



## Praying Us Into Being

Work inspired by the Avot V'Imahot Blessing of the Amidah

<b><i>Avot v'Imahot / Ancestors, traditional</i></b>	2
<b><i>God Of..., Steve Silbert</i></b>	3
<b><i>Generations, R. Rachel Barenblat</i></b>	4
<b><i>Ancestors, Mike Cockrill</i></b>	5
<b><i>Ancestors, R. Sonja K. Pilz</i></b>	6
<b><i>Blessed Are You, Joanne Fink</i></b>	7
<b><i>Names, Steve Silbert</i></b>	8
<b><i>אבות ואמהות Fathers and Mothers, R. David Zaslow</i></b>	9
<b><i>Excavation, Mike Cockrill</i></b>	10
<b><i>Our History, Trisha Arlin</i></b>	11
<b><i>About Us</i></b>	12

## Avot v'Imahot / Ancestors

*Baruch atah יהו"ה Eloheinu v'Elohei  
avoteinu v'imoteinu, Elohei Avraham, Elohei  
Yitzchak, Elohei Ya'akov; Elohei Sarah,  
Elohei Rivkah, Elohei Leah, v'Elohei Rachel.  
HaEl hagadol hagibor v'hanora El elyon,  
gomeil chasadim tovim v'koneih hakol  
v'zocheir chasdei avot v'imahot,  
umeivi goeil livnei v'neiham  
l'maan sh'mo b'ahavah.*

ברוך אתה יהו"ה אלהינו ואלהי  
אבותינו ואמותינו, אלהי אברהם, אלהי  
יצחק, ואלהי יעקב, אלהי שרה,  
אלהי רבקה, אלהי לאה, ואלהי רחל.  
האל הגדול הגבור והנורא, אל עליון,  
גומל חסדים טובים, וקנה הכל,  
וזכר חסדי אבות ואמהות,  
ומביא גואל לבני בניהם,  
למען שמו באהבה.

Blessed are You, יהו"ה our God and God of our ancestors, God of Abraham, God of Isaac, God of Jacob; God of Sarah, God of Rebecca, God of Rachel and God of Leah; the great, mighty, and awesome God, God on high, who does deeds of loving kindness, who is the Source of all, and who remembers the steadfast love of our ancestors, who lovingly brings redemption to their children's children for Your name's sake.

*Melech ozeir umoshia umagen.  
Baruch atah יהו"ה, magein Avraham  
v'ezrat Sarah.*

מלך עוזר ומושיע ומגן.  
ברוך אתה יהו"ה, מגן אברהם  
ואזרת שרה.

