



Lech Lecha

lit. take yourself and go

Take the Next Step

The Jewish approach promotes living life as a journey. At times we must leave familiar and safe spaces and go toward a place we don't yet know.

G!d tells Abraham – ‘Go!’ or, in another translation, ‘Go to yourself’ (Genesis 12). Like Abraham, we each have our own unique journey. At times it can feel as if we were supposed to have arrived. And yet, there is always another journey. We never arrive. We are always a work in progress.

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1. Gershon Winkler (a 21st century non-denominational Rabbi) translates the word עבריים (*Ivrim*, Hebrews) - as ‘Boundary Crossers,’ since its root meaning is to cross over. Abraham received a call to leave everything he knew, everything that was familiar or predictable and to go beyond his boundaries, to ‘the land that I will show you.’ There, he found G!d. To be a Hebrew is, like Abraham, to cross over boundaries, not always knowing where our crossing will take us.
 2. The term ‘lech lecha’ can be translated as ‘go forth’ and also as ‘go to yourself.’ An interesting riddle – in what way is going forward like going to one’s self? One response is that in order to find our unique gift, to go farther toward our authentic self, we have to go away from what is known. We sometimes reach a time when life becomes too small, and we have to leave its environs in order to grow.

Questions for Conversation and Reflection

1. What are the similarities in the statements ‘go forth’ and ‘go to yourself’?
2. Think of a way that you diverged from what your parents and grandparents expected from you. As a result of having diverged, what do you now know?
3. Are there any boundaries that you have ‘crossed over’ that have made you who you are today? Who do you admire that has crossed over a societal boundary?