲאִר וְנִבְרַכְוּ בְּךָ כָּל מִשְׁפְּחוֹת הָאָדָמָה׃

*The Lord said to Abram, "Go forth from your native land and from your father's house to the land that I will show you.*

*I will make of you a great nation.*

*And I will bless you;*

*I will make your name great,*

*And you shall be a blessing.*

*I will bless those who bless you*

*And curse anyone who curses you;*

*And all the families of the earth*

*Shall bless themselves by you."*

[Genesis 12:1-3]

[**AVODAH commentary:** The very first conversation between God and Abraham consists of two parts. The first part is an instruction to Abram to radically change his life by leaving behind his home and starting off on a journey to "the land that I will show you." The second part is a promise to Abram that a certain transformation will occur on this journey. Among other things, Abram is told that he shall be a blessing. Not that he shall be blessed. But that he himself shall be a blessing. What does that mean? Below are two traditional Torah commentaries:]

1. **RASHI:** *Be a blessing* -- [God said to Abram], "Blessings are now in your hands. Until now, I bestowed all blessings. I blessed Adam and Noah and you. From today on, you shall bless whomever you desire to bless.

2. **RAMBAN:** *Be a blessing* -- [Means] You will be invoked in blessings. People will say: "May God make you like Abraham." And *all the families of the earth shall bless themselves by you* was added to make clear that even outside of his country people would invoke Abraham in this way. Alternatively, [the latter part of the verse] was added to teach that all the families of the earth will be blessed because of Abraham.

**QUESTIONS:** Add your commentary to these verses. As Abraham's descendants, how do we fulfill the charge to be a blessing, such that all of the families of the earth shall feel blessed on our account?