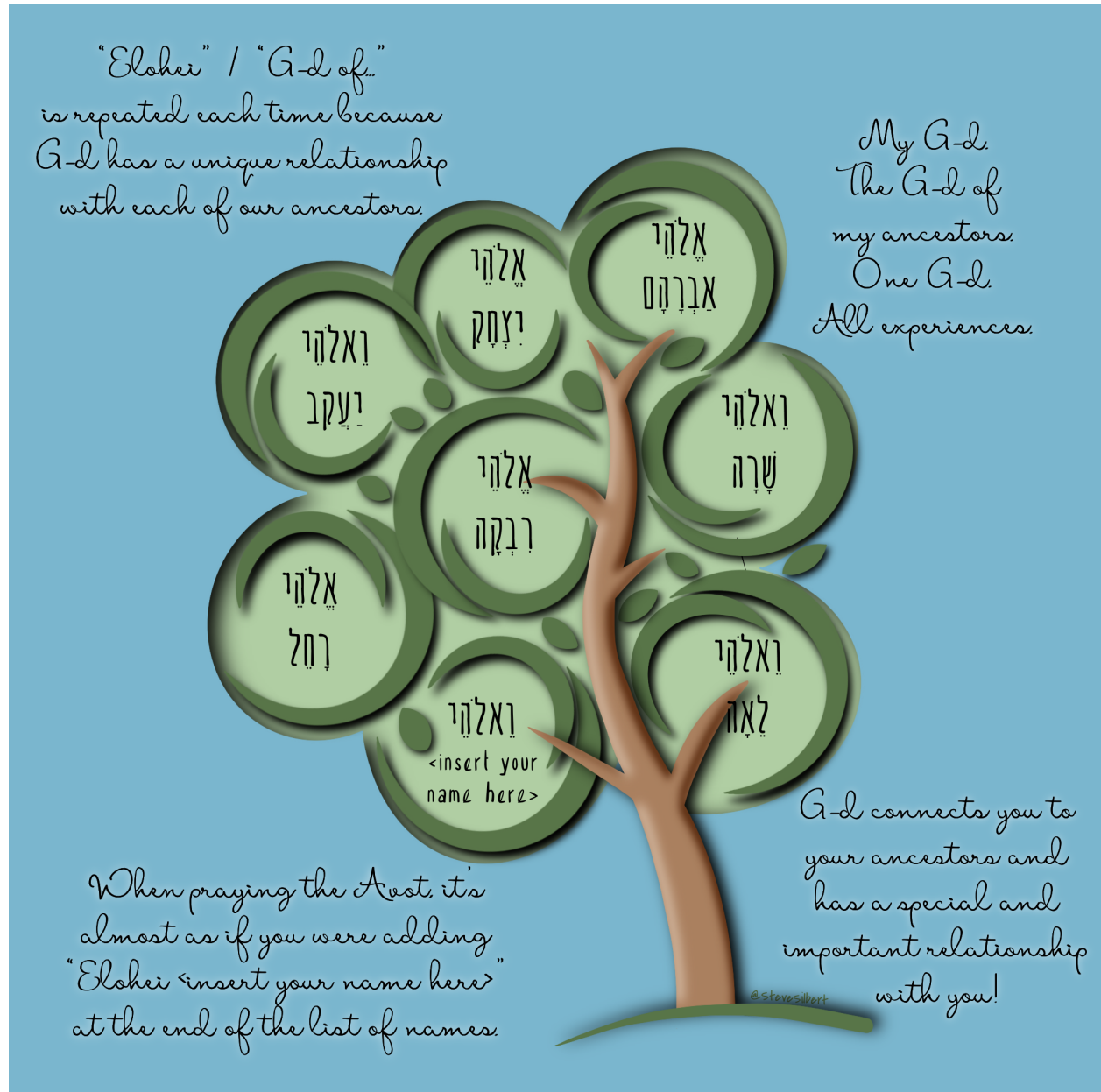
Ruler, Helper, Redeemer, and Protector: blessed are You, Abraham's shield and Sarah's strength.

*We've chosen not to translate or transliterate the ancient name יהו"ה, which can be understood as a permutation of the verb "to be." Its untranslatability points us beyond all words.*

*Jewish tradition teaches that our Creator is beyond language: our words can only approach the Infinite. May our linguistic choices remind us that our names are only substitutes, and that our Source is beyond any words we can speak.*

*Liturgy excerpted from Beside Still Waters, Bayit & Ben Yehuda Press, 2019.*

## God Of...



*Steve Silbert*

## Generations

God of our generations –  
God of my parents  
now buried in the earth  
and their parents before them

and their parents, journeys  
scribed across the sea  
all the way from the Old Country,  
(whichever Old Country) –

God of our beloved dead  
all the way back to Ur  
where Avram and Sarai began,  
back to Australopithecus –

Notice us.  
Remember what we've forgotten.  
Some of us can't believe  
in hope anymore. Shield us

from apocalypse. Help us  
as You help every nursing mother  
who survives to sustain  
the generations to come.

