

PARSHAT TOLDOT
GENESIS 25:19-28:9
HAFTARAH MALACHI 1:1-2:7
29 CHESHVAN 5786/20 NOVEMBER 2025



The Negative Way #10
Lithograph by Paul Brach

THE BLESSING OF GENERATIONS

1. אֱלֹהִים תְּלַדְתָּ יִשְׁמְעֵאל (Genesis 25:12)
אֱלֹהִים תְּלַדְתָּ יִצְחָק (Genesis 25:19)
אֱלֹהִים תְּלַדְוֹת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְהָאָרֶץ (Genesis 2:4)
2. לְמָה זֶה אֲנֹכִי (Genesis 25:22)

3. “Anochi Adonai Eloheicha (I am Adonai your God)” [Exodus 20:2]. The word Ani is not used, but rather Anochi. Had it been written “Ani,” the meaning would have been that the Holy Blessed One had revealed God’s light to Israel in all its completeness, and then they could not have reached deeply into God’s words, for God would have already revealed everything. The additional letter kaf in “Anochi” (אני, אנכי) teaches that it is not in a state of completeness, but an imagined image of the light that the Holy Blessed One would reveal in the future. (Mei HaShiloach)
4. Emperor Wu of Ryo of China invited the legendary monk Bodhidharma to his court, expecting to receive teachings and wisdom. When they finally met, the emperor asked: “What is the ultimate meaning of the holy truths of Buddhism?” “Vast emptiness, no holiness,” replied Bodhidharma. “Who stands here before me?” asked Emperor Wu. “I don’t know,” said Bodhidharma.
5. God’s nowhere is a portion of man’s somewhere. (Arthur A. Cohen, *The Negative Way*, Proposition #10)
6. You have opted for security, tranquility: for the answer.
I have chosen insecurity and worry: the question.
I mark time at the edge of life whereas you have already
Reached death’s shore.
To die on the threshold. (Edmond Jabes, *The Book of Shares*)
7. A work of art does not answer questions, it provokes them; and its essential meaning is the tension between the contradictory answers. (Leonard Bernstein, NYT 1965)