*R. Rachel Barenblat*



## Ancestors



*Mike Cockrill*

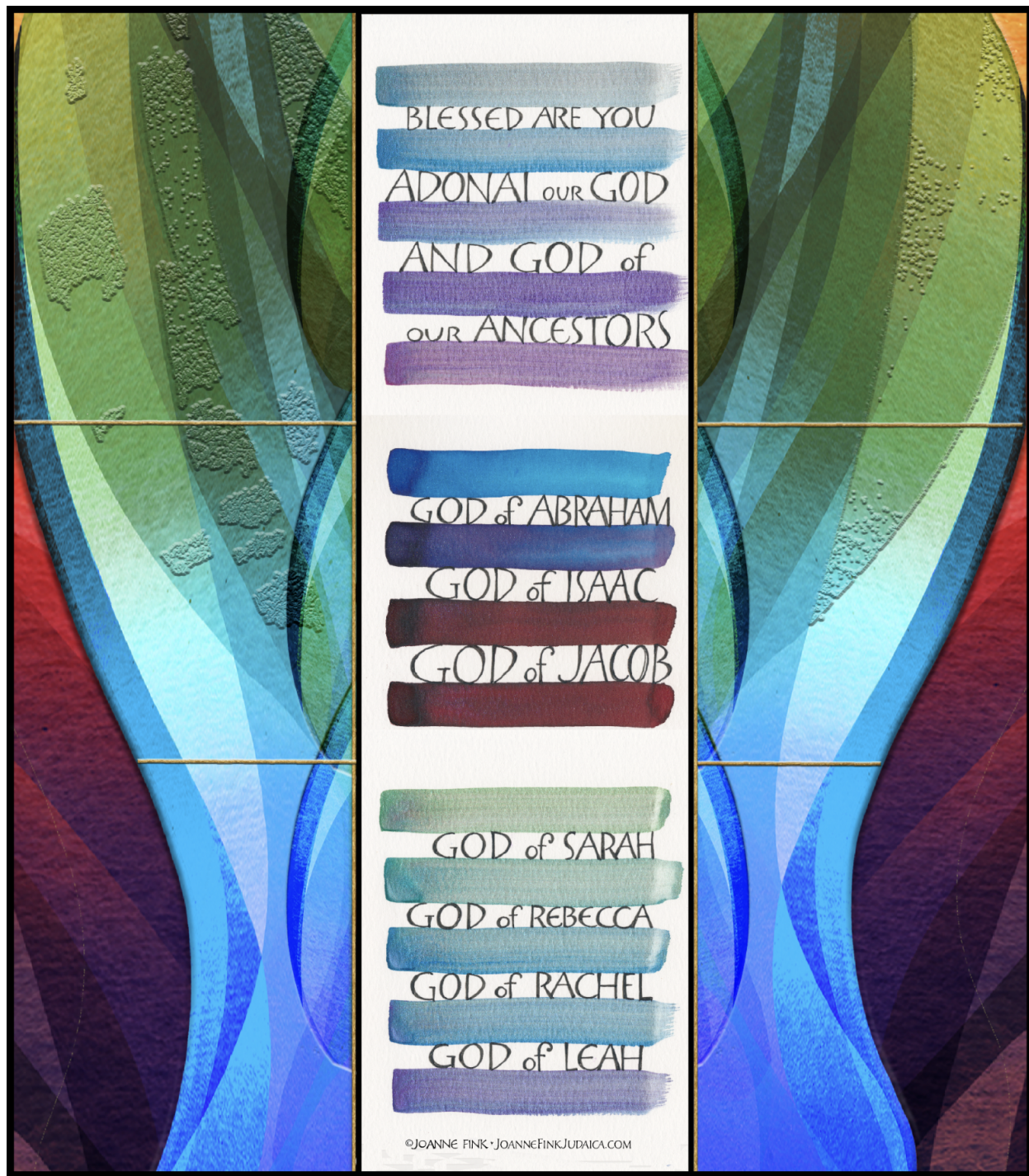
## Ancestors

Our ancestors taught that  
Whatever we do  
We leave traces on high  
The vibrating humming star dusty footprints  
Of our thoughts and actions  
Shaping and reshaping God's face.  
I look at my own footprints  
The way I put my feet on the ground  
The way I touch  
The way I listen to You.  
I see all the moments I arrived too late  
Or never  
At the destination.  
I see my ancestors  
Stumbling, racing, in all their imperfections  
Drafting the map of your face  
With their bare and broken skin.  
I am still making my own steps.  
I am still leaving my own traces.  
I am still layering my own dances on top of theirs.  
At times, I don't know how to apologize to God  
For all the missed steps and corrections,  
In this forever movement  
Between beginning and end.  
And then I see God's smile,  
Wrinkly, pimply, and shimmering,  
The sum of all our traces  
And so much more.

*R' Sonja K. Pilz, PhD*



## Blessed Are You



Joanne Fink



## Names

*This image can be used as a focus for meditation on these four qualities of the Divine.*



Steve Silbert

## אבות ואמהות

### Fathers and Mothers

It's less about me reaching back  
in time to all my fathers and mothers  
from Abraham and Sarah in Mesopotamia  
all the way to Sam and Jean in Brooklyn.  
It's more about tuning in to that Place  
where in special moments my parents,  
and the ancestors before them, reached forward in time  
as they thought and prayed about  
what the future would bring for their descendants,  
including me, my children, and grandchildren  
who they could only dream would even be born.

It's that reaching forward, those prayers, hopes, and dreams,  
somehow stored and live streaming  
in the form of some kind of Supernal Memory Light  
from the very First Day forming a continuous loop  
in what my life downloads each moment now.  
I don't invoke my ancestors as much as I try as best I can  
to tune into that Place where they are invoking me  
into being now even though those invocations  
were spoken and prayed so long ago  
by my parents, and the parents of my parents,  
all of them uncertain as to what the future would bring.

Yet their prayers are coming down and being answered now.  
As my mothers and fathers are praying me into being,  
I do the same – casting my own prayers,  
uncertain where they will land, onto an unbroken  
Ray of Light that I subscribe to with my life.  
I am praying my descendants into being  
a hundred years and more from now.  
I pray that the children of my children's children  
will do the same when they download this, my prayer,  
and cast their own prayers for their children's children.  
Amen.

*Rabbi David Zaslow*

## Excavation



*It's difficult to tell from a photograph, but the central part of the painting has had several layers of canvas collage cut away. Many different iterations that were collaged or painted over were removed. I see the women as excavating back through time to reinterpret or reveal a new flowering truth.*

*Mike Cockrill*





## Our History

Bless our inventive ancestors,  
Who gave us

The Daddy God of the Torah and  
The Lawyer God of the Talmud,

The Dreaming God of immigrants and  
The Pediatric God of children,

The Unlimited God of the mystics and  
The Unmoving God of the philosophers,

The Many Gendered God of community and  
The Personal God who is each of ours, alone,

The non-existent god of our skepticism and  
The Holy Whole-ness of our adult searching.

The Loving God of our births and  
The Redemptive God of our deaths,

With our imaginations and creations,  
With our memories and traumas,

With awe and concern for those who came before  
And with fear and love for all who will come after,

We stand within the One-ness.  
Blessed Was•Is•Will Be,

Our shield  
Our doubt

Our history.  
To this God we pray.

Amen

*Trisha Arlin*

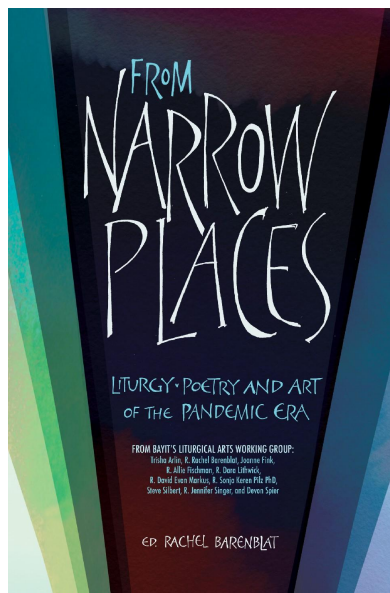
## About Us

*Co-created by members of Bayit's Liturgical Arts Working Group, 2023.*

*Bayit is building a soulful, inclusive and meaningful Jewish life for all ages and stages. Our visionary teams of clergy, liturgists, artists, educators and other thought leaders across and beyond denominational life develop, test, refine and distribute tools for a Jewish future always under construction.*

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***Bayit, 2